

DAN BOONE FIXER OF PRESSES

"DAN BOONE CILLED BAR HEAR"

When Dan Boone spent a half hour cutting with his hunting knife, the above words on the bark of a tree in East Tenn., he did not know that a descendant of his, 150 years later would fix a printing press so it would turn out the same words 1000 times faster.

Judging by the number of articles on the Boone family one sees from time to time in papers and copied from one to another, it would seem this subject is popular and that the Boones, especially our two blacksmiths of Burnsville, Kelsey and his son Daniel, are getting their full share of free advertising. Any reader of American history has already concluded from what he has heard and been taught in school, that this is an interesting family; not because they are Boones resident and being in Western North Carolina, but because they are direct descendants of the noted backwoodsman, Dan Boone of Kentucky.

This paper has published much matter pertaining to the early and late history of the Southern Mountains and their lore during the many years it has appeared, but nothing heretofore on the Boone family. We should apologize for not doing so, since the editor has always from infancy been more or less associated with the local Boone family. Our readers no doubt, often read of the great ingenuity of Dan Boone and his father Kelsey in metal work. They are in fact geniuses in such work and the entire world seems to be finding it out. Few however, know that they are very expert mechanics and have done work on almost every type of machinery used in the south.

It is concerning their art of repairing printing presses of which we desire in this connection to write. If our readers could visit our plant we could show parts on nearly every press and other machines which were made by Dan Boone or Kelsey or some of their cousins equally skilful in machine repair work. The Boones have been blacksmiths from time immemorial. Many times during the past twenty-five years when some important part about the big press on which this paper is being printed or some of the smaller presses have broken or worn out and it looked like an order for the factory, we would go to Dan or Kelsey and let them take a look at the trouble. About 99 times out of 100 they went to work and soon had the machine working again with a part even at times better than the original one.

And the Boones have always patronized our job shop when in need of any printed matter and our files show that their orders have been steady if not large.

The Grit, Atlanta Constitution, North Carolina Magazine, The Uplift and others have recently published articles on the Boone Family and some have had pictures of them. C. Z. Mast, writer of one of the articles claims to be a relative of the family dwells much on the beauties of the mountains of Watauga county and the town of Boone which he says was named for the family and built by hard work. Most towns are.

Massey's article tells us nothing more than the ordinary histories which no doubt are in your library and in which you may read of the noted frontiersman, Daniel Boone who is six generations back from our Daniel and Wade who hammer out imitation "colonial ironware" in their Burnsville forge—as does their father Kelsey at his forge at Burnsville at the junction of the Mt. Mitchell highway. These histories tell us, not of the Yancey County Boones that this article will dwell upon, but how the pioneer Daniel was born in Bucks County, Pa., in 1746, later coming to North Carolina, perhaps along with the Edwards people, which at that time seemed to be a great haven as a hunting ground for those who like Daniel, wanted more "elbow room."

Boone himself wrote a journal which furnishes the history writers with most of their materials. We learn he married a Tar Heel girl, as most of us have. Settled in the Valley of the Yadkin; went to Kentucky, returned to N. C. in 1771, sold his farm and took back five families to Ky. in 1773. In Powell's Valley he was joined by 40 more adventurers who helped

him, fight Indians a few days later when he lost his oldest son. Retreated to Clinch River in 1774. Done surveying work for Gov. Dunmore of Virginia to falls of Ohio River. Next duty was a member of the council of the Cherokee Indians in 1775 when they ceded all their lands south of the Kentucky River. Rescued three girls, one of them his daughter, who had been kidnapped by the Indians, an incident which supplied Cooper with a leading idea in his tale, "Last of the Mohicans." 1778 commenced making salt for the colonists in Ky. and Va. Captured and adopted by Indians, taken to Chilicothe. Escapes in time to save Booneborough from an Indian and French attack. Loses his land through weak titles, goes to Missouri and loses his wife. Returns to Kentucky to live with his son Nathan where he dies at 84. In the Indian idea, the great hunter had gone to the hunting grounds of the warriors above where his spirit would be eternally happy, when the stars would cease to give them light.

It is with the local Boone family that we now choose to deal briefly. At a later date we propose to continue this article with some first hand matter which we intend to get Mr. Kelsey Boone to furnish us. At present space and time will not permit more than a short summary. The early Boones just before and perhaps after they arrived in North Carolina were said to have been neighbors to the Lincolns who must have directed them or had them follow to Linnville Creek in Virginia. The Lincoln homes and graveyards are nearby. On Boones Creek in Tennessee not many years ago stood a tree on which was carved in the long ago, perhaps about the 1780's just after the Indians had killed his sons, and his brother and four of them had captured him from which he made his escape by throwing snuff into their eyes.

"D BOON CILLED BAR HEAR" This hunt must have occurred while Dan was going to North Carolina after the Indians had defeated him and caused his family to return there or while he was taking them back to Kentucky. But Mr. Mast, in the Uplift, says this "bear tree" was near the "rude cabin in which Daniel Boone was born and on the farm of his father here in Berks County, Pa." Mr. Mast must have been mistaken for there are yet many persons in Tennessee who saw the tree there—or else there may have been two trees so inscribed by Dan's jack knife, which we doubt. However, Mast does give us a bit of unknown history when he concludes, "It may not be generally known that Kit Carson, the famous western scout and explorer, was a grandson of Daniel Boone, so carrying exploration and blood fezzher on. Boone led the way across the Appalachians; Crockett across the Mississippi to Texas, and Carson across the Rockies."

When the editor of the Broadcaster's grandfather came to Yancey County from Forsythe in 1848, he found many of the Boone family already here. Jerry Boone, Knox Boone, Samuel Boone and several others whose names Kelsey will give us for the end of this story. Even at that time or as late as the '60's and 70's there was a Dan Boone here. He went later to Mississippi as did several others of the family, Crumly Boone, Baxter Boone, Jane Boone. We remember Jane returned to Yancey around 1900. She had married a Mr. Cuffey Gray and they had some grown up sons. Gray claimed that he had made good as a planter of cotton and had with him several hundred dollars in cash which was stolen from him by a man in Mine Fork Valley. Gray returned with his family penniless to Mississippi. Nelson Boone, father of Kelsey, seemed to have been the giant of the family. The writer remembers him as a man that must have weighed 250 or 300 lbs. It was a mighty sledge that he could wield at his anvil. Only a small number of runts may be found in the Boone family.

There were some pretty bad actors in the Boone family in the olden days. During the 70's there were two Tom Boones both under death sentences for murder at same time. One of them was convicted and condemned to hang for the killing of an uncle of the editor, whose name was Sam Butner, about 1876-7. This Tom made his escape from the jail and was never apprehended. Just a few years ago he died in Tex-

as, and the facts in this case are interesting in the extreme. A lawyer came from Texas searching for the heirs of Tom Boone, who prior to the trial and conviction had married, and upon his escape, had left his wife and one young child who never heard of him until the lawyer came. Boone had died wealthy and had sent all his money to his heirs here; his land going to his Texas heirs. The most wonderful part of the story was, that Boone had given on his death bed the full and truthful details of the killing of Butner in which it was claimed that Ed Boone had done the killing and not he. Ed was dead so the incident was ended.

Ed Boone, himself was rather a noted character. He was a son of Jerry Boone. His brothers were, Sul, Mack, Crum, all of whom were blacksmiths and wagonmakers as was their father. There were 3 sisters, one of whom, Lucretia, married Henry Butner, another uncle of the writer. Other Yancey county families that intermarried with the Boones were the Ramseys, McMans, Parrots, McAllisters, Rays and Wilsons, Woodfins, etc. But it was of Ed Boone that we started mention. He killed a man in the early 70's about the time that both Big Tom and Little Tom Boone were under indictment for murder. But it so happened that Ed made his escape from arrest and went to the wilds of Virginia, so called at that time, though now being an enlightened center of industry—Gate City, (called Estelville when Ed was there). There was at the time a reward for Ed's apprehension and there was a very active and shrewd young man living on Jacks Creek by name of Dock Hampton. In some way Dock got word of Ed's whereabouts and took with him a man by name of Woodfin, a brother of the man Ed had killed. When these two officers arrived at Estelville they soon found Ed at one of those big two story log houses so common then. They had little difficulty in putting him under arrest, having arrived very unexpectedly. They had Ed handcuffed in the lower room, when suddenly his friends in some way attracted the attention of the officers and Ed sprang quickly up the stairs and joined others already there.

Hampton started up but at the head of the stairs he met a number of bullets coming his way and he made a hasty rolling retreat. He lay for a long time on his back unhurt and fired shots through the loft at every sound. Woodfin ran from the house in a fright. Hampton, too, had to leave the premises later when about out of shells for his pistol, leaving Ed and his force in possession.

Several years later Ed showed the writer the handcuffs he had on when he ran off. He said his friends had quite a task in filing them off—and they showed the marks of the file. Ed then made a key to unlock them and repaired them and they remain still in the family as a souvenir. The pistol too. It was a 32 cal. old style revolver. Ed said he carried it in a large bill book in a breast pocket. He said when he got up stairs he used his teeth in pulling the pistol from the bill book and then he could shoot very well with it down through the loft floor and fired each time at the spot where he would see one of Hampton's bullets pierce the floor. Ed showed us marks on the pistol handles he said were made by his teeth.

Some years later Ed came in and surrendered to the authorities and was acquitted.

The Boone family of Yancey county are one of the oldest and most of them have been respectable people. It seemed however, that they were inclined in the early days to dominate their neighbors to some extent. They were said to be overbearing and treacherous, much of this nature may have been adapted from the Indians with whom the first Daniel and his companions of the wilderness associated and helped to fill the family and the country with their traditions of trickery and horror. They are a family of much musical ability; nearly all of them like their fun and their dram. They are not a people of great educational attainments, most of them are, as present-day spelling shows little improvement over that of their illustrious ancestor. Dan on his Boone Creek bear tree. They have remained in the poorer strata of society, none of them having become wealthy. They are physically strong, handsome, vivacious and shrewd. They are seldom shiftless or lazy. From blacksmithing they have turned modern mechanics and their service is always on a par with the best in demand at the best pay. The Boones are never much interested in religious or political matters of any kind. No matter what may

be said of their shortcomings of the pioneer days they are now among the county's foremost peace abiding, industrious, honest citizens. But they are apparently a dwindling people and have not kept pace in numbers with their neighbors. Neither are they a long-lived people, few of them reaching the age of Dan I—84.

DAN AND WADE



"ALL THE BOONES are blacksmiths," said Kelsey Boone, at his shop in Burnsville, N. C. "Old Daniel in the story book is noted for hunting, but he was the first blacksmith in these hills. There's his iron still to be found in these cabins."

"My daddy, Nelse, was a good one. My granddaddy, Jim Boone, had a shop right here. Here are some of his pieces—a hoe and mattock. Jim's daddy, Squire Boone, was born in Kentucky but moved to this country and went to blacksmithing. He learned it from his laddy, who was the original Dan'l Boone."

"I've been blacksmithing all my life. My four boys are blacksmiths. Dan'l is the fanciest. I used to have a shop with Dan'l and Wade, but they went over to Spruce Pine and opened up on their own. I run my shop now alone. The young 'uns has got to get out on their own."

BY THE SWEAT OF THEIR BROWS—No smocks at the Boone Forge in Spruce Pine, where Daniel and Wade Boone have undertaken the 25 year job of restoring Williamsburg's iron. Like all the previous generations of iron-making Boones, Daniel and Wade know that to make useful things from hard metal requires a hot fire, a keen eye and a stout arm.



KELSEY BOONE

Of Burnsville. There is another Kelsey of Erwin, Tenn. Speaking to the writer of the Boone family of Yancey County, Kelsey gives the first representatives as, Jerry whose children were: Tom, Dove, Mack, Ed, Sul, father of Kelsey at Erwin; Crum, Mary Jane, Lucretia, Sarah Ann.

Kelsey's father was a brother to Jerry. His sons were, Kelsey, Douglas, Jerry, deceased.

Sam Boone and Jim Boone were interesting characters. Sam was a sort of local humorist and many of his jokes are still heard in the county. It is said he could not read, tho like most of the early Boones, he was proud and wished to conceal his illiteracy. Once he was waiting at a railroad station for a train and seeing several of the passengers buying papers, he bought one. He was holding it upside down pretending to be reading. A lady said, "Mr. Boone do you find any interesting news in your paper?" His reply was, "yes, lady, I see they've had a bad storm, a wreck on the sea, as here is a ship turned up-side, down." The lady looking saw it was the paper that was up-side down, and said, "Mr. Boone you have your paper bottom

side up." "Oh that's no bother at all to me lady, as I reads from bottom to top just as easy as others read top down, said Sam."

Jim Boone once killed a man in Burnsville by name of Alf Keith. This murder was just on the eve of the War between the States. He was given a choice to volunteer in the Southern army or stand trial in court. He served in the army until he was killed in one of the campaigns in West Tennessee and died at Memphis. It was said that the evidence against Jim was rather meager until a man by name of Micah Ayers, Co. C, 29N.C. Inf. C.S.A. had a dream in which he dreamed that the murder scene passed before his eyes and he saw Jim Boone use a certain Boone-made shop knife and kill Keith and then run and hide the knife under a small office building then standing in a row of others on the north side of the town square. Sure enough it was said, searching parties found the knife located just as Ayers had dreamed, after which the evidence was so conclusive that had not Jim joined the army he would most certainly been convicted of the murder.

"TWEETSIE" THE LITTLE MOUNTAIN TRAIN

William C. Finney, Columbus, Ohio, sends the editor of the Post the following article on the W. N. & E. T. (Narrow Gauge Railway) which he took from the Ohio State Journal of August 22, 1938. He says: Mr. V. G. Edwards, Editor Post, Spruce Pine, N. C. "Thought perhaps you'd be interested in the following article. Sorry to see the Banner go down—an editor's life work. I am also sending your brother, L. E. Edwards, Assistant Editor, Yancey Record a copy as he might be interested. Also the Columbus Dispatch had the photostats of two young women who killed a man at Fairfield, Illinois—one girl from Elizabethton, the other from Johnson City; but I suppose you know all about that. They accuse each other. They shot him to death; it is charged, and left his body nude; stripped him of everything, even his clothing, leaving him in his home. I recognized their faces as alleged "street hustlers," around Elizabethton and the Soldier's Home; they are in a mess this time."

"Tweetsie" Runs Errands in Town Boone, N. C.—(A. P.)—The mountain folk swear by "Tweetsie," a narrow gauge railway winding along among the coves and crags on a 66 mile route between here and Johnson City, Tenn.

The engineer has been on the job 35 years, the conductor, 32. They think nothing of stopping the train in front of a mile-high cabin, picking up children and delivering them safely to the home of a relative down the track while the conductor often stops in town for an isolated farmer. Then the train stops in front of a farm home for the specific purpose of delivering a spool of thread or length of wire.

The little train, with its huff, puff locomotive will stop any where any time. Its whistle, ringing shrilly through the mountains is more of a greeting than a warning.

The formal name of this folkay railroad is the Eastern Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railway, but you could not tell the mountain people it is anything but "Tweetsie," the title they gave it 52 years ago.

The father of the two editors above referred to has a diary in which there is an entry concerning his first sight of the W. N. & E. T. R. It says in substance: "Aug. 9, 1886 left home near Burnsville equipped with a few clothes and some rations in a valise, crossed a mountain and joined a friend on Big Pine creek. Proceeded on foot toward Cranberry. Hot, toilsome walking; difficulty in crossing river at mouth of Cane Creek; saw Bakersville first time; spent night at John Buchanan's at Clarissy-Bunch mines 3 miles above town."

"August 10, another hard days' walking over mountains and thru woods. Passed thru Powder Mill section. Only one little mill and it not making powder, but corn meal at rate of about pint per hour. At Cranberry Gap was seized by an SWP; racket of flat ore meeting us suddenly. Many tramps abroad who made tin of us and perhaps faces which we resented (secretly)."

"August 11, Got a job at Cranberry without asking for it. Boarded with Frazier Greene who was a fireman at power house. Work too hard, sweat poured down our legs, shirts stuck and split to pieces, blood oozed from our hands as the ore cut them

Hard old boss by name of Wintora. Regular slave driver and most of his bands Negroes and had ones, soon left and started a new track of 35 miles with "cross-tickets" to Embreeville, Tennessee. The "Tweetsie Trains" were running regular with nice crews who waded at us as we stood aside in the ditches for the train to pass. We walked several trestles and thru 5 tunnels. We subsisted upon a little bacon which we broiled by the road, side and ate with crackers and washed down with river water. We had a little tobacco but no other luxuries as we tramped down Doe River. Gorge—one of the grandest in the East.

At one place was an old time pounding mill, at another some folks were selling liquor but we could afford none. On the way we passed thru Elk Park, Shell Creek, Mountain City, Allentown and camped for the night in a corn field at Elizabethton and next day thru Johnson City and then on thru Cherokee, Garbers and then Embreeville arriving very sore and dirty. Here I stayed one year. My friend Noah Letterman left after three months to marry. In a few years he moved to Erwin where he died many years ago."

Edwards Printing Co., Burnsville, N. C.

Dear Sirs:

Am sending you the names of fifty or more business people and firms for which please send me one of your fountain pens.

I do not know the type of letter you desire for your Young Folks Correspondence Club but I hope this one will be printed. If not I hope you will print this little poem I have enclosed.

I am a young high-school graduate and write poetry and short stories and songs. I have had three of my poems and a song published.

I have written about two-hundred poems and twenty short-stories and about fifteen songs. I also keep scrap books and collect anything which appeals to me.

I also like to do profiles of movie-stars and paint and I have a funny ambition of being an aviator some day. I have rode in an airplane one time.

Sincerely,

Miss Edyth Dowell, R. 1, Box 43, Shouns, Tennessee.

"I Want to Build A House"

I want to build a house. Inside will be immaculate-fastidiousness. No matter if the pots are black or blue.

Each one will be a-looking-glass—Each one will boost a mirror.

I want some flowers, some common flowers;

Like funny, fuzzy weeds and things, And a gen tian in the fall.

A brilliant poppy in the spring, I want my little house to be—

A shining lovely place to see.

Miss Edyth Dowell, R. 1, Box 43, Shouns, Tenn.

BOYS—GIRLS—ESPECIALLY GIRLS—WILL YOU WRITE FOR PAY? HAVE YOU A FOUNTAIN PEN?

We need names. We have thousands of names on our mailing lists, but we have not revised our list for 5 years. Many persons whose names we have are now dead or removed or gone into other business.

Will you help us revise our list? We don't want you to write for nothing. Still we have very little money and very slow business.

But Oh, if you will just write us some letters, they will help us get more business—

And we will just pay you until you are satisfied.

We have some of the nicest fountain pens to give away—Yes, and Mechanical Pencils, Needle Books, Bead Necklaces, Scissors, Pocket Knives, Printed Envelopes, Printed Letter Heads.

Fill out the enclosed name and address blank if one is enclosed with this paper and for as many as 50 or more names of live business people or firms, we will send you one Fountain Pen or Mechanical Pencil, or your choice from above list. If you will write a letter for publication in our Young Folks Correspondence Club, just being started again after being dropped 2 years ago, we will print it—if it shows merit and general interest, and you will get letters from pen friends, and they too, will see our paper and write names for revival of our mailing list.

If there is no blank enclosed, just write on plain paper all the names you know of business or professional people or write us for a blank