

On to Ken-tuck-y

Ear-ly in 1769, Dan-jel B⁰one, John Fin-ley, and four o-ther strong men star-ted for Ken-tuck-y. One of the men wa^s Dan-jel's bro-ther-in-law. They took their gun^s. They car-ried a-ni-mal trap^s, t⁰o. They planned to bring back skin^s and fur^s to sell.

The hun-ter^s rode their hor-se^s a-cross the moun-tain^s. Soon they came to Cum-ber-land Gap, a nar-row moun-tain va-lley which led in-t⁰ Ken-tuck-y. The In-di-an^s u^sed the Gap al-so, but the white men did not see any of them at this time. It wa^s week^s be-fore they saw a sin-gle In-di-an.

But they did see rich green mead-ow^s, which stretched a-head for mile^s. Sil-ver ri-ver^s wound like rib-bon^s through them. In some pla-ce^s there were low ro-lling hill^s and in o-ther^s great tow-er-ing moun-tain^s. The wood^s were thick and still. The sun-light made dan-cing pat-tern^s on the pine nee-dle^s. Ken-tuck-y wa^s a^s beau-ti-ful a^s John Fin-ley had said.

Everywhere they went the men found lots of game. There were deer and buffalo. There were fur-bearing animals, such as mink and otter and beaver. There were many different kinds of birds.

When the men went hunting, they separated into pairs. One winter day Boone and his brother-in-law were captured by Indians. The Indians did not harm them, but they took all the white men's deerskins.

"Get out of Kentucky and stay out!" the Indians told them.

Daniel Boone did not scare easily. He and his brother-in-law did not want to leave Kentucky.

But the other four were afraid. They returned to the settlements. Boone never saw Finley again. But Boone was soon joined by his brother, Squire, and a friend named Alexander Neeley. Squire had promised to harvest the crops back home and then join them in the late autumn with fresh horses, traps, and gunpowder. Skilled woodsmen that they were, the brothers somehow found each other in the wilderness.

While they were hunt·ing, the men sep·a·ra·ted a·gain. They met ev·er·y tw^o week^s. One week Boone's bro·th·er·in·law did not re·turn to camp. He ne·ver did come back. Five year^s la·ter a skel·e·ton with a pow·der horn be·side it was found in a hol·low tree. Per·haps he was w^oun·ded by an In·di·an. No one real·ly know^s what hap·pened to him.

Ne·ley wa^s scared. He de·ci·ded to go home a·lone. But Dan·jel and Squire stayed on all win·ter and spring. They hun·ted and trapped un·til they had a lot of skin^s. Then Squire went home to sell the skin^s and buY more gun·pow·der and trap^s.

Dan·jel stayed on in the wil·der·ness. He did not mind be·ing a·lone. He wa^s ne·ver a·fraid. With his tru·sty ri·fle, Tick·Lic·ker, o·ver his shoul·der, he ex·plored much of Ken·tuck·y. He wa^s hap·py be·cau^se the wil·der·ness wa^s wide and he felt free. Af·ter a few months, Squire came back. A·gain the bro·th·er^s hun·ted to·ge·th·er.

At last Dan·jel said to Squire, "I'll go home with you this time. We have all the skin^s we can carry."

"When we sell them, we'll have plen·ty of mo·ney to take to our fam·i·lie^s," Squire said hap·pi·ly.

It did not hap·pen that way. In·di·an^s a·ttacked the bro·ther^s when they were near·ly home and took the skin^s. The Boo^{ne}s were still poor men.

But Dan·iel wa^s hap·py. He wa^s glad that he had roamed the wil·der·ness for near·ly tw^o year^s. He wa^s sor·ry he had lost the skin^s, but he wa^s hap·py that he had seen Ken·tuck·y.