

Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania

The name Daniel Boone will forever be synonymous with the saga of the American frontier. Born on November 2, 1734, and raised here, Boone was the inveterate wayfarer who achieved lasting fame guiding land-hungry settlers to the Kentucky frontier and fighting to defend them against attack.

Daniel's father, Squire Boone, was an English Quaker born in Devonshire in 1696. While still a youth, Squire, his brother George and sister Sarah embarked for Philadelphia to appraise the possibilities of settlement for their father's family, who immigrated finally in 1717.

Squire settled first in Abington, then moved to Gwynedd, where he met Sarah Morgan, born in 1700 to Welsh Quakers. Married in 1720, they lived first near Gwynedd, then in Chalfont, before purchasing 250 acres here in the Oley Valley in 1730. Squire's father and brothers also lived in the area and became prominent in business, local government and the Friends Meeting.

Daniel was the sixth child, one of eleven, born to Squire and Sarah. As a youth, he undoubtedly helped his father as farmer, weaver and blacksmith, and had the usual experiences of a boy growing up in the back country.

In 1750, Squire and Sarah joined the growing southward movement of Pennsylvanians and concluded their long trek in the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina.

Daniel was then only 15 years old, but ahead was a life filled with the rigors of the American frontier. In 1756, he married Rebecca Bryan and with her raised ten children. In 1773, he failed in his first attempt to settle Kentucky, but in 1775 he succeeded in establishing Boonesborough. Between 1775 and 1783, Daniel Boone was a leader among settlers in opening new parts of Kentucky and in resisting Native American raids. Although Boone lost two sons and a brother in the fighting, he was considered merciful and compassionate toward his native adversaries.

Twice Boone returned to visit his boyhood home—in 1781 and 1788—a hero and legend in his day. Although his legend grew, his finances diminished. Beset by creditors and personal disillusion, Boone finally left Kentucky in 1799 for Missouri, where he served as an official for the controlling Spanish government until 1803. He died near St. Louis on September 26, 1820.



After the Boones

In Pennsylvania, Daniel's boyhood home changed to reflect the growth, prosperity and cultural diversity of the Oley Valley.

Squire Boone moved his family from Pennsylvania in 1750 and sold his house and part of his homestead to his cousin William Maugridge. Maugridge, also born in Devonshire, worked as a shipwright in Philadelphia prior to 1750 and later served as a magistrate and judge for Berks County from 1752 until his death in 1766. The Maugridges were not Quakers but leaders among the local Anglicans.

In 1770, John and Elizabeth DeTurk, who were Pennsylvania Germans, purchased the property and prospered as farmers. John died in 1808, but his family continued to reside here into the 1820s.

The Oley Valley

The Oley Valley comprises a multi-township region in eastern Berks County. It is culturally unique for the amazing diversity of inhabitants, religious groups, and economies which existed here in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Swedes, Dutch, Germans, Swiss, French-Huguenots, English, Welsh, Scots-Irish, African Americans and Lenape all resided here in harmony. Today in the Oley Valley visitors can still see a remarkably preserved rural area in which there are examples of traditional rural landscapes and the architecture from the Colonial era. The Daniel Boone Homestead is a gateway to discovering this rich heritage.

The Daniel Boone Homestead

Since 1938 the Daniel Boone Homestead has been a historic site owned by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Comprising 579 acres of rolling countryside, the site includes restored period buildings, a Visitor Center, miles of trails, picnic areas, a lake and organized youth group camping facilities.

The Daniel Boone Homestead interprets the Boone, Maugridge and DeTurk families, and the history of the Oley Valley region through exhibits, programs, tours and publications.

