

EARLY ROADS INTO KENTUCKY

By NEAL OWEN HAMMON

KHS April 1970.

In Kentucky we are unique for having passed from the stone age to our modern civilization in less than two hundred years. Prior to the first settlement in Harrodsburg in 1774, our boundaries had only contained Indian villages, and most of these had vanished long before the first Europeans set foot on this continent. Only one small Shawnee village, Eskippikithiki, is known to have existed in central Kentucky within the last 300 years, and even this site was abandoned prior to Daniel Boone's first trip into the Bluegrass region.

Based on world standards, our historical situation is unusual; our first civilization was begun by our great-great grandfathers, some of whom are still remembered by the living. Many of the buildings that we pass were erected by these first pioneers and many of the nearby fields were sites of Indian skirmishes. Basically our history consists of a brief but bloody Colonial Period, followed by a rather stable agricultural age. The latter is now in the process of being supplanted by an industrial economy that began in the Commonwealth about the time of the first World War.

The roads of our state clearly reflect these three periods. First, only game trails and Indian paths were available to the early pioneers. Later, when a stable government ushered in the second stage of our civilization, wagon roads were laid out that were adequate for the horse-drawn transportation of the day. With the coming of an industrial economy, these old roads are being rebuilt to accommodate the high-speed automobile traffic.

It is the purpose of this article to record, wherever possible, the exact locations of the early roads before they are lost to future historians. Although most of the early routes have already been improved, a few may still be traveled in their original condition, untouched by grader and bulldozer. Future [page 92] "progress" will surely eliminate not only the character, but even the knowledge of the locations of the old roads still in existence. It would be a noble project to trace and record all of the first roads in the state; such a task would require a large, well trained staff working full time for many years. Thus, of necessity, this project is limited to the roads which entered the state from the old settlements and lead into the Bluegrass or to the Falls of the Ohio.

In the beginning, so the history books relate, there was one main road leading

northward from Cumberland Gap to the Ohio. This was the famous War Road, or Warriors Path, which had been traveled for centuries by the Indians. This trace ran through Flat Lick, Manchester, down the Station Camp Creek to the Kentucky River, and across the central part of the state to the Ohio River. In addition to the War Road, there were also thousands of game trails leading in all directions from practically any location in the state. Our native white tail deer will form beautiful hiking trails over a short period of time that are free of foliage and other obstructions. The buffalo was even a better trail blazer, as his paths were wider and the grades less steep.¹ Thus the early hunters, like those today, had numerous trails to follow when entering Kentucky. When exploring south of the Cumberland River in 1750, Dr. Walker wrote, "In the fork of Licking Creek is a lick much used by Buffaloes and many large roads lead to it."

The first English "long hunters" such as Knox, Skaggs, and Bledsoe, normally used Warriors Path from Cumberland Gap to Flat Licks as this was the only practical way through the Cumberland and Pine Mountain ranges. From the Flat Licks they could travel down the Cumberland River to the Barrens, or proceed northward by various routes to the Bluegrass. These men did not need to cut trails through the wilderness as there were already many in existence. Their main problem was in choosing the best route to their destination. It is fairly certain, for instance, that "Skaggs Trace" was in existence and known to many hunters prior to 1775. It was probably used by the [page 93] Cherokee Indian, Captain Dick, and his guest, James Knox, whom he invited to hunt on "his" river in 1770.

Daniel Boone relates that from May, 1769, to March, 1771, he hunted and explored southern and central Kentucky. Much of this time, it would appear, was spent in the area between the Kentucky and the Cumberland Rivers west of Station Camp Creek. Boone, with Michael Stoner, made another trip into Kentucky in June, 1774, "to conduct into the settlement a number of surveyors." On this trip, which took "sixty-two days," he is said to have visited the newly established settlement at Harrodsburg, as well as the Falls of the Ohio.

In March of the following year, 1775, Daniel Boone blazed his now famous road from the "Clench to Boonesboro." ² Much of this trace or road was used for the next twenty years by thousands of travelers. This road entered Kentucky at the Cumberland Gap, crossed the Cumberland River at the present town of Pineville,

¹. A section of a buffalo road can still be seen near Shelbyville, Kentucky, which measures forty feet wide and in some places is worn down four feet into the ground.

². John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke* (Wilmington, 1784). Further information referred to in this article is from the same source when attributed to Filson.

and then proceeded to Flat Lick, following the established Warriors Path. From here, Boone's Trace led northwest to Hazel Patch at which point Skaggs' Trace, which led to the Dix River,³ departed to the west.

It is interesting to speculate as to whether Boone followed the original Skaggs' Trace from Flat Lick northward to Hazel Patch. In any event Skaggs' Trace was certainly in existence at this time as it was followed by Benjamin Logan and John Floyd in the same year.

From Hazel Patch, Boone's road ran northward, mostly through several creek bottoms to the Kentucky River. While his party was preparing this road, they were attacked by Indians "within 15 miles of where Boonesboro now stands." Two members of the party were killed and two wounded at this location, which is now known as Twitty Fort. Another road builder was killed near Boonesborough several days later. [page 94] Throughout the next twenty-five years, approximately 200,000 settlers entered Kentucky, ⁴ the majority of them over Boone's road of the western branch known as Skagg's Trace. Some died on the way and others were killed by Indians; most of these were buried where they fell. Some improvements on the road were authorized by the Virginia legislature in 1779 which apparently resulted in some minor re-routing, but no major alterations. ⁵ In 1795 James Knox and Joseph Crockett were hired by Isaac Shelby, the governor of the new state of Kentucky, to improve the road from Crab Orchard to Virginia. This project was accomplished for the sum of 2,090 pounds, which amounts to about 20 pounds per mile. This improved route, which did not follow exactly either Boone's or Skaggs' Trace became known as the Wilderness Road. This wagon road was used without further major changes until the early 1900's when the railroads and automobiles replaced the horse in the area.

Three years after the construction of the improved road to Crab Orchard, another wagon road was built from "the Madison Court House" near the Kentucky, River to Laurel County where it connected to the new Wilderness Road. This became generally known as the "State Road." These two roads caused some

³. The change in spelling from "Dicks" to "Dix" occurred sometime between 1785 and 1900. All maps printed prior to the Civil war show the former spelling. Other place names that are frequently spelled in various fashions are Boonesboro, Skaggs' Creek, Hammons Creek, and Lynn Camp Creek.

⁴. The Census gives the population of Kentucky as 73,677 in 1790 and 230,959 in 1800. In die earlier period the majority of travelers came over-land rather than by river because of the Indian menace along the Ohio.

⁵. The fact that some improvements were conducted can be verified by the fact that several surveys were entered in Lincoln County authorizing land as a payment for road work.

portions of the earlier traces to be abandoned, except for minor local travel, and other portions (those that coincided with the newer roads) to lose their identity. This investigation, therefore, is an attempt to unscramble the locations of these various routes and preserve their separate identities for future historians.

CUMBERLAND GAP TO FLAT LICK

The first description of the Cumberland Gap consists of less than two hundred words. On April 13th, 1749, Dr. Thomas Walker and his party, after riding ten miles, came upon "Cave Gap" so named because of "their discovery of" a large cave with a small entrance. This cave, according to Dr. Walker's [page 95] Journal, was on the north side of the gap, and a large spring, "sufficient to turn a mill," ran to the foot of the hill where it flowed through a laurel thicket. "On the south side, is a plain Indian Road." He then continued along this road and stated "as I went down the other side, I soon came to some Laurel in the head of a branch. The Mountain on the north side of the Gap is very steep and rocky, but on the south side it is not so. We call it Steep Ridge." ⁶

So far as it goes, Dr. Walker's description of the Gap is still quite accurate. There is a cave on the north slope, above the present town of Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, which is now called Cudjo Cave. The modern tourist may visit this cavern for a small fee. The land on both sides of the gap still appears to be steep and rocky, but the sharp eye of this early explorer is correct; the fall from the top is approximately two hundred feet more on the north or Kentucky side.

On Saturday, April 8, 1775, settlers under Col. Richard Henderson, crossed the same gap. William Calk, member of this party, wrote: "We all pack up and started crost Cumberland Gap . . ." ⁷ James Nourse, traveling back to Virginia went over the mountain on Monday, 3 July 1775, and stated that it was "a good gap." ⁸ The captive Governor Henry Hamilton (called by the Kentuckians, "the Hair buyer") who was certainly weary of his trip by this time, gives only these words,

⁶. Journal of Thomas Walker, First Explorations of Kentucky (Louisville, 1898.) All following quotations from Walker throughout this article are from the same source.

⁷. William Calk, "Journal of William Calk, Kentucky Pioneer," transcription of journal from Photostat in Filson Club. All quotations from "Journal of William Calk" throughout this article are from the same source.

⁸. Nourse MSS, University of Chicago Library. Further quotations of above used throughout article from same source.

"26 April, 1779 Passed Cumberland Mountain." ⁹ Col. William Fleming, normally gifted with words, passed through the gap four times, but left us with no description.

In retrospect, it would be unusual for a pioneer to write a lengthy description regarding a thing as normal as a pass in the mountains, especially if it were well known and well used. Such literary effort was left to the more leisurely Victorians. [page 96] But the Cumberland Gap remained, nevertheless, the actual gateway to Kentucky.

By the winter of 1796 a traveler passing through the gap could stop at the tavern of Mrs. Davis which was located on the north base of the mountain. Even by modern standards, a liberal, Mrs. Davis believed that "pleasure was the only thing she had in view, and that she had her ideas of life and its enjoyments." ¹⁰

The way over the gap has changed little in centuries; beginning in Virginia, the Indians followed the path which is used as Highway 58 today. This route leads through a natural fault on the south side of the mountain and down the headwaters of Gap Creek. For a short distance, the old road can still be seen crisscrossing the modern paved highway. Prior to entering the village of Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, the highway begins the climb to the Gap proper, whereas the old trail led directly into this town, via the creek. At the north end of this village, the Cumberland Gap National Park begins and the old trail up the mountainside can still be followed by anyone with good legs and a strong heart. At the top of the mountain, near the gap, this hiking trail again joins the highway, at the Virginia-Kentucky border.

From the saddle northward, the road has been altered to some extent to make it passable to modern traffic. A large projection called Indian Rock was originally located just beyond the gap, but most of this feature was removed by explosives. As one now proceeds down the three-lane highway, the old road can be seen first on the west, then crossing to the right side at the overpass. The old trace obviously climbed and descended the Cumberland Mountain in a more direct fashion than does the modern road.

Coming off the Cumberland Mountain on the Kentucky side, the early

⁹. John D. Barnhart, Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution (Crawfordsville, Ind., 1951), 196-98.

¹⁰. Mrs. Davis presumably resided in the Davis' Station noted in text. Her views are quoted from "A Memorandum of M. Austin's Tourney" in the American Historical Reviews", (April, 1900). It is also possible that either John or Robert Davis, found massacred by the Indians near the Cumberland Ford in 1780, was the husband of this Mrs. Davis.

travelers reached the Davis Branch of Yellow Creek, a stream which leads into the Middlesboro valley or basin. The exact location of the original trace can be followed [page 97] through this area by means of several old surveys found in the Lincoln County records. These documents, dating back to July, 1782, include the "settlement road," Davis' Station and mill, and two "improvements." ¹¹

As Dr. Walker noted Yellow Creek "made a great deal of flat land" where Middlesboro is now located. The road more or less followed the creek, but crossed it four times. Calk was rather critical of the area since he wrote "Come to a very ugly creek with steep banks and have to cross several times on this creek." Dr. Walker continued along the creek which he named "Flatt" for about six miles to somewhere near the present Binghamtown where he camped on a bank "where we found some good coal." We can deduct that the Henderson party also camped in this general area as they crossed the gap at one o'clock.

The original trace ran by Davis' Station which was built on the east side of Davis Branch, opposite the mouth of Little Yellow Creek. The mill was located about a half mile up the creek toward the present reservoir. The path was on the south side of the station and almost exactly followed the park road for a short distance to the west. It then turned a little more to the north, passing' about 300 yards in front of the site of the present park building. It crossed Cumberland Avenue near the Coca Cola Plant which is between 13th and 14th streets, and then led to the hill at the cemetery. From this point it almost exactly followed the existing black top road that passes the east side of Binghamtown and leads to Meldrum.

Today, it is not possible to drive along' the old trace in Middlesboro; the route can be approximated by following Cumberland Avenue and then turning north on Main Street. As one heads out Main Street he passes from the center of town to an industrial area, then sees the road curve around the east side of the cemetery. A branch of Yellow Creek is then crossed and as one continues a number of very small dirty frame houses are encountered. This is Binghamtown. The old trace was [page 98] probably straighter than the modern road at this point. In this case the trace was well to the west (2,000 feet) of Yellow Creek.

Just north of Binghamtown the road passes a number of small hills or knobs prior to entering the lower Yellow Creek valley. The lower or downstream part of

¹¹. Lincoln County Survey Book, IV, 76, for Jacob Myer', 995 acres, entered 3 Dec. 1791 : and *ibid.*, IV, 56, Thomas Fleming of 2000 acres, entered 18 July 1782 and surveyed 16 May 1797. The Lincoln County Survey Books are hereinafter referred to as LCSB.

the valley is very narrow, with the road running about 100 feet from the creek. In January, 1969, large patches of cane were found in this bottom, and the hills on both sides were covered with trees. An improvement shown on the old survey was at Browne Branch, where the flat land in the bottoms is large enough for about 100 acres of corn. ¹²

The name "Yellow Creek" is somewhat obscure in historical records. Walker and his party were still using the name "Flat Creek" during their survey in 1779-80. ¹³ Filson's map of 1785 shows the creek but does not name it, although both "Flat Creek" and "Yellow Creek" were used in surveys by 1782. ¹⁴ Barker's map, which was probably drawn circa 1791, is the first to label this creek. By the time Munsell published his very detailed map in 1818, ¹⁵ not only was the Yellow Creek named, but also Bennet's Fork. It is interesting to note that this map also shows the only road on the east side of Yellow Creek in the vicinity of Middlesboro: as later surveys show the road still on the west side, ¹⁶ we can assume that Munsell was either in error or that the road was relocated for a period of time.

just below the present village of Meldrum the old trace left Yellow Creek and passed northward up the valley between Log' Mountain and Rocky Face. The present Highway 25E still uses this route and frequently the old road can be seen [page99] crisscrossing as one climbs to the gap before reaching the headwaters of Cannon Creek. The trace proceeded down the south fork of this creek then up the north fork to another gap where it entered the valley formed by Clear Creek. Dr. Walker apparently camped on Yellow Creek on 14 April 1749, but was forced to move north "7 miles along the Indian Road" as this creek bottom was "bad ground for our horses."

His next camp was on Clear Creek which he then called "Clover." The next day Dr. Walker went hunting, and discovered a river about a mile below his camp, which he named Cumberland. The Henderson party did not dally in this area, and made the trip from their camp on Yellow Creek to the Cumberland River crossing

¹². LCSB, TV, 57, George Brooks, 2000 acres, entered 18 July 1782 and surveyed 18 May 1797.

¹³. Draper MS, 7-ZZ.

¹⁴. LCSB, IV, 41, Arthur Campbell, 600 acres entered 2 June 1780 and surveyed 8 Feb. 1796.

¹⁵. Originals of both maps are in the collection of the Kentucky Historical Society. The map attributed to Elisa Barker was probably composed in 1791 but printed at a later date. The large map of Luke Munsell was published in 1818 and from the appearance required several years to prepare.

¹⁶. The 1882 survey made by the U. S. Department of Interior still showed the road on the west side of the Yellow Creek. This survey was prior to the establishment of the city of Middlesboro, Kentucky.

in one day.

Clear Creek, it would appear, is only one of the names given to this tributary of the Cumberland. Dr. Walker named the branch Clover Creek since "Clover and Hop Vines are plenty here," and it would also appear that it is labeled "Buffalo Creek" on Filson's map of 1785. The name Clear Creek first appears in Daniel Smith's Journal in 1779, and it is later seen on Munsell's map of 1818.

Presently (Jan., 1969), the section of the road leading along Clear Creek and an adjacent stretch along the Cumberland River is being improved. This work consists of removing some of the west side of the Flag Top Mountain and part of the base of Pine Mountain, which will certainly obliterate any trace of the old road that still exists. Several years ago a dam was built on Clear Creek which has flooded most of the bottoms to the west of the road. As one approaches the Cumberland River, the rocky gap of Pine Mountain comes into view; it is a very impressive sight, for the beauty of this thousand-foot water gap is not exceeded by the more famous Cumberland Gap.

Going into Pineville, the old trace, like the modern highway, follows the narrow base of Pine Mountain. There is no bottom land at this point, so the old trace apparently followed along the same narrow plateau that is still used, though since improved by rock excavation. Upon entering the city, this plateau widens and the old trace was about 50 feet east of the [page 100] present highway.¹⁷ Pineville is fitted into the small erosion plain and surrounded by the steep sides of Pine Mountain.

On 18 April 1749, Dr. Walker noted in his Journal, "Still Cloudy. We kept down the (Clear) Creek to the River along the Indian Road to where it crosses (Cumberland River). Indians have lived about this Ford some years ago." The Henderson party camped and hunted on the south side of the ford on the ninth and tenth of April, 1775. Governor Hamilton reported that he "forded the Cumberland or Shawnee River" on 25 April 1779, "which is about 200 yards over." The latter name was used on all of the early French and some of the English maps.¹⁸

The party, led by Dr. Walker, which was surveying the line between North Carolina and Virginia "Lay in a bottom just below the ford of the Cumberland" on 16 November 1779 and calculated the latitude as approximately 36-44-30, thus this

¹⁷. LCSB, IV, 53 Evan Shelby, 100 acres entered 24 April 1780 and surveyed 10 Nov. 1794.

¹⁸. The early French maps, such as Jacque Bellin's "Carte de la Louisiane," printed in 1744, labeled the Cumberland River "Riviere des Anciens Chouanons" (River of the old Shawnees). Even some of the English maps, such as Captain Gordon's drawings of the Ohio River made in 1766, still refer to this river as the Shawnee.

party was in error by only 1 3/8 miles. So much for Dr. Walker's surveying ability. It is also interesting to note that by this time the old Indian trail was generally known as the "Kentucky Road." One year later Evan Shelby surveyed 200 acres at the Cumberland ford.

In May of 1780, a party of twelve men traveling from Lexington to Virginia were ambushed by Indians near the ford. Col. Fleming found the bodies of John and Robert Davis and buried them near the road. At least seven men, possibly more, escaped and finally reached the settlements in Virginia.¹⁹ After the wagon road was built, the Kentucky legislature authorized the building of a toll gate on the road (in March, 1797), which was located at this ford. Robert Craig was appointed keeper to collect the fee of 9 pence for each person or horse, and 6 shillings for a four wheel carriage.²⁰ [page 101]

The old road, north from the Cumberland ford followed the northeast side of the River toward Flat Lick. Surveys made in 1886 indicate that the old trace was on the existing L&N railroad bed except opposite Turkey Creek where it ran a few hundred feet to the southeast. One can still travel along this side of the river although the main highway is now on the west side. The river bottom along this stretch is generally wide and flat; a few scattered farm houses are encountered, and the fields are used as pastures. The ground is rich as cane can be seen growing along the fence rows) and in large patches near the river. Calk's Journal mentioned the "turrable cainbrakes" encountered in this area.

About four miles out of Pineville the valley narrows and the eastern hills again become rocky with a double layer of cliffs near the river bank. After passing this place, another large bottom is encountered where the Kentucky Utilities power plant is now located. At this point the road follows close to the base of the large hill) hereby cutting across the long bend in the river.

The exact spot where the old trace left the Cumberland River would appear to be about 4,000 feet west of the present highway bridge, near Pogue Hollow. This point is indicated by several old surveys,²¹ one entered for John Harris in 1797 and another for Robert Buckner in 1782.²² Although neither of these surveys is drawn

¹⁹. Col. William Fleming's Diary, in *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916).

²⁰. Robert L. Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road* (Middlesboro, Ky., 1966), 204-05.

²¹. LCSB, I, 241, Francis Taylor, 620 acres surveyed 9 Oct. 1783; LCSB, IV, 33, George Thompson, 6600 acres entered 3 Aug. 1784; and LCSB, IV, 41, Daniel Broadhead, 10,000 acres surveyed 8 Dec. 1795. LCSB, IV, 70, John Harris, 6910 acres entered 30 Dec. 1782, and surveyed 20 Oct. 1797.

²². LCSB, IV, 78, Robert Buckner, 2425 acres entered 30 Dec. 1782,

well enough to be conclusive about the exact location of the original trace, they nevertheless furnish the only reliable information on the routing. It should be pointed out that the road location shown in these surveys varies from that described by William A. Pusey in *Wilderness Road* which shows the old trace farther to the west near the present highway.²³ The route shown on the old surveys is shorter than that favored by Pusey, thus it is the most obvious way. [page 102]

The routing was apparently changed at some later date in this area to avoid the need of crossing a hill in heavily loaded wagons.

At this point the road has arrived at Flat Lick, where traditionally the old Indian trail parted from the route used by the white settlers. This may be a simplification of the truth, for it is likely that the Indians passed through this area on several paths blazed by the buffalo. Nevertheless, Daniel Boone certainly blazed the way (northward from Flat Lick) in 1775 which was followed not only by Henderson's party, but many other travelers for years to come. Although a number of hunters and surveyors had traveled the same route prior to 1775, the way was thereafter credited to Boone.²⁴

Flat Lick is said to have been a frequent camping place for both the Indians and the Long Hunters prior to the establishment of the Kentucky settlements. The nearby Stinking Creek probably acquired its name from the smell produced by the rotting animal entrails deposited therein by these hunters. General Hamilton confirmed that which he described as "a Remarkable Buffaloe salt lick." Flat Lick is the place where the junction of the Kentucky Road and the "great path of the Shawnee" occurred. This ancient Indian trail proceeded up the Trace Branch of Stinking Creek on its way to the Ohio. The Transylvania settlers, according to Calk's *Journal*, must have camped in the area on 11 April 1775. Calk mistakenly called Stinking Creek "Richland Creek," but later correctly identified the latter.

The distance from the Cumberland Gap to the Cumberland ford is presently 15 miles by highway, and it is nearly another 10 miles to Flat Lick. To the ford, Dr. Walker estimated the distance to be 17 miles, and both Fleming and Brown quoted the distance as 15 miles. For comparison, Filson's book gives the distance as 13 miles. From the ford to Flat Lick, Calk and Fleming give the distance as 10 miles,

surveyed 23 Oct. 1797.

²³. Pusey, William Allen, *The Wilderness Road to Kentucky* (New York, 1921). The data in this publication relating to the various roads is discussed hereafter without the use of footnotes.

²⁴. Daniel Boone himself claimed that he marked the road in 1775. in a letter to Governor Shelby written in 1795.

as compared to 9 miles used by Filson, Brown and Speed.²⁵ [page 103]

FLAT LICK TO THE LAUREL RIVER [page 103]

Immediately north of Flat Lick, the exact location of the old Trace along Stinking Creek is given on a land survey dated Oct. 9th, 1783. This survey for Phillip Buckner assignee of James Taylor, for 757 acres of land on Stinking Creek, a branch of the Cumberland River, mentions that the "Kentucky Road" crosses the northern and southern boundaries of the property.²⁶ The former can be located exactly in the existing village of Baugham on the present Highway US 25E. The southern point is less definite being "same course continued up the creek 120 poles farther to saasafrass and Beech near the Bank of the creek where the said road to Kentucky Crosses said Creek . . ." The survey would indicate that this point is on the branch just to the northeast of the Evergreen Cemetery. Thus the trace closely followed the old paved highway to Fighting Creek headwaters.

Somewhere on or near the section of the road mentioned above, Middleton's Block House was constructed circa 1793.²⁷ It was named for Lt. Walter Middleton, who headed the company of militia stationed there to protect the travelers from Indians. Barker's map shows this blockhouse as being located just west of Turkey Creek.

At the juncture with Fighting Creek, the trace ran directly to the Trace Branch of Little Richland Creek. This fact can be confirmed by the survey of James Grey entered 1 Feb. 1793 and made on 6 Oct. 1779 in which he begins "on a ridge about 15 poles from the old trace"²⁸ William Pusey believed that the exact route was via Shy Mug Branch of Fighting Creek and Hammon's Gap. On a flight over this area in 1966, I detected a trail running over the hill at this gap. However, it appeared that less climbing would have been involved if the trace had proceeded across the ridge at an unnamed gap at the [page 106] head of Shy Mug Branch, about one-half mile west of the

²⁵. The source of the distance comparisons used hereafter is from *The Wilderness Road*, by Thomas Speed (Louisville, 1886).

²⁶. LCSB, I, 241, Phillip Buckner; 757 acres surveyed 9 Oct. 1783.

²⁷. Although Middleton's Blockhouse is shown north of the road and to the west of Turkey Creek on Elihu Barker's map, the survey of John Harris for 6910 acres noted above would indicate that the blockhouse was about 80 poles to the east of this creek.

²⁸. LCSB, IV, 59, James Grey, 1000 acres entered 1 Feb. 1783 and surveyed 6 Sept. 1797.

above location.

The valley formed by Trace Branch is reasonably flat and wide for this area. However, where this small valley enters that formed by Richland Creek, it takes on the appearance of a large plain. The bottom land of the Little Richland is over a thousand yards wide, and completely flat. However, as these creek beds were originally covered by thick cane, the old trace probably followed the edge of the hills, just as State Road 11 does today.

Just north of the existing village of Hendrick, the old trace crossed the Little Richland Creek and proceeded westward across the flat bottoms to the valley formed by the main branch of Richland Creek.²⁹ Calk, with Col. Henderson's party, writes that they camped on Richland Creek on the evening of 12 April 1775 because it was high. He also noted that they met a number of settlers who were fleeing Kentucky because of Indian raids. Fleming stated that he went up this creek when returning to Virginia in 1780, and Filson noted that the road went "down" this creek 8 miles on the way to the Bluegrass. It would appear that both men used up and down incorrectly.

Until this writing, the exact location of Boone's Trace into Laurel County was in doubt. Certainly it proceeded north-eastward along one of the branches of Richland Creek, but as these fan out in an arch covering ten miles, the fork used was open to speculation. William Pusey believed that the trace followed the middle fork of Richland Creek to Booger Hollow, then proceeded up this branch to the head, where the trace crossed the ridge. Several of the old surveys indicate other-wise. An entry by James Barbour dated 14 April 1800,³⁰ definitely shows the "old trace" running along Poplar Branch, and the survey for George Wilson made 29 June 1795, shows [page 105] what is referred to as "a remarkable gap. . . . on a large buffalo Lick" at the head of this watercourse.³¹ A third survey, dated 27 Sept 1798, made for John Christian places the "old settlement trace" on the northeast side of "Linn Camp Creek" (the East fork) which indicates

²⁹. LCSB, I, Clough Overton. 200 acres survey shows a trace pass-ing do"n on east fork of Richland Creek, then turning north. The branch is presumably Little Richland Creek.

³⁰. LCSB, IV, 155, James Barbour, 8000 acres entered 14 May 1784 and surveyed 14 April, 1800.

³¹. LCSB, IV, 35, George Wilson, 9725 acres entered 26 Jan. 1786 and surveyed 29 June 1795.

that it ran to the present village of Grey.³²

Therefore, it would appear that Boone again used an existing trail to advantage, in this case an old buffalo road, in crossing the ridge into Laurel County. The trace then turned northward toward Raccoon Springs which was a noted landmark for the early Long Hunters.³³ James Knox and Henry Skaggs had camped on the east fork of Robinson Creek in the vicinity of this spring prior to 1774.³⁴

Although it is not certain how the trace ran prior to reaching the first branch of Robinson Creek, the route probably was on or near the present Kentucky "highway" 233. In any event the creek was crossed where this road meets Ky. 830 according to the survey of Francis Mexan, entered November, 1784.³⁵ This plot begins "where the old Kentucky path crosses same (Waters of Robinson Creek). From here the trace continued along the creek for about three-quarters of a mile, to the vicinity of the McHargue Church.

From this point northward to the Laurel River, the Trace was nearly as given by McHargue.³⁶ It crossed another branch of Robinson's Creek and led directly to Raccoon Springs, then [page 106] northward along the ridge for two miles, finally descending at Happy Hollow, a small branch of the Laurel River. The exact point where the trace arrived at the Laurel River can be con-firmed by a survey for George Brooks, entered in March, 1782, and made 27 May 1797.³⁷ This survey shows the "old road" crossing the Laurel River immediately south of a small branch at the above mentioned hollow. If the survey were to be interpreted as showing the exact position of the trace, it would indicate that it descended from the hill in the draw which is about 1,500 feet southwest of the route designated by

³². LCSB, IV, 101, John Christian, 2000 acres surveyed 27 Sept. 1795. This map shows a branch of the East Fork of Lynn Camp Creek and the road is labeled "The Old Settlement Trace."

³³. Although the name "Raccoon Springs" was apparently known to the early Long Hunters, only one land entry could be found using this landmark as identification. This was found in LCSB, IV, 77.

³⁴. LCSB, IV, 49, Pavton Sterns, 6072.5 acres mentions the old camp of Knox and Skaggs.

³⁵. LCSB, IV, 61, Francis Mexan, 1763.5 acres entered Nov. 1784 and surveyed 11 Oct. 1797.

³⁶. L. B. McHargue, "Boone's and Skagg's Traces Through Laurel County," Information Series No. 3, The Sentinel-Echo, London, Ky., 1942. This article was later supplemented by Russell Dyche, "The Wilderness Road and Other Early Trails and Roads Through the Wilderness," (Division of State Parks, Frankfort, Ky., 1946), and Neal Hammon, "Boone's Trace Through Laurel County," Filson Club Quarterly, XLII (1968), 21-25. The location of the early trace (as noted in the above) was subsequently found to be in error in several places.

³⁷. LCBS, TV, 57, George Brooks, adjoining plots of 1000 and 7000 g acres entered 29 March 1782, and surveyed on 12 Jan. and 24 May 1797.

McHargue.

The location of the trace indicated by these early surveys would correspond to the notes left by various travelers. The Henderson party, wrote Calk, made the trip from Richland Creek to the Laurel River in one day, on 13 April 1775. General Hamilton described this section as being "exceedingly difficult, lying over very steep hills." Daniel Smith, while surveying with a party in 1779, stated that they "moved into the Kentucky road" and along it to the Laurel River after leaving their camp on a branch of Lynn Camp Creek. Unfortunately, no mention was made of either the distance or direction of travel and the crude map that he made is of little help.

Fleming described a spring that he passed in 1780 that would fit the description of Raccoon Springs: his journal stated that two men were killed in an ambush which had occurred a half mile from it where the road followed the "ridge with steep draugh on each side." When passing through the area in 1783, he "Halted at Lin Camp C." No mention is made of Robinson Creek although he noted that "Stocks Creek" was crossed between Raccoon Springs and Richland Creek. Some of the old surveys also mention a "Goose Creek" in the general vicinity of the present Corbin. The Little Laurel River is also called as "Fraziers Creek" on the first surveys.

James Nourse, Jr., who traveled up the road in January of 1780 wrote, "Thursday got to Richland creek-good-cane-Friday to Lyn Camp creek-went down it two miles to cane, and then [page 107] but middling. Saturday to Laurel River, could get no cane tho I have heard since, there is good cane two miles up it."

The area between Flat Lick and the Laurel River is hilly, but by no means mountainous like the country to the south. The major branches of Richland, Lynn Camp and Robinson Creeks have eroded the hills to the point that they are intersected by wide, fertile valleys at frequent intervals. These bottoms were apparently traveled by buffalo and the early pioneers as they offered feed and water to the animals. The pioneers also followed the ridges on occasion, which certainly would have been dryer and conducive to easier travel.

Raccoon Springs is presently hard to find as it is well off any good road, and on a privately owned farm. The spring is located in a small draw on the southern part of the ridge, and the water is said to flow even in the driest seasons. The owner of the land reports that numerous arrowheads and other Indian artifacts have been found in his field immediately west of the spring, indicating that this area was a

favorite camping place even prior to the coming of the Long Knives.

The distance from Flat Licks to Richland Creek is given as 9 miles by Filson and Speed, and 11 by Brown. From Rich-land to the Laurel River is 13 miles according to Brown, and 16 by Filson and Speed, thus their totals nearly agree. In addition Filson notes that it is 8 miles "down Richland Creek." The actual distance is 9 miles to the main fork of Richland Creek and 18 miles from there to the Laurel River, giving a total of 27 miles which is nearly the same as that of these early reporters.

LAUREL RIVER TO HAZEL PATCH

Between the Laurel River and Hazel Patch, Boone's Trace is almost exactly located by the McHargue Report;³⁸ however numerous surveys of this area are available which cast doubt on the reliability of that article. According to McHargue, after the trace crossed the Laurel River near Happy Hollow, it ran northward past the existing village of Fariston, to the McNitt massacre site which can still be seen in the Levi Jackson State [page 108] Park. The road then led north-northwest before turning east, and crossed through the city of London where the courthouse now stands. This latter bit of information apparently came from Collins' History of Kentucky.³⁹ The city of London, of course, was not founded until 1826, but a village called "Rice-ton was in existence on this site at an earlier date, as it appears on Gridley's map of Kentucky which was prepared prior to 1806.

40

The McHargue Report then goes on to relate that the trace ran northeast from the London courthouse, and for the most part followed the present State Route 638 to the Twin Branch of Raccoon Creek. Both the Drakes and McFarland defeats took place on this part of the trail, about three quarters of a mile apart, near the Macedonia Church. From the Twin Branch the trace crossed the ridge to the northwest, into Little Raccoon Creek, then ran westward to Hazel Patch. A more exact description of this route is given in my article entitled "Boone's Trace through Laurel County," *Filson Club History Quarterly*.. XLII (1968).

South of the present Levi Jackson Park, the McHargue route is confirmed by two old surveys, entered by George Brooks in March, 1782, and surveyed in 1779.

³⁸. McHargue, *supra*.

³⁹. Lewis Collais and Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky* (Coving-ton, 1874), II, 458.

⁴⁰. Riceton shows on the map credited to Enoch Gridley in *Carey's Atlas of the World* (Philadelphia, 1814).

⁴¹ These surveys show both the "old" and "new" trace, which combine into a single road just north of the park. Also shown is a "Thomas' Station" on the east side of the Little Laurel River, about 3,000 feet north of the McNitt Cemetery. From this point on, the surveys show the trace in a location hitherto unpublished.

The survey of John Drew, for 27,500 acres of land on the northwest side of the Little Laurel River, ⁴² indicated that the road proceeded up the east side of the river past Rockey Knob to a point just downstream of the present Highway 80, where the crossing occurred. The trace then continued northward on [page 109] the west side of the river, passing "M Station" (Moddrel's Station) shortly after the crossing. ⁴³ Note that this route places the trace about two miles east of the London courthouse, and in fact misses the city entirely.

There are two other facts that support the contention that this survey shows the true course of the old trace. First, Brown's Journal states that it is five miles from the main Laurel River to the crossing on the Little Laurel River. At the point shown on the survey the crossing would be about five-and-a-half miles from the main Laurel, whereas by the route described by McHargue, the distance is only three miles. Secondly, in spite of Collins' information, the Laurel County courthouse is too far west to be on the logical route between two known points on the trace, i.e., the McNitt and the McFarland massacre sites. ⁴⁴

After crossing the Little Laurel River, the John Drew survey indicates that the trace ran north between the forks of this stream; another survey for James Gannon shows the trace crossing the headwaters of a branch that flows southeasterly into the main branch of this stream. ⁴⁵ This branch is identified on the survey as follows: "lying on the west prong of the North Fork of Laurel River heading with the waters of Raccoon Creek to begin at the trace leading from Kentucky to Holston . . ."

Although both of these surveys are somewhat vague, together they would indicate that the general course of the road was up the ridge from the Little Laurel crossing, thereby more or less joining and following the present Kentucky Highway 638 past the Macedonia

⁴¹. LCSB, IV, 57, George Brooks surveys noted above.

⁴². LCSB, IV, 31, John Drew, 27,500 acres entered 14 Oct. 1784, and surveyed 23 Dec. 1793.

⁴³. Moddrel's Station was built about 1792 and abandoned in 1795. It was named for Lt Robert Moddrel who commanded the twenty-four militia stationed there. Although the McHargue report states that the station was located south of Farrison, the above survey would indicate otherwise.

⁴⁴. The exact locations of these sites are given in my article, "Boone's Trace Through Laurel County," *Filson Club Quarterly*, XLII (1968), 25.

⁴⁵. LCSB, IV, 71, James Gannon, survey for 500 acres.

Church into the headwaters of the Slate branch of Raccoon Creek. At the site of McFarland's defeat, which is approximately 4,000 feet north of the church, it would appear that the trace turned northwest again instead of passing down this creek as described by McHargue. [page 110] A survey of Hezekiah Pigg shows the trace from the headwaters of Freeman's Branch, running northwest to the Hazel Patch Creek, including the crossing of the Little Raccoon Creek about 1,500 feet northeast of the Viva Church.⁴⁶ Another survey for Jerah Tamplin depicts the road north of the Pigg survey as far as Mount Carmel Church.⁴⁷

From the data on the above mentioned surveys, it is clear that the old trace led more or less directly to Hazel Patch from the vicinity of the present Levi Jackson Park. It did not swing over to the main branch of Raccoon Creek as McHargue's account relates, neither did it follow the present Highways 25 and 490 as William Pusey believed. The student may also note the surveys do not place the road near the point where McHargue places Julian's defeat, on the hill below the mouth of Freeman's Branch. Yet the latter point is not contradictory as many early pioneers often left the established trails to camp or to find feed for their horses.

It is interesting to note that Calk, on 14 April 1775, described the trip northward from the Laurel River as being on a very mirey road," and stated that the party camped on a creek that he believed to be a branch of the "Loral," prior to reaching "the plais caled the Bressh." Col. Fleming, when traveling south from Hazel Patch on 14 May 1780, "cross(ed) some hills and swamps" on the way to the "Lawrel" River. James Nourse, Jr., came through the area on Sunday 30 January 1780, and was having trouble feeding his horse and himself. He wrote, "traveled fifteen miles to Raccoon Creek and down the creek two miles to cane-mostly eat out and what is not, frost bit. Cut the tops for the horses but it does not seem to satisfy them."

Brown's Journal was the first to place Raccoon Creek in its proper position four miles south of Hazel Patch. Fleming notes two Raccoon Creeks but one obviously refers to the branch of Robinson's Creek near Raccoon Springs. The other, along with Nourse's account quoted above, probably refers to the fork now called Slate Lick Branch. One of the old surveys [page 111] states that Little Laurel

⁴⁶. LCSB, IV, 37, Hezekiah Pigg, 1943 acres entered 3 Nov. 1783.

⁴⁷. LCSB, IV, 54, Jerah Tamplin, 1000 acres entered 21 May 1783 and surveyed 31 May 1797.

River was formerly called Frazers' Creek.⁴⁸ The various distances from the Laurel River to Hazel Patch are given as 12 miles by Fleming, 15 by Filson and Speed, and 17 by Brown. The actual distance is about 15 miles by the route shown on the old surveys, and 18 miles by McHargue's version of the trace.

The area between the Laurel River and the Rockcastle River is unusually flat for southeastern Kentucky. The land is now mostly covered with small farms intermixed with patches of woods. Hazel Patch is the place where Boone's and Skaggs' traces parted, and for this reason it was sometimes called the Road Forks. In the latter part of the eighteenth century a blockhouse was built here, possibly by a man named Wood who later moved to the head of White Oak Creek.⁴⁹ A state marker on Highway 490 about three quarters of a mile north of the present Hazel Green School now locates this site. Munsel's map of 1818 shows Hazel Patch as the point that separated Rockcastle and Knox counties, and also noted that "Pearls" house was a short distance to the south. The Pearl family has owned this land up to the present time.

In spite of some information to the contrary, the name Hazel Patch referred exclusively to this area until circa 1872, when the name was adopted by a new community of railroad construction workers living several miles further down the Hazel Patch Creek.⁵⁰

BOONE'S TRACE, HAZEL PATCH TO THE KENTUCKY RIVER

Between Hazel Patch and the Rockcastle River there are no surveys or other records to indicate the exact location of [page 112] Boone's Trace. Both McHargue and Pusey claim that the trace led directly north, passing close to Mount Carmel Church at Oakley. The road is then said to have turned northwest for about three miles,

⁴⁸. The survey of Rowland Madison in Lincoln County Survey Book, IV, 45, for 8000 acres, dated 26 Sept. 1795, reads as follows: "on a branch of the Cumberland formerly called Frazers Creek or Little Laurel River."

⁴⁹. It would appear that this blockhouse was named for a man named Wood. In later years a wood lived several miles north of the Rockcastle River on the State Road, according to the map of Luke Munsell printed in 1818.

⁵⁰. Although a number of publications state that the name Hazel Patch has not applied to the original area since about 1800, numerous sources would indicate otherwise. The present town of Hazel Patch, which is located several miles down the creek was not formed until the construction of the railroad circa 1870. All maps printed prior to this date show Hazel Patch where Boone's Road parted from Skaggs Trace.

finally arriving at Parker's Creek which it followed to the river. Just north of the Mount Carmel Church, on the property of Henry McWhorter, a rock carved with Boone's name was discovered circa 1920, which, if authentic, would place the old trace slightly to the west of the present highway.⁵¹

In the vicinity of Rockcastle River the routing of the trace cannot be disputed; Calk stated that after fording this river he proceeded "down it 2 miles and then turned up a creek that we crossed about 50 times, some very bad fords with a great deal of good land on it." The creek referred to is still called Trace Branch, in memory of the old road. Presently a gravel road leads up this creek through a deep narrow valley to the top of the ridge. The climb to the ridge is quite steep, as is the descent to Crooked Creek on the other side. It would appear that this hill was crossed near Windy Gap where the 1891 Geological Survey showed a trail which may have been the vestige of the old trace. From Crooked Creek the trace led into Roundstone Branch of the Rockcastle River, which was followed northward to Boone's Gap. This creek was frequently referred to as the "far fork of the Rockcastle."

On 16 April 1775, the Henderson party reached Crooked Creek and "went a little down" before camping. Calk refers to this and all other streams to the north as "waters of the Caintuck." The trip northward from the Rockcastle is described by Felix Walker as follows: "upon the Rock-Castle we had to encounter and cut our way through a country of about twenty miles, entirely covered with dead brush, which we found a difficult and laborous task. At the end of which we arrived at the commencement of the cane country, traveled about thirty miles through thick cane and reed, and as the cane [page 113] ceased, we began to discover the pleasing and rapturous appearance of the plains of Kentuck. . . "⁵²

James Nourse, Jr., had a different impression of the country. He wrote on 3 February 1780, "Thursday, endeavored for the far fork of the Rockcastle but could not reach it-camped by the side of a mountain, and was obliged to feed on corn. These two days passed, I have scarce seen the track of a single Deer, and all other game very scarce-Friday went 4 miles to the far fork of Rockcastle, and there camped and stayed to recruit our horses. Went up the river a buffalo hunting with-

⁵¹. I talked to Mr. McWhorter several years ago and he stated that the Boone rock was found some distance to the northwest of his house some time about 1922. The rock was removed and taken to a nearby church wh&e it remained for some years. I was unable to disoov& where this rock is now located.

⁵². Draper MSS, 3B, 173-179.

out success, obliged to eat our bacon. Saturday made an early start and went 20 miles to Silver Creek-good cane-some very good bottom land along the Rockcastle (Roundstone) then came over a great deal of white oak middling land."

The Roundstone near Crooked Creek is very winding and narrow, but becomes wider a few miles to the north. An attempt to drive a jeep along this narrow stretch in 1965 was facilitated only by using the railroad bridges and tunnels. Presently where roads exist, they follow the eastern side of the hills, as the bottoms are planted in corn.

There are several old surveys along Roundstone Creek that prove that Boone's Trace was in the main branch practically all the way to Boone's Gap.⁵³ Northward from Renfro Creek these bottoms are quite wide with a number of large and small valleys interrupting the surrounding hills. This valley tightens again upon approaching the Madison County line, where the trace led through the passage called Boone's Cap. Presently the railroad crosses at the lowest point of the gap where the old trace was probably located. It would have been near this point that the early pioneer could first look down into the Bluegrass of Kentucky, as is so often portrayed in numerous illustrations.

It is interesting to note that, except for Filson's early map, no others show any roads or trails in the Roundstone Creek [page 114] to the south of Boone's Gap. Yet the surveyors of the era were aware of not one, but two Boone's Traces in Rockcastle County.⁵⁴ The second Boone's Trace was his route in August, 1775, when he guided his family and "21 guns" to Boonesborough. On this trip he traveled as far as the present Broad-head on Dix River with the party made up of Hugh McGary, Richard Hogan, Thomas Denton, and their families, who were destined for Harrodsburg. At Broadhead the Boone party "bore a more northerly direction for Boonesboro while the McGary party went down to Dick's River."⁵⁵ On this trip Boone traveled down the branch of Dix River known as Boone Fork, then proceeded north via Bowman's Fork, and arrived at Roundstone Creek in the vicinity of Hurricane Branch.

⁵³. LCSB, II, 396, James Renifro, 300 acres surveyed Jan. 1785. LCSB, II, 397, James Rentfro, 400 acres surveyed 9 Feb. 1785. LCSB, II, 398, William Payne, 1000 acres surveyed 10 Feb. 1785. LCSB, II, 408, William Mays, 1000 acres surveyed 24 March 1785. LCSB, IV, 68, Thomas Smith, 1000 acres, surveyed 28 Oct. 1797, entered 14 Dec. 1781.

⁵⁴. LCSB, II, 441, Catlett Conway, 18,000 acres, dated 22 March 1785. This survey states that the "road from the settiement to Booneshoro formerly went tip (a branch of Dicks River) about three or four miles above Englishes Station." The survey also mentions "crossing a branch of Rockcastle (Roundstooe) and Boones Trace" well to the north of Dicks River.

⁵⁵. Draper MSS.

It must be admitted that Boone's Trace, in the vicinity of the modern Berea, was no more than a blazed trail, with little or no means of identification. James Nourse tells of the problem of following this trace in his Journal: "Wednesday 28 June 1775, traveled and missed our way, got up a steep mountain, beat all about the ridge-at last found another steep place, where we got down off the mountain whose sides were in general perpendicular; we had a view of fine country to the west. Traveled without being able to keep any course till night-made a fire and suped. Thursday 29th, got up and settled that we should steer something to the south of west, which we did, brought us to large lick-kept down the buffalo path-then crossed a large meadow at least a hundred acres-still keeping our course. At nine o'clock got into the right path at 1/2 past 10. arrived at water where there was an Indian mark on a tree." Even Colonel Henderson, on his way back from St. Asaph's in the summer of 1775 "crossed it inadvertently and got out of our way."⁵⁶

Apparently Roundstone Creek takes its name from the lick which was located just south of Boone's Gap. Roundstone [page 115] Lick is mentioned in the Madison County Order Books in August, 1787, but the name Roundstone Creek does not appear in the records until later.⁵⁷ Munsell's map still refers to this creek as Roundstonelick Creek. The earlier records refer to this creek as the north or far fork of the Rockcastle, and was occasionally erroneously labeled 'Scaffold Fork.'

⁵⁸

Northward from Boone's Gap, tradition has the Trace passing through the existing city of Berea on its way north. William Pusey shows Boone's Trace leading directly through the city, then gradually swinging eastward into Silver Creek. As all of the early maps show the first roads to the east of Pusey's route, his version is probably incorrect.

The key to the early road is Blue Lick. Filson's map shows the road to Boonesborough passing this point. Both Munsell and the early drawings of the Madison County surveyor, prepared circa 1810, also show the road leading from Boone's Gap to Boonesborough passing very near to this lick. This road ran just south of the branch of Silver Creek called Brushy Fork, which is the most direct route between the gap and the lick. This road did not pass through Berea, but passed a half mile to the south and southeast. Berea was not established until about 1860, thus its position would have no bearing on the location of the trace.

⁵⁶. Draper MSS, 4B, 25.

⁵⁷. LCSB, IV, 68, survey for James Smith, dated 27 Oct. 1797, names Roundstone Creek.

⁵⁸. Barker's map circa 1792 shows Scaffold Fork in the place of Roundstone. The early surveys distinguished between Scaffold Fork and the branch which Boone's Trace went up.

The Blue Lick was near the head of the Blue Lick Creek, between Robe Mountain and Joe Lick Knob. One of the so called 'Pilot Knobs" is found about 2 1/2 miles to the southeast of the lick, well off of the trace. As Pilot Knob does not afford a very good view towards Richmond, the name probably derived from the fact that it was used to "pilot" the traveler who looked upon it from below. Had the traveler needed a vantage point, he would have used Joe Lick Knob where the view is better in any direction.

On 18 April 1775 William Calk wrote that Henderson's party reached "the beginning of the good land near the Blue [page 116] Lick" where they shot two "bofelos." On the following day they passed the site of Twitty's ambush and "camt on Oter" creek. The site of this ambush is described by Felix Walker as being "near the head of Taylors Fork of Silver Creek, about 4 miles south of the present Richmond." ⁵⁹ This writing goes on to describe the "fort" which was built on the morning of 25 March 1775, as "two or three small cabins 4 to 5 feet high but without any stocking which they dignified with the name of Twitty Fort." These cabins were built the morning after the Indian attack more to house the wounded than for protection.

If Boone's Trace coincided with the later roads in the area, it would have been nearly where Highways 421 and 388 are today. The conversion of at least part of the old trace into county roads apparently did occur as Lincoln County ordered a road established between "Boonesborough to intersect the road leading from Irvines to Paint Lick." The proposed route from Boonesborough was to run "along the old trace to Wood-rough, then following blazed trees though John Tanners." ⁶⁰

It would therefore appear that Boone's Trace passed through the present city of Richmond, and led down the ridge between the east and west forks, just as the road does today. Daniel Boone claimed 1,000 acres of land just south of Richmond, which was apparently on his old trace. ⁶¹ Pusey's contention that the trace was along the eastern fork of Otter Greek cannot be substantiated.

Upon arriving at the Kentucky River near the mouth of Otter Creek, Boone's party "immediately" erected a second fort as protection against the Indians. This fort was located "60 yards south of the Kentucky (River) and a little below the Lick, near the present ferry and the few cabins erected were strung along, fronting

⁵⁹. Draper MSS, 3B, 184.

⁶⁰. Lincoln County Order Book, I, 248, dated 1784.

⁶¹. Boone's land claim is recorded in LCSB, I, 167, as the assignee of Hayes. The maps of the county surveyor in the French Tipton papers show it to be on the road to the Blue Lick south of Richmond.

the river." On Thursday, 20 April 1775, Colonel Henderson and the main party of settlers arrived at "Fort Boone" and "were saluted by a running fire of about [page 117] 25 guns . . . all that were then in the fort." The original fort was abandoned and a new fort started on the 'opposite side of a large lick near the river bank.. .300 yards from the other fort." The new location was chosen because of the "scarcity of ground suitable for clearing at such an advanced season and because of the existence of "a large spring over a hill about ½ mile from Fort Boone." ⁶²

It would appear that Boone's Trace was never the main route into Kentucky, thus it never developed into a good road. Most travelers who entered the state used the "Settlement Road" which passed through Crab Orchard and Logan's Station. Except for occasional land surveys, there are few mentions of

Boone's Trace in the county records and later journals. If we are allowed to read between the lines in these old records, we must conclude that the original trace was only a blazed path, the exact route of which was soon forgotten even to the early inhabitants. It is even likely that part of Boones Trace was later called by other names, such as the road from "Estils to the Blue Lick."⁶³

In retrospect, the route picked by Boone is an excellent way to central Kentucky. With minor variations it was used by the railroads a century later because of the directness and superior terrain features. A comparison with Skagg's Trace will show that Boone used the shortest route to the Bluegrass, and that his road was as good in regard to fords, watering and feed for animals. The probable reason for the unpopularity of Boone's over Skaggs' Trace was the longer distance to the first inhabited station, or the avoidance of Boonesbrough because of the doubtful legality of the Transylvania Company. The use of a road in the wilderness is important for its survival, since this is the only way it will retain its identity. By 1785 Boone's Trace, like the buffalo paths it followed, was probably overgrown with cane and brush from lack of use. [page 118]

SKAGGS' TRACE TO SAINT ASAPH'S

In 1775, during the time that Daniel Boone was blazing his trail northward from the Holston, it is reasonably certain that Skaggs' Trace was already in use. It is also probable that Boone used this hunter's trail as far northward as Hazel Patch

⁶². Draper MSS, 3B, 184.

⁶³. The name Road from Estils to the Blue Licks" or "Estils to Hazel Patch" is frequently mentioned in the old surveys and I presume that it is another name for Boone's Trace, which was adopted later, since the above more or less coincided with the location of Boone's Trace.

before leaving it for a more direct route to the Kentucky River. The hundred or so people fleeing Kentucky in 1775 who passed the Henderson party between Richland Creek and Hazel Patch most certainly did not use the new path blazed by Daniel; as most of them came from the area around Harrodsburg, they probably used the buffalo road to beyond Crab Orchard, then the route down Skaggs' Creek.

64

The namesake of this route was either Henry or Richard Skaggs, Long Hunters who entered the present boundaries of Kentucky about 1769. Along with other men from the New River area in Virginia and the Yadkin country of North Carolina (such as Elisha Walden, Kasper Mansker, Uriah Stone, James Knox, Abram and Isaac Bledsoe) they roamed through the Cumberland and Green River basins as far as Nashville. It is likely that this trace was followed by the Knox party in 1770 when Captain Dick, a Cherokee Chief, invited them to hunt on "his river" and directed them northward from the Rockcastle.⁶⁵

Although Skaggs' Trace appears to be older than the trail blazed by Boone, it was nevertheless still difficult to follow in 1775. The party, consisting of the families of Hugh McGary, Richard Hogan, and Thomas Denton, became hopelessly lost after leaving Daniel Boone's group at Broadhead on their way to Harrodsburg.⁶⁶ It is quite likely that the area was covered with numerous old game and Indian trails, thus affording many opportunities for the traveler to take the wrong path to his destination.

As we have assumed that Boone's Trace and the trail now [page 110] called Skaggs' Trace ran together as far as the Hazel Patch, we shall continue our description from that location. The fact that these two roads forked at Hazel Patch can be verified by several sources. Fleming's Journal states that on 14 May 1780, he "passed Hazel Patch where the Boonesboro road comes into the St. Asaph's Road."

A survey for Robert Todd dated 1782 begins "at the path leading from the Holston to Kentucky about 3/4 mile from the ford of Hazel Branch on the northwest side of the Hazel Patch on the said path . . ." ⁶⁷ Skaggs' Trace then

⁶⁴. Draper MSS, 3B, 174-75. Co!. Henderson stated that he met nearly 100 people in four days that were returning from Kentucky.

⁶⁵. Thwaites and Kellogg, *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, 75-78. The change from Dick's River to Dix River occurred circa 1915. No valid reason for using the incorrect spelling has ever been found by this author, other than the fact that the spelling was used on the first USGS survey of the Danville area.

⁶⁶. Draper MSS, 3B, 40.

⁶⁷. LCSB, I, 79, Robert Todd, 880 acres entered 17 Dec. 1782, surveyed

followed this creek westward at least to the point where it is joined by Little Hazel Patch Creek. It would seem likely that the old trace used Arthur's Ridge on the way to the junction of the Hazel Patch and Altamont Creeks; the latter was originally called Laurel Creek on the old surveys. From this junction the only possible route for the trace is westward through the Hazel Patch creek bottom to the Rockcastle River.

The McHargue map gives the location of Jenkins' defeat (1791) as being in the creek bottom just west of Arthur's Ridge. On 14 May 1780, Fleming noted the passing of graves of some travelers that had been trapped by rising waters on a "knowl." The most likely spot where such an event could have occurred is a small island about one quarter of a mile below the junction of Hazel Patch and Altamont Creek but another rather prominent knob is located on the same watercourse about a half mile from the Rockcastle River.

When returning to Virginia in May of 1780, Fleming stated that he proceeded up the Rockcastle River three miles past the crossing (or ford) then turned up "Raccoon Creek" and continued for three more miles before camping. Since the present Raccoon Creek empties into the Rockcastle many miles farther up the river, this reference probably refers to Hazel Patch Creek. His camping place on 13 May 1790 would therefore have been near the site where Jenkins was later ambushed. Fleming also mentioned passing "the rock" and noted a difference in the foliage on the two sides of the valley.

The mileage from Hazel Patch to the Rockcastle ford [page 120] is quoted as 10 by Filson although the actual mileage to Skaggs' Creek is closer to 14 via the waterway. It would therefore appear that the ford of the Rockcastle was about 3 miles below Hazel Patch Creek and about 3 miles above Skaggs' Creek.

Daniel Smith's journal also relates that this surveying party proceeded along the "Kentucky Road" in this area. On 8 December 1779, his group "moved near Rockcastle and camped on a creek which we called Beaver Creek ... (and) ... 9 Dec. crossed Rockcastle and left Kentucky Road, encamped on the river 3-4 miles below where Kentucky Road leaves it."

By 1780 there were at least two routes that could be followed from the Rockcastle River to the headwaters of the Dick. According to Fleming, he took the "new" road in 1780 via a "long" branch of Skaggs' Creek. This route met the old trace at the third fording of Skaggs' Creek, and apparently followed the west fork. He was not impressed with the new road as he used the "old trace" on his next trip

in 1783. Governor Hamilton noted that after leaving Whitleys on 21 April 1779, that he "set forward on an Indian path and forded Scaggs Creek forty times." He found that .the "narrow track" was over "steep ascents and descents with rugged stoney ways varied with swampy and clayey grounds."

The exact location of the old trace can be followed in several places by means of old surveys. One for James McGavock ⁶⁸ includes the "second crossing" of Skaggs' Creek which occurred near the junction of the east and west forks, "170 poles below the mouth of a large rockhouse" or cavern. The old trace ran up .the East Fork to a point about one mile south .of the present Mt. Vernon, then turned westward, passing over to the headwaters of Little Renfro Creek. The exact location of .this crossing is shown in surveys for Stephen Trigg dated March, 1782 ⁶⁹ and Jacob Myers, dated December, [page 121] 1782. ⁷⁰ McClure's defeat occurred on the trace near the headwaters of Skaggs' Creek, and probably on the land claimed by Trigg. ⁷¹

It is interesting to speculate on the origins of the names "Little Trace Branch" and "Big Trace Branch," since two small watercourses north and parallel to Skaggs' Creek. Both run. from the Rockcastle and head at Sand Hill, where Indian carvings and artifacts were found in abundance. ⁷² This route, following the ridge on the left bank of Skaggs' Creek would appear to be the quickest and best route from the Rockcastle to Mt. Vernon; possibly this was the original Indian trail.

From the headwaters of Skaggs' Creek the trace led to "Englishes" which was located on the west bank of Dix River, near Turkey (formerly Neaks) Creek. In many references to "Englishes," including Fleming and the Lincoln County Order Books, there is no notation of a station; the one exception is Filson's book. The surviving records would lead one to believe that "Englishes" was no more than a cabin or two, with no stockade or blockhouse for defense. Only Filson deemed this settlement important enough to put on a map. Filson computed the mileage from the Rockcastle to English Station to be 25, which is midway between the 27 quoted

⁶⁸. In addition to the James McGavock, two others show the trace on Skaggs' Creek; LCSB, IV, 85, George Heston shows the "deep crossing" on the creek; and IV, 78 survey for Val Harmon confirms the location of the trace on the creek.

⁶⁹. LCSB, I, 114, Stephen Trigg, dated March 8, 1782.

⁷⁰. LCSB. I, four separate surveys for 50, 400, 550, and 600 acres, dated circa 1781.

⁷¹. The McClure defeat took place near the head of Skaggs' Creek in 1784; the approximate site was located by Lee McClure, a descendant, and is in accordance to the family tradition.

⁷². A large carving of a bear paw could be seen on the top of a rock outcrop until about 1935. This carving was near the road junctions presently designated Sand Hill on modern maps. Nearby there is a spring around which many Indian arrowheads have been found.

by Fleming and the 23, quoted by Brown. The correct mileage is about 23, discounting any detours around dead trees and laurel thickets.

The route to "Englishes" was apparently along the east branch of Negro Creek, then via the ridge to Boone's Fork. Two surveys show where Daniel Boone departed from Skaggs' Trace in August, 1775, when he led his family and "21 guns" to Boonesborough.⁷³ The trace was definitely on the north side of Dix River at Broadhead, and continued along this side for some distance prior to crossing to the south on the way to [page 122] Crab Orchard. The exact point of the crossing is located on George Stagal's survey of 63 acres made in 1800.⁷⁴ Skaggs' Trace probably followed an old buffalo path through this area, which passed an unnamed salt lick located on the north side off Dix River two miles below the present town of Broadhead.

From "Englishes," the trace led two or three miles northwest to Crab Orchard, so named for the wild crab apple trees found there. Lincoln County records relate that Capt. Snoddy lived near the trace south of "Crab Orchard Station" and that Colonel Edwards lived to the northwest.⁷⁵ Filson's map labels this station "Moore's or the Crab Orchard" so we can presume that Moore resided therein. In the summer of 1782, William Whitley's narrative mentions that "Mrs. Hammons came into Crab Orchard in her linsey-woolsey wounded in the head with an arrow" after the Jacob Baughman defeat at the head of the Dix River.⁷⁶

Upon reaching Crab Orchard, the travelers felt that the wilderness and its hidden dangers were past. From this location northward, the country along the trace was considered to be well settled by the early pioneers. The illustrious Col. William Whitley resided about two miles northwest of Crab Orchard in a stately brick house that is said to be the first built in the state. This building is now preserved as a state historical site and open to visitors. Whitley was considered "the guardian of the road" because of the many retaliatory raids made against the Indians who molested travelers attempting to reach central Kentucky. [*Before he built this house, Colonel Whitley lived at Whitley's station, located about two miles north-west of his house, on what is now called Walnut Flat Creek. Surveys would indicate that this station was slightly north of the existing highway.*]

⁷³. LCSB, II, 441, Catlett Conway, 18,000 acres, circa 1783.

⁷⁴. LCSB, IV, 155, George Stagal, 63 acres on Dicks River, dated 31 Aug. 1804.

⁷⁵. Lincoln Co. Order Book dated June, 1783.

⁷⁶. *Whitley Papers*, The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, XXXVI (1938), 197. The person referred to was Christina Cook Hammon, wife of Phillip Hammon, who later resided in Madison County.

It would now appear that the original trace nearly followed the present Highway 150 from Crab Orchard to Stanford. The Lincoln County Order Books note certain minor changes in the road location which were ordered to be made in 1782-83, but by and large, this section is essentially on the same route as the old buffalo path used by the early Long Hunters. [page 123]

From Stanford, the trace led to the Buffalo Springs, located about 3/4 mile due west of the present Court House. This spring is now on the site of the city reservoir; Logan's Station or Saint Asaph's was situated on the hill just to the north. Filson's map shows "the Path to the Cumberland Settlements" leading south from Logan's and passing through the Flat Licks. This trail ran parallel to, but about 1/2 mile west, of the present Highway 27 for several miles.

Although this description of Skaggs' Trace ends at Logan's Fort or St. Asaph's, in a technical sense the road did not stop there. Throughout central Kentucky there were wide buffalo trails leading in all directions. Many of these were adopted by the early settlers and used for roads for many years; some have developed into major modern highways.⁷⁷ Some of these ancient paths can be located exactly by the early surveys. For instance, the trace from Logan's to Harrodsburg can be plotted from the Hanging Fork to Clarks Run, 2 miles southwest of the center of modern Danville, by referring to the case of Christopher vs. Singleton, Kentucky Reports, 17851801, by James Hughes. The records also reveal that an old Indian road led from near Danville toward Lexington,⁷⁸ and that there was another route from Harrodsburg, toward Lexington called Haggins Trace.⁷⁹ Leading northward from Harrodsburg, one might travel towards the present Shelbyville either on "Harrods Old Trace to the Falls" or by Squire Boone's trace.⁸⁰ The earliest Lincoln County records verify that a trail led to the Falls by way of "Harlings to Harbisons" and the "Salt Works" at Bullitt's Lick.⁸¹ [page 124]

⁷⁷. A survey in the Bourbon County records from Hulbert vs Haws Heirs, dated circa 1800, shows that the modern Highway 27 between Paris and the Lower Blue Licks follows the old buffalo trace almost exactly.

⁷⁸. This Indian road is noted on the survey made for the ease of Austin vs Dougherty, Kentucky Reports, James Hughes, editor, 1785-1801 (Lexington, 1803.)

⁷⁹. Haggins Trace is noted on the survey made for the case of Rebecca Hite vs Thomas McClannahan, Woodford County Court and Franklin District Court.

⁸⁰. Numerous surveys in the Lincoln County Survey Books show either or both of these traces in the vicinity of Hammon Creek, Benson Creek, and the present Lawrenceburg.

⁸¹. Lincoln County Order Book, dated June, 1788.

THE WILDERNESS ROAD, A 1795 IMPROVEMENT

Soon after Kentucky became the 15th state, Governor Isaac Shelby commissioned James Knox and Joseph Crockett to undertake to improve the road from Crab Orchard to the Cumberland Gap. Daniel Boone also solicited this assignment and considered himself 'entitled to the offer of the Business as I first Marked out that Rode in March 1775 and never Re'd anything for my truble and . . . think My Self as Capable of Marking and Cutting that Rode as any other man." ⁸²

In October, 1796, Knox and Crockett, the first Kentucky Highway Commissioners, announced that the road was open and that 'wagons loaded with a ton weight, may pass with ease, with four good horses." ⁸³ Since the road, as cut at that time apparently received few improvements prior to the invention of the automobile, it is possible to trace the exact route.

Starting at Cumberland Gap this road followed the old trace to beyond Flat Lick, nearly as the present highway does today. Munsell's excellent map of 1818 shows it passing Stinking and Turkey creeks with Boone's Trace, above described. When reaching Fighting Creek, however, it ran northward up this creek to Dozers School, thence down a branch of Little Richland Creek to Grove School. The road then proceeded west for about 2000 feet to intersect the present Kentucky Route 11; it followed this road northward for about a mile then turned west again at the Locust Grove School. From this point it followed Sublimity Hollow westward, and crossed the ridge into Wilson Branch of Richland Creek. The latter stretch of road, at least, was on an old buffalo path, according to Alexander Buchannon's survey made in October, 1795. ⁸⁴

As it reached the main valley of Richland Creek, the road turned north and generally followed the present Kentucky Highway 229 to the Laurel River. This route led up Knox Fork, as can be verified by the surveys of Robert Walton, Clough Overton, and Terrants Hammon dated October, 1797.⁸⁵ [page 125]

Maps made by the U. S. Army during the Civil War indicate that this route, 'via White Oak Gap," was in use at that time, and that no road existed down the

⁸². Robert Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road*, 189.

⁸³. *Ibid*, 191.

⁸⁴. LCSB, IV, 39, Alexander Buchannon, 1300 acres surveyed 1 Oct. 1795.

⁸⁵. LCSB, IV, 60, Robert Walton, Clough Overton, and Terrants Hammon, 1000 acres entered 27 July 1782, surveyed 9 Oct. 1797.

main part of Richland Creek between Wilson Branch and Barbourville.⁸⁶

Although this new section of the road was finished in 1795, a modified version of the old Boone's Trace was also used by many, or perhaps most travelers. This route ran off the above road near Flat Lick, and generally followed the present Kentucky 930 into Barbourville. Moses Austin, and his son Stephen, apparently traveled this way in 1795 when they stopped at the tavern of Richard Ballinger, which was located within the present limits of Barbourville.⁸⁷ From this point the alternate road proceeded up Smokey Creek, along the existing Route 6, then turned north into Poplar Branch, joining the old trace.

Near the Laurel River the well worn Wilderness Road is easy to follow when traveling along Highway 229. On approaching the river it can be seen to the west of the present highway, and for several miles north of the river it can be found in the woods to the east. Near the entrance to Levi Jackson Park, the Wilderness Road crosses to the west again, and follows it for several more miles, finally assuming an almost identical course with Kentucky 229 into London.⁸⁸ As the land is reasonably level, the road is generally straight and along the higher land when feasible.

North of London, the Wilderness Road followed the existing U.S. 25 for about three miles to the head of Wood's Creek, then curved off the present road to pass between two knobs located west of the road. It then swung back crossing the present road, and ran along the northeast side of the railroad tracks along the existing blacktop road. Upon reaching [page 126] the Carmichael School, the old road again connected to the route of the present highway, and followed it along the ridge to Wood's Creek. At this point the original road turned north with the creek, and proceeded down into the valley of the Little Rockcastle River as far as Happy Hollow.

From here to Livingston, the original road is accurately shown on the 1953 U. S. Geodetic Survey Map where it is labeled "Wilderness Road." This section has not been altered or improved since the Civil War, and some of the original logs used for surfacing were still in place in 1967. This part of the road runs up a branch

⁸⁶. The Official Atlas of the Civil War, U. S. Army, original not dated but apparently made circa 1864. Large version of map on file at Kentucky Historical Society. Numerous other maps made between 1818 and 1860 also fail to show any road north from Barbourville up Richland Creek.

⁸⁷. G. George Garrison, "A Memorandum of M. Austin's Journey," *American Historical Review*, (April, 1900).

⁸⁸. LCSB, IV, 57, George Brook, 7000 acres entered 29 March 1782 and surveyed 26 May 1797. This survey not only shows the "old Trace" and the new Trace" but indicates that one of the forks of the "new Trace" led to the east of the present City of London.

of Happy Hollow Creek for about a mile, and then rapidly climbs to the top of the ridge where the battle of Camp Wildcat took place. The road continues along the top of the ridge past the neck of the big bend in the Rockcastle River before descending into the bottoms. This river was crossed just opposite the branch appropriately named Ford Hollow. This stretch of the road is not difficult to follow on horseback, jeep, or motorcycle, but cannot be traversed by the average passenger car.

After leaving the Rockcastle River, the original road did not pass through Livingston, but went up to the top of the ridge by way of the left or south fork of Ford Hollow Creek. It then passed Sand [Till and followed the top of Chestnut Ridge in a northwesterly direction. Until the recent construction of Interstate Highway 71, this section was passable by auto in dry weather. The road has obviously been improved in recent years, yet it is still only a little better than a wagon road, being unpaved and only seven to eight feet wide. At the Old Chestnut Ridge School the existing road is improved, becoming two lanes with a gravel surface. The Wilderness Road again joined U.S. 25 near the new Chestnut Ridge School and followed this route for about 1/2 mile westward.

From the ridge down into Mt. Vernon, the old road can still be used, as it was used for many years until the highway modernization circa 1950. The old road is now blacktopped, and runs in the valley to the north of the improved section of the highway. The Wilderness Road passed through the center of Mt. Vernon, and went westward with the existing rural highway that crosses Little Renfro Creek, leading to the [page 127] headwaters of Boone's Fork. The old road led down this creek to the Dix River at Broadhead. The road apparently crossed the river at or near Broadhead, and generally coincided with the present road to Crab Orchard and Stanford.

The Lincoln County Order Books give a very good picture of road construction and improvement in the settled areas of the southern part of the state. The first entry is dated January, 1782, when Benjamin Pettit, James Floyd and Joseph Martin were ordered "to view the way from Falling Creek of the Rockcastle River to the Hanging Fork (towards the Salt Works) and report the most convenient way. Other roads considered included 'to the county line from the above" and "from the Court House to Boonesboro." In March of 1783, John Snoddy, John Lewis, William Whitley and William Logan were ordered to "view and report the nearest and most convenient way for a road to be opened from a lick about 1/2 mile above Englishes, that lies on the Settlement Road to the Court

House at St. Asaplis." The lick mentioned was located on Dix River about two miles northwest of Broadhead, and on the north side of the river. At this time roads to Crow's Station and the mouth of the Hickman were also considered.

The results of these "surveys" were submitted to the court in May, June and August of the same year. The first concerned the route to the mouth of Hickman Creek. The second, dated June, 1783, gives a detailed description of the proposed route of the road from near Englishes to the court house, reading as follows:

". . . beginning at a lick about three miles from Englishes, coming partly as the road now is, leaving Englishes on the right hand, leading by Capt. Snoddys thence to the Crab Orchard Station then leading through Colonel Edwards lane thence through William Pearls cleared land then a direct course by Alexander Douglas' fence, then a direct course to the south corner of William Whitneys fence, then by William Logans, then a direct course to McCluers, through a field and by the end of the houses then a direct course through Forbises field then a direct course to the Court House."

At the same session of court, the route to Crow's Station was submitted, and in August the extension of this road to the [page 128] county line "toward the Salt Works" was recorded. These routes were as follows:

". . . beginning at Crows thence south east to Wm. Crows field and through the said field to Clarks old Station and thence to Doughertys and thence south west course of his field thence to the crossing of Doughertys Creek below the corner of Todds field thence to James Logans and thence to the Hanging Fork about one quarter of a mile below John Chraphards and thence to Glovers and passing his field on the south and thence to Col. Benjamin Logans." And toward the Salt Works, ". . . beginning at John Crows thence south 85 west to Kincades Run thence west to Thomsons branch on the waters of Chaplings Fork thence south 85 west to the trace that goes from Harlings to Harbisons, thence south 80 west to Chaplings fork, thence along the trace that goes from Harbisons to the Salt Works."

During the next three years the Lincoln County records pertain to the maintenance of these roads, as well as numerous others that were also built between the various parts of the county. By June, 1784, the city of Danville, located a short distance to the east of the original trace and west of the new road to Crows, had become important enough for the citizens to request a change in routing so that a road could go "from the public square on which the meting house now stands in the place called Danville, leading from thence the nearest and best way to fall into the old road from Crows Station to Harrodsburg."

Thus it was that a system of wagon roads was established between all of the settlements in the adjacent counties. The new road to Cumberland Gap therefore began where the roads maintained by Lincoln County ended, which was near the present Broadhead. Prior to 1785, Lincoln County had established a road from Crab Orchard to Boonesborough via Paint Lick, which undoubtedly accounted for some of the abandoned use of the old Boone's Trace.

Although the route northward from the Cumberland Gap is now generally called the Wilderness Road, this term did not usually appear in the earlier manuscripts. The first reference that I am able to find using this wording occurs in a survey [129] made for Hugh Johnson and John Rhea, which is dated 1795.⁸⁹ This plot is on the Cumberland River "near a lick." The names most often used were the Kentucky Road, the Settlement Road, the Road to the Holston, or the road to the old settlements. The terminology, it appears, varied with the direction of travel.

THE STATE ROAD - A WAY TO THE CENTRAL BLUEGRASS

The last and final route from the Cumberland Gap to Central Kentucky to be built in the eighteenth century became known as the 'State Road.' Generally speaking, this road paralleled Boone's Trace to the east, and was intended to run from the Madison Court House to Hazel Patch. A subscription to build this road was raised in 1795, but the construction was not started by 1797. In the meantime, the county seat of Madison was changed from Milton to Richmond, thus the road was tied into the existing routes running through this community that led into Lexington and beyond. The state finally appropriated additional funds and by 1798, the route was apparently finished as a tollkeeper was authorized and appointed.

The exact course of this route is not difficult to follow, as it is well documented by various maps and records. The road was used without major alterations from the time of its construction through the Civil War and the older citizens of Laurel and Rockcastle counties can still remember riding horses on this route to Lexington. In fact, a large section of this road can still be followed in the modern passenger car.

As we found in previous pages, the 1795 "Wilderness Road" left the old trace in the vicinity of the modern London, Kentucky, and proceeded on a northwesterly

⁸⁹. LCSB, IV, 64, Hugh Johnson and John Rhea, 12761/2 acres, dated Oct., 1797.

course to Stanford. As the State Road was only authorized to Hazel Patch, the connection between the two was originally planned to be by way of the old trace. However, within a short period of time, possibly by the time the road was finished, a better way was found to Wilderness Road, which was used by most travelers. This route ran northward from the present town of Pittsburgh [page 130] to Hazel Patch by way of Peacock Branch, and the existing Kentucky Highway 490. This road then more or less continued up the old trace for approximately two miles to the area known as Mershons, where it fell into the headwaters of Parker's Branch, then continued almost due north into a hollow that led to the Rockcastle River. Whether by fate or design, the limits of this part of the road are the same as the 1953 border of the Cumberland National Forest.

The crossing of the Rockcastle occurred just below the mouth of Horse Lick Creek, and the road went up the west side of this creek, for about 3/4 mile, then snaked up the main fork of White Oak Creek. This road was still in existence in 1891 when the first USGS was made. Presently the way has deteriorated to a very poor trail, accessible to horses and adventurous Honda riders.

Nearing the head of White Oak Creek, the State Road climbed to a spur of the ridge arriving at the top near, but not in, Trace Branch; the road then followed the ridge between Horse Lick and Crooked Creek, exactly along the road which separates Rockcastle and Jackson counties. Near the termination of these two counties with Madison, the present road and the county line separate, but the original road ran with the present county line. The two again join prior to reaching the township of Morrill, near the junction with the present Highway 421.

This long ridge was originally termed "Big Hill," but the name now only designates the northern end. Munsells map shows the house or station of "Woods" on the southern slope, and the 1891 USGS places a community of Goachland near the top of the ridge. Presently there are no towns or communities south of Morrill, and only one surviving old house, near the road crossing called Three Links.

Continuing north from the crest at Morrill, the present Highway 421 approximates the original road. The old road descended by way of the westernmost fork of Cowbell Creek, whereas the modern road uses the eastern bluff. At the bottom of the hill, both the old and new road join as far as the present community of Bighill, where they part again for about a mile. After joining, both the old and new roads proceed to Bobtown and Kingston.

Like the southern terminus, the northern course through Madison County can only be verified by sources starting in 1818. It would appear however, that the

State Road and Boone's Trace were similar from Bobtown northward, if not exactly the same. The route followed Highway 421 into Kingston, which is on Hayes (originally Boone's) Fork, then into Richmond.

Not much happened on this road to excite historians, yet as previously mentioned, it was used by farmers, migrants, and armies for about one hundred years without any improvements, and after minor repairs and some relocation, is still available for travel in the low slung 1970 automobiles. The road no longer offers comfort or speed, but most of it is still there.

Published in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Vol 68, No.2, April 1970. Cover Illustration of Phillip Buckner survey.