Wed., July 12: In Daniel Boone's Bootsteps

The crater was covered in fog when I awoke the next morning, a bad sign. My plan had been to drive back to Cumberland Gap National Park and up a road on the western slope far enough to get a picture of the crater. I drove the couple miles to its entrance and a short distance uphill, to find myself in a cloud. Combined with the VC not opening until 9 and it being 7:30, I decided to book.

US 25 gradually climbs north into increasingly narrow passes, such that I almost missed the fact I had passed over that gap of Powell Mountain that is aligned with the Cumberland Gap. On the far side, nearing I-75, I was surprised by a store advertising, "Fire Truck Sales." I'd heard of a "fire sale," but this was a first. Several fire trucks were arrayed in front. It made me think back to a similar specialty store I once patronized, the ambulance sales company in Greensboro where I bought my first car, a 1972 Oldsmobile Delta 98… hearse.

I decided to make an optional stop on the itinerary, Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park. It boasts original sections of both Boone's Trace and the Wilderness Trail north of where they split. This turned into a great exercise in time-wasting. First, reflecting decades-old complaints of mine, the state's signage guiding one to the park A) took us down a commercial strip rather than using a bypass I found on the way out, a way to bump up local retail, and B) gave out at some point, leading us partway to the site and then disappearing. The atlas was not detailed enough to help, but I finally figured out I had gone way down the wrong road—hardly a first for me—backtracked, and got to the park.

Yes, I hereby acknowledge MapQuest would have been useful in this case.

Once in the park, I figured there would at least be trail maps on panels like in *every hike-able park I've ever been in*, if not paper maps in dispensers. I figured incorrectly. I drove all the way across the park in search thereof, to the site of an old mill. This turned out to be a WPA[1] reconstruction, the walkway lined with millstones of questionable authenticity. In hopes the park administrative office I'd passed was opening at 8, I drove back to it and surprised the young woman who was just opening up. She provided a paper map, but seemed stunned at my suggestion of signs. She said new signage was going up, implying—but not stating—this would include maps.

1 The Works Progress Administration, a 1930s federal government program to provide jobs during the Great Depression, was responsible for a lot of government infrastructure still in use today.

The map said a trailhead for Boone's Trace was accessible from the extensive campground. I walked across its mini-golf course and made my way along the loop drive, self-consciously looking between closely parked RVs and campers, not wanting to look like a Peeping Tom as families began to stir. Perhaps because of this, combined with again a lack of any signage on the road, I never found the trail. Disgruntled, I walked back through the park, availing myself of the shower building to pee. Yes, you'll be hearing often about my PG-rated peeing adventures. The topic takes on great importance as males reach late middle age.

A short drive out of the park and down the highway to a side road availed me of the supposed Wilderness Trail remnant. Given that it is perfectly flat, not reflecting decades of use as a wagon road, I'm not even convinced it is. Maybe what I saw simply *led* to the original section, but I wasn't going to gamble any more time on finding out.

On the aforementioned bypass back to US 25, I pulled up at a stoplight and inexplicably heard the theme song from "The Andy Griffith Show" blaring from an adjacent pickup! Far more quickly than I left it, I soon returned to I-75 North.

Nearing Richmond, Ky., I took an earlier exit and turned into a housing development. At the intersection of several side streets and the collector, off to the left was the unmarked spot of Twitty's Fort. The Boone party blazing the trail in 1775 built a temporary camp here, and failed to post guards. Members of the Miami Nation attacked in the night. Captain William Twitty was wounded, and a man he held in slavery, Sam, was killed. Twitty's bulldog, trying to protect him, was tomahawked to death. After fighting off the raiders, Boone and the survivors built some small cabins for protection and named the camp for Twitty.[2] Why it wasn't named for the dead man, I will leave to you to figure out.

Area of Twitty's Fort (at trees)

2 Boone material in this book is adapted from my "Daniel Boone Homesite" page on AmRevNC.com.

Next I made a small backtrack in direction and track forward in time, about 75 years. Like all white Southern males of a certain age, I've long joked, I was legally required to be a Civil War buff. I have been to all the major, and dozens of minor, CW battlefields from Pennsylvania to New Mexico; read major tomes and novels and journal articles; and read *The Civil War Day by Day* day by day. Frankly, at this point it bores me. The Civil War was the most important conflict of American history for African-Americans, in terms of impact on the modern U.S. For the rest of us I think it third at best, behind the American Revolution and World War II. Slavery is the only American problem the CW solved, mostly[3], which is not to suggest its legacy has been. Without the Revolution, however, there would have been no U.S. Had the Allies not won World War II, our country likely would not have become a superpower—assuming it survived.

Leaving aside that aside, I no longer go out of my way to visit CW battlefields. But by the time I came out of the Twitty's Fort neighborhood back onto Duncannon Boulevard, I was already *on* one. I spotted some related signs to the right before turning right for the short drive to an antebellum home that played a minor role in the Battle of Richmond. The house now serves as the visitor center, owned by a private association. I stepped into the hallway at the base of a simple staircase, spotted no human, and went into an exhibit room before I heard a friendly, "Where'd you go?" I stuck my head back out to find an older guy leaning down from the stair landing. I said I just wanted a display explaining the battle, and he pointed me back into the room I was in. He added, if you understand the term "flanking," you know what happened. That I do, I responded.

The room had a simple but effective diorama with light and audio that explained the battle, which happened in several parts over a number of miles in 1862, the second year of the war. The key moment came when Confederates managed to sneak along a draw and slam into the side ("flank") of the United States line that was confronting another rebel force. The Federals had trouble regrouping and were driven back past where I was and into Richmond (again, Kentucky, which I point out to avoid conflation with the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia).

I drove out to Mt. Zion Church, which was in the thick of the fight, marking the point at which the Confederate flank attack arrived. A church volunteer, I gathered, was taking care of the yard. I greeted him and went to look at the church, which still shows battle damage in the form of dents in the brick. On my walking south toward another set of displays, he asked if I wanted to see inside, because he had the keys.

3 The 13th Amendment banning slavery still allows forced labor by criminals, which helps explain why Blacks are incarcerated at a rate five times that of Whites.

"No, thank you," I said, trying to push an apology into my voice. "I'm on a bit of a schedule." What I didn't want to say is that nothing of interest to me happened *inside* the church.

Clearly taken aback at my rebuffing his kindness, he said, "Aren't we all," in the sense that he had volunteered some of his valuable time to take me in. I ignored it and finished my rounds.

The most interesting thing to me about this battle is the hidden history it reveals. The impression left by most popular content about the war is that the Confederacy only invaded "the North" twice, unsuccessfully: Robert E. Lee's campaigns that led to defeat at Sharpsburg, Md. (the Battle of Antietam) and Gettysburg, Pa. Those writers seem to forget that Kentucky and Missouri did not secede despite supporting slavery. So rebel incursions in those states (and Kansas and New Mexico and Vermont) also count as invasions of the United States. This one was especially successful, since the Battle of Richmond opened the path for the capture of Frankfort. Thus the capital of a U.S. state fell to the Confederacy.

Heading north again, a bypass of sorts around Richmond took me to KY 388. This became a narrow two-lane path snaking through rural residential areas and farms at 35 or 45 mph., beautiful but a far longer trip than I had expected to my next destination. When I pulled over and made myself turn on Location on the phone, I turned out nearly to be there. A minute or two later, I pulled into the site of Fort Boonesborough, the town founded on the Kentucky River by Boone's 1775 trail-cutting party. It was originally just a set of rough cabins in a hollow. Boone's employer relocated it within months, uphill out of the floodplain. Later a wall of vertical logs—a "stockade" or "palisade," just go ahead and memorize those words for this trip—was built around it.

I suspect most people who know about Boonesborough assume it was the first European-American town in Kentucky. It was actually the third, but grew to be the largest. Eventually Boone and the others moved their families here. However, Boone's life of adventure was far from over. In just one example of many, he was captured by Shawnees and taken to what then was *Fort* Detroit with a group of other men, before being forcibly adopted into the tribe. This was not an unusual outcome for captives of Native Americans, and by far the best short of freedom. He escaped in time to warn Boonesborough of an impending attack, which turned into a siege in September 1778.

After lunch in the Sage in shade, watching kids play on the playground with a doting dad, I went exploring. The original site is indifferently marked, requiring triangulation between two markers and a monument to determine the exact-ish outline. It is on a small

plateau above a campground. If the ground is roughly the same as it was in Boone's day, it was a wise location, giving the north and northwest sides the extra protection of extensive slopes. The fact the British and mostly Native American force of 1778 *passed* the fort to attack from the south suggests this was true back then. As an added bonus, the back gate was within a minute's walk of the river, but the ground was high enough to prevent frequent flooding.

I spotted a problem on a historical marker for Sycamore Hollow, the lowland where Boone's party first placed the cabins. The marker is on the plateau, across the driveway leading down to the campground. It said the fort was relocated 300 yards away, but the sign was nearly inside the fort's footprint. The Internet confirms my suspicion that the marker had been moved, from a spot about 300 yards away in the campground.

Site of the fort, looking toward the narrow southern end (starting just behind the center marker)

After that Native army arrived in 1778, two days of negotiations proceeded. A modern source claimed the site was now where the bathrooms stand, and gave a distance of about 60 yards. After figuring out the approximate location of the palisade, I paced off that distance over flat grassy ground, and found myself by bathrooms at a picnic shelter (behind and to the right when I took the picture). The distance mattered because it was still within effective range of the fort defenders' muskets, more so its rifles.[4] (They had no cannons.) Unfortunately, I now know that source was wrong. The negotiation was held off to the left of the picture in the mouth of the hollow. Boone's party suspected a trick, and indeed the Natives tried to capture them on the third day. All were able to escape.

4 Muskets are smooth inside the barrel. Rifles have grooves that make the round bullet spin and fly straighter, the way a spinning American football is more accurate than a wobbly one. For more details on both, see "How Flintlocks Work" on AmRevNC.com:*

During the eight-day siege that followed, a weakness in the fort's location became apparent. A ridge directly across the river, and heights to the west, were within range of rifle fire and flaming arrows. This became a pain in the butt for Boone's teen daughter Jemima: She who took a slight wound in the rear while ferrying supplies inside the walls. I slid down the sharp river bank about 10 feet to the narrow floodplain for a better look. Across the river rises the sharp hillside. At the time the trees on this side were no doubt gone, and probably those on the hill, incorporated into the stockade, buildings, fences or fireplaces of Boonesborough. It's a long distance by the standards of the time, 250 yards, but not impossible for experienced hunters on both sides. Boone reportedly dropped a troublesome sniper atop the ridge. I looked toward it and admired his sharpshooter skills.

The Native force tried to tunnel in from the riverbank to the fort. Looking at the vertical wall of compacted sand, it was easy to imagine why someone came up with the idea. Rain collapsed the tunnel, though, and the attackers abandoned the siege shortly after. In my mind's eye I could see Boone inspecting the open hole after they left, and the unlit torches apparently meant to set the base of the wall afire had they reached it.

The majority of folks likely go to the state park surrounding the site to visit a reconstruction atop a hill across the road. I could not figure out how to. I took the Sage across the road toward an empty parking lot to find a driveway leading up, but it was

closed off by a gate. Then I spotted a trail at the bottom of the rise. Turns out the entrance to the fake fort is on the far side of the hill, because I topped out after another sharp climb to find a half-full parking lot. MapQuest would probably have taken me to that entrance, but the irony here is it was not what I was looking for. I wanted the original fort site. Why there is no direct car connection from the site to the reproduction fort is beyond my ken.

The reproduction is as well done as one could hope, having been based on a sketch of the original. Picture a wooden wall around a football field, the perimeter almost entirely lined with one-story buildings, and blockhouses on the corners. The interiors were decorated to represent different functions that would have existed at the time.

One was set up to demonstrate weaving. After the teenage girl reenactor did an excellent job of explaining how the loom worked, also showing small older versions I had not seen before, I put her through an extended Q&A. I have some "technical questions," I opened, later explaining I was a history writer. First I wanted to understand how designs were inserted. I'm not sure I have this right, but I understood her to say it was as simple as passing the "shuttle" with different-colored yarn (the "weft," I clarified with her) through the desired number of vertical threads (the "warp") and then skipping some to the next section that needed the design.

I also wanted to confirm something I'd read, about "linsey-woolseys." These were the hunting shirts many frontiersmen like Boone wore, made from linen and wool for a combination of warmth and breathability. One source had told me the linen was always the warp. The Web confirms this, but offers no explanation. She offered a speculation but was not sure, referring to another volunteer due soon. I decided I didn't care enough to wait, so that mystery remains.

All but two of the other exhibits got only a passing glance, more of the same I've seen in a million places. (I realize this may leave *you* in the dark, but we'll cover most of those elsewhere.) The first exception was the gunsmith's shop, where the reenactor answered a

question I'd had for several years. He confirmed that American gunsmiths could manufacture the "locks" of the day, meaning the mechanical parts of the gun that move together to shoot the bullet. I knew the barrels and the "stocks," the wooden parts, could be made here.[5] He taught me that locks could too, and in fact he could make one. Volume was the challenge for the Continental Congress, the American government during the Revolution. England had an established industry of sorts for producing guns, whereas the colonists were limited to individual gunsmiths working as fast they could.

The other building I visited was the suspiciously well-appointed militia barracks. I got into a bit of a debate with the reenactor, because I questioned whether militia were there until later in the war. He was right, a glance at my records show now, in that they arrived in 1777. But I still have my doubts as to whether anything like a barracks with rows of bunks to the roof line existed. The militia appear to have only been there a few months, and they certainly weren't there by the time of the siege the next year.

To Kentucky's credit, both a marker at the original site and an exhibit printed on a banner at the fake brought out some history I had not come across in my Boone research. The first non-NA child born in the state-to-be was African-American. She was the fruit of a likely rape by one of the white settlers, Richard Calloway, of his slave Dolly. The exhibits left out the rape part, but even if Dolly "consented," she didn't really have any choice.

My faith in Rand-McNally fell slightly as I tried to drive to a cabin Boone moved his family to, six miles north. The atlas showed the back road I needed, KY 418, only going off to the left from the larger KY 627, which it does, with a catch the map doesn't show. I was miles past in the edge of a town I couldn't identify, because they weirdly had no identifying signs, but turned out to be Winchester, before convincing myself I'd missed 418 somehow. Back near the river I spotted, but drove past, the sign for 418 because it pointed *south*. A third pass told me why: The entrance starts south and curves underneath the bridge to go north, the road nearly invisible from the overhead.

A highway marker under the overpass confirmed my suspicion I was near the spot where Jemima and two friends were kidnapped by Cherokees when she was 14. Kids at Boonesborough were warned to stay away from the far shore of the river, but Jemima's canoe had drifted a half-mile down. They used a variety of means to retard progress and mark their trail, and Boone and others found them two days later, scaring the Cherokees off. This story spread Boone's fame, and was the basis for the similar scenes in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

5 This is the origin of the term, "lock, stock, and barrel." A buyer could buy one or two of the parts from a gunsmith, or could buy…

Hugging the riverbank on the left, KY 418 drives very similar to an N.C. mountain road, with lots of ups and downs and curves and rare shoulders on either side. Only when uphill slopes gave way to a horse pasture or farm on the right did the fancy break. But another mystery arose in a tiny town, too small for the atlas, that appeared where it said "Boone's Station" should be. Again there were no signs to what, as a state park, should be the biggest draw in town. I drove all the way to a highway intersection, came back to no signs on that side, and finally looked at MapQuest. The route took off at an angle from the street grid of several blocks that make up the aspirationally named Athens, Ky.

At the historic markers for the site, I found nothing else, on first glance. There was no indication of a place to park next to an overgrown field behind an ungated fence. What looked like the driveway to the Boone Station State Historic Site was marked as private property with a "No Trespassing" sign. When I turned around and drove back, I finally saw a monument and exhibit panel amidst knee-high weeds and bushes overhanging a history panel. The Commonwealth of Kentucky, which still lists this a Historic Site on the Web, should be ashamed of itself.

I drove back through Athens, with which I was now well acquainted, to the aforementioned highway and west back to I-77. Branching off to the northeast from Lexington, US 68 took me to my last and best stop of the day. In doing so it passed through miles of classic Kentucky horse farms, rolling green fields, occasional trees, and white rail fences. One I looked up later: The Thoroughbred Center provides stables and training for racehorses.

When Boone was captured by the Shawnees, he was hunting food for a group of men from Boonesborough boiling salt from the Licking River. In those days you couldn't just drive to the store to pick up salt. You either had to buy it imported from the coast or overseas in bags or barrels; mine it from former seabeds now sunk underground; or find places like these to boil it out of high-sodium waters.

The Shawnees were prepared to kill the salt party, but Boone convinced them he could get his crew to surrender, knowing they were outnumbered. He succeeded, to later complaints by some that they would have preferred death. This led to his Detroit trip, and also to charges that he was a Loyalist (pro-British) for not fighting the British-allied Shawnees.

Four years later he returned to the spot with around 180 other militia soldiers, having learned that various Ohio-region tribes and Canadian militia were marching yet again on the Kentucky EA settlements. This was 1782, 10 months after the largest British army, under Lt. Gen. Charles Cornwallis, surrendered at Yorktown, Va. Treaty negotiations had begun between England and the nascent United States, but officially the Revolutionary War was still on. More to the point, the Ohio nations still wanted EAs out of Kentucky, especially since Pennsylvania militia had massacred more than 90 Native American converts to Christianity not long before (a story we'll get to much later).

The militia forded the Licking River and stood at the base of a hill upon which they had spotted a few NAs. Here a theme of this trip first appears. Hot-headed officers wanted to charge up the hill after them. Boone said, in effect, "There are more of them up there than you think." One accused him of cowardice. Boone said, again in effect, "I'm tellin ya', there are more of them up there than you think!" He was overruled by the commander. The force spread out and charged uphill.

Back in the present, I pulled into the Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park and curled past a couple of monuments to spot the Pioneer Museum below me. Happily for me, despite the lack of cars in the lot, a sign out front said it was still open. Inside I found a guy my age behind the desk with a younger one seated across from him. I explained my mission, which led to a great conversation about Boone myths. He joked that Fess Parker had done more to damage the history of Daniel Boone—and Texas hero Davy Crockett—than anyone else. Parker was an actor who portrayed the latter in a 1950s miniseries[6], and then Boone in a TV series during my childhood. Parker was put in an actual coonskin cap by costumers to portray Crockett, who apparently wore one sometimes, sparking a craze among kids. For whatever reason, he wore one as Boone, too. Boone never did. He wore a "high-crowned and wide-brimmed felt hat" to "look taller," according to a modern biographer.[7]

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6 The term had not been invented yet, apparently, and Wikipedia claims this was the first example.

7 Note by the editor in Draper, Lyman Copeland, *The Life of Daniel Boone*, ed. by Ted Franklin Belue (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998) <http://archive.org/details/lifeofdanielboon0000drap> [accessed 13 June 2023].

The interpreter at the museum told of a woman approaching him about where she could get a coonskin cap for her son, who was portraying Boone in a school event. He explained the truth, and she didn't care: "'We *have* to have a coonskin cap,'" she declared. So much for the accurate teaching of history to one's child.

He questioned documentation from the time stating that Shawnees were among the half-dozen nations represented at the battle, reasoning they were back defending their homes. I pointed out this did not mean there were *zero* Shawnees among the warrior force, which he conceded. He then pulled out a park map, and marked where there once had been a monument next to a 19th-Century resort hotel. That had marked a mass grave of some of the dead from the battle.

The younger guy asked me a question about Boone I was able to answer from my research (not recorded in my notes, sorry) and then I was on my way toward a trail. I found the trailhead, after yet another unnecessary loop through a campground, by a boat launch where I gave a wave to the only other occupants, preparing their fishing boat.

The trail slowly falls about halfway down the slope while curving around it. At various spots it drops fairly sharply down and up before emptying at the old US 68, which dead-ends for cars at a river bridge. Younger Guy had corrected Older Guy to say it was open to foot traffic. I walked a bit uncomfortably down what amounts to a shared driveway for several homes.

From the first on the left, in the vicinity of the former mass grave, a dog rapidly advanced, growling, receiving no verbal restraint from a man sitting in the garden. Dropping into a defensive stance, I went super-friendly in face and voice-tone while putting a hand out. Doggie got close enough to raise concern I was going to have kick her, which was also close enough for her to sniff my malevolent energy. She backed away with fear on her face.

I went on to the bridge. From there I got a view of the current bridge (shown above), which Older Guy said he'd been told was the site of the ford[8] the salt-boilers and militia would have used. This is likely, as bridges are often built across former fords, I learned in my AmRevNC travels.

He believed they would have been working just beyond that bridge. Thus the hill above the modern bridge is the one on which Boone appeared in 1778 with his Shawnee captors to convince the salt-boilers to surrender.

Walking back I got a better look at the hill up which the militia attacked. Remember the ups-and-downs of the trail? Writing my notes from the day, I realized these were the ravines I'd read about in the Boone materials —ravines in which hundreds of warriors were hidden, along with 50 Canadian militia. Boone was right. After five minutes of fighting, the militia drew back; after 15 minutes, 70 were killed, including the idiot who had called Boone a coward and the commander who failed to trust Daniel. Boone's company was on the left end around the hill; someone had to come tell them the militia were retreating.

Walking back to the Sage on the trail, I looked at an open field narrowing between the hill and river. This must have been the general area where he and his son Israel served as a rear guard protecting his men. Israel was shot. Daniel picked him up and began running, then realized a warrior was charging at them. He put Israel down, shot dead the warrior, then turned back to watch his son bleed out and die.

The Battle of Blue Licks is considered the last "pitched battle" of the American Revolution, and it was won by British allies. However, Boone and his brother Neddie participated in a final campaign against Shawnee towns two months later, which did not result in a battle. But Neddie was killed. For those keeping score, Boone's insistence on going places he had no right to be cost two sons and a brother their lives.

8 A stretch of river with a relatively shallow and solid bottom, used to cross without a boat.

Driving out, I stopped by the monument to the dead, whose engraving of course leaves out the fact that most were killed because officers made the stupid decision to attack without any scouting of the enemy position. An addendum memorial of sorts lists additional names not on the original, identified through later research. Only as I write this and do some poking around on the Web do I realize I missed the monument that was moved from the mass grave. Nothing online confirms whether the bodies were moved with it.

Back on 68, heading west toward the hotel I'd found in Paris—Kentucky—I noticed a double-track dropping down toward the river just before the guardrail on the left side of the bridge. Naturally, I could not resist turning around on the other side, crossing back, and making what now was a hard right down the hill. I regret to admit this is far from the first time I abused my aging subcompact as a four-wheeler. Checking the park map, this turned out to lead to a loop trail, but as I stated aloud at the time, "It doesn't say I can't drive on it!" Nonetheless, a short distance toward the river I realized it was overgrown and getting hairy. So I pulled back to a juncture, parked, and took a definite hiking-only trail under the bridge. Unfortunately I could not really see the river, but I did get a shot of what I suspect is a salt marsh by the main trail. I didn't taste it. These places were useful to NAs and EAs alike not only as a source of sodium, but also because they attracted wild game.

I told the Sage that was our last sudden stop, and we would head home. From the days of my first solo road trip at 18, "home" for me has always been wherever my head hit a pillow that night. Mother's house in Raleigh was a distant second. My house or apartment, if any, has always seemed a more distant third, something I called *home* only for the purpose of conversation. I write these words in a house in Durham I've lived in nine years, longer than any place other than Mother's. It feels no more like home than did any of the rooms housing me on this trip. As long as I am laying my head somewhere I can drop my guard and sleep, it's home. I think this is why I don't enjoy camping, and can't really sleep on overnight flights. I'm too exposed to feel secure, and thus to feel like

I'm home. This is a down side to being a highly trained martial artist. "Situational awareness" is hard to turn off.

However, I had lied to my car. A few miles toward home, a small sign pointed toward "Boone's Last Cabin in KY." On researching this before the trip, I couldn't confirm the provenance of the claim nor the degree to which the cabin was reconstructed. Now, finding it was the issue. The sign had been paired with one for Wendt's Wildlife Adventure. I passed the large sign for that and saw nothing about the cabin. After deciding with additional driving that I must have passed it, I turned back and finally saw a tiny sign for the cabin pointing toward the Adventure. I cautiously pulled into a white-gravel road leading into a tourist farm past a large flock of pygmy goats, mules, and donkeys in a field. A sign indicated it had just closed, but no gate blocked access. A guy on an ATV gave me a glance as I crept upon him uncertainly and drove around a building uphill. I got out and got close enough to gain his attention, then asked if I could still get pictures of the cabin, my assumption being it was part of the park and closed as well. He smiled and said sure, just drive back a little further.

Just over the rise I was parked on—a minor mistake given that the wheels spun a bit on the gravel before gaining traction—the cabin appeared across a small lagoon. A sign indicated it was always open, just close the door behind you. Boone and his namesake son built it in 1795 and the family lived here four years. In addition to his usual ways of making a living, meaning hunting and surveying, he and a partner sold salt boiled at the Blue Licks. That means he regularly returned to the vicinity of his son's death.

A handout inside proved the provenance. The addition of wooden boards to the outside had protected the logs, which in the 1940s were numbered and moved a short distance to get the cabin out of a flood plain. The owners at the time fended off an attempt by Henry Ford to move it to a museum he had built outside Detroit. Although I couldn't find the water trough the handout said marked the original location, I was still glad to see the cabin in proper context, on land Boone owned. The cabin was renovated again years later, so I couldn't know for sure if the floorboards were trod by Boone. If not original, they were expertly "aged."[9] Still, I paused at the door to reflect on the fact that in some sense, I was standing in Daniel Boone's bootsteps. Decorated to reflect life in a backwoods cabin in the 1790s, with rustic furniture and pelts on the wall, it was the closest to the physical life of Boone I have ever felt.

On the way east I'd randomly spotted a Best Western near the western end of the bypass around Paris. It turned out to meet my motel criteria on Booking. In a sign of how much the world has changed, I booked the room while hiking the Blue Licks trail. "That's the world we live in today," I thought as I was doing it. Getting to it was a bit tricky, but once ensconced, I looked up places to eat on Google Maps. Much as I detest Google, which is hypocritically evil[10], no other service does as good a job of showing you all your dining options on a map. I found a promising place and took Business 58 into town. I missed the turn, but that's okay, because I got to see the Paris, Ky., version of the Eiffel Tower. It's about as tall as I am.

The Trackside Restaurant and Bourbon Bar is, not surprisingly, in the late 1800s train station, with outdoor seating on the former platform. But I asked for inside seating and got a table near the bar, taking the bench seat with colorful cushions that lined the wall. I ordered a house-made pimento cheese sandwich with a slight spicy bite and perfectly cooked fresh green beans, neither too crisp nor too soft, in a light pepper-infused oil. I had to ask what an "Ale 8-1" soda was and literally got the, "Oh, you're not from around here" line from the young server. It turned out to be a regional brand like Cheerwine out of N.C., brewed since the 1920s in Winchester, the town I inadvertently visited. It was a

9 Meaning an expert uses a combination of chemicals and mechanical means to make the wood look old and worn.

10 The company's early mission statement was, "Don't be evil." Apparently they changed their minds.

lemon and ginger delight. A blurb on the label from the owner said, “Four generations later, I still blend the secret recipe from Uncle Lee’s handwritten notes.” Lee had created it for the 1926 Clark County Fair.

For entertainment, I watched a very drunk older man all the staff seemed to know maneuver away from the bar—hopefully to a ride, because he was in no condition to walk, much less drive.

Just when I thought I was full, the server felt compelled to point out they had beignets on the dessert menu. She started to explain what they were, but I said with a twinkle in my voice, “I’ve been to New Orleans, I know.” She laughed. I went for the *small* portion of 10. What came out were little cream-filled pillows with a bourbon-based sweet dip, better than some I’d had in the Big Easy. I was overly full after six, but ate all 10. The whole meal came to a ridiculous $16.96.