



"All who are not cowards follow me!"

Nearly a year after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, what has come to be known as the last battle of the Revolutionary War in Kentucky was fought at the site of Blue Licks Battlefield State Park on August 19, 1782, in what is now Robertson County.

Members of the Kentucky Militia, 182 strong, gathered at Bryan's Station northeast of Lexington to avenge an attack on that stronghold by British and Indian forces. For two days the British laid siege to the fort, burned houses, cut down cornfields, killed livestock, and burned hemp in the fields. After two days, Captain William Caldwell, commander of the British and Indian troops, ordered his forces to retreat.

The British troops followed a buffalo trace, a path through the wilderness beaten out by the passage of buffalo, northeastward toward what are now the towns of Paris and Millersburg. They crossed the Licking River at Blue Licks ford and hid on the wooded hills overlooking the river.

Three groups of Kentucky Militia followed in hot pursuit, incensed by the destruction at Bryan's Station and ready for a fight. The troops were under the command of Colonel John Todd of Fayette County, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Trigg of Harrodstown, and Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Boone of Boonesborough. But it was a lower-ranking officer, Major Hugh McGary, who was to play a critical, even fatal role in the outcome of the Battle of Blue Licks.

While the Kentucky forces were gathering at Bryan's Station, Major McGary urged the militia to wait for the reinforcements of Colonel Benjamin Logan of Lincoln County. Apparently McGary was ridiculed by members of the militia and accused of "timidity." This incident probably caused McGary to later take an action which would affect the outcome of the Battle of Blue Licks.

The three Kentucky commanders decided to pursue the enemy, for they believed that a delay of one day would give the British forces time to cross the Ohio River. Over heavily wooded hills, across Elkhorn, Houston, and Hinkston creeks, throughout the steamy August day, the militia moved in rapid pursuit of the enemy.

As the Kentuckians approached the Licking River northeast of Millersburg, they discovered the British were making no effort to conceal their trail and were retreating at a leisurely pace. When they reached Blue Licks ford, there were disagreements among the militia. Should the troops cross the river at Blue Licks ford, should they wait for reinforcements, or should they divide their forces in a flanking movement and cross the river in different locations as Daniel Boone suggested? Disagreement reigned; Boone then advised delay. He knew the terrain well. At Blue Licks ford, the Licking River makes a u-shaped bend around a hill. At the crest of the hill were two wooded ravines filled with fallen timber. Boone felt this would be the perfect place for an ambush. Just as Boone suspected, the hill overlooking the creek provided good cover for an ambush. The main body of Indians hid in and behind fallen trees. A few others remained standing on the hillside along with the British troops.

Major McGary, the story goes, still smarting from the accusations leveled at him at Bryan's Station, waved his rifle, plunged into the river, and yelled, "all who are not cowards follow me." Immediately men began climbing into their saddles and wading into the river. All the commanders could do was follow their men into the water. On the other side of the river, a semblance of order was attained. The militia was divided into three columns abreast.

Trigg, who commanded the Harrodstown men, took the right flank, Todd and his Fayette men took the center, and Boone and the Boonesborough men the left flank. Some men dismounted and left their horses standing with their reins flung over their necks. The Kentuckians reached the top of the ridge and headed toward the ravines where Boone expected an ambush. When they were about 60 yards from the Indians, there was a volley of gunfire. Todd and 23 of his men in the center column were either wounded or killed. McGary, who was with Todd's troops, survived the first round of fire. Within several minutes, forty Kentuckians were down. Meanwhile on the right flank,

the Indians had shot Trigg and his men began to yield ground. Only Boone's troops were able to drive the enemy back; his men did not realize what was happening to the other columns. When his troops realized the turn the battle was taking, there was a panic-stricken rush toward the river.

Daniel Boone's son Israel was a member of the retreating forces. Boone found a horse and told his son to mount and ride off while he searched for another horse. Israel told his father he would not leave him. As Israel passed to take a final shot at the enemy, he was fatally wounded. Boone carried his dying son to a cave, caught a riderless horse, and led his men to safety across the Licking River.

The Battle of Blue Licks lasted only a few minutes and ended in bitter defeat for the early settlers in Kentucky. Some of their most able leaders had been killed. However, the defeat of the Kentuckians at Blue Licks and the ensuing panic among pioneers spurred George Rogers Clark and 1,050 riflemen to chase the Shawnee Indians from their villages near the Ohio River. Clark and his troops destroyed Chillicothe, a Shawnee town north of the Ohio, and five other Indian villages, thus striking the final blow of the Revolution.

Soldiers Who Fought in the Battle of Blue Licks

<p>OFFICERS WHO ESCAPED Lt. Col. Daniel Boone Maj. Levi Todd Maj. Hugh McGary Capt. John Allison Capt. Samuel Johnson Capt. Gabriel Madison' Capt. Robert Patterson</p>	<p>OFFICERS CAPTURED Capt. John Beasley Lieut. John McMurty</p> <p>OFFICER KIA Col. John Todd Col. Stephen Trigg Maj. Edward Bulgar Maj. Silas Harlan Capt. Joseph Kincaid</p>	<p>Capt. John Bulgar Capt. Clough Overton Capt. John Gordon Capt. William McBride Lieut. John Kennedy Lieut. James McGuire Lieut. William Givens Lieut. Barnett Rogers Lieut. Thomas Hinson Lieut. Joseph Lindsay</p>	<p>PRIVATES CAPTURED Lewis Rose Jesse Yocum James Elijah Woods James Morgan James Ledgerwood</p>
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<p>PRIVATES WHO ESCAPED John Childers Squire Boone, Jr. James Coburn William Barbee George Corn Thomas Gist Peter Harget Wainright Lea Andrew Morgan John Pitman Samuel Scott Thomas Stevenson Samuel Boone Jerry Craig Edward Graham Benjamin Hayden James McBride James Ray Abraham Scholl John Smith Jacob Stucker Benjamin Netherland</p>	<p>Whitfield Craig James Graham James M. January James McCullough John Morgan Aaron Reynolds James Twyman Joseph Scholl Andrew Steele James Swart Benjamin Cooper William Field Squire Grant James Kincaid William May James Rose Peter Scholl Jacob Stevens Henry Wilson Bartlett Searcy John Searcy William Shott Anthony Sowdusky</p>	<p>John Summers Robert Scott George Smith Samuel Shortridge Edmund Singleton Josiah Wilson Samuel Woods Thomas Acres William Aldridge Elijah Allen James Allen Abraham Bowman Robert Bowmar Thomas Brooks Jacob Coffman Joseph Collins Edward Corn William Custer Richard Davis Theodous Davis Peter Dierly Thomas Ficklin Henry French</p>	<p>Hency Grider Jeremiah Gullion John Hambleton John Hart James Hays James Harrod Henry Higgins John Hinch Charles Hunter Jacob Hunter Ephraim January William Lam John Little James McConnell Mordecai Morgan Henry Nixon James Norton Matthew Patterson John Peake Alexander Penlin Robert Poague Elisha Pruett Andrew Rule</p>
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<p>PRIVATES KILLED Thomas Boone (Daniel Boone' nephew) Charles Black Esau Corn Charles Ferguson John Fry Francis McBride Henry Miller Drury Polley James Smith Val. Stern John Wilson</p>	<p>Samuel Brannon Hugh Cunningham Emekiel Field Daniel Greggs Andrew McConnell John Nelson John Price William Smith John Stevenson Israel Wilson Israel Boone " Little" James Graham Thomas Farrier</p>	<p>John Doglass John Folley Jervis Green Isaac McCracken William Robertson John Stapleton William Stewart John Wilson William Eads Daniel Foster Matthew Harper Gilbert Marshall John O'Neal</p>	<p>Matthias Rose William Stephens Richard Tomlinson Matthew Wylie John Jolly Joseph Olffield William Shannon Archiblad Woods James Brown Francis Harper William Harris John Nutt</p>
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"Indeed you are a fine fellow!"

Todd, Trigg, Boone, and Blue Licks...all names and places etched in early Kentucky history. How different would the Battle of Blue Licks have been if a young Virginian named Simon Kenton had not saved Daniel Boone's life in 1777?

In 1771, 16-year-old Simon Kenton, alias Simon Butler, fled Virginia believing he had murdered his former girlfriend's husband. In the spring of 1775, Kenton set out down the Ohio River in search of a rich, fertile land the Indians called "Kain-tuck-ee." Within a mile of the present town of Washington, Kentucky, he found this rich land, set up camp, and cleared and planted an acre of land with corn bought from a French trader.

Throughout 1775 and 1776, Indians made frequent raids into Kentucky, attacking many small stations and forcing weaker stations, including Kenton's Washington homestead, to be abandoned. As a result, six "spies" were appointed by Daniel Boone to watch the Indians and give warning of their approach. Simon Kenton was one of six people appointed as a spy for the stations. The spies worked in pairs, alternating on a weekly basis. They traveled up and down the Ohio River, patrolling deserted stations and looking for signs of Indians.

On one significant occasion, the spies did not detect the approach of the enemy. Kenton and some of his fellow spies were at the gates of Boonesborough ready to leave the station to go hunting. Indians attacked men who were working in the fields outside the fort. Boone and approximately fourteen men ran out of the station to pursue the Indians. He and his men were soon surrounded and cut off from the fort. As they tried to fight their way back to the station, Boone was wounded and his leg was broken. An Indian, brandishing a tomahawk attacked the fallen Boone. Kenton shot the warrior and carried Boone into the fort. When the gate was closed and the fort secured, Boone sent for Kenton and said, "Well, Simon, you have behaved yourself like a man today-indeed you are a fine fellow."

Kenton eventually returned to his original homestead and established what is now the town of Washington in Mason County. Today two log cabins which were built prior to 1790 still stand on their original site. One of the restored cabins serves as an information center and the other is a replica of a frontier store. Washington is located 21 miles northeast of Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park on U.S. Highway 68.

Partaking of the Waters

The Lower Blue Licks Spring, famous because of the battle which took place nearby during the 18th century, once again experienced renown during the 19th century as a health resort or "watering place."

Instead of visiting Europe or the northeast, wealthy families from the South visited mineral springs in Kentucky to escape the summer heat and to partake of the "curative qualities" of the springs.

Much emphasis was placed on the "health-giving" qualities of mineral springs. The mineral waters were said to be beneficial to persons suffering from diseases of the stomach, liver, and kidneys, asthma, gout, dysplasia, rheumatism, neuralgia, "autumnal" fevers, and "general debility." Most watering places offered showers and tub baths where the patient could be "steamed out."

Blue Licks Springs boasted a 670-foot, three-story hotel, The Arlington, which had a full-length gallery where guests could walk, socialize, or enjoy the view of the hills and the Licking River. There was a large dining room where lavish banquets were served, a ballroom, and an observation building shaped like a bird cage and featuring a cupola.

The Arlington Hotel burned in 1862 and the Blue Licks Springs area began to decline in popularity. A few smaller hotels remained after the Civil War and regained popularity during the middle 1870s and early 1880s. However, the primary business at Lower Blue Licks after the Civil War was bottling mineral water.

Tusks and Tibias

In 1896, the Lower Blue Licks Spring went dry. In 1897, a local landowner, Thomas Hunter, attempted to locate the source of the old spring. He did not find the spring; however, what Hunter did discover would prove to be more valuable to most Kentuckians than spring water. Hunter discovered the tusk of a mastodon and various other animal bones. After the first dig was completed, Hunter hauled two wagon loads of artifacts from the site.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery occurred in 1945 when a group of Lexington archaeologists used a bulldozer to search for more artifacts. They dug a 10-foot trench and unearthed a section of a mastodon's tusk weighing more than 100 pounds and approximately three feet long. Using hand tools, they also found two vertebrae, a large joint

of a prehistoric animal, and bones of still more animals. These artifacts may be seen in the Pioneer Museum at Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park.

Salt - A Pioneer Necessity

Next to powder and lead, a basic need of pioneers was salt and expeditions went out frequently in search of salt "licks." "Licks" were places where wild animals went to lick the saline, brackish earth around springs. Daniel Boone led a party of Boonesborough men to lower Blue Licks in 1778. They carried with them several large boiling kettles given to the settlement by the government of Virginia. In 1932, Ed Hunter was searching for the source of Lower Blue Licks Spring when he discovered what is thought to be one of Daniel Boone's salting kettles.

The salting process used by the pioneers was long and tedious. Approximately 840 gallons of water were required to make one bushel of salt. Water was drawn in buckets suspended like those in a well, emptied into a trough supported by rafters, then funneled into boiling kettles. The boiling kettles were of different sizes and were placed parallel to each other on furnaces made of layers of stone cemented with mud. The furnaces were several feet deep and 12 to 15 feet in length. Each boiler required a separate fire and after each boiling the furnaces had to be newly cemented. The process required a great deal of labor, time, and firewood.

During Boone's 1778 salting expedition, his party ran low on food. Boone and several men went hunting for game. They were captured by a band of Shawnee Indians and forced to lead the Indians back to Blue Licks, where the rest of the Boonesborough men were taken prisoner. The Shawnee chief, Black Fish, liked Boone and insisted on adopting him, giving him the name "Sheltowee" or Big Turtle. The Sheltowee Trace, a hiking trail which runs through Daniel Boone National Forest, was named for Boone.

Blue Licks Golden Treasure



The first plant in Kentucky to be listed as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can be found only within a 2-mile radius of Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park and a small colony along the Blue River in Indiana. This extraordinary plant is Short's Goldenrod, named for Charles W. Short, a medical doctor and avid amateur botanist in the mid-19th century.

Short's Goldenrod looks like most other goldenrods at first glance, but is only known to exist today along the remains of the ancient buffalo trace in Northern Kentucky and the Indiana site. Botanists speculate there may be a connection between the bison and the goldenrod, but what could it be? Perhaps the bison, attracted to the salt springs in large numbers, reduced competition from other plants by constantly trampling the ground. This would benefit the goldenrod since it is intolerant of shade. Perhaps the shaggy coat of the bison was instrumental in dispersing the seeds of the goldenrod.

Whatever the connection may be, Short's Goldenrod has never been found anywhere but along the ancient paths followed by the bison, and since the herds of bison are gone and the old paths have almost been eradicated, Short's Goldenrod has disappeared, everywhere but at Blue Licks and within the Harrison-Crawford State Forest along the Blue River in Indiana.

The Kentucky State Park System, in cooperation with the Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission, has established a 15-acre nature preserve within Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park for the protection of Short's Goldenrod. You must be aware that there are limitations on visitor use of the preserve in order to minimize human impact. Help us protect the critical habitat of one of the rarest plants in North America. Remember, it is found nowhere else in the world.