

# *Historical Facts of Lee County, Virginia.*

*Boone Trail Historians.*

*Pennington Gap, VA  
1930*



This pamphlet given to Lovelady  
Chapter, Daughters of the American  
Revolution by Martha G. Barron  
(Mrs. J. R.) Mar. 11, 1951.

Sent to Virginia State Library by  
Lovelady Chapter Daughters American  
Revolution for the D.A.R. shelf.

Marguerite Young  
Lovelady Chapter Librarian H.S.L.  
January 25, 1953



# **THE BOONE TRAIL HISTORIANS OFFICERS**

**RUTH STOUT, President**  
**J. D. HOUSLEY, Vice President**  
**VIRGINIA LEWIS, Secretary**  
**MISS MARTHA GIBSON, Sponsor**

## **ROLL**

**Earl Carroll**  
**Otey Cottrell**  
**Walker Cress**  
**Walter Daugherty**  
**Angus David**  
**Robert Ellison**  
**Flournoy Gaujot**  
**Lavoy Grabeel**  
**Milford Hawks**  
**Paul Kelly**  
**Edwin King**  
**Frederick Luntsford**  
**Lawrence Moore**  
**Don Moore**  
**Smith Myers**  
**Oscar Paul Orr**  
**Charles Smith**  
**Elmo Keel**

**Jack Stacy**  
**Hubert Stapleton**  
**Edsil Stewart**  
**Tom Tiller**  
**Ralph Turner**  
**Howard Zion**  
**Christine Adams**  
**Gladys Allen**  
**Thelma Ely**  
**Alta Blair Fry**  
**Maud Grubbs**  
**Anna Mae Hobbs**  
**Bertie Johnson**  
**Vivian Lane**  
**Margaret Mathews**  
**Boots Richards**  
**Oza Yearly**  
**Verda Mosley**

# **Dedication**

to

**Miss Martha Gibson**

**Teacher of History**

in

**Pennington High School**

**This Sketch**

**Is Dedicated with**

**Appreciation and Love**

by

**The Boone Trail Historians**

To the memory  
of  
Betty Anne Graham  
a  
beloved and accomplished member  
of the  
Junior History Class

## FOREWARD

The following material was collected by the Junior History Class of Pennington High School in connection with the class work on a unit on local history. There may occur many discrepancies in both facts and dates but the material is based on tradition and facts that have been related and preserved by Lee Countains.



## FIRST EXPLORATIONS MADE IN LEE COUNTY

It was in 1748 that efforts were made towards exploration of the inlands West of the Alleghanies and on beyond Cumberland Gap. In that and the succeeding year two large land companies were formed in London under Royal Charter, the Loyal Land company; with authority to survey and locate 800,000 acres of land now a part of Kentucky; and the Ohio company, authorized to locate 500,000 acres beyond the Kanawho and Monongahela rivers.

Dr. Thomas Walker was engaged to make the first exploration, and Christopher Gist was engaged to lead the second. These two were the first explorers to leave a record of their observations. Since Dr. Walker had charge of explorations in this vicinity, portions of his journal are interesting:

“Having on the 12th of December last been employed for a certain consideration to go Westward in order to discover a proper place for a settlement. I left my home on the Sixth of March, at 10:00 o’clock, 1750 in company with Ambrose Powell, William Tomlinson, Colby Chew, Henry Lawless and John Hughes, each man had a horse and we had two to carry baggage.”

Then the Doctor relates each day’s experience from March 6 to April 9 which brings his party to what to-day is Clinch river not far from the Gap. He continues:

“We traveled to a river, which I supposed to be that which the hunters call Clinch’s River from one Clinch, a hunter, who first found it. We marked several Beeches on the East Side. We could not find a ford shallow enough to carry our baggage over on our horses. Ambrose Powell forded over on one horse and we drove the others after him.”

“April 13th, we went four miles to a large creek, and from there six miles to Cave Gap, the land being level.” Beyond a doubt the “large creek” Dr. Walker mentions is

the river which today bears the name of his comrade, Ambrose Powell.

Furthermore, one of the first of hunters who visited this section, was a company organized by Elisha Wallen, accompanied by Scaggs, Blevens, Cox, and others. They remained eighteen months, during which time they hunted in Clinch and Powell Valley's and went as far as Laurel Mountain in Kentucky.

In 1760 Nathaniel Gist came through this territory on his way to Cumberland Gap. He had been with Boone in what is now Abingdon, Virginia and they separated there. Gist is probably the best Indian spy and hunter we read about in our early history.

## BOONE IN LEE COUNTY

In 1767 Boone started out with his brother and another man to search out a route to North Carolina that would pass through Cumberland Gap, but passed over the mountain somewhere to the Northeast of the Gap and he and his comrades returned to North Carolina.

But Boone was not to stay long in his old settlements home until his next chance came. In 1768 John Findley visited Boone and told him in detail how to reach Quasioto Pass, so, with Findley as a guide, Boone with a small party of skilled huntsmen, again pushed into the wilderness. This time he succeeded in finding the great pass, in 1769.

Boone made his second trip into Kentucky in 1773 and on his return trip he met Captain William Russell of Castlewood somewhere in Clinch Valley. At the meeting they made plans for a strong party to make a settlement in Kentucky.

Five or six families were organized and they agreed to assemble in Powell's Valley for the trip through the wilder-

ness of Kentucky.

By September 25, of this year 1773 after extensive preparation Boone and the others started for Powells Valley. On reaching Abingdon, Boone sent his sixteen year old son, James, in company with John and Richard Mendenhall, to Castlewood to notify Captain Russell and obtain supplies and implements. Here they were joined by Henry Russell and Isaac Crabtree, and two negro slaves, Adam and Charles, and continued their way down the Clinch river to meet the main body at Powell's Valley. But before they could make contact with the main body they were attacked by Indians and all were massacred except Isaac Crabtree and the two slaves, Adam and Charles.

Isaac Crabtree and Adam made the party safely but Charles was taken captive and latter killed because of a quarrel between the Indians to see which would possess him.

Daniel Boone's party was camped near Stickleyville, Lee County while waiting for James party and the supplies. But hearing of the murder of his son and Henry Russell he tried to persuade the rest of the party to continue the journey but instead they scattered in various directions while Boone and his family went to Castlewood to wait for a more favorable time to organize a party.

In August 1774 Dunmore's war broke out, Boone and Michael Stover were sent by Captain Russell to warn the surveyors of Kentucky of the dangers of the threats of Indian outbreaks. On the return journey which had extended as far as Ohio, he followed the old Wilderness road entering Lee County at Cumberland Gap, following the crossing into Scott County by way of Wallens Ridge and Stickleyville.

On one of Boone's journeys through this county, he spent the night at the home of Peter Fulkerson. The log house is still standing and in use today. It is on the left side of the road entering Rose Hill

Except that Boone passed through Lee County on his

way to and from Kentucky, the most important events are his making the Wilderness Road and the death of his son, James, which has been related.

(Parts are taken from Summers)

## **THE FIRST SETTLEMENT IN LEE COUNTY**

In about the year 1768 or 1769 General Joseph Martin with a number of men say twenty or thirty, made the first settlement in Lee County, at a place afterwards known by the name of "Martin's Station", on the great throughfare leading to Kentucky. Dr. Walker had told Mr. Martin of Powell's Valley and represented it in such terms as induced him to make the venture into the wilderness. Here they cleared land and planted corn and other vegetables. In the latter part of the summer the Indians caused them to abandon the enterprize.

In 1774 the great Shawnee war broke out and an immense frontier was exposed and Martin engaged in that war. In this same year a company was organized under Henderson and others which purchased from the Cherokees the whole or nearly the whole of the Western parts of Virginia and North Carolina, as those states then claimed, a great part of which is now a part of Kentucky and Tennessee. Mr. Martin was appointed entry-clerk and agent for the Powell Valley position of Henderson's purchase. He and others went in the early part of the year 1775 to the very spot where he had planted corn several years before. This was fifty miles in advance of the then frontier. Here they made corn that year. The next year the great Cherokee war broke out, as it was called at the time. The Cherokees were then a great and powerful people living not far from Powell's Valley, and being incited by British agents sent among them, began a sudden war on the whole frontier border. Powell's Valley felt her full share of this mighty onset and the whole settle-

ment was again broken up. This happened in June 1776.

After the break up of the settlement Mr. Martin returned to his home in Virginia, raised and commanded a company of men, and joined a campaign against the Cherokees commanded by Col. Christian. This company of two thousand men marched against the Cherokees in the Autumn of that year, laid waste a great part of their settlement and returned having met with little opposition. On the return of the army it was disbanded with the exception of a few companies posted on the frontier; one of which Mr. Martin commanded.

During the darkest period of the Revolution General Joseph Martin rendered great service to the cause by his tact and force of character in dealing with the Indians on the frontier.

In 1788 Mr. Martin resigned his Indian agency, and went to his old home in Henry County, Virginia, having spent the greater part of the twenty-five years of his life in the Western country, and half that time in public employment

Reminiscences of General Joseph Martin. By his eldest son, William Martin. Published by his great-grand son, Martin Williams.

## THE LOCATION OF MARTIN'S STATION VIRGINIA

Martin's Station, or cabin, was in the very early days of the wilderness Road to Kentucky, the only station between the beginning point of the road, the Blockhouse, in Virginia and Crab Orchard on the edge of the settlement in Kentucky, and throughout the period of the Wilderness Road's great activity it remained the important intermediate station. All of the few journals of the Road testify to its importance, and

there is hardly an outstanding character among the Kentucky pioneers, from Boone to George Rogers Clark, who does not indicate somewhere the importance he attached to this station. Its existence was in fact essential to the success of the early pioneer movements into Kentucky. Its importance lay first in the situation of the Station almost half way between the Blockhouse and Crab Orchard and second, and to a less extent in the character of its founder, Capt. Joseph Martin. Hulbert says upon this point. "It is plain that the great immigration to Kentucky would have been out of the question had there been no means of assistance along the road. There were many who gained their livelihood as pioneer innkeepers and provisioners along Boone's Road. Among the very few of these of whom any record is left, Captain Joseph Martin is perhaps the most worthy of remembrance." "Martins Cabin" or "Station," as it is variously termed occupied a strategic point in far famed Powell's Valley, one hundred and eighty miles west of Ingles Ferry, twenty miles east of Cumberland Gap, and about one hundred and thirty miles southeast of Crab Orchard and Boonesborough. Captain Martin was Virginia agent for Indian affairs, and was the most prominent man in the scattered settlements in Powell's Valley, where he was living at the time of the founding of Boonesborough. Later he made his headquarters at Long Island in North Carolina. "It is plain from Colonel Henderson's journal that wagons could proceed along Boone's Road in 1775 no further than Martin's Cabin. Here everything was transferred to the pack horses."

Martins Cabin stood not a mile South of where the Wilderness Road crossed Martins Creek, but actually on the Wilderness Road.

My authority for this location is the Rev. Isaac S. Anderson of Rose Hill Virginia. Dr. Anderson comes of a pioneer family whose members have lived in this part of the state since the time of the Holston settlement. He was a

direct descendant of Captain John Anderson who built the Blockhouse.

The information from Dr. Anderson is contained in a letter to me of July 17, 1926; 'Martin's Station was built by Capt. Joseph Martin in Powell Valley in 1768. This Cabin stood just to the left of the pike road beyond the first bridge over Martin's Creek one-half mile from Rose Hill, R. R. Depot, Lee Co., Va. The spring is on the right of the pike road.'

The road its self passes directly through the site of the stockade between the spring which is on the south side of the road, and only about one hundred and fifty feet north of the spring. The spring furnishes a bold unfailing stream of water. The site is fifteen or twenty feet above the level of the creek and is well drained, The location is beautiful. It is between the fine range of Cumberland Mountain and that of Powell Mountain, at the point where Powell's Valley opens out into a wide attractive rolling Valley.

This location of course, conforms to what would be expected if Martin's Cabin was located anywhere on Martin's Creek, it would be where the road crossed the creek and not at a considerable distance from that point.

Wm. Allen Pusey

## ORGANIZATION OF LEE COUNTY

Lee was formed in 1792, from Russell, and named after Henry Lee Gov. of Va. from 1791 to 1794, it lies in the South-western angle of the State, bordering on Tennessee and Kentucky. Its greatest length is 75 miles, breadth 10 miles. The Cumberland Mountains run on the Kentucky line, the Powell Mountain is on a part of the se-boundary, and there are several other ridges in the county known as Stone, Chestnut, Wallens, and etc. Powells River runs lengthwise through the county into Tennessee. Much of the land is of

a very black rich soil. The staples are beef, pork, and horses. The people of this county make their own sugar, and molasses from the maple sugar trees which grow in great abundance. Population in 1840, whites 7,829 slaves 580, free colored 32, total 8,441.

## **THE WILDERNESS ROAD IN LEE COUNTY**

Daniel Boone in 1776 undertook to mark out a road from Watauga, Tennessee, through the wilderness to Kentucky. His party consisted of about thirty men.

As near as we can determine by tradition in this county the trail cut by Boone entered Lee County at Pattonville, crossed Powell mountain to Stickleville, then it went Westward down Wallens Creek to its mouth at Kyles Ford on Powell River, thence to Martin's Station and Cumberland Gap. On the other hand, if he from Duffield, kept the South side of Powell mountain going eight or ten miles into the Blackwater country, he crossed Powell mountain near or at Hunter's Gap, striking Wallens Creek; thence, Westward to Kyle's Ford, and from Kyle's Ford to Martin's Station and Cumberland Gap.

The above seems to be the most authenticate account of the record of the omitted section of Boone's Trail through this county.

## **EARLY SETTLERS IN LEE COUNTY**

Between 1777 and 1780 the second settlement in Lee County was made at Stickleysville by Robert Duff, who built a cabin at the Head of Wallens Creek. He owned all the land in this valley.



Two or three other families soon come to this fertile valley, and among these was Archibald Scott; He was later killed by the Indians and his wife, Fannie Dickenson Scott, carried into captivity.

About 1790 a man by the name of John Yokum settled with his family somewhere West of Powell mountain. Here he built a fort, living here about ten years, until the settlers became too numerous, then with his family he followed the Boone Trail into Kentucky. Yokum was a wild natured man and a good bear and deer hunter. He was often called "Fear Killing John." The Yokum district in the Eastern part of Lee County is named for this early pioneer.

"Edward Pennington came to this county from New River, probably in North Carolina, in about 1790. He built his first home somewhere on the banks of Powell River about two miles east of the town of Dryden. Mr. Pennington married a Miss Flanary. The Flanary family had preceded him and settled in the neighborhood of Yokum Fort. After marrying he took his young wife, and went to the south side of the gorge, of what is now Pennington Gap, a distance of about six miles from the old Yokum Fort. With a horse, bridle and Flint lock gun he bought a large tract of land from people whose name was Butchers. On this tract of land he built a house consisting of three pens in a row, and one and one-half stories high. The house which he built was torn down about the year 1880 and on its site a frame house was erected. Edward Pennington died about the year 1861."

Between the land holdings of Edward Pennington and Cane Creek a man by the name of Michael Friel entered a large tract of land that extended from the North Fork of Powell River to near what is now Ben Hur. Most of this land was sold by the said Friel to Michall Myers and John Zion. The town of Pennington is now located on lands formerly owned by the Zion and Myers ancestors.

About the time Edward Pennington came to Lee County a man by the name of Abraham Jones settled on Sugar Run

near the present home of J. Olin Woodard, He had a son named Fredrick. The records of this county show that Fredrick Jones gave about 65 acres of land around Jonesville for the purpose of locating thereon a court house, and the town was called Jonesville in honor of this worthy pioneer.

Major George Gibson settled in Lee County in 1790 at Gibson Station (from which Gibson Station took its name). Major Gibson served in the Southern Division of Lord Dunmores Army commanded by General Andrew Lewis; and in the Revolutionary war as a major of the 4th Virginia Regiment. Four hundred acres of land was granted him in Washington county in 1788 and three hundred acres in Lee County in 1800; In the year 1790 he built a two-story log home at Gibson Station. This house is still standing, and from that day to this has never passed from the hands of his decendents.

Mr. Jim Graham came to this county between 1795 and 1800 and settled at what is now York on the old Fincastle road. He owned a large tract of land in this part of the county. Mr. Graham was the great grandfather of Mrs. Mary P. Kelly of Pennington.

## **INTERESTING FACTS OF PIONEER DAYS**

### **INDIANS**

During the early pioneer days the Indians living in and near what is now Lee County belonged to the Cherokee tribe. There were two Indian villages in the county, one near what is now Natural Bridge three miles west of Jonesville, another near what is now Rose Hill where you will find a number of Indian Mounds at the present time which are located and marked on the state highway. Numbers of relics have been found in Lee County. The two most important collections

of these is the one collected by the late Col. A. L. Pridemore. This collection is now on display at William and Mary College. The other collection was made by the late Dr. Will Spencer and his brother Mr. Mel Spencer. These have been loaned to Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate.

The last battle between the Whites and Indians in Lee County took place in Hickory Flats, with John Sevier from Tennessee in command. The Indians had raided the settlers in Tennessee carrying off their horses and capturing several women. They were followed by a party of men under John Sevier and overtaken in Hickory Flats, here a battle took place and the Indians were defeated.

### THE STORY OF FANNIE SCOTT

Archibald Scott was one of the first pioneers that settled in that quiet and beautiful little valley between Powell Mountain and Wallens Ridge in Lee County. Mr. Scott married Fannie Dickenson and built a home in this valley five years after Boone had passed along the same trail with his family on their way to Kentucky, Mr. Scott erected his cabin on the head waters of Wallens Creek, near the spot now occupied by the residence of Mr. Thomas D. Duff.

On June 20, 1785 the family had retired, without a thought of danger, when the house was attacked by a band of Shawnee Indians, who by some means had been diverted from their usual route, and having seen the smoke rising from the cabin, were attracted to it, and had lain in ambush on the mountain side till night fall. When all was quiet, they approached and entered the cabin, and the first notice that the husband and father had of their presence was the gleam of the tomahawk that struck him. After scalping Mr. Scott, they murdered and scalped his five children, and plundered and burned the cabin. Taking Mrs. Scott prisoner they started on the long journey to their towns beyond the Ohio river. When faint and weary she failed to travel as

rapidly as her captors desired, they would slap her in the face with the bloody scalps of her dead husband and children. After traveling about 200 miles they reached their home and she was left with one guard while the rest of the band continued to hunt for game. Some few hours after they left the guard fell into a profound sleep and she escaped, coming to a creek she waded down it for several miles to lose her trail and then for weeks she traveled without food, toward the Cumberland Mountains.

One morning Mrs. Scott heard a party of Indians on her trail, seeing a large hollow log she climbed into it and a friendly spider spun a web over the end. The Indians approached the log but seeing the spider web passed on. After many weeks of weary travel Mrs. Scott made her way to Castlewood where many of her people lived.