
Jesse Boone

His
Ancestors
and
Descendants



By
DR. J. E. HODGES
Maiden, North Carolina
One of his descendants

1953



ALLEN BOONE AND WIFE ANN HARDY

**This is the only picture of any of the early Boones
found, so far**

JESSE BOONE, SON OF ISRAEL BOONE

In the year 1790 the county of Burke, N. C., consisted of the territory now constituting the counties of Caldwell, portions of Avery, Watauga and the greater part of the other counties west to the Tennessee line.

The first Federal census, taken that year, shows that somewhere in that vast territory resided Jesse Boone and Jonathan Boone, both with families consisting of their wives and seven children, each family recorded with three sons and four daughters.

It seems that Jesse Boone and family has created greater interest than Jonathan and many theories as to his parentage have been advanced, many of them widely divergent, and of course, erroneous.

Some have asserted that he was a brother of the famous Daniel Boone, yet nobody seemed able to offer any proof as to his parentage.

Some years ago, knowing his own direct line of descent from Jesse Boone, the writer determined to ferret out the mystery, if it was humanly possible to do so, and while he has had evidence, satisfactory to himself of Jesse's parentage for some years, he has recently assembled what should satisfy the most skeptical, and presents it for the benefit of the numerous descendants of Jesse Boone, wherever they may be.

When the "Boone Family," a monumental work of genealogy of seven hundred pages was compiled by Mrs. Hazel A. Spraker, of Buffalo, N. Y., she recorded little of Jesse Boone, except a quotation from the history of Watauga County, by J. P. Arthur, a valuable work on local history, though containing many errors.

When the question of Jesse Boone's parentage began to arouse interest, by careful elimination, it was reduced to either Jonathan or Israel Boone, as it was found that Daniel Boone nor none of their other brothers had a son named Jesse. Here, for years, the matter rested.

Then in the 1920s Mrs. Spraker's "Boone Family" appeared, quoting an excerpt from the Draper Mss., a statement from Mr. Enoch M. Boone, a son of Squire Boone, Jr., who was a brother of Daniel Boone and Jonathan Boone.

He remembered that his uncle Jonathan came to Kentucky early, and was tending Squire Boone's Mill in 1783. That he finally settled on the Wabash, in Illinois, and died there about 1808. Also, of his three sons, John settled in Kentucky, Joseph in Mississippi and Daniel at St. Antoine, Texas, where he was killed by the Indians.

This eliminated Jonathan as the father of Jesse, and left none of Squire Boone's sons who could have been the father of Jesse, except Israel.

Still we had no documentary evidence saying that Jesse Boone was the son of Israel.

It is not our purpose here to recount any Boone history other than necessary to make this problem understood.

It will be recalled that Squire Boone brought his family from Pennsylvania to North Carolina in 1750, and settled on the Yadkin river in what now is Davidson county, then Anson.

History tells us that he had the following children: Sarah, born 1724; Israel, 1726; Samuel, 1728; Jonathan, 1730; Elizabeth, 1732; Daniel, 1734; Mary, 1736; George, 1739; Edward, 1740; Squire, 1744; Hannah, 1746.

Until recent years the only published history on Israel Boone was that in the records of the Exeter Quaker Meeting, in Pennsylvania, where he was testified against for "marrying out" on December 31, 1747. Therefore he married sometime in 1747, but no record of his wife's name has been found.

At one time, it was said that he went to Kentucky, as evidenced by a deed on record in Fayette county from him to his brother Daniel.

I obtained a photostat copy of this deed, and other information regarding it, and find that this deed is related to Col. Daniel Boone's son, Israel, who was killed in the battle of Blue Licks.

In 1823, Jesse Boone left North Carolina and settled down for the last time in McMinn county, Tennessee. I located some of his descendants there and visited them in June 1952. Mrs. Walter Copeland, a great-great-granddaughter of Jesse Boone, who lives on a portion of the land entered by Jesse in 1824, told me she had always been taught that their family descended from Israel Boone and not from Daniel, the old hunter. Mrs. Copeland knew her grandmother, the wife of Allen Boone, who was a young girl when Jesse died, and was familiar with the family history. This old lady taught her children and grandchildren that they were descendants of Israel Boone.

The following, unless otherwise noted, is from the Draper Mss., in possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, photostat copies of which are in my possession.

DR. DRAPER ENTIRELY CONVINCED

After a long and painstaking investigation in which he interviewed dozens of Boones and Bryans, closely related to Israel Boone, only a few of which we quote herein, Dr. Draper heads his "Notes on Jesse Boone" with this direct, unmodified statement of his own:

"Jesse Boone was a son of Israel Boone, a brother of Col. Daniel Boone."

The evidence he collected through the years convinced him of the parentage of Jesse Boone beyond the least doubt.

Statement of Daniel Bryan, son of William Bryan and Mary Boone Bryan, and a nephew of Israel Boone:

"When Squire Boone returned to Kentucky, Jesse Boone and Alexander Neely came with him. Jesse Boone was a son of Daniel Boone's brother, Israel."

Another statement by Bryan in Appendix sketches No. 4:

"Israel Boone, born May 9, 1726, married in Exeter out of order in 1747, went to North Carolina with his father where he died early of consumption, which he was supposed to have caught from his wife who died of that disease before him. They left a son Jesse."***"

Samuel Boone, son of George Boone, another brother of Daniel and Israel, told Dr. Draper:

"Israel Boone, brother of Col. Daniel Boone, never came to Kentucky, but died in North Carolina. He had four children, two sons and two daughters."

Dr. Draper's notes on Jesse Boone, page 197:

"Jesse Boone was a son of Israel Boone, an older brother of Col. Daniel Boone. Israel Boone was born May 9th, 1726, died and was buried near Mocksville, formerly Rowan, now Davie county, N. C., and C. Harbin's letter (among the Bryan Papers) shows that he died June 26, 1756, aged 30 years."

"Capt. Samuel Boone says, 'Israel Boone died in North Carolina when about 30 years old, leaving four children, two sons and two daughters.' Israel Boone was married in 1747, one child born 1748, one 1750, one in 1752 and one in 1754. The two daughters may have taken the consumption from their mother and died early."

"If Jesse was the oldest and born in 1748 that would have made him 22 in 1770, when he went to Kentucky with Squire Boone with supplies for Daniel Boone. If he died in 1829, he would have been 81 years of age."

It will be seen that Jesse made his will November 23, 1829, though he may not have died till in 1830.

A bit of additional evidence is contained in the Moravian Records as to the cause of Israel Boone's early death.

The Moravians made their first settlement near Winston-Salem in 1753. This was only about twenty miles from the Boone and Bryan settlements on the Yadkin.

In the first group of settlers was a young doctor, Hans Martin Kalberlahn, who had obtained all the medical education available at that period, and in proficiency, was fifty or seventy-five years ahead of his time.

These Moravians kept careful diaries, recording the happenings of each day. The diary for 1755 contains the following entry:

"August 26. A consumptive came with his mother and asked to remain two weeks for treatment and we could not refuse."

"September 1. The consumptive was taken home by his brother, who came for him last evening. He—Mr. Boone—returned on the 6th, accompanied by his father, who remained over night. On the 15th his brother came for him, and he left, there being small hope for his recovery."

The Boones came into that region in 1750. Squire, the father, did not die till 1765, and none of his sons died in the Yadkin county except Israel.

This consumptive Boone, who went to the Moravian doctor for treatment, could have been none other than Israel.

The Moravians said there 'was small hope for his recovery,' and Israel died the next year—1756.

In the Lexington Herald, Lexington, Ky., edition of Sunday, April 17, 1927, is one of a series of articles by the late J. R. Cooper, an outstanding Boone historian of Kentucky, in which he says:

"Jesse Boone was a son of Daniel Boone's brother, Israel."

I have the sworn statement of the publishers on this.

Jesse Boone was probably born in 1748, as he seems to have been older than his brother, Jonathan.

He married Sarah McMahan, daughter of James McMahan, of Rowan county, N. C., about 1772.

Just when he and Jonathan came to Burke county is unknown, though he first entered land there in 1777. He entered four tracts of land between 1777 and 1801.

Jonathan first entered land in 1779, and by 1805 had entered five tracts of land chiefly on Mulberry creek and waters thereof. (Records in Land Grant office, Raleigh, N. C.)

To Jesse and Sarah Boone were born the following children: Jonathan, about 1774; Daniel, 1776-7; Israel, 1780; Sarah, Hannah, Anna, Celia, 1790, Rachel. Dates of the births of the daughters unknown, except Celia who was born 1790 and died 1874.

Israel, youngest son of Jesse, married about 1804, Elizabeth Moore, born 1787, daughter of Daniel and Rachel (Stone) Moore, of the Globe region of Caldwell county.

The Moore family was one of the pioneer settlers of this region of old Burke county, coming from Virginia about 1772.

From this Israel Boone and Elizabeth Moore are descended the Boones of McMinn county, Tennessee.

Jesse's daughters married—Sarah, Jonathan Wilson; Hannah, Smith Coffey; Anna, William Coffey; Celia, William (Buck) Gragg; Rachel, Marvel Coffey, this latter in 1812. (See Jesse Boone's Will.)

Some time about 1810, or soon after, Jesse settled near Coffey's Gap of the Blue Ridge where he remained till the autumn of 1823. A creek flowing through that section into Watauga river is still known as Boone's Fork.

He, his wife Sarah, and son Jonathan united with Three Forks Baptist church, near the present town of Boone, in Watauga county, N. C. Also his negro woman, Dinah.

This church was organized in 1790. I have a copy of its minutes from date of organization. They contain many entries concerning the Boones.

After moving to Tennessee they united with old Zion Hill Baptist church in the community where Jesse entered his land. Mrs. Copeland has the original minutes of this old church, and I have copies of the entries about the Boones. They tell us of some of Jesse's grandchildren. In the fall of 1823, Jesse and his family, consisting of his wife and several of his children with their families, turned their faces westward.

On July 8, 1823, Jesse sold his farm of 350 acres on Flanners Fork of New River, for \$600 to Alexander Elrod—Ashe county, N. C. Deed Book M. Page 391.

On Sept. 15, 1821, his son, Jonathan, sold his 245-acre farm on the north side of New River adjoining the lands of Jesse Council to John Hardin for \$600.—Ashe county Deed Book S. page 509. This land adjoined the Three Forks church land.

No doubt these sales were made in preparation for the move to Tennessee. Jesse was either accompanied or joined soon after settling in Tennessee, by all three of his sons, and his sons-in-law, Jonathan Wilson and Marvel Coffey.

They all seemed to have settled on Middle Creek, making a small community themselves. Some additional information from the Draper Mss. referring to Jesse Boone:

"His granddaughter, Mrs. Sarah Henderson, says, 'His parents dying when Jesse was young, he lived in Daniel Boone's family.'"

"Nathan Boone and his wife (notes p. 54) also say, 'as Jesse's mother having died of consumption, and his father soon following her with that fatal disease, young Jesse was mainly raised by Daniel Boone and wife.'"

Quotations as to Jesse Boone's size and the probable date of his death:

"Rev. Levi Wilson, a grandson, says, 'five feet and nine inches.'"

"John Boone of Round Rock, Texas, a grandson of Jesse Boone, says, 'five feet eight or ten inches.' Also thinks his grandfather died about 1830 at 80 years of age."

"John Boone's brother, Daniel Boone of Smithfield, Texas, thinks his grandfather, Jesse Boone, died between 1830 and 1883, aged 82."

"Israel Wilson, a grandson of Jesse Boone, thinks he died about 1833."

"Rev. Levi Wilson says his mother (a daughter of Jesse Boone) used to speak of his being in the eighties at death."

Jesse's son, Jonathan, had sons, Daniel, John and Jonathan, Jr., and a daughter, Elizabeth.—Zion Hill church minutes.

Entries in the old Zion Hill church minutes show that there were a Jesse and Israel Boone among the grandchildren.

The Rev. Levi Wilson and Israel Wilson, of the Draper Mss. were sons of Jonathan Wilson who married Sarah, the daughter of Jesse Boone.

Israel, youngest son of Jesse Boone, remained on the Boone lands on Middle Creek, in McMinn county, Tenn., and he and his wife are buried in the church yard of Zion Hill church. The inscription on their tombstones read:

Israel Boone
Born Feb. 7, 1780
Died Oct. 13, 1839

Elizabeth Boone
Born Sept. 23, 1787
Died April 13, 1843

They named their eldest son Daniel, and this Daniel married Emily Triplett, daughter of William Triplett of Wilkes county, N. C. They had fifteen children, who were great-grandchildren of Jesse Boone.

The complete list of the children of Israel Boone and Elizabeth Moore Boone: Nancy; Daniel, born on Mulberry creek, Caldwell county, N. C., married Emily Triplett; Rachel, married Daniel Moss; Allen, born Feb. 5, 1816, married Ann Hardy in 1838. Ann was born March 2, 1822, and died in 1907; Elizabeth, married Medaris; John married Betsy Moore; Sarah, married Henderson; Israel, the youngest child, married a Haigler.

Ann Hardy Boone was the one who passed the information on down to her children and grandchildren that they were not descendants of Col. Daniel Boone, but of his brother, Israel.

Allen and Ann had a son, Daniel K. Boone, who was the father of Mamie Boone, the present Mrs. Walter Copeland of McMinn county, Tenn. Daniel K. Boone married Liberty Jane Ferguson, a descendant of some of the first settlers of McMinn county, going there from Wilkes county, N. C.

Let us keep in mind that the people quoted by Dr. Draper regarding Jesse Boone's parentage were sons of Israel Boone's brothers and sisters and should be expected to know what they were talking about.

Also that Nathan Boone was the youngest son of Col. Daniel Boone, and should have known if his father had a part in rearing Jesse.

Jonathan Boone, brother of Jesse, was evidently younger than Jesse. We quote from Draper:

"Jonathan Boone, brother of Jesse, was grandfather of Rev. N. L. Clark of Mississippi, and of A. T. Littlejohn of Caldwell county, N. C., and if he died about 1825 as Mr. Clark says, and was about 70 as Mr. Littlejohn says, then he was younger than Jesse."

He was a member of Yadkin Baptist church, and according to the minutes of that old church, he had died prior to the third Saturday in October, 1826.

I am indebted to Mr. H. W. Goforth of Caldwell county, N. C., for the following list of his children: Thomas, born about 1774, had a large family; two daughters, names unknown; Jephtha; Eleanor, born 1782, married Jeremiah Clark; Jemima, born 1785-6, married Jacob Setzer; John, born Sept. 19, 1789, married Isabella Kincaid. John was sheriff of Burke county 1832-33 and 1836-37, dying in office November 22, 1837.

Three of Jesse Boone's daughters, Anna Coffey, Hannah Coffey and Celia Gragg, remained in North Carolina, reared families and died here.

Many of their descendants still live in Caldwell, Burke, Watauga and Avery counties, and only a few of them know their places in the Boone family tree.

CHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND CELIA (BOONE) GRAGG

Allen; John; William, born 1811, married Susannah Greene; Isom; Enoch; Jesse, married 1st—Mast, 2nd—Legrand Braswell; America, married Lewis Harris; Eliza, married Judson Moore.

Allen Gragg had a son, Osmond, born 1832, who married Nancy Harris, born 1833. They were the parents of Rev. Shelby Eber Gragg, now about 92 years of age and active in the ministry.

CHILDREN OF SMITH AND HANNAH (BOONE) COFFEY

Squire, married Ella Webb; Morgan, married Elizabeth Day; Athan, married Polly McGuire; Sallie, married Wm. Puett; Leland, married Myra Day; Isaac, married Sallie Estes; Millie, married John Tritt.

CHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND ANNA (BOONE) COFFEY

Daniel, married Clarrisa Estes; Wilburn, married Sallie Cottrell; Celia, married Hezikah Curtis; Gilliam, married 1st Polly Moore, 2nd Susan Gragg; Calvin, married Mary Greene.

There is a bit of tradition that has been, at times, confusing to writers of Boone history, the statement that Jesse Boone was either the grandfather, or father of Judge Ratliff Boone, who was governor of Indiana in 1822.

It seems that Ratliff's parents were a Jesse Boone and his wife Kessiah, who emigrated from Georgia to Kentucky when Ratliff was a boy.

I have found nothing to indicate that he was related to the Squire Boone family of N. C. On the other hand, I believe he was from the Boones of Eastern North Carolina, as a Ratlif is mentioned in the will of Joseph Boone, Feb. 19, 1728, of Eastern Carolina.—(See N. C. Wills, by Grimes.)

JESSE BOONE'S LAND GRANT

Grant No. 503

State of Tennessee

Jesse Boone this day enters as occupant enterer, agreeable to law, the southwest corner of Section 5, Township 5, Range 1, East of the Meridian, in the county of McMinn, Hiwassee District. Beginning on the Northwest corner of said quarter, 160 acres.

July 27, 1824.

Jesse Boone

JESSE BOONE'S WILL

In the name of God Amen. I, Jesse Boon of the county of McMinn and State of Tennessee, of sound and dispositive mind and memory do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament.

1st. I commit my Soul to God who gave it, and my body to my friends that it may be decently buried.

All my property, both real and personal, that may remain after my debts are paid I lend to my beloved wife, Sarah Boon, for her use during her natural life and widowhood. After her death I wish my negro woman, Dinah, be freed and set at liberty.

My land lying on Middle Creek to be divided between my sons Israel and Jonathan according to lines thereto agreed afore,—viz. the parts laid off for Israel and Daniel Boone to belong to Israel and the parts laid off for Jonithan Boon and Marvel Coffey to belong to Jonithan, the whole to be valued at seven hundred dollars; out of the property which may them remain I give to the amount of two hundred dollars to Jonithan Wilson, Smith Coffey, William Coffey and William Gragg, which with a negro man named Martin heretofore given to them and valued at five hundred dollars is intended as equivalent to the land already disposed of—then the remainder, if any to be equally divided between Daniel Boon, Israel Boon, Jonithan Boon, Marvel Coffey, Jonithan Wilson, Smith Coffey, William Gregg and William Coffey.

Lastly I appoint Israel Boon and Asbur, M. Coffey Executors of this my last will and Testament.

Signed, sealed and published in presence of us this 23rd day of Nov., 1829.

Witnesses:
A. M. Coffey
Jonithan Allen

Jesse Boon (Seal)

Copied from McMinn County, Tennessee, Wills, Book A—Fragment, Book B—Complete. Copied under Works Progress Administration, 1936.

Isabell E. Allmond
Asst. Librarian, N.S., D.A.R.

Certified to be a true copy of the original record. Subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of May, A.D., 1950, at Washington, D. C.

(Notarial
Seal)

Ida E. McWhorter
Notary Public

THE AUTHOR'S PLACE IN THE FAMILY TREE

William Gragg and Celia (Boone) Gragg had a son, William Gragg, Jr., who was the father of Louisa Gragg. She married Edward Hodges, and they were the parents of the writer's father, L. P. Hodges. Therefore, Jesse Boone was the great-great-great-grandfather of the compiler of this sketch.

My grandmother, Louisa (Gragg) Hodges, and her grandmother, Celia Gragg, visited frequently and I have often heard her speak of "Granny Celia." Said she was a beautiful woman and could "ride any nag ever saddled."

Louisa Hodges was forty years old when Celia Gragg died.