John Wilcoxson

As portrayed by one of his descendants

Ladies and gentlemen. My name is John Wilcoxson. I am the son of George Wilcoxson, who emigrated from England around 1718, and Elizabeth Powel who was born in Pennsylvania. I was born in Berks County Pennsylvania in 1720. I won’t bore you with the events of my early life, though I found them anything but boring.

The area where I grew up was quite settled. This is significant because it afforded me more career opportunities than just farming with my father and siblings. My career choice, made by me or my father; I can’t remember which; was for my brother George and myself to be apprenticed to one Squire Boone, a weaver by trade. Now some of you may have heard of this Squire Boone. If not, pay attention so you can remember him for more than a short time.

As was the custom, George and I lived with Squire Boone and his wife Sarah. This was a bit of a challenge since they had several children living in their household. I believe there were at least ten but can’t for the life of me remember how many.

Working for Squire Boone and living with his family I couldn’t but notice their oldest child Sarah. Yes, she had the same given name as her mother. Now this was not an uncommon custom for parents to give daughters the same given name as their mother. Today parents seldom name their children after their mothers and the practice of naming sons after their father has fallen out of favor, or so I am told. But I digress.

Well I more than noticed Sarah, four years younger than me, I was quite smitten by her and decided to make her mine. Now this was a bit of a problem. You see, the Boones were members of the Society of Friends also known as the Quakers and I wasn’t. I was a Baptist. I don’t know why my family no longer practiced the Quaker faith. My parents were married at a Quaker Meeting House. Wonder if the Wilcoxsons experienced an early version of the Great Awakening in the 1700s? Were they converted by German Anabaptists? Or by Baptists filtering down from New England? I wondered about that myself. I wonder if the Wilcoxson’s came over for the same religious freedom to practice their Quaker faith as the Boone’s. Many Boone family members, including Squire Sr., became Baptists after settling in Rowan Co. Some maintained their Quaker faith. The Baptist faith runs deep in my Wilcox family. No one can remember us being of any other faith. I have two direct ancestors, Isaiah and his son William M. Wilcoxson, who were Baptist preachers. William M’s son William was also a Baptist Preacher. William M was known as Rev Billy Wilcox. I attached his photo to the reply.

The Quakers had a particular belief that members should not “marry out” of their fellowship and members of the Exeter Meeting House, as their congregations were named, were no exception. If Squire Boone let his daughter Sarah “marry out” the fellowship would be less than happy with him. It seems he had already let one of his younger daughters “marry out” and allowing a second one do same would be adding fuel to an already shouldering fire. Now remember this fact because it might just be of some import.

Sarah Boone, the daughter, and I were married in 1742. And the smoldering fire between the Quakers and the Boones flared up. The Friends appointed members to speak to Squire Boone. Squire Boone “declareth he did not countenance or consent to the marriage but confesseth himself in fault in keeping them in his house after their keeping company but that he was in a great straight in not knowing what to do, and hopeth to be more careful in the future”. Now at the same time Sarah was ‘treated with “for marrying out’. But things got even hotter when our first child David was born. The Quaker ladies, if nothing else, were pretty good at mathematics, or they could at least count the months between May and October. And it didn’t add up to nine. Sarah was condemned by the Exeter Meeting House and her father, by now a grandfather, was called in front of the Friends yet again. My father-in-law, by then thoroughly dissatisfied with how the Quaker Church tried to tell him how to raise his family, told them he didn’t see this was such a terrible thing. The problem had been taken care of since his daughter and his apprentice were now married. Since I wasn’t present for this “Friends” conversation I am relying on what I heard about the matter.

The house still stands near Reading, PA or rather the basement does.

I have visited the Meeting House web site and seen photos and read the history of the place. Might be a good place to visit.

This strain between the Society of Friends and the Boone family was so severe that Squire Boone decided to leave Pennsylvania. Of course, he took his family with him including me, my wife Sarah, and our son David. The strain was so severe that my father-in-law took all the possessions he couldn’t load up in the wagons, piled them up in the front yard, and set them to fire. That way the neighbors would not get any of his possessions he couldn’t take with him. Hmm...what happened between 1742 and 1750. Did they not farm in Virginia for several years and after moving to Rowan County, move back to Culpepper, Virginia during a Cherokee Indian uprising? I need to research this. I haven’t seen any long stops in VA or John & Sarah moving to VA. John died in Rowan Co. and is buried near his in-laws, Squire & Sarah Boone, in Joppa Cemetery in Mocksville.

And so in 1750 Sarah and I packed up our belongings and set off with five children that included Nancy who married Benjamin Greer, including our infant son Isaac who was just a few months old. The birth info on Isaac is a bit sketchy. The comment I saw stated he was born either a short time before they moved to NC or very shortly after they got to Rowan Co. Either way this was quite an accomplishment for Sarah. The Boone/Wilcoxson band headed south till we came to Rowan County, North Carolina. It was there we set up our households. Of course the Boone family included Sarah’s younger brother Daniel. Now I said that you might just remember Squire Boone for more than a short while. Yes, he was the father of the famous frontiersman and pioneer Daniel Boone. You should all have heard of The Daniel Boone. If anything, my brother-in-law was a shameless self-promoter. You have grabbed the humor whenever possible - very good. I have been corresponding with a cousin who is a descendant of Elizabeth Wilcoxson & Benjamin Cutbirth. Elizabeth was one of John & Sarah’s daughters. The cousin asked me to look at Ben Cutbirth’s accomplishments. They rival Daniel. Ben was both illiterate and not much of a self-promoter. Rachel Wilcoxson, a daughter of John & Sarah, married William Bryant. He settled Bryant’s Station in KY. Seems Daniel wasn’t the only member of the extended Boone family who was a dedicated pioneer. And don’t forget the wives who traipsed along with their husbands.

On can wonder if the move from a well-established community to an area much less settled sparked the interest in my brother-in-law Daniel to explore wilderness area. Daniel and other men from his area often went on hunting expeditions to wilderness areas of North Carolina, trekking into unsettled country to secure game. He became quite adept at surviving in the wilderness. Would my brother-in-law had that same pioneering spirit had his family stayed in Berks County PA? If so, where would he have gone? Perhaps the Ohio wilderness. It gives one pause to ponder this question.

I say these things because it would seem that the tenants of the Quaker church, and the unwillingness of the Boone family to abide by some of them, had a significant effect on the history of the settling of the American frontier. And, of course, my wife Sarah and I had a part to play in this. Had my family remained in the Society of Friends, and had Sarah and I not “Known” one another prior to marriage I think the history of Kentucky settlement would have been vastly different from what it is.

Are the lessons from this “don’t let your Quaker daughters marry Baptists”, and “keep an eye on your apprentice and your daughter”? Who knows how such seemingly minor things, in the course of human events, might affect the history of a continent.

My brother-in-law, Daniel, had an itch that could only be scratched by going out in the wilderness and exploring places where white men had not trod. After one of Daniel’s earlier trips to Kantuck, he talked a small group of people into going with him for “the adventure of a lifetime”. I won’t say who’d idea it was but Daniel managed to convince Sarah and me to go with him.

So off the little band of brave pioneers; including Daniel’s oldest sister, her husband, and their children; went, off through Northwestern North Carolina, into the Tennessee Territory, and into Kentucky County Virginia. After what seemed like an eternity to me and our children, the little band of settlers came to our destination. Can anyone guess what the place was called? You guessed it, we called the place Boonesborough. Did I mention my brother-in-law was a shameless self-promoter? I am not sure what it’s worth, probably not enough to get a good chaw of tobacco, but my wife and I were among the earliest settlers of Boonesborough. Date?

Because the native population was not exactly hospitable, we erected a small fort, large enough to hold all the settlers, to fend off the savages in case of an attack. I bet you can never guess what the fort was called. Yes, it was called Fort Boonesborough. Good, good! My wife says I have a warped sense of humor but my baby girl and her husband have the same well developed humor. I just can’t help but jab at Daniel. Most descendants of his siblings take more stock in their ancestors accomplishments than touting Ole Uncle Dan. I identify as a descendant of Daniel’s oldest sibling rather than a 6th great nephew of his.

Now about that time the American War for Independence from England had made its way into Virginia, including Kentucky County. English soldiers didn’t involve their selves in fighting in the Virginia Wilderness or Carolina. They used their surrogates, Loyalists who we called Tories and a few other terms not appropriate in polite company, and the native Indian savages. They made all kinds of promises to those poor redskins and the Tories were loyal to King George. Now it’s a little known fact that only about 1/3 of the population of the Colonies were “Rebel Patriots”. One third was still loyal to England and one third were fence setters who didn’t want any part in the whole mess. Let those hot heads sort things out and they would take up with the winner. I got this bit of information at a Sons of the American Revolution meeting. We had a gentleman who portrayed the Marquis de Lafayette and he gave us this nugget. There was not an overwhelming support for the Revolution.

I was out with my infantry unit when the Indians were talked into attacking Fort Boonesborough.

On September 7, 1778, Blackfish's force arrived outside Boonesborough. Boone counted 444 Native Americans and 12 white men. The former were mostly Shawnees, with a number of [Cherokees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee), [Wyandots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyandot_people), [Miamis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_tribe), [Delawares](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenape), and [Mingos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mingo). The latter were French-Canadian militiamen from Detroit, former French subjects now fighting on behalf of the British Crown. Although this was the largest force yet sent against the Kentucky settlements, taking a fortified position like Boonesborough would still be difficult without artillery to reduce the stronghold.

The Shawnees launched their final assault on September 17, again trying to set fire to the fort. They were beaten back, and a heavy rain helped to put out the fires. The Shawnees lost more men killed in this attack than on all previous days. The next day, they gradually broke off the siege. They separated into scattered war parties and raided other settlements, inflicting far more damage in their traditional mode of warfare than they had done during the siege.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Boonesborough#cite_note-3)

Hmmm...were John and Sarah's lives rather normal after the Revolutionary War? Their house in North Carolina is still standing, a symbol that the explorations and experiences of the Boone families live on in the 21st Century. Lives in the DNA of descendants such as you and me!! I have seen the articles on this house and downloaded all I can find. I hope to visit it some time.

If you can give this in front of the Green and Wilsons in Boone, you might name the children, i.e. Benjamin Greer, a grandson of John and Sarah. Benjamin, a chip off the Boone and Wilcoxson block! I already thought about this and will add the Greer connection to John. Ben Greer was his son-in-law. He married John & Sarah’s daughter Nancy. Now Ben was a bit of a rascal. He sired a son, Thomas, before Nancy left him. Ben did marry the mother of this child and they ahd additional children. That’s covered in my Greer document.

Does not the house have a bolt hold or a place to hide in case of Indian attack?

Good work so far! I can imagine you standing in buckskins and wearing a tri-cornered hat!

Glenn