Historian Lyman C. Draper Letters to and from Jesse Greer, Jr.

(9C21)  Letter from A. W. Finley, Wilkesboro, North Carolina to Lyman C. Draper, Apr. 30,
1887.
He is the son of Maj. John Finley who Jesse Greer spoke of. His father has been dead over 20 yrs.  He lived in Wilkesboro. He has never heard him speak of Capt. Christopher "Grist".

Hunting Creek, he thinks, runs into the South Yadkin and is on South side of this Yadkin.  His father was 87 or 88 yrs. old.  He has only has one brother living, younger than himself.  Most old men on Yadkin are dead.

(9C22)  Draper heading: "Major Finley's birth and death." No Date, no identification. In another writing: "There is one H. Creek goes in this Yadkin but in Iredell County, N.C. southly."

[Different writing]  "Maj. Finley from Adams Co., Pa. settled in Wilkesboro about 1806; died 1865 in Wilkesboro.

(9C23-23/2)  Letter from Jesse Greer, Jefferson, North Carolina , to Lyman C. Draper, July 15, 1884. Draper heading: "Benjamin Greer, a fellow hunter with Daniel Boone - Routes over the Mountains - Daniel's Gap - Jonathan Boone"
Writer is nearly 78, was born and raised in this county, and was well acquainted with the traditional routes of Daniel Boone from the Yadkin to Kentucky. so far as they extended "through this part of the country."

"My grandfather, Banjamin Greer

"My grandfather, Banjamin Greer see King's Mt. 441-42) who was the same age of
Boone and one of his hunting companions in Wilkes and what is now Ashe and Watauga counties, and who removed to Ky. about the year 1800 and settled there on Green River.  My understanding is, that when Boone first went to Kentucky he crossed the Blue Ridge at Blowing
Rock Gap, 8 miles south of Boone Courthouse in Watauga County, and camped near where the said courthouse is; and also made [or had] a camp at [illeg] about five miles from the mouth [or north], and then went down the Watauga River into Tennessee; and beyond that I do not know.

There was a trail across the Blue Ridge at Deep Gap and (9C23/1 ) to south fork of New River and up to mouth of Elk Creek thence across Long Hope and over to the head of North Fork of New River, and thence across what is now called Baldwin's Gap of the Stone Mountain and thence to Taylorsville, Tenn., and on towards Kentucky. There was another route from Phillips Gap in the Blue Ridge and Reddin River Gap or Devil's Gap which is the Rachel, on said ridge near by this place and down Buffalo Creek by the 'Devil's Stairs,' and up the north fork to the
Round About Creek and across the Stone Mountain to Rowan's or Forge Creek and down the Laurel Fork of Holston and over that  went through Taylor's Valley between the Stone Mountain and Holston.  Boone traveled all these routes. It is said he first went down the Watauga route on through Baker's Gap to Tennessee, that he made two trips back and traveled the others and hunted them.  I never heard of any place called 'The Stairs' except the 'Devil's Stairs' on Buffalo."

(9C23/2)  I knew Jonathan Boone who once lived near the town of Boone; but do not remember what relation he was to Daniel; but he was related and married to Johns River in Caldwell County a long time ago." [There is obviously something wrong with this. Ed.].

(9C24)  Questions in Draper's writing, to Jesse Greer, July 28, 1884.
"1. Did you derive the facts about old trails and Boone's routes from your father  and he from his father?
2. When and where your grandfather died and age. His Revolutionary services?
3. Any Greer cousins in Ky. or elsewhere to whom you can refer me?
4. May it not have been Vandergriff Gap not Baker's - Boone passed on his first Kentucky trip?
5. Which way and how far is Baldwin's Gap from Baker's?
6. From what gap and how far south Va. line did the route via Phillips Gap and Round About Creek pass?
7. Traditions of Boone's camps near Big Lump and near Thomas Sutherland's ? Describe these localities.
8. You say Boone's first Ky. trip was by Baker's Gap - and two others by the other routes you describe.  He moved in 1773 on packhorse - was that by the Round About route.  Was it passable for horses?
9. Boone's camp in Taylor's Valley - in what part of that valley?
10. What your father's first name and when die and when and where Billy Ellison die and at what age?"

(9C25-25/2)  Letter from Jesse Greer, Jefferson, North Carolina, to L. C. Draper,.Aug. 17, 1886.

1. Gained his info. from his father.  Grandfather visited North Carolina when writer was 3 years old.
2. Grandfather died Oct. 23, 1816 on Green River, Green Co., near Lexington, at 70.
3. Grandfather was sent from Columbia, S. C. at beginning of war with some others under Capt. Cleveland to guard Ashe Co.

(9C251)  Can't give any info about Greers in Ky.
4. "The Stairs," "Baldwin's Gap" and "Collins Gap" were all east of Baker's Gap

5. Baldwin's Gap is 25 miles from Baker's on Tennessee and North Carolina line.
6. On the Phillip's Gap route, Boone crossed Stone Mountain at Collins Gap, 15 miles south of the Virginia. line.

7. Boone had a camp near Thomas Sutherland's abt. 3 mi. from Baldwin's Gap on head of North Fork.

8. Boone moved his family by the Round About way.  It was passable with pack horses.

(9C25/2)
9. Boone's camp in Taylor's Valley was  near the head, "as I was informed by my uncle, John Greer , my grandfather's oldest son, settled there."

10. "My father's name was Jesse.  He died in Ashe Co. in 1869, born in 1778."  Doesn't know exactly when Billy Ellison died, about 1820. Died on South Yadkin where D. Boone was raised. Knows what he writes to be so.

(9C26)  Questions by Lyman C. Draper to Jesse Greer, Aug. 27, 1884.
"1. Where your grandfather born?  He either was not so old as Boone or 12 years older than you represent.
2. Are Baldin's and Griffin's Gaps the same?  If not, how far apart, and which the more NE?
3. How far and which way is Collins Gap from Baldwin's?
4. Were Baldin's and Collin's Gaps in early times passable for pack horses and have either of them or Griffin's anything like steps or stairs?
5. Are all the gaps in the main Stone Mt. and passing them, do you enter Tenn?
6. Do I understand that Baldwin's Gap is at the head of the North Fork ad Collins at the head of Round About?
7. Can you give any particulars where your grandfather and Boone hunted together, and give any incidents of these hunts?
8. Can you more fully describe the locality of Boone's camp in Taylor's Valley?  In what part of Johnson County - on any stream - and close to the mountains - which way and how far from Taylorsville?
9. Has your uncle, John Greer, any surviving children or grandchildren to whom you can refer me?
10. Did you ever learn from your father, Ellison, or other aged people, anything about Capt. Christopher Gist, an early settler on the Yadkin.  Where he settled and what became of him?
11. Was Ellison associated with Boone in hunting.  Refer me to his descendants.
12. Your age and have you surviving brothers and sisters who could tell me about Boone and your grandfather?"

(9C27-28) Letter from Jesse Greer [no signiture but indicated by internal evidence],

Jefferson , Ashe Co., North Carolina to L. C. Draper, Apr. 8, 1885.
Has been away from Jefferson since "last fall".  In  answer to Draper s letter of March 17:

Grandfather was born Wilkes County, North Carolina. [kw note: not likely – no known white men living in Wilkes Co. in 1746]  Was seven months younger than Boone "to the day and date". Lived in Green County, Kentucky on Green River near Lexington.
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 Died there.  "Boone and Greer hunted together in Kentucky and had a heap of trouble in fighting with the Indians."
Doesn't know the particulars.

(9C28) This may or may not be a continuation of above. Consists of this one incomplete sentence. "Ambrses six miles north".

(9C28)  Notes in Draper's writing. April 14  1885.
"You say Boone's camp in north corner of Johnson County. Perhaps you mean NE corner.
Any incidents connected with Boone at this camp?  Or on Meat Camp?
Captain Chr. Gist which side of Yadkin he lived - any creek putting in near there?  From whom you learn abt. Gist?  And what became of him?
April 15.  "1.  You say your grandfather was 7 months younger than Boone.  Hence born in spring of 1735.--Yet you say he was only 70 when he died in 1816.  He was either over 81, or else about 11 years younger than Boone when they hunted together.
2.  Where Round About Creek - in what county and what part - and through what gap in Stone Mt. did that route lead. Who told you Boone moved by this route?
3.  When you said Jona. Boone I suppose you meant Jesse.
B.  What his character, size and appearance? L.C.D."

(9C29-30)  Letter from Jesse Greer, Jefferson, Ashe Co., North Carolina to L. C. Draper, May 2, 1885.
"Boone and my grandfather were born both in the same date the year 1734.  Round About Creek is in the west  part of this [sic] heading up in the Stone Mt. near Ambros Gap - that Boone moved through when he left this country for Kentucky. - Jonathan Boone was a small man, very quiet good man.  As to Jesse Boone, I know nothing of him to my own knowledge; but there was
such a man lived in this county.  Daniel Boone had a camp in Taylor's Valley, Johnson County, East Tenn., on the waters of the Laurel Fork of the Holston River.  Do not recollect of learning of 1 Green County is about 80 miles SW of Lexington.

Any particular incidents connected with Gist living in Wilkes County, North Carolina on the Yadkin River, near the mouth of Hunting Creek?  James Jackson has told me often that he knew Boone's mill; he, Jackson, tended a mill [maybe preceding is Boone s mill - Ed.] in Watauga County near. Meat Camp or Meat Camp Creek, about 1/2 mile from Boone's camp.  This is all the (9C30) earnest information that I can give you."

Wants agricultural book Draper mentioned for his grandson.
"I have heard my grandfather and his brother, John Greer, Col. Gideon Lewis say, that Boone when he left the country traveling the Round About Creek road.  Col. Lewis lived and died on the Round About Creek - Boone's route."

Signed Jesse Greer

(9C30)  Notes in Draper's writing. Questions for Jesse Greer, Jefferson, North Carolina,
May 7,1885.
1. "Gist's settlement - 2 miles below Wilkesboro and near mouth of Hunting Creek.  On the
north side of Yadkin?  All accounts so state.
2. "Near mouth of Hunting Creek - above or below - and how far?  Is Hunting Creek on north side of Yadkin?
3. "From whom did you learn this tradition that Gist lived there?"
4. "Was it said by your informant, who Gist was, and what he did?  Did he figure or live there before the Revolutionary War?"
5. "Was it Collins or Ambrose's Gap through which Boone passed when moving to Ky?"
6. "Did you learn from your uncle, John Greer, that Boone had anyone with him when he hunted in Taylor's Valley - what luck he had - any incidents? "
7. "Any incidents to Boone when at Meat Camp and where was his camp on that stream - which side - and how far from its mouth?"
8."When did Col. Gideon Lewis die?  And age - refer me to any of his surviving children."

(9C31-32) Letter from Jesse Greer, Jefferson, North Carolina to L. C. Draper, July 21, l885.
Draper heading: "Capt. C. Gist - Boone's camp, Johnson County, Tennessee Round About
C. - Benjn. Greer - origin of name of Yadkin.
Says Capt. Gist lived on south side of Yadkin River near mouth of Hunting Creek. Doesn't know whether above or below. Maj. John Finley of Wilkes County, North Carolina was his authority. Doesn't know what became of him or his family.
Boone's camp was in the northeast corner of Johnson County on the waters of the Laurel [Fork]. Hunted in the surrounding country; also did same at Meat Camp.
Says according to the record, his grandfather was born in l746 and died in l816. Makes him younger than Boone.

Round About Creek is in western part of Ashe County. Heads in Ambrose's Gap on top of Stone Mountain at the Tennessee line. "This route leads to Ambrose Gap."
Learned this from his father and Gideon Lewis, "an old hunter who lived and died on that creek."

(9C32) There was a Jonathan Boone and a [off page] (Jesse Boone?). Jonathan Boone was a civil straight forward citizen. He was rather "small like man ."
Thinks Yadkin River took its name from John Adkin, who lived and died on it near
Wilkesboro. Says river called PeeDee when Adkin settled there. Says he was a noted and "much honored man" and name of river was changed.
Moses Waters and John Ferguson, "old citizens of Wilkes", told him these facts.
Has received book Draper sent.