Early in September 1775 Daniel Boone returned to Boonesboro with his wife and their unmarried daughter, Jemima. With them had traveled a group of settlers and twenty young North Carolinians in search of adventure. Supplied with salt, ammunition, a number of dogs and a herd of cattle, they had stayed together until they reached Dick’s River, south of the Kentucky, where they separated, some heading toward Harrodsburg and the rest, thirty in number under Daniel Boone, going to Boonesboro. The population of that fort was soon further increased by the return of Squire Boone with Rebecca’s kinfolk, the Bryans, and Colonel Richard Callaway with his family.

Before long the settlers discovered that stray bands of Shawnee were lurking around the fort. During their hunting trips these Indians learned that the white men intended to settle permanently in Kentucky. The news soon spread to the Shawnee villages north of the Ohio. Far from intending to keep their pledge to Lord Dunmore to stay on the northern side of the river, the Shawnee now determined to destroy the settlers or to drive them out of what they still considered their favorite hunting grounds.

Some months passed, however, before the Indians were prepared to attack. Just two days before Christmas Colonel Arthur Campbell with two boys named Sanders and McQuinney went searching for rich bottom lands across the river from the fort. Unarmed, the boys climbed a hill while Campbell wandered 200 yards upstream. Soon meeting with “a couple of Indians,” he ran toward the fort, losing a shoe. When nothing more was heard
from the boys Boone gathered a rescue party and led it into the surrounding forest. After four days of searching the party found McQuinney's scalped body in a cornfield three miles from the fort. The fate of the other boy remains a mystery.

The Shawnee took the precaution of making haste slowly. Having tasted defeat at Point Pleasant, they thirsted for victory. They persuaded some Cherokee bands to aid them in expelling the whites from Boonesboro. The Cherokee chief, Hanging Maw, though usually friendly with the Americans, consented to attack the fort but not before he took full council with other tribal leaders. Hanging Maw had a profound respect for the courage and military sagacity of the settlers. In Watauga he had known Boone whom he and other chiefs called Wide Mouth, and he recognized no brave as this white man's equal. He resolved, therefore, on elaborate preliminaries, one of which called for a thorough scouting of the fort. To this task he assigned five of his most trusted warriors.

On a Sunday in July 1776 Elizabeth and Frances Callaway and Jemima Boone decided to go canoeing on the river just below Boonesboro. Elizabeth was not yet fifteen; the other girls, about fourteen. They paddled toward some flowers that grew at the foot of a high cliff surrounded by forest and cane. As they drew near the shore one of Hanging Maw's scouts sprang from the canebrake. Betsy Callaway tried to jump into the water while Fanny whacked at the Indian with her paddle until it broke. Hanging Maw and three other Indians now appeared, took the girls ashore and set the canoe adrift. They hushed the cries and shrieks of their captives by brandishing their knives and tomahawks. Jemima, having cut her foot, refused to go forward. The Cherokee threatened to kill her. She remained still until they provided her with moccasins. Then the Indians cut the girls' dresses at the knees to facilitate their progress through the forest.

As they marched the girls availed themselves of every means to mark their trail for the benefit of possible rescuers. One of them cut twigs with her penknife and strewed them on the way. They also shredded a white handkerchief and scattered it along their path. Jemima tumbled down as often as she could. The
Indians discouraged these stratagems by shaking their tomahawks, pulling the girls' hair and threatening to scalp them.

To deceive possible pursuers the kidnappers followed ridges where footprints would be dim, walked through the thickest canebrake they could find and, when they were obliged to lead the girls over soft ground, cut off Betsy's high wooden heels. At nightfall they encamped within three miles of the present town of Winchester. They prevented each girl from using her hands by tying her elbows together securely. At night when the Cherokee sprawled on the ground around their prisoners, they placed each girl beyond the reach of another, tying one end of the tug with which she was fastened to a tree and keeping the other for one or more of themselves. Jemima tried in vain to reach her penknife to cut herself and her companions free.

On the following day the Indians came on a pony they had perhaps left behind. They wanted the girls to ride, particularly Jemima because of her injured foot. As the girls reluctantly mounted the pony they tickled it in the flanks with their feet. The pony reeled; the girls tumbled off, thereby gaining a little time. Their captors forced the girls to remount. The pony, becoming spiteful, bit Betsy on the arm. One of the Indians then mounted the pony to show how easily it could be ridden. He was badly bitten; the girls and the other Indians laughed. Again on the pony, the girls began climbing the hills; they suddenly slid off. The Indians then abandoned the pony as a hindrance to their progress.

The girls were not missed until milking time. Then a hunter, probably one of their suitors who had gone out to meet them, gave the alarm. Boone leaped from his bed, grabbed a rifle and ran barefoot down to the river. Samuel Henderson, who was Betsy's sweetheart, threw down his razor though he was only half shaved. Other men followed them.

John Guess—or Gass, as his name is sometimes spelled—jumped into the river and secured the canoe which the Indians had set adrift. In this Boone and five other men crossed the stream while a mounted party which included Callaway, Nathaniel Hart, Samuel Henderson and John Floyd forded it a mile down. Shortly the two parties joined and found the kidnappers' trail.
Boone and his men followed it, Callaway and his group rode to the Lower Blue Licks to cut off the abductors from possible retreat.

After following the trail for five miles Boone and his men came to a place where nine men were building a cabin. Enlisting the services of three of these men, they pressed on until morning when they arrived at the place where the Indians and the girls had camped the night before. Though they found broken twigs and torn clothing and footprints, they had some difficulty in detecting the trail. Boone then decided to change his method of pursuit. To gain speed and prevent the possibility of being seen by the Indians' rear guard who might kill the girls rather than run the risk of having them rescued, he told his men they would pursue a straight course toward the Scioto River. This wise decision soon rewarded them with success; they found fresh tracks and a stream that was still muddy. Boone observed that the Indians were being less cautious. He therefore ordered his men to follow the old trail again.

Meanwhile the girls shifted between hope and despair. Sometimes Jemima and Fanny cried. Often Betsy reassured them with the certainty of rescue. The Indians, fearing that a fire might reveal them to their pursuers, cooked no food. They ate and offered the girls only unsalted and dry buffalo tongue. The girls would scarcely touch it, and the Indians themselves soon decided on more palatable food. They killed a buffalo and cut from it a choice portion which they prepared to cook. The girls, securely tied, sat watching them. Jemima and Fanny rested their heads on Betsy's lap.

Boone and his men soon came on the remnants of the slaughtered buffalo. Eagerly they followed the tracks to a small stream. Boone guessed that the Indians had waded in the water for some distance to deceive their pursuers and that they were engaged in cooking the meat. And sure enough the group soon came on a patch of thick cane in which all the Indians, save one who stood guard, had secluded themselves. The braves were busy—one was gathering wood, another was forcing a spit through the meat, still another was lighting his pipe at the fire. Hanging Maw had gone without his rifle to the river to fill a kettle. Two of the white
men inched to within thirty yards of the Indians and then fired on them. They missed, but Boone and Floyd, instantly coming up, fired on the Indian with the spit, sending him howling into the blaze. His companions fled, leaving everything except a gun. One of the Cherokee, turning as he ran, flung his tomahawk at Betsy. It barely missed her head. The rifles sputtered.

“That's daddy!” cried Jemima.

“Run, gals, run!” yelled the rescuers.

One of Boone’s men saw Betsy, a very dark brunette wearing a red bandanna, short skirts and leggings, rise from the ground, and mistook her for one of the Indians.

The man was about to bring the butt of his rifle down on her head when Boone caught his arm. “For God’s sake, don’t kill her—” he panted—“when we have traveled so far to save her from death!”

The whites were too elated to pursue the kidnappers. They marched with the Indian plunder toward Boonesboro. Just before they reached the river they met Callaway and his horsemen who, having crossed the trail of the retreating Indians, had concluded that the girls were rescued.

The whole fort celebrated the girls’ safe return, but a feeling of insecurity swept the Kentucky settlements. Some of the men deserted Boonesboro for Harrodsburg while scattered settlers, fearing Indian attacks even more intensely, abandoned their cabins and went to Boonesboro, Harrodsburg and a newer settlement called McColland’s. The settlers at the latter place soon had an opportunity to use what little ammunition they had. On December 29 the Mohawk chief, Pluggy, attacked them, but they killed him and defeated his men. Realizing, however, that they could not hope to survive another attack which might come at any unguarded moment, the settlers took refuge in Boonesboro.

Depression spread over all the Kentucky settlements. The settlers in seven of them packed their meager belongings and fled to the safety of the East. At the beginning of the year of the “three sevens”—1777—only three settlements remained inhabited. They were Boonesboro, Harrodsburg and St. Asaph, and to-
together they counted no more than two or three hundred people.

Asserting their right as lying within the jurisdiction of Virginia these settlements decided to organize a militia. In this body John Bowman held the commission of colonel, George Rogers Clark that of major. Daniel Boone was one of the captains. These officers inaugurated compulsory military training, requiring every man, whether a permanent resident or not, to join one of the companies for an allotted time. They also began a fairly large fort in Boonesboro and another in Harrodsburg.

These places of defense were still incomplete when on March 6, 1777, the Indians attacked. On that day James Ray invited several of his friends to drink sap at his brother William's sugar camp four or five miles below Harrodsburg. Suddenly forty or fifty Shawnee under Chief Blackfish descended on the place like a cyclone, driving the white men, some of whom were unarmed, in all directions. The Ray brothers stayed together as they ran until William was exhausted. Turning then to fight his pursuers, he was captured, killed and scalped.

James, finding a tree, slipped behind it while a dozen Indians dashed past him, firing into the top of another tree where they supposed he might have hidden. He emerged and, chased by Indians, ran like a deer into the fort. His story naturally spread terror and confusion among the settlers. Hugh McGary took the occasion to express his dislike for James Harrod, whom he accused of neglect and cowardice in connection with the defense of the fort. The dispute grew more and more bitter until the two men leveled their rifles at each other. At this juncture McGary's wife rushed to the scene and pushed his rifle to one side. Harrod then withdrew and the difficulty was adjusted for the moment.

Leading thirty mounted men to the sugar camp, McGary soon found William Ray's mangled body which the men buried. After returning to Harrodsburg, none of them slept that night. Instead they worked at strengthening "some of the open places around the fort." Just as the settlers expected them to do, at sunrise the Indians set fire to some of the cabins and to Ben Van Cleve's turner shop at the outskirts of the fort, apparently hoping to decoy the settlers. A few of the white men, hurrying to put out the fire, ran into some Indians who were hiding in piles of
brush which lay between the cabins and the fort. The settlers lost four men; the Indians, one. The settlers brought the dead Indian to the fort, showed him to the women and children, then dragged him to a hole and buried him without ceremony. The marauding Indians withdrew, taking many horses and cattle.

In view of these circumstances the settlers decided to provision the fort for a possible long siege. Fortunately the preceding year had produced a bumper crop of corn, most of which was cribbed in the fields where it was harvested. The settlers wasted no time in bringing the corn in from the various storing places. This proved a wise move, for the Indians lurked around the fort during the rest of the year, not only to prevent the settlers from bringing food into it but also to hinder the production of corn and other foods. The whites could venture out only at the peril of their lives. Preservation demanded eternal vigilance. Ten sentinels guarded the fort during the day and twenty at night. Nevertheless, several of the settlers were killed or scalped.

At Boonesboro the settlers, working under Boone’s constant vigilance and persuasion, completed the fort in March 1777 just as Blackfish renewed his attacks. Once the Shawnee succeeded in decoying the settlers outside the stockade where one of them was overtaken, tomahawked and scalped. Boone almost met the same fate. An Indian, seeing him among a group of men who were charging in an attempt to rescue the slain man, wounded him severely in the left ankle and then approached with raised tomahawk. Fortunately Simon Kenton was on hand; he clubbed the Indian with his rifle and took Boone back to the stockade.

“Well, Simon,” said the wounded man, “you have behaved like a man today; indeed, you are a fine fellow.” Boone never bestowed a greater compliment on any man.

As the year advanced Blackfish hung around more than before, destroying as much of the corn, potatoes and turnips as he could. His men also stole about two hundred horses, forcing the settlers to carry on their backs what meat they could find. Salt became very scarce. The settlers asked Virginia for supplies and men, but that commonwealth, engaged in defending herself against the British, could promise little assistance. Henderson, though
no longer claiming ownership of Transylvania for his company, begged North Carolina to send soldiers to rescue the settlers; she turned down his request. Eventually a few trained soldiers arrived from Virginia, but what salutary effect their presence might have had was nullified when they, having completed their term of service, returned home.

At the beginning of 1778 the salt supply, never ample, began to run short. Needless to say, this commodity was a very important one to the settlers. It was needed not only to cure meat and hides but also to add flavor to an otherwise unsavory diet. Few calamities in the forest could be as difficult to endure as the lack of bread or salt. The dwindling of the stores caused more lamentation than Blackfish’s depredations and scalpings. Boone, observing that the complaints increased as the salt supply lessened, realized that something must be done to relieve the situation before it lowered the morale of the settlers. Taking a party of thirty men, he packed salt kettles on horses and set out for the Blue Licks whose salt springs were the most important in that area.

At first everything went smoothly. For a few weeks the salt kettles “bubbled merrily”; several horse loads of salt were carried to Boonesboro, and the complaints of the settlers lessened and lessened. Indeed, a feeling of security was beginning to return to the fort for the Indians apparently had gone back to their villages in Ohio, and the settlers dared to hope they might remain there.

One day in February Boone, in carefree mood, went on a hunt. That evening in a blinding snowstorm he loaded his pack horse with buffalo meat and led it slowly along the riverbank toward camp. Suddenly, just as he was passing a fallen tree whose upturned roots left barely enough room to squeeze through, he discovered four Indians close behind him. Boone thought of riding for his life, but, realizing the futility of such action, he dropped his bridle and ran. Too late—the Indians covered him from every direction and drew closer and closer until he realized he must surrender. Slipping behind a tree, he placed his rifle in front of it to indicate that he would offer no resistance. The four
Indians laughed, shook his hands warmly and took him to an Indian encampment near by.

There Boone stared in amazement at what he saw. Around a huge fire blazing in a sheltered part of the valley sat more than a hundred Shawnee, painted for war and fully armed. Among them were Blackfish, Munseeka and Captain Will, Boone’s captor of nine years before. But the Indians’ number was not all that amazed and chagrined Daniel Boone: advising the Indians were Charles Beaubien, a French-Canadian agent of the British; Louis Lorimier, a French-Canadian trader who commanded great influence among the Shawnee; and “the white Indians,” George and James, brothers of Simon Girty, that scourge of American frontiersmen.

What was the meaning of this strange gathering? Boone soon learned the answer. Impetuous American soldiers had three months before murdered Chief Cornstalk, beloved leader of the Shawnee. Cornstalk’s tribe had vowed to avenge his death by wiping out the nearest and weakest of the white settlements. Spurred on by the British through their agents, the Shawnee had abandoned their usual custom and had gone to war in the dead of winter.

Yet the Indians greeted Boone in the usual friendly manner. “How d’ye,” they said, laughing, as though they had made him the victim of a practical joke in capturing him.

Boone saw Captain Will approaching. “How d’ye,” the frontiersman said. He and Captain Will shook hands, and the other Indians enthusiastically repeated the ceremony. They made no secret of the esteem in which they held him. Never, they knew, had he scalped any of their people; never had he shown any cruelty. And he was as good a woodsman as any of them and a far better hunter.

Blackfish now approached. Speaking through Pompey, a runaway Negro, he explained that his braves were prepared to attack Boonesboro. Then he requested the identity of the men at the salt springs. After giving him an evasive answer which he saw was not believed, Boone told him who they were. The chief said he would have them killed.

Boone reasoned that the men at the salt springs were some
distance away. But Blackfish's scouts had seen them; the chief might at any moment send a group of his men to surprise them, as he had said he would. The settlers could not be saved but Boonesboro could be spared, thought Boone; and he proceeded to do so with verbal strategy. He told Blackfish that the fort was strong and could not be taken, that only women and children with some old men and a few warriors remained in it, and that these people would perish if they were forcibly moved. As a solution to this problem he offered to surrender the men at the salt springs as prisoners of war on condition that they were well treated. He also suggested that the women and children in the fort be taken to Detroit in the spring. There the British lieutenant governor, Henry Hamilton—"the hair-buying general" as he was dubbed by the Indians—had promised to pay Blackfish £20 for every well and sound prisoner he delivered.

Blackfish accepted Boone's proposals. At his command a group of braves silently surrounded the saltmakers while they rested under blankets in their camp. Then the Indians sent Boone under guard toward his men through the snow. The saltmakers, seeing the Indians approach, leaped for their rifles. Just then they heard Boone yelling, "Don't fire! If you do, all will be massacred!" In a hurried voice he added, "You are surrounded with Indians and I have agreed with these Indians that you are to be used well and you are to be prisoners of war and will be given up to the British officers at Detroit where you will be treated well." Twenty-six of the thirty men in the party were present, two were in the woods, and two had gone to Boonesboro with salt. The men stacked their rifles and surrendered.

But the young Shawnee warriors were not satisfied. They clamored for the death of all the prisoners save Boone who, they thought, should be compelled to induce the settlers in Boonesboro to move to the Shawnee towns or at least to persuade them to surrender the fort. In the face of this demonstration Blackfish, despite his promises, felt obliged to appease the young men by holding a council of his party. The council proceeded in solemn debate for two hours while each warrior spoke for mercy or for death. Pompey sat beside Boone and translated for him. The saltmakers, understanding no Shawnee, were unaware of
what was going on. The Frenchmen and the renegade whites took no part in the council. As it drew to a close Boone was asked to rise and speak. Pompey translated into Shawnee:

Brothers! What I have promised you, I can much better fulfill in the spring than now. Then the weather will be warm, and the women and children can travel from Boonesboro to the Indian towns, and all live with you as one people. You have got all my young men; to kill them, as has been suggested, would displease the Great Spirit, and you could not then expect future success in hunting nor war. If you spare them, they will make you fine warriors, and excellent hunters to kill game for your squaws and children. These young men have done you no harm, they are engaged in a peaceful occupation, and unresistingly surrendered upon my assurance that such a course was the only safe one for them; and I consented to their capitulation on the express condition that they should be made prisoners of war and treated well. I now appeal both to your honor and your humanity; spare them, and the Great Spirit will smile upon you.

For the first time the prisoners realized that they were in danger. They saw the war club pass from brave to brave; they saw fifty-nine of them dash it to the ground; they saw sixty-one let it pass. Blackfish had won. The white men were saved.

The Indians scattered all the salt in the camp on the snow, gathered what other supplies they wanted, and filed off with their prisoners through the bleak white forest toward Little Chillicothe, their town on the Miami. At dusk when they encamped Boone saw braves clearing a path in the snow. He guessed, and guessed correctly, that they were going to run him through the gantlet. This was a combination of test and game to separate the cowardly from the brave while it provided the Indians with sadistic merriment.

Usually every captive was obliged to run through the ordeal even though the tribe intended to spare his life. On approaching an Indian village a captive was usually obliged to sing at the top of his voice, a signal for the entire population—women, children, old men, and what warriors remained in the place—to attack him with clubs, sticks, stones, hatchets and deer antlers. But Boone
was let off easy; he had to perform only for the benefit of the party. He was ready for anything they had to offer. By zigzagging from side to side he managed to escape most of the blows. Indeed, he gave more than he took, and after he butted one of the Indians in the chest with his head, sending him sprawling to the ground, the ordeal came to an end. The red men, shaking with laughter, crowded around the hero with profuse congratulations. Blackfish eyed him with admiration.

In ten days they arrived at Little Chillicothe where, during a lengthy war dance, sixteen of the prisoners were adopted into the tribe. Then Blackfish took Boone and ten of his companions to Detroit. Hamilton received the hunter with a show of kindness and offered Blackfish a hundred pounds for him. The chief refused to hand Boone over, either because he had already become attached to him, or because he wanted him to assist in the capture of Boonesboro which he hoped to attack when summer arrived. Blackfish did, however, allow Hamilton to question Boone. And Boone derived malicious satisfaction from informing Hamilton of Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga, of which until now the lieutenant governor had heard only rumor.

Hamilton requested Boone to refrain from mentioning Burgoyne’s surrender to the Indians.

“You are too late, Governor,” replied Boone, “I have already told them of it.”

Hamilton admired Boone’s frankness; he gave the rough frontiersman a horse, a saddle, a bridle and a blanket which the Indians permitted Boone to keep and use as long as he remained with them.

Boonesboro soon learned of Boone’s capture. Two of the saltmakers who had been absent from the camp returned, found it empty, thought their companions had tired of waiting to be relieved and had gone back to Boonesboro. But soon the two found an Indian bow, some arrows, moccasin tracks and the salt scattered on the snow. They then hurried to camp to warn the relief party, which rode to the fort at full speed. Simon Kenton with a few companions went in hot pursuit of the Indians through snow six inches deep, but when he reached the Ohio he realized
he could not hope to attack so large a force with success and turned back.

Two weeks passed without word of the prisoners. Rebecca Boone, thinking her husband was dead, returned with the families of the other missing men to North Carolina. Jemima, now married to Flanders Callaway, stayed in Boonesboro and was to have the happiness of seeing her father safe and sound.

In Little Chillicothe, Blackfish gave his attention to the ceremony that was to transform Boone into Sheltowee, or Big Turtle. The ceremony was long and cruel. Boone's hair was plucked out until only a narrow tuft remained. This was cut across in several places and each part adorned with ribbons and feathers. Then he was stripped of his clothes and taken into the river where several women washed him and performed the ritual of rubbing all the white blood out of him. He was then taken to the council house where Blackfish delivered a fiery speech, expatiating on the high honors conferred on Boone and detailing the demeanor expected of him. Then Boone's head and face were painted while everybody feasted and smoked.

Boone was now Big Turtle, son of Blackfish, mighty chief of the Shawnee. Though his Indian father and mother assured him that they loved him as much as their own children, he perceived that they did not trust him. While Blackfish permitted Boone to graze his horse, armed Indians were posted behind trees to watch him. He could hunt whenever he liked so long as Blackfish's little daughters could report his whereabouts. Learning that his movements were closely watched, Boone was careful to show every sign of contentment, but he planned to make his escape at the first opportunity. Though he was given only limited quantities of ammunition, he was able to store a supply of lead and powder. He cut bullets in two and used only the halves when he hunted small game. He also managed to hide some jerked venison and one of the rifles which the Indians had requested him to repair.

About the first of June 1778 Boone was taken to near-by salt springs to help make salt. There he learned that the Shawnee planned to attack Boonesboro with a large number of warriors
The Appalachian Frontier

which included Wyandots and Mingo. Boone knew then that he must make his escape as soon as possible. The opportunity came on June 16 when the saltmakers prepared to return to Little Chillicothe.

Boone, who by now was thoroughly trusted, was put in charge of the salt kettles which he lashed on his horse. As the party drew near the Indian town the men began to scatter in all directions to hunt a flock of wild turkeys which had been scared up, leaving Boone alone with the squaws and children. He waited until he knew by the reports of the rifles that the men were occupied, then he cut the lashings of his horse and threw off the kettles. Noticing this, his Shawnee mother asked him what he was doing.

“Well, Mother,” replied Boone calmly, “I am going home to see my squaw and children and in a moon and a half I shall bring them out here to live with you.”

“You must not go; Blackfish will be angry.”

Boone smiled, mounted his horse and, waving his hand, rode off, leaving the squaws screaming the alarm.

Covering his tracks in running streams, Boone rode all night and into next morning until his horse gave out. He turned the exhausted animal loose and went on foot, breaking his trail now and then by running along fallen trees. On the second day he reached the Ohio River which he probably crossed on a raft improvised with three pieces of wood and grapevine. He ate nothing until he had passed the Blue Licks, when he killed a buffalo and cooked a portion of it. Two days later he arrived in Boonesboro. He had traveled over a hundred and sixty miles in four days.

The townsfolk welcomed him with joyous shouts while they gripped his hand and slapped his shoulder. He smiled sadly. He had entered his cabin to find it devoid of everything that constituted his happiness. Of all the members of his family, only Jemima was on hand to greet him. His wife, his other children, his furniture were already somewhere on the Yadkin. He had brought home a buffalo tongue for his little son, but his son was many miles away.

Rough logs, a cold, blackened fireplace and empty pegs greeted
his happy expectancy when he opened the door to his cabin. What is so desolate as a house from which home has been taken? After months of captivity, after suffering hunger, cold, thirst and danger he had returned to the poignant despair of an abandoned home. Suddenly Boone felt something soft pressing against his leather leggings. He looked down. It was the cat—Rebecca had left the cat behind. Living as a stray among the other cabins, it had seen Boone, had recognized him, had come home. It purred a long welcome. Boone sat down. The cat jumped into his lap.

The townsfolk crowded around him with consolation and brought him food, but one of his friends feared he would gorge himself and had the solids taken away. Instead he fed the exhausted man nothing but broth until, within a week, Boone was fully recovered.

Boone found that the settlers had completely neglected defenses during his absence and that they could not have withstood the slightest Indian raid. The wooden palisades had crumbled; the gates of the two blockhouses needed repair; the water supply within the stockade was inadequate. Not that the settlers were indifferent or lazy. On the contrary, they had more duties than they had time to perform: they had to clear the land, cut trees, build cabins, hunt, and dry and store away enough firewood to pull them through the winter. Since the Indians were giving them no trouble for the present, they thought these chores were more important than defenses.

But Boone knew trouble was ahead and might come before the settlement was fully prepared for it. Without delay he sent to the neighboring settlements for help. Logan’s Station obliged with fifteen men and Harrodsburg with another small force. With the assistance of these settlers Boone repaired the palisades and strengthened the two blockhouses and built two new ones which rose to two stories and were equipped on the second story with defenses as high as a man’s head. He had, however, no time to roof them.

For several more weeks the settlers saw no Indians. Yet the fort had plenty of excitement. On July 17, 1778, Stephen Hancock, who had been one of Blackfish’s prisoners, appeared at the
fort almost naked, badly bruised and so weak from hunger that he could hardly whisper. Hancock said he had been nine days coming. He had lost his way, had become discouraged, had lain down to die. But the Lord scouted his misery and directed his rescue. Looking up, he saw his brother's name carved on a tree and, recalling the place as a camping ground they had once shared, realized he was only four miles from Boonesboro and staggered on.

Hancock said he had been with Blackfish at Old Chillicothe where the chief had held a council at which he had postponed an attack on Boonesboro for several weeks. Hancock had talked with British officers who had brought Blackfish presents from Detroit. He had heard the Indians say they were going to attack with 400 men and four field guns. And he had learned something more of their plans; the settlers were to be asked to join the British, and, if they refused to do so, Boonesboro was to be battered down or starved into submission by siege warfare.

In the light of this information the settlers became more and more apprehensive of Blackfish's plans. Boone petitioned the Virginia military authorities for assistance. "If men can be sent to us in five or Six Weeks," he wrote, "it would be infinite Service, as we shall lay up provisions for a Seige [sic]. We are all in fine Spirits, and have good Crops growing, and ... intend to fight ... hard in order to secure them."

Doubting that aid would come in time despite his plea, Boone resolved to save Boonesboro from possible attack by striking at the Indian town of Paint Creek. He started out with thirty men, but beyond the Blue Licks ten of them became discouraged and returned home. With the remaining men Boone advanced to within four miles of Paint Creek. There the party encountered and successfully attacked forty Indians who were on their way to join others in an attack on Boonesboro. Knowledge of their intention prompted Boone to return home.

Soon Blackfish and his men appeared. Befeathered and painted in rose and vermilion obtained in Detroit, the warriors straggled over the hill that overlooked the fort, some hoisting French and English flags, others leading pack horses burdened with provisions and extra ammunition. Among them were three white men: An-
toine Dogneaux de Quindre, Blackfish's French-Canadian aide; Isadore Chene, interpreter of the Wyandots and Ottawas; and Peter Drouillard, a French-Canadian trader. Blackfish also enjoyed the services of Blackbird, a Chippewa chief who later deserted the British for the Americans; Moluntha, a formidable raider of the Dark and Bloody Ground; and Black Hoof, who had witnessed Braddock's defeat twenty-three years before.

Presently Blackfish sent Pompey into the clearing. The Negro climbed the cornfield fence and, waving a white flag, yelled for Boone, who answered, "Yes," and went out to meet him. Pompey told Boone he had letters addressed to him from Hamilton, requesting him to surrender the fort peacefully. The wary settlers decided to stay in the fort and ask Pompey to bring the letters to them. When they yelled this decision across the stockade, Blackfish, calling to Boone by his Indian name, asked him to come out. Boone agreed; Pompey met him at a specified stump and escorted him to Blackfish who spread a blanket out for him.

"Well, Boone, how d'ye?"
"How d'ye, Blackfish?"
"Well, Boone, what make you run away from me?"
"Why, I wanted to see my wife and children."
"Well, why you run away? If you ask, I let you go."

So saying the chief gave Boone a letter and proclamation from Hamilton urging him to surrender and warning him against the folly of resistance. Boone explained that he had been so long absent from the fort that he was no longer in command of it and that the great Virginia father had sent an unconquerable captain in his stead. Whereupon he went to the fort and soon returned with Major William Bailey Smith, who in the previous July had come to the aid of the fort with some forty North Carolinians most of whom were friends and neighbors of the Boones. Elaborately dressed in a scarlet uniform and a hat adorned with ostrich feathers, Smith impressed the Indians as a man of superior authority.

The parley broke up without any agreement on the part of Boone to surrender the fort. Yet Boone knew that the Indians were growing hostile and that negotiations could not be much longer delayed. What policy should the settlers pursue? Should
they permit Blackfish to take them to Detroit as he had promised? That meant surrender. Should they offer resistance? That seemed a more honorable course. They all agreed to fight to the last. "I'll die with the rest," Boone said gravely.

Yet the Kentuckians felt confident that Virginia would eventually send them relief. Boone therefore adopted the policy of dragging out negotiations with Blackfish as long as he could. Accompanied by Callaway and Smith, he went to see Blackfish again. The chief received them courteously, spreading a panther skin for them to sit on.

Displaying a wampum belt in three colors—black for warning, white for peace and red for war—Blackfish made a speech which ended with these words: "I am come to take you easy."

Smith reminded the chief of the difficulty of removing so many women and children. "I have brought forty horses," replied Blackfish, "on purpose for the old people, women, and children to ride." Boone then asked for two days to consider the matter. Blackfish agreed and escorted the white men back to the fort.

The settlers took council. If Blackfish really had brought forty horses with him, reasoned Boone, he must have exaggerated the number of men in the fort. He quickly saw the advantage of encouraging this delusion. At his suggestion Callaway dressed up the children, women and slaves and kept them moving back and forth in the fort. He also had hats put on sticks and bobbed over the stockade, and had dummies paraded before the open gate of the fort. When Pompey, full of curiosity, stole close to the building he was detected and warned to stay away.

The masquerade enabled the settlers to make hasty preparations for defense. They passed the powder; they picked the flints; they cleaned the rifles; they molded the bullets. And they carried countless buckets of water from a spring into the fort, drove in all the cattle and horses they possessed, and gathered the potatoes and corn they had raised just outside the fort.

Every night Boone posted sentinels in the blockhouses to alert the settlers in case the Indians attacked. At last Boone informed Blackfish that the settlers were determined to fight. Whereupon the dissembling chief, talking through his interpreter, De Quindre, assured Boone that the Indians had come to talk of peace,
not of war; that Hamilton had given orders to avoid bloodshed; and that if the white men refused to go to Detroit they might still live quietly with their Indian brothers. Why not hold another council to draft a treaty? If nine representative men from the garrison would sign it, said Blackfish, the Indians would go home. The settlers naturally consented to the proposition.

The council was held on the following day in a friendly atmosphere. The settlers and the Indians, while they ate and drank, reached an agreement. Blackfish stipulated that the white men abandon Boonesboro within six weeks and submit to the authority of Governor Hamilton at Detroit. When the settlers spurned these terms Blackfish inquired: "Brothers, by what right did you come and settle here?"

Someone reminded the chief of the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals between Henderson and the Cherokee. Blackfish pretended he had never heard of the treaty and inquired of a Cherokee in his party if the settlers' story were true.

Assured that it was, Blackfish expressed great surprise. "Friends and brothers," he said, "as you have purchased this land from the Cherokee and paid for it, that entirely alters the case; you must keep it and live on it in peace."

With these words he ordered the "pipe-tomahawk"—half hatchet, half pipe—to be passed around to each Indian negotiator who took a puff or two as he passed it to his neighbors. Boone noticed that it was offered only to Indians. Acquainted with their customs, he burned with suspicion, but he remained silent while one of his men drew up the agreement. When this was completed, Blackfish said one thing must be added—he must give a big talk to his young men in order that they might fully understand what a firm peace had been made. And he began to address the braves in Shawnee—an eloquent and vigorous speech which few understood and everybody applauded.

Then, turning to the white men, Blackfish made them an extraordinary proposal: in becoming friends, he said, men usually shake hands; but in making a sincere and lasting peace, something more must be added; they must shake long hands; two Indians must embrace one white man, bringing their hearts together. With these words he and another Indian quickly seized Boone
by his arms while other pairs of Indians grappled with each white
man. The settlers quickly sensed the red men's strategy.

Neither side had taken the treaty seriously; the Indians had
simply been waiting for an opportunity to try their trick while
the white men had been abiding their time in the hope of receiv­
ing aid from Virginia. Just as the grappling began an Indian
concealed near by fired his gun—the signal for each pair of
Indians to drag their particular "brother" over the high, steep
banks of the Kentucky River where, outside the range of mus­
ketry from the fort, they could the more easily be subdued. This
endeavor failed. Callaway broke loose; a bullet from the fort
killed one of the Indians grappling with Smith. Boone sent Black­
fish sprawling and loosed himself from the grip of the other
Indian. The rest of the Indians, thinking their chief had been
killed, became demoralized. Making the most of the situation, the
whites ran toward the fort, bounding like rabbits from behind
each tree and stump on the way. While women screamed and
children cried and dogs howled and cattle stampeded, the men
reached the building in safety.

The Indians, seeing that their fire produced no results, scattered
flax along a fence leading to the stockade and set fire to it. The
settlers met this threat by running a trench under the well and
out to the fence. Sheltered by this device, they crawled out and
pulled down a part of the fence connecting with the stockade.
During the night Nathaniel Henderson's Negro, London, saw an
Indian creep up to within fifteen paces of the fort. London
crawled out into the ditch and fired at the flash of the Indian's
rifle. His bullet missed, and the Indian killed him.

Failing in his endeavor to capture the leaders of Boonesboro,
Blackfish tried another trick. He ordered his followers to catch,
saddle and load the horses and while so occupied to make as much
noise as possible. This done, he had a few men bawl out orders
of retreat from the thickets while he ordered as many of his
braves as could find hiding places to creep up close to the fort.
Then just before daylight all the Indians save those in hiding
made off, tooting a bugle and making a great deal of noise.

This stratagem deceived nobody. The settlers knew that the
redskins, if they really intended to retreat, could creep through
the forest as silently as a snake slithers into the underbrush. Before long the warriors returned and hid themselves near a buffalo road just across the river. The settlers kept the gates of the fort closed and made no sign of coming out. The concealed Indians, soon realizing that the trick had failed, rejoined their comrades.

Now Blackfish resolved to try to reduce the fort by siege. He ordered some of his men to continue to fire on the fort, while he used the rest to fell trees. Then a broadening muddy streak began to appear on the river downstream while upstream remained clear. What were the Indians doing now? One of the settlers soon noticed a cedar pole waving back and forth on the edge of the riverbank; apparently somebody was loosening dirt.

Yes, the Indians were digging. De Quindre, perhaps, had persuaded them to run a mine from the river to the stockade. But what did they intend to do when the mine reached the fort? Bring in powder to blow it up or set fire to it? To determine Blackfish’s intention, the settlers built a makeshift wooden watchtower and lifted it to the roof of a cabin which Richard Henderson had used as a kitchen. From the watchtower sharpshooters could look over the edge of the steep banks and see the Indians dumping fresh earth into the river.

The settlers promptly resolved to frustrate the scheme by digging a trench across the mine. The trench, four feet deep and three feet wide, began under the watchtower and ran through four other cabins to the blockhouse which the mine would eventually reach. Under the blockhouse they dug out the whole floor to the depth of four feet, so that they would have plenty of room to shoot the Indians as they emerged one by one from the mine.

An irascible settler named John Holder gathered the largest stones that were dug up and hurled them with all his might at the Indians behind the riverbank. Cries of pain mingled with volleys of profanity as the redskins bade the settlers “fight like men, and not try to kill them with stones like children.” One of the women adjured Holder to stop throwing the stones because, she said, they might injure the Indians and make them want to take revenge.

Pompey climbed a tree and did his level best to pick off as many
of the whites within the stockade as he could. He did not know that William Collins had discovered him and was waiting for him with cocked gun. When the Negro stuck out his head from the trunk of the tree, Collins fired, and Pompey's terrestrial hopes came to an end.

As Virginia militiamen the settlers had tacked the new American flag to a long pole and hoisted it in the stockade. The Indians soon shot the pole to pieces and yelled triumphantly when the flag toppled to the ground. But in a few minutes the flag went up again amid rousing cheers.

One night the Indians decided to try to force the settlers to surrender by setting fire to the fort. Stealing up close, they hurled torches over the stockade and cabins while they shot blazing arrows which had been either wrapped in oily fibres of shell-bark hickory or filled with powder lighted by a piece of punk. Most of the arrows and the torches fell harmlessly in the open square of the fort, lighting up the interior to the extent that the settlers could see to pick up a pin. When an arrow or a torch chanced to fall on a roof a few settlers would climb up and sweep it off with a broom or kick off the blazing shingles or punch them off from inside the cabin.

But the torches that fell on the stockade could be put out only from the outside. This was a dangerous venture, but the peril did not deter John Holder. Seeing a torch falling on the door of a cabin which was already ablaze, he dashed out along the stockade and, swearing soundly, doused it with a bucket of water. He escaped injury or death—but not Mrs. Richard Callaway's indignation: instead of swearing, she cackled, they should all be praying! Holder consigned prayer to perdition and returned coolly to his duties. Next afternoon a light rain made the wood so damp that the fires flickered out.

Meanwhile the Indians kept digging. Now and then the sharpshooters in the watchtower and the Indians under the riverbank would indulge in friendly banter.

“What are you red rascals doing down there?” yelled an old hunter in Shawnee.

“Digging; blow you all to devil soon; what you do?”

“Digging to meet you and make a hole to bury 500 of your yellow sons of bitches.”
One night a few Indians killed a stallion which the settlers had brought into the stable outside the fort to improve the breed of horses. This exploit inspired a gem of Shawnee humor:

"White man keep a horse in the house!"
"Go and feed the horse!"
"The horse wants water."
"Go take him to the river."

The settlers sometimes flung back taunts of their own. Though they all knew that Pompey was dead they often inquired of his whereabouts. The Indians were ready with a sheaf of answers: Pompey had gone to Chillicothe to fetch more Indians; Pompey had gone to hunt in the woods for some of the white men's roaming pigs. Then one brave yelled: "Pompey ne-pan." (Pompey is asleep.) Another corrected him: "Pompey nee-poo." (Pompey is dead.) Redskins and settlers chuckled at the play on words.

The siege dragged on. For eight days the settlers had worked unremittingly with too little food to strengthen their bodies and with too little sleep to lift their spirits. The Indians were still digging steadily underground. Anxiety and the strain of constant vigilance were beginning to instill distrust and suspicion in the leaders. And the weather did everything to worsen the general feeling of insecurity. A heavy rain during the night drowned all sounds of warning. The guards could see the soggy clearing only during flashes of lightning. Could not the Indians easily creep up undetected in the impenetrable darkness? Might they not blow up the gate of the fort? Might they not break into the fort through the mine? Or was their mining a mere trick to conceal a deeper and deadlier plan? These and a hundred other macabre thoughts surged through the minds of the besieged as they nervously awaited daylight.

At last the sun rose and the rain ceased. Everything was changed. A deep silence pervaded the countryside. Not a sound was heard in the mine. Not an Indian lurked around the fort. Not an arrow whizzed through the air. What had happened? What were the Indians doing now? Were they about to try another ruse?

Gradually the beleaguered fort learned that the rain had come as a conquering ally. It had soaked the earth, causing the mine to sink in many places. This had crushed Blackfish's spirit. He gave
up the siege, collected his braves and withdrew in disgust toward his capital in Chillicothe. At noon the settlers coolly opened the gates of the fort, strolled into the clearing, stretched their weary legs and sent their starving cattle out to pasture. Then, rejoicing, they lay down to the luxury of long-desired rest.

No sooner was the siege ended than Colonel Richard Callaway and Captain Benjamin Logan, founder of St. Asaph, accused Daniel Boone of treason. Not that Boone was guilty of the charge. Jealous of him, the two officers simply saw in his popularity the shadow of their own. Boone and Callaway had shared experiences on which they might have built a lifelong friendship. For many years they had been neighbors in North Carolina. They had been among the first settlers in Kentucky, had worked together for Henderson and had joined in directing the rescue of their daughters from the Indians. Callaway's nephew, Flanders, had married Jemima Boone. Even this tie failed to dissipate Callaway's envy of Boone. He had strongly opposed the expedition to Paint Creek town and had scorned what he considered Boone's foolhardiness in leaving the fort to parley with Blackfish. He needed no coaxing to ignore the fact that the parley had gained invaluable time for the settlers. This point in Boone's favor doubtless increased Callaway's resentment.

He began to cast aspersions on Boone's loyalty. Had not Boone permitted himself to be captured? Even worse, had he not guided the Indians to the salt camp and urged the saltmakers to surrender without offering resistance? Callaway could marshal other evidence in support of his charges against Boone. One of the escaped saltmakers, Stephen Hancock, an inveterate gossip, had spread and stretched tales of how Hamilton received Boone with a marked show of friendship. Hancock had also said that Boone agreed to surrender the fort to the British officers and to take the settlers to Detroit where they would live under the jurisdiction of the British government. And when the Indians arrived at Boonesboro just before the siege, was not Boone the first man they requested to see? When Callaway objected to a parley with them, had not Boone overruled him?

A suspicious man construes his suspicions as truths and soon
finds justification for them. Callaway believed that Boone had lived with Blackfish for four months as his adopted son because he was secretly a lover of Indians and a Tory to boot. The colonel could show that Rebecca Boone's kin were mostly Tories, some as armchair sympathizers, others as soldiers in the British army. One of them, Samuel Bryan, had recently been killed fighting in North Carolina. From these facts Callaway deduced that Boone had never desired to fight for the American cause and that he had gone to Kentucky in 1775 to avoid service in the impending Revolution. He found justification for these notions by recalling that Boone had boasted during his captivity that he maintained constant contact with Boonesboro. Boone probably meant that his scouts had been able to keep a constant watch on the fort from the hills across the river, but Callaway interpreted his statement as evidence of treachery within the fort itself.

Armed with these suspicions, Colonel Callaway and his friend Benjamin Logan served notice on Boone to stand trial before a military court composed of his fellow officers in the Virginia militia. At the trial Callaway and Logan preferred four specific charges: Boone had voluntarily surrendered the saltmakers to the Indians at Blue Licks; he had made an agreement with Hamilton to surrender the fort and take the settlers to Detroit; he had influenced his men to undertake the expedition to Paint Creek town; and he had, on the pretext of making peace, taken the white officers of the fort to the Indian camp beyond the protection of the garrison's guns. On these grave charges Callaway and Logan pronounced Boone a traitor and recommended that he be "broak of his commyssion."

Boone denied the charges categorically with a firm but quiet dignity. True, he had induced the saltmakers to surrender, but only to avert an attack on the fort which, he believed, it was too weak to resist. He had used duplicity to stall off the Indians by telling them that the fort was too strong to be taken with their small numbers and by recommending that they return in the spring with a greater force. The Paint Creek town expedition, Boone explained, had done no harm; indeed, it had turned out very well. As for the negotiations before the fort, he simply had been "playing" the Indians in order to gain time for the reinforce-
ments he expected from Virginia. He might have added that the Indians enjoyed superior numbers and that they were sure to find the Blue Licks, which were located on a much-traveled warpath.

Boone's adroitness had actually saved Boonesboro from capture. This also meant that he had possibly saved the lives of the saltmakers, of the relief party about to leave Boonesboro, and of the men, women and children in the fort, including the two men who had brought him to trial. When Boonesboro was finally attacked it was no longer weak; it had been repaired and had been warned repeatedly of imminent onslaught.

The court-martial found Boone not guilty. The verdict was, moreover, no ordinary one of not guilty, but a complete exoneration by his friends and neighbors, for immediately after the trial he was promoted to the rank of major. While Callaway and Logan were "not pleased" with the verdict, they accepted it quietly and raised no further protest. Once cleared of the charges Boone hurried off to the eastern settlements to find his wife and family. He found Rebecca and their children living comfortably in a small cabin near that of her brother, William Bryan, who had married Boone's sister. Soon they all returned to the East where they remained throughout the winter of 1778-1779 and all of the succeeding summer.