Soldiers of Settlement:
Violence and Psychological Warfare on the Kentucky Frontier, 1775-1783

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Abstract: *The Kentucky Frontier War is arguably one of the most brutal and violent episodes in America's colonial history. During the American Revolution deaths linked to wartime combat in this region were over seven times higher than in any of the thirteen rebelling colonies. Bolstered by their British allies the Shawnee, Cherokee, Wyandots, Pickaways, and numerous other Native American tribes, launched a war of attrition upon the Kentucky Frontier that would outlast the Revolution by thirteen years. For those living on this frontier, warfare with Native Americans was a distinct everyday, reality and strikes into the heartlands of both settlers and their Native American adversaries was commonplace. From 1775 to 1783 Kentucky was transformed from an uninhabited hunting ground into a major destination for settlers migrating westward. During these early years settlements were constructed as forts and the settlers themselves were cast, out of necessity, into the role of soldiers responsible not only for their own safety but that of their families, kin networks, towns, and ultimately, the settlement of this new region. In this paper the development of society on the Kentucky Frontier will be considered in the context of the hyper-violence caused by larger political movements affecting colonial America. This enables the assessment of the extent to which violence informed the shape of the Kentuckian frontier society.*[1]

In September 1778 the settling of Kentucky had been ongoing for a little under four years. The blustery weather around the fort town of Boonesborough and the arrival of Daniel Boone, clad entirely in Shawnee garb and warning of an approaching tribal army intent upon the destruction of the township, perhaps best summarizes the state of the burgeoning effort at settling this new frontier. Since the establishment of Harrodsburgh in 1774 and Boonesborough in 1775 in the otherwise uninhabited 'Kanta-Ke', settlers living in the region had been drawn into one of the most consistently violent frontiers in America's colonial history.[2] Even as frontier legend Daniel Boone returned from his captivity among the Shawnee he brought with him tidings of an advancing army and stories of enraged Native American chiefs to the already war-wearied settlers.

It is often tempting to think in terms of violence when one thinks of the American colonial frontier and, indeed, violence was often a characteristic of frontier life. However, few frontiers throughout the colonial period saw violence embody a region as it did Kentucky. By the end of the Revolutionary period there were few settlers

living on this frontier who had not been affected by violence in some way; directly as victims, perpetrators, witnesses, or through the loss of family members, friends, or acquaintances. On both sides of the frontier military and civilian distinctions meant nothing. Most people did become involved in the frontier war in some way. The settlers of Kentucky, then, were not simply pioneers but soldiers of settlement and violence upon this frontier was not rare or occasional but a constant feature that helped to shape the development of Kentucky's early societies. Prior to the arrival of the settlers Kentucky was valued by its neighbouring tribes as both a major hunting ground and as an important spiritual area. As white settlers began to trickle beyond the line of the Appalachian Mountains tribes such as the Shawnee and Cherokee began offering strong resistance to these new waves of immigration and settlement.

Resistance, however, is not the right word to describe the type of frontier warfare that developed in and around Kentucky. Indeed, although it has been argued by historians such as David Curtis Skaggs that from 1754 the Ohio Valley region was embroiled in a sixty-year period of war, the Kentucky frontier stands out as being particularly violent, even in this context.[3] During the Revolutionary War one of the principle and most violent episodes in Skagg's sixty-year period recorded that deaths linked directly to warfare in Kentucky occurred seven times greater than in the thirteen rebelling colonies.[4] This was not simply a border skirmish and, although it may not have been motivated by racial hatred, the conflict was certainly fuelled by a strong racial and cultural animosity. This led to an escalation of violence that was calamitous for both the settlers and Native Americans involved.[5] Acts of violence and intense combat leave deep and lasting impressions upon those involved. When levels of violence in a particular historical context can be identified as widespread, sustained, and likely to have affected a large number of individuals regardless of race, age, gender, or military capability, then their affects on society as a whole must be examined.

The Kentucky frontier's place in the wider historiography of the American frontier has for many years been dominated by the exploits – some real, others imagined – of only a handful of its early settlers. In particular Daniel Boone and his family have cast a long shadow over the history of this region. It is unsurprising, then, that a significant number of histories of this frontier are little more than biographies of

Boone. Boone was, evidently, an extraordinary man and it is not the purpose of this paper to prove or disprove otherwise. Rather it is argued that the extraordinary nature of Boone's life makes him a poor candidate for study when the enduring place of the Kentucky frontier is to be considered in context. Instead it is necessary to look not at individual characters on this frontier but at a larger collective of people in order to identify the broad social and cultural trends that shaped life for the white settlers.[6] Key among these factors is the presence of consistently high levels of violence. Only when a broad perspective is taken of Kentucky's settlers does it become apparent that violence on this frontier was not something that affected a narrow section of society, or a few legendary individuals, but was instead something that helped to shape it. It is the purpose of this paper to introduce the vastly understudied region of Kentucky to the lexicon of the southern frontier, not simply as an aberration of the revolutionary period, but as an example of a frontier defined as much by violence as it was by other social and economic factors. When Presbyterian minister and oral historian John D. Shane travelled through Kentucky collecting oral histories in the early nineteenth century it was the frontier conflict that the settlers remembered, and it was within the context of that war that they defined their own lives. Just as violence was a feature of much of the American colonial frontier endemic warfare was a founding characteristic of early Kentucky.

The impact of violence upon the Kentucky frontier is seldom entirely absent from histories of this region but rarely is it the focus of a given study. Elizabeth Perkins' social history, *Border Life*, is a particularly good example of this; drawing together – largely from the narratives collected by John D. Shane – the different economic and social factors that came together to give Kentuckian frontier society its character. Whilst Perkins' work is broadly informative and often excellent, the rigidity with which it looks for factors that made different groups unique within the larger frontier society results in a failure to engage with one of the most important social consequences the frontier war generated amongst early Kentuckians; that a near constant state of warfare often eroded the social and cultural divisions Perkins identifies within that society.[7] On one occasion early settler William Clinkenbeard, who John Shane Perkins interviewed, was sent as part of a militia group to guard a loyalist fort. He was not particularly happy about this considering his own political leanings appear to have fundamentally clashed with those of the 'Tories, [I] dare not call them Tories.'

Regardless, Clinkenbeard patrolled the loyalist outpost against Native American raids, for both loyalists and rebels were brought together through fear of their common enemy: 'They were afraid, and we were as afraid as they.'[8] Fear and terror are powerful processes that can bond and overcome other significant divisions within society. Social, economic, and cultural factors may have divided individuals and groups but the frontier war and the presence of a deadly enemy ultimately brought them closer together.

Patrick Griffin places violence into the centre of his work *American Leviathan* but, like Perkins, Griffin never goes so far as to question its agency in isolation. Focused less upon the social than it is upon the political impact of the trans-Appalachian frontier wars, Griffin's work does not fully demonstrate the social significance of violence on the frontier. At the very least Griffin demonstrates an understanding that violence affects how people view the world around them and that this, in turn, can affect the formation of those societies.[9] Looking at the settler population of Kentucky as a whole, a number of key formative social and economic forces can be identified: the desire for and relative availability of land, the absence of a well developed aristocracy (at least in the early period), an abundance of game, and social values imported from populations living to the east. What stands out as immediately remarkable concerning Kentucky's frontier, however, is a near universal exposure to violence that was not consistent across the wider colonial frontier. Contrasting the early life of Daniel Boone with that of another early settler, Isaac Clinkenbeard, it is evident just how divergent violence shaped the experiences of other pre-Kentucky frontiers.

Despite growing up on the Pennsylvania frontier, Boone's pre-Kentucky contact with frontier violence was particularly limited and he faced little-to-no real exposure to warfare or high levels of violence.[10] On occasion relations between settlers and Native Americans could be tense but there was little reason for any settler to fear for their general wellbeing or everyday safety. Following a move to the North Carolina backcountry in the 1750s Boone and his wife Rebecca were forced to take refuge in local forts after learning of supposedly imminent attacks. Ultimately neither suffered any major loss.[11] Perhaps Boone's most significant experience with violence at this point in his life was during his role as a teamster on General Braddock's disastrous

campaign. In the context of Boone's early life, however, this episode stands alone and it must be remembered that Boone, at the rear of the company, was not a part of the fighting unit and did not engage in combat.[12]

In contrast, Isaac Clinkenbeard and the rest of his family suffered immensely as a result of hostilities between the settlers and Native Americans during their time on the Pennsylvania frontier. 'My uncle Isaac Linn, was taken prisoner…& kept 11 years', Clinkenbeard would remember, whilst another uncle, John Linn, was killed at the exact location where his brother Isaac was taken. One more uncle, Thomas Linn, 'was scalped & tomahawked, & left laying in the sand all night' until his eventual discovery. Thomas, although severely wounded, survived his attack but his head injuries were such that he 'was made blind' by the incident.[13] His nephew Isaac would later remember how he 'had fits too, sometimes' following his attack.[14] Despite their similar background, Boone and Clinkenbeard had very different pre-Kentucky experiences, but they were similar in that both, like many early settlers, moved with their families out to the new frontier. Whilst families such as the Clinkenbeards hailed from backgrounds with a significant degree of prior hostile contact with Native Americans, others such as the Boones brought with them a very different understanding of frontier life. When the divergent pre-Kentucky experiences of different families are analyzed it is evident that those coming from what appeared to be similar frontier backgrounds could have had significantly different degrees of exposure to violence. On the Kentucky frontier these same families and individuals could expect relatively consistent experiences and high levels of exposure to violence.

It is perhaps telling that the first major loss Daniel Boone experienced from frontier hostilities was in 1773 when he led an expedition into Kentucky to establish the country's first settlement. Defeated *en route*, the company turned back without several of its members who had been killed in the raid, including Boone's eldest son. The issue here is that frontiers are not universally violent places and that the American colonial frontier offers no analogous experience. What can be said, however, is that the Kentucky frontier was consistently violent and while its location shifted overtime as an interior developed some areas became secure. Frontier areas of this country were characterised by consistently high levels of violence.[15]

One final issue, however, needs to be addressed. The form this violence takes is very rarely given serious thought in most frontier histories. It is important to note, however, that violence is not an easily-summarized, two-dimensional concept. Pieter Spierenburg's assertion, for instance, that acts of violence are acts of aggression that affect the body is a gross over-simplification that fails to convey the potential complexities of violent interactions.[16] Put simply, the war on the Kentucky frontier targeted not only the body. Acts of both deliberate and non-intentional psychological warfare permeated the clashes between settlers and Native Americans.

Since the seventeenth century *La Petite Guerre*, or guerrilla warfare, has been a common mode of combat in North America and, particularly since the Seven Years War, it was supplemented with the addition of psychological warfare that was particularly refined by Native Americans.[17] Guerrilla warfare by its very nature draws on some elements of psychological warfare facilitating, as it does, the apparent sudden appearance and swift disappearance of one's enemies. Guerrilla warfare commands surprise that, in turn, fosters insecurity. Even the woodlands that surrounded the settlements and sheltered the country's valuable game were locations of extreme danger, for they housed an unknown number of hostile Native Americans intent on disrupting the settlers and their activities.[18] Guerrilla warfare, therefore, is not a modern strategy but its widespread and consistent use, together with other more deliberate acts of psychological terrorism, created an environment that was particularly defined by these tactics. Amid the vast wilderness any number of enemies could lurk and a variety of atrocities could be committed upon one's person. The Native Americans intended that this was a message the settlers never forgot.

Describing the period between 1754 and 1814 as a 'sixty year war in the Ohio Valley', as David Curtis Skaggs does, is perhaps somewhat ambitious.[19] But in other respects this idea does capture the essence of the relationship, not only between the competing colonial powers but of the often-changing relationship between those powers and the different Native American tribes in the region. Whilst arguing that this period was dominated by unchecked and continuous warfare would

certainly be inaccurate, it is equally true that periods of definitive peace in the region were elusive and difficult to identify; this is the context in which settlers began to enter the Kentucky country.[20] It is the nature of the warfare that occurred in the Ohio Valley that is of particular importance to the historian of the Kentucky frontier. Guerrilla warfare, as already noted, was nothing new in North America but, beginning with the Seven Years War in 1754, this mode of combat took on a deliberate psychological element that saw Native Americans exploit – to their advantage – fears and anxieties among British colonial soldiers.[21] This mode of fighting was not limited to the Seven Years War and instead established a pattern of violence that would continue to define the types of encounters between Native Americans and white settlers along the Kentucky frontier.

By 1775, the year when permanent settlement in Kentucky began in earnest, the shadow of the Seven Years War and other subsequent conflicts with Native Americans had been well and truly cast south of the Ohio River (Figure 1). Even after peace treaties had been signed relations between white settlers and Native Americans did not enter into any kind of peaceful phase. Indeed, following the end of the American Revolution the war in the west would continue to rage for a further eleven years until the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and the subsequent signing of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Whilst treaties may have been signed they evidently meant little to Britain's former Native American allies who were understandably unwilling to surrender control of the lands on which they lived and hunted. White control would not be gained by political manoeuvring but by an almost constant state of attrition of settlers and the region's Native inhabitants.[22]

Kentucky was first settled during a context of almost constant tension, war, and racial aggression, and as such it is necessary to understand how widely the tactics and methods that drew upon psychological warfare impacted the general frontier population. It is one thing to recognise that psychological warfare was a component of settler-tribal conflicts, it is quite another to consciously utilise it. The exercise in woodland warfare that dominated the Kentucky frontier perhaps finds its best parallel in modern day studies of conflict in the Vietnam War. These recognise the potentially detrimental effects that psychological and guerrilla warfare can have on those who engage in them.[23] Identified across almost four-decades-worth of empirical studies

on combat veterans in this and other conflicts, it is now accepted that particular types of activities can cause significant amounts of stress upon the individual. Stress, by definition, describes forces and circumstances that force changes upon the mental and emotional state of human beings.[24] As such, when historians identify contexts of endemic and brutal periods of violence – particularly those which take on the form of psychological or guerrilla warfare – stress takes on a degree of agency and must be addressed.

Figure 1 - Kentucky is bordered to the north by the Ohio River. Above this lived the Shawnee, Miami, Wyandots, Delaware, and Mingo Native American tribes. In particular the Shawnee, like the Cherokee in the south (not shown), used Kentucky extensively as a hunting ground. (Image by the author)

Put simply, the purpose of psychological warfare is to cause significant increases in the stress levels of one's opponents in order to force an irrational reaction. These responses have the potential to vary significantly and can result in the development of paranoia, anxiety, and a break down in the norms of social interaction.[25] By looking at asylum records Eric T. Dean Jr., in his comparative study of the American Civil and Vietnam Wars, has demonstrated that veterans of the Civil War were in as much danger of suffering damaging levels of war-related stress as Vietnam combat

veterans.[26] For revolutionary Kentucky appropriate asylum and mental health records are simply not available, but anecdotal evidence contained throughout dozens of frontier narratives and oral histories testify that these settlers were not immune to the psychological dangers posed by the intensity and type of warfare deployed along the frontier.[27]

During the Revolutionary period the British drew heavily on their Native American allies in the Ohio Valley to form the backbone of their efforts against Kentuckians. The Shawnee, Wyandots, Pickaways, and various other tribal groups, who were supplied by the British, began a concentrated effort to force settlers back east over the Appalachian Mountains and away from their hunting grounds. What is perhaps most surprising is the relative degree of success that the Shawnee and their allies had during the early revolutionary period. Indeed, 1777 in particular was a calamity for white settlers who left the region in large numbers. By 1778 Boonesborough, Harrodsburgh, and Logan's Fort were the only remaining inhabited white settlements and these three forts probably represented, at their nadir, a total population of about 200 white settlers. Nor were these years exceptional. Beginning with Daniel Boone's first attempt to settle Kentucky in 1773, the story of the Kentucky frontier was one of disproportionate fatality levels and exposure to incidents of extreme violence.

Boone's attempt to establish Kentucky's first permanent settlement saw him leading approximately 40 men and six families, including his own, over the Appalachian Mountains. This first expedition, however, ended in failure when, after only fifteen days of travelling, the group was attacked by Native Americans and forced to retreat forty miles to the Clinch River in either neighbouring Virginia or North Carolina. This attack resulted in the death of six persons, including Boone's eldest son. Based on a group size estimate of 70-100 persons, this equates to a mortality rate of 8.57% after just fifteen days.[28] This level of mortality set a precedent that would last until the end of the Revolutionary War in Kentucky. According to historian John Mack Faragher, the mortality rate in Kentucky related to combat and wartime activities was approximately 7%; a particularly startling figure when compared to the 1% combat and wartime activity mortality rate of the thirteen rebelling colonies.[29] In his study of violence and homicide rates across American history David T. Courtwright puts such figures into sharp contrast when he presents the homicide rate in America during

1987 as 0.0219% of the total population. This, Courtwright argues, was one of the highest homicide rates in the world that year.[30]

Boone's first attempt at settling Kentucky may have proven unsuccessful but by 1775 he was, once again, ready to brave the experience and in April 1775 he successfully established the settlement of Boonesborough. The establishment of such permanent settlements, however, did not prevent raids by Native Americans; particularly the Shawnee and the Cherokee, which continued to massively disrupt the settling process. The kidnapping of the daughters of Richard Calloway and Daniel Boone is a key example of the kind of attack that affected the larger community as a whole. While the three girls who were kidnapped during a trip to the river near Boonesborough in July 1776 were the direct victims, other members of the community were also affected by this incident.

Beyond the immediate victims were the nine rescuers who, led by Boone, entered a combat situation to recover the girls from their captors. Although not directly involved in either the kidnapping or the rescue, the families of the three girls must also be accounted for as the kidnapping would have been the cause of much stress and anxiety. This incident would have demonstrated to all members of the Boonesborough community how dangerous and precarious their situation in the frontier was at this time. The kidnapping of the Calloway and Boone girls, like the hundreds of similar episodes that would follow it, also demonstrated the vulnerability of the settlers. Such attacks affected not only the individuals directly involved; they had a knock-on effect that rippled across the frontier communities, constantly reinforcing the level of danger settlers perceived in the world around them. The Native Americans' expert use of the wilderness to facilitate their guerrilla warfare was something that would compound this perception.

Indeed, the level of perceived danger among settlers was one of the single most important outcomes generated by the combination of frequent violent clashes and the deliberate guerrilla and psychological warfare tactics employed by the Native American. To be sure, soldiering and warfare can only exist because human beings are able to operate in battle and wartime conditions. The particular circumstances of a guerrilla war, the witnessing of atrocities against civilians, difficult environmental

conditions and, most importantly, a constant fear or belief that attacks could occur at any given moment, however, combine to break down the psychological and logistical conditions that can help protect the mental wellbeing of soldiers.[31] Battles in Kentucky did not take place in highly-regimented open field conditions, and being captured by the enemy could result in torture being committed upon a person. Additional factors unique to this period compound these conditions; the nature of weaponry was such that fatalities rarely occurred quickly after injury. On the contrary, death was often a slow and protracted affair and musket balls killed as many through infection and other secondary injuries as they did by physical damage to the body. Likewise, being tomahawked did not ensure an instant or pain-free death. Indeed, scalping almost certainly guaranteed suffering prior to death. Unlike veterans of the Vietnam War – and problematically for the settlers – the dangers they anticipated and feared were not limited to the military. Any member of settler society, man or woman, adult or child, soldier or civilian, could fall victim to these perceived dangers and potential atrocities.

As the initial settlements in Kentucky began to expand, population levels would continue to remain extremely low and demographically lopsided, particularly as Native American attacks increased. This resulted in significant casualties and reverse migration out of the region. Based on evidence in John Filson's narrative, along with anecdotal evidence from Lyman Draper's interview with Daniel Boone's son, Nathan, it is possible to estimate the population of Boonesborough and the neighbouring settlement of Logan's Fort as being as low as just 76 persons as of June 1777.[32] Prior to the arrival of new settler groups later in the year, accounts from this period detail the deaths of a number of individuals, even as the population had already plummeted as a result of reverse migration. Between 1775 and 1777 at least ten men were killed, thirteen injured and three young girls kidnapped, all of whom belonged to either Boonesborough or Logan's Fort. Considering just these two settlements, however, the death rate alone by 1777 had reached an excessive 13.16%, almost double the average rate in Kentucky for the revolutionary period as a whole. Low population levels in Kentucky and individual settlements no doubt played a significant part in such high mortality and casualty rates, but that does not change the fact that, of the country's white population, a significant proportion were either killed, wounded or kidnapped during this early period and, of those who remained,

the close and concentrated nature of fortified living ensured exposure to these harsh realties. Perhaps what is most telling is in spite of a population explosion by the end of the revolution, the wartime mortality rate in Kentucky would continue to massively outpace that of the thirteen former colonies.

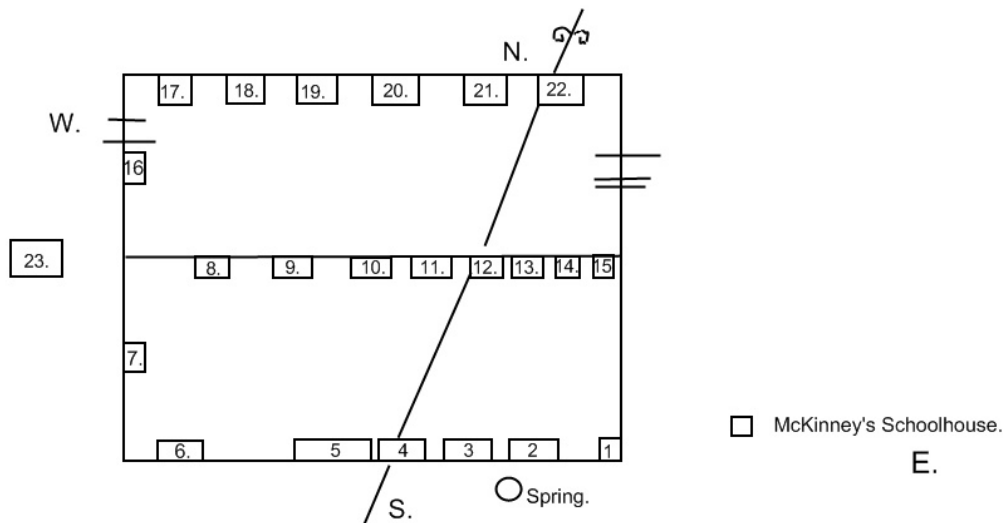

Figure 2. Lexington, like most early settlements built in Kentucky, was constructed within a picketed boundary to protect against Native American attack. Such designs were not unusual and proved to be effective against outright assault. As a result Native American groups had to develop other methods, specifically guerrilla and psychological tactics, that were effective against picketed settlements (Based on a sketch by John D. Shane and Josiah Collins in *Draper Manuscripts 12-CC-85-98*, p. 89).

The extent to which the wider society was affected by individual incidents was compounded by the fact that some events encompassed entire settlements and, by proxy, the entire localised population. One of the various sieges of Boonesborough is a pertinent example of the kind of event that could affect a settlement's entire population in this manner. The casualty rate of any given siege or direct settlement assault during these early years was typically three to six persons per settlement. Looking beyond simple casualty rates, however, it is crucial to note that such direct assaults or sieges ultimately involved every member of a given local population. The 1778 siege of Boonesborough, which has entered popular memory as *the* siege of Boonesborough, is a particular example of how attacks during this early period could prove disastrous for localised population centres. Even prior to the siege, Daniel Boone and a group of twenty-five other men had been captured by the invading Shawnee forces. Satisfied with capturing twenty-six settlers without having to fire a

shot, the Shawnee aborted their intended siege of Boonesborough and instead returned north of the Ohio border to await summer, a time much more suitable for their planned attack.

Such a loss of manpower was a significant problem for the burgeoning settlement, left with only 60 weapon-bearing men by the time the Shawnee returned in September.[33] Even the return of Boone, forewarning of this coming attack, could do little to bolster the flagging morale and resources of the settlers. As fighting broke out at least one man was found 'hiding under Mrs. Stephen Hancock's bed.'[34] The capture of Boone and his men who had been out on a crucial salt-making expedition was a blow not only to the logistics of the struggling settlement but also the social and familial networks of these men. Daniel Boone's wife, 'supposing her husband dead', left Boonesborough for North Carolina with almost her entire family in the company of one Colonel Donaldson.[35] Although the personal reactions of the wives, sisters, friends, and children of most of the salt-boilers, have not been recorded some important conclusions about these losses can still be made.

Figure 3. This 3D reconstruction of Boonesborough illustrates how the defensive walls of settlements not only offered protection from outside forces but also, in very strict terms, defined the social world of those living within them. Women and children, in particular, had

highly restricted levels of movement, particularly in the settlement's early years. These included only a limited zone of movement around the boundaries of the settlement.[36] For many women the four picket walls of towns like Boonesborough defined not only a safe zone but their entire social zone (Image by the author).

The harvesting of salt by the captured settlers was not an arbitrary exercise but a crucial activity required to ensure the continued survival of Boonesborough as a viable settlement. Salt was a key resource required for the preservation of foodstuffs and was also required to replace that which was lost through perspiration in the hot Kentucky summers.[37] A lack of a reliable source of salt in the year of 1778, led to relative famine for the people of Boonesborough. In addition the capture of Boone and his men resulted in a significant decrease in the male hunting population, making it difficult to maintain sustenance levels within the settlement. Discussing a trip to Boonesborough in March of that year, three months after the capture of the salt-boilers, Josiah Collins remembered finding a 'a poor, distressed, & naked, & starved people; daily surrounded by the savage, which made it so dangerous [that] the hunters were afraid to go out and get buffalo meat.'[38]

Before the start of the siege, then, the situation at Boonesborough had been detrimentally and universally affected by the capture of the salt-makers. The arrival of the Shawnee force in September of that year served to make an already precarious situation much worse. For most of 1778 the inhabitants of Boonesborough were in a poor situation, affected not only by obvious episodes such as the siege but by the loss of a significant portion of the settlement's manpower and cultivation capacity. Although the specific responses of the salt-boiler's family members are lost to historians their capture evidently caused much hardship amongst the community as a whole. Their absence, even from a strictly logistical perspective, had community-wide consequences. For these settlers frontier warfare was not something that occurred on a far distant front; the settlers of Boonesborough and Kentucky on the whole were, quite literally, living on the frontline.

In spite of the best efforts of the Shawnee and their allies, white settlers and their slaves continued to pass over the Appalachian Mountains. This first happened in a trickle but later in more substantial numbers, bringing with them resources, expertise,

and a hunger for land. As the population began to expand and disperse across a larger number of fortified settlements, the grossly disproportionate casualty rates subsided slightly. Whilst the population may have dispersed over a greater number of settlements, each of these stations, in turn, became potential targets for Native American forces. As the failed siege of Boonesborough had demonstrated, however, Native American military techniques, resources, and tactics were not conducive to siege warfare. Instead the entire country entered into a phase that can perhaps best be summarized as a meta-siege; that is to say an almost-constant Native American presence in the wilderness – at least during the summer and spring – created a culture of fear and trepidation that would come to dominate the way in which Kentuckians saw the world around them. Native American attackers could, and did, appear at any time, attacking members of settler society without discrimination and further developing a system of intensive guerrilla warfare and the promotion of anxiety that would dominate the countryside for over a decade to come.

In the years following 1778 frontiersmen and women, collectively and individually, became vulnerable targets to unannounced attacks, both in and out of their home settlements. Strode's Station, for instance, was attacked in 1781 by a force of Native Americans who actively harassed the settlement's population without directly assaulting the settlement itself.

Unable to breach the station's fortifications the attacking Native American forces had 'killed all the sheep…[and] cattle' by first driving them 'in groups at some distance out of shot [range] from the fort [and] into the field[,] where they in the fort could see them [the attackers] kill them.' From this point of safety the attacking Native Americans 'called to the men in the Station to come and get their cattle. The Indians would kill them all. And when they shot one that kicked up, or cut any capers, they would ha! ha! ha! as loud as to be heard all through the fort.'[39] Native American wartime tactics may not have been conducive to easily over running a given fort but they were extremely effective as a form of attrition, assaulting the settlers not only physically but psychologically, as well as attacking their economic and social systems. When direct combat with settlers was not available as an option, as was often the case, Native Americans used other tactics to remind the settlers of the ever-present and very real danger they posed. An incident described by James Lane

typifies this prolonged state of attrition: ‘They had crossed Hinkston at a deer lick, just above Louis’ Mill about a mile below us, [there they] took the bells off of some horses but not the horses themselves.’[40] Horse theft was a popular method of indirectly attacking settlements whilst simultaneously transferring valuable resources. The incident described by Lane, then, highlights not just the material gain of attacking a settlement’s livestock, but also highlights other tactical benefits that Native Americans were actively exploiting. Lane’s horses may not have been stolen but the Native Americans who took their bells had sent an important message nonetheless.

Psychological warfare is just one part of the picture and can only be understood in a context of a much larger, prolonged cultural war between settlers and the neighbouring Native American groups. Attacks upon the mental wellbeing of settlers worked because they were carried out in conjunction with attacks upon their bodies, and it is the absolute nature of this double-sided assault that made the Kentucky frontier such an ordeal. As the Revolutionary War drew to a close in the east the frontier war in Kentucky appears to have paradoxically escalated as Native American groups attempted to enforce the Ohio River as the definitive line between themselves and white settlers. The end result of this escalation was the Battle of the Blue Licks in 1782, the final battle of the American Revolution, and a resounding defeat for Kentuckians even as the former colonies stood upon the cusp of a historic victory.[41] The Blue Licks Defeat, as it was commonly referred to by contemporaries, saw a complete rout of a large Kentucky militia force with no less than 70 of the total force of approximately 180 settlers killed during the battle. More than simply being a calamitous physical defeat, the Blue Licks represented a significant blow to the confidence of Kentuckians regarding their ability to effectively combat Native Americans. It also visibly underlined the failure of the settlers to exile their enemies from the neighbouring woodlands and canebrakes of their new country. The Blue Licks Defeat was not an isolated incident but a well planned assault carried out by a force of Wyandots, Shawnee, and representatives of various other tribes who first assaulted Bryan’s Station in order to draw out the militia, whom they consequently led into an expertly executed ambush.

The Blue Licks Defeat highlights the uniqueness of the Kentucky frontier, at least in the context of Revolutionary America. Just as the thirteen colonies gained their independence from Great Britain, the fight for the trans-Appalachian West was only escalating, ensuring that the victory of the east was in no way a victory for Kentucky. The year 1783 appears to have been a year of relative peace, particularly following a number of significant assaults upon the home villages of the Ohio Native Americans, but it would be a further eleven years before the United States would gain any real control over the lands ceded to them by Britain at the end of the Revolution.

During the American Revolution Kentucky was not simply a frontier but a battlefield on which the ambitions of the white settlers clashed directly with the goals and autonomy of neighbouring Native American tribes in the surrounding regions. War in this theatre was not restricted to military personnel or fought in a European open field manner. Instead it affected all members of the settler community, both directly and indirectly. The dominance of guerrilla and psychological warfare gave this region and period a dangerous character that, accentuated by high mortality and casualty rates, combined to form a two-tier assault upon both the bodies and minds of the settler population. To be sure the settler's Native American enemies suffered immensely and often in many similar ways to their white adversaries and, as such, they are fully deserving of a detailed analysis in their own right that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

It is meaningless to talk about 1782 as an end for the war in the west but it is, perhaps, appropriate to describe it as the end of one phase of this war. In the years following the end of the Revolution, central Kentucky would become relatively secure, and endemic violence became ever more restricted to the area surrounding the Ohio River. Following the close of the Revolution, however, patterns of conflict and, most importantly, racial hatred and animosity, had already been established and they would continue to dictate and guide settler-Native relations for the next twelve years. But where previously large majorities of the population were affected directly by the frontier war the rapid expansion of Kentucky's population significantly altered the relationship between the population as a whole and frontier violence. Until the close of the revolution, however, violence was a factor that affected every aspect of settler society, dictating the type and shape of settlements and town

development, social and personal interaction, and freedom of movement. In short, endemic guerrilla and psychological warfare dictated absolutely the type and shape of society that developed on the early Kentucky frontier and, though many other social and economic conditions would have their role to play, it was the particular shape and intensity of violence and warfare during this period that gave society in Kentucky its character.

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[1] The author would like to thank Matthew C. Ward, Richard McMahon, Catriona M. Paul, Doctor Steven Cull (BMA) and my wife, Keira, for their kind advice, guidance, and patience.

[2] S. Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*, Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 6-7; T. F. Belue, *The Hunters of Kentucky: A Narrative History of America's First Far West, 1750-1792,* Mechanicsburg, Stackpole Books, 2003, pp. 14-15, 33.

[3] D. C. Skaggs, 'The Sixty Years War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814: An Overview', in D.C. Skaggs, *The Sixty Years War For the Great Lakes, 1754-1814,* Michigan, Michigan State University Press, 2001, pp. 1-3.

[4] J. M. Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer,* New York and Ontario, Henry Holt and Company, 1992, pp. 143-144.

[5] Belue, *The Hunters of Kentucky*, p. 92.

[6] E. A. Perkins, *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley,* Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1998, pp. 1-7.

[7] Perkins, *Border Life*, pp. 81-115.

[8] J. D. Shane, 'Interview with William Clinkenbeard', *Draper Manuscripts 11 CC 54-66*, p. 56.

[9] Griffin ties the American Revolution and the concept of the American frontier together, arguing that both represented the same process and that the frontier was a place in time represented by the Revolution. It was, according to Griffin, during this 'crucible' of revolution and frontier that identities of both self and society were reformed. Griffin's argument, therefore, accepts the agency and impact of violence on the shaping of society, but only in the context of a much larger, society-wide struggle. P.K Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier,* New York, Hill and Wang, 2007, pp. 15-16.

[10] L. C. Draper, 'Interview with Nathan and Olive Boone', in Neil O. Hammon (ed.), *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone,* Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1999, pp. 9-12.

[11] Faragher, *Daniel Boone*, p. 50.

[12] Draper, 'Interview with Nathan and Olive Boone', pp. 13-14.

[13] Or possibly from Thomas having his head bored 'full of gimlet holes to get the blood out', J. D. Shane, 'Interview with Isaac Clinkenbeard', 11 *CC 1*-4, p. 1.

[14] Shane, 'Isaac Clinkenbeard', p. 1.

[15] The shifting nature of the frontier in Kentucky is of less importance in this paper as secure areas and an identifiable interior that typically came into being after 1782. Although some areas of Kentucky were believed secure by this point, the Battle of the Blue Licks in 1782 and the defeat of the participating settlers demonstrated how false this assumption was.

[16] P. Spierenburg, 'Masculinity, Violence and Honour: An Introduction', in P. Spierenburg (ed.), *Men and Violence: Gender, Honour, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America,* Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 1998, pp. 1-9.

[17] M. C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1767*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003, p. 44.

[18] In his monograph, *How the West was Lost*, Stephen Aron illustrates how the close proximity between white settlers and Native Americans meant that settlers incorporated many of Native practices and habits into their daily routines. Aron's study demonstrates a two-way cultural exchange

between Native Americans and the new white settlers of Kentucky; however, whilst Aron's argument is sound it fails to emphasise that it was the reality of hostilities between the two parties that most clearly defined their relationship. S. Aron, *How the West was Lost*, pp. 11-13, 18-25.

[19] Skaggs, 'The Sixty Years War for the Great Lakes', pp. 1-3.

[20] J. A. Caruso, *The Appalachian Frontier: America's First Surge Westward*, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2003, pp. 65-70.

[21] Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry,* p. 44.

[22] Skaggs, 'The Sixty Years War', p. 10.

[23] L. R. August and Barbara A. Gianola, 'Symptoms of War Trauma Induced Psychiatric Disorders: Southeast Asian Refugees and Vietnam Veterans', *International Migration Review*, vol. 21, 1987, pp. 821-823.

[24] World Health Organization, *ICD-10: The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorder: Clinical Descriptions and Diagnosis guidelines,* Geneva, World Health Organization, 1992, pp.145-151; American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders (DSM IV): International Version with ICD-10 Codes*, 4th ed., Washington, American Psychiatric Press, 2000, p. 927; L. R. August and B. A. Gianola, 'Symptoms of War Trauma Induced Psychiatric Disorders: Southeast Asian Refugees and Vietnam Veterans', *International Migration Review*, vol. 21, 1987, pp. 821-823; A. Forester and B. Beck, 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II: Can a Psychiatric Concept Help Us Understand Postwar Society?', in R. Bessel and D. Schumann (eds), *Life After Death: Approaches to Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 31; www.MedLinePlus.gov, *Medline: A Service of the U.S. Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health*, http://www2.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/mwmednlm, accessed 27 July, 2007.

[25] G. A. Fernando, 'Working with Survivors of War in Non-Western Cultures: The Role of the Clinical Psychologist', *Intervention*, vol. 2, 2004, p. 110.

[26] Dean's study is certainly interesting and much of the argument is convincing; however, Dean is hampered by an almost unfaltering focus on post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD has, since the end of the Vietnam War, taken on a very strong sense and shape in the popular consciousness that is, in part, strongly attacked in Dean's work. Whilst this is to his credit, Dean's single-minded focus on this one specific syndrome ultimately undermines his own argument. Dean focuses upon PTSD not because it is necessarily the most relevant condition but because it is the most well-known and one of the most extreme and misunderstood conditions affecting individuals in war. It is not being argued here that PTSD or any specific condition identified in modern medicine should be used to describe any individuals in Kentucky, but that some recognition must be given to the mechanics of psychological warfare, and the high stress that results, quite naturally, from these tactics. E. T. Dean, Jr., *Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 15-18, 106-109.

[27] A large collection of sources held within the Draper Manuscripts (Wisconsin Historical Society) come from the Reverend John D. Shane who, in the 1830s and 1840s, travelled widely through Kentucky recording oral histories from surviving pioneers. This collection represents dozens of unpublished narratives taken, very often, near verbatim form from their subject. As this is a collection of Shane's notes rather than published accounts many of the potential problematic areas of published accounts are sidestepped. The pioneers talked in a characteristically honest manner, often making no attempt to censure themselves around their interviewer. In the few instances where Shane censored his subjects it tended to be in the omission of curse words and phrases and Shane was careful to retain the surrounding context. When Shane did comment he did so only in the margins of his notes, never replacing words of phrases in the main text. What is remarkable about these accounts is the near omnipresence of frontier violence that is described by a wide spectrum of former pioneers, both men and women, throughout the frontier period. Most individual accounts contain first-hand experiences of violence but most do not concern family members, often husbands, wives or siblings, who were victims of the frontier war. J. D. Shane, *Interviews* in *Draper Manuscripts Folders 11-13 CC.*

[28] The top end of this estimate comes from using the size of Boone's family as a model. At the time it consisted of nine people, including Boone and his wife. Multiplied across the six families and added to the forty men, this creates an upper population estimate of 94 individuals. The lower end of the estimate adds the nine members of Boone's family to a much lower estimate of family size for the other family members of four persons to family generating a lower end estimate of 69 persons. J. Filson *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky to Which is Added the Adventures of Daniel Boone,* Willington, James Adams, 1784, p. 57.

[29] Faragher, *Daniel Boone*, pp. 143-144.

[30] D. T. Courtwright, *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 28.
[31] Dean, *Shook Over Hell*, pp. 64-73; J. D. Bremnar and E. Brett, 'Trauma-Related Dissociated States and Long-Term Psychopathology in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 10, 1997, pp. 37-39.
[32] In Filson's narrative he describes Boonesborough as being defended by 22 men, Harrod's Fort by 65 and Logan's Fort by just 15. In the narrative he describes deaths and incidents surrounding Boonesborough and Logan's Fort, giving an indication of mortality rates for these two settlements. In order to put these rates into perspective it is necessary to estimate the population levels for these settlements. Based on the demographics of Boone's first expedition it is possible to estimate the population of Boonesborough at 43-51 persons and Logan's Fort at 26-31. Taking an average of the maximum and minimum of a combination of these two figures it is possible to create an average population estimate for these two settlements of 76 persons. Population increases to these early settlements was accomplished only by further immigration which was reported to have occurred after June of 1777 which brought the average population estimate, including Harrod's Fort, to 408 persons. Prior to the arrival of these reinforcements the average population estimate of Boonesborough, Logan's Fort and Harrod's Fort was 204 persons. No specific information is given about killings and other violent instances in Harrod's Fort, although there are plenty of suggestions that it was a significant problem for this settlement. As a result this study looks specifically at Boonesborough and Logan's Fort. It is also worthy to note that the number of men guarding a frontier settlement was by far the best indicator as to the overall population levels as the demographics were so unbalanced with relatively few women and children compared to the number of men. Nathan Boone, for instance, notes that his sister Jemima married at the age of just 13, despite being referred to continuously as a 'girl'. Filson, *The Present State of Kentucky,* pp. 60-62; Draper, 'Interview with Nathan and Olive Boone', pp. 47-49.
[33] These 60 men do not represent the nadir of manpower at this time. This number includes recent re-enforcements that arrived with Josiah Collins between the capture of the salt-boilers and shortly before the onset of the siege. J. D. Shane, 'Interview with Josiah Collins', in *Draper Manuscripts 12-CC-52-68*, p. 52.
[34] Draper, 'Interview with Nathan and Olive Boone', p. 68.
[35] Shane, 'Interview with Josiah Collins', p. 52.
[36] Perkins, *Borderlife*, pp. 64-69.
[37] J. A. Jake, 'Salt on the Ohio Valley Frontier, 1770-1820', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 59, 1969, pp. 692-695.
[38] Shane, 'Interview with Josiah Collins', p. 56.
[39] J. D. Shane, 'Interview with William Clinkenbeard', in *Draper Manuscripts 11-CC-54-66*, p. 56.
[40] J. D. Shane, 'Interview with Colonel James Lane', in *Draper Manuscripts 12-CC-42*-45, p. 45.
[41] Beleue, *The Hunters of Kentucky*, p. 179.