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Proceedings of the Meeting
of the Kentucky State
Historical Society

Boone Day

June seventh, 1912



In the Hall of Fame
New Capitol
Frankfort, Ky.

Kentucky
Proceedings of the State Historical Society on
Boone Day, June seventh, 1912, in the Hall
of Fame, in the Capitol, Frankfort, Kentucky

THE PROGRAM

The meeting of the State Historical Society at this annual commemoration of the seventh of June, on which day Daniel Boone "first saw the level of the beautiful land of Kentucky," was in all respects one of the most delightful the Society has held in its elegant quarters in the new Capitol.

The program fulfilled its promise of good things, and the speakers and musicians were at their best. No reports are read on these occasions; the proceedings are for social reunion, and literary papers and music are the features.

The program was carried out, with due regard to time, as follows: Governor James B. McCreary, President of the Society, opened the meeting, and, after a brief and eloquent prayer by Rev. Jesse R. Zeigler, made an impromptu address. He gave a review of the Society from the time he as its first President, after the Civil War, conducted it for four years, from 1875 to 1879.

The Governor then introduced the Regent, and asked that she address the assembly, after the usual custom on such occasions.

As his address had embodied much that was in her paper, she declined to read it, lest it should occupy too much time, saying: "Ladies and gentle-

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men, I did not tell the Governor what to say when I requested him to make an address, but in his remarks he has in some mysterious way embodied much that I have written, and as our program is long, I ask that you will excuse me from reading my paper today, and promise that you may read it in the September Register."

Following Mrs. Morton's apology came the reading of "The Moneyless Man" and the unveiling of Major Henry T. Stanton's portrait.

The poem was read by Hon. H. V. McChesney, who preceded the reading by a brief introduction, in which he said that while the purpose of these annual meetings on the seventh of June was primarily to do honor to the memory of Daniel Boone, on this particular occasion the Society had a double purpose in view, to honor the memory of Boone, and also to pay a tribute to the memory of Kentucky's Poet-Laureate, Major Henry T. Stanton. He said that the Society wished to pay this tribute to Major Stanton not only as the Poet-Laureate of Kentucky, but as an early and staunch friend of the Kentucky Historical Society. Following these introductory remarks Mr. McChesney read the following comment from the "Illustrated Kentuckian:" "When this poem appeared in the Liverpool Times, the Royal Society of Letters in England placed the signet of everlasting applause upon it, and it was awarded the first honor, years ago, as the most vigorous and finished American poem. It has found its way to the hearthstones of both continents, and swept with its firm yet gentle fingers the weary worn hearts of the throbbing thousands to whom gold is only a dream." Mr. McChesney read the poem very impressively—we do not think the author himself ever read it better. When concluded, he introduced Miss Marguerite

McLean, of Louisville, granddaughter of the poet, who gracefully came forward, and gently touched the string of the elegant silk Confederate banner that veiled the portrait. It fell back, and waved away from the life-like face of the late beloved Laureate of Kentucky. Great applause greeted the unveiling, and many eyes were wet, the audience being deeply touched by this honor paid the poet whose songs honored his name and Kentucky.

Miss Lucy Chinn now played a beautiful prelude on the piano for the program that followed. Mrs. Kate C. Bailey, of Shelbyville, conducted the music, with her class as musicians.

Mrs. Bailey is a pianist of distinction, and had her class well trained for the day; the numbers were all beautiful and played with skill and expression.

Miss Corinne Bailey sustained her reputation for wonderful sweetness in song, as did Mrs. Barksdale Hamlett, in the lovely song, "The Beautiful Land of Nod," accompanied by the charming Miss Priscilla Williams on the violin. "The Harp" was never rendered more beautifully than by Miss Errickson. The Misses Thomas delighted the audience by their execution, both in "Two Larks," and "The Duet."

Mrs. Charles Bell never appeared more lovely in person than when she recited with dramatic power and patriotic enthusiasm her number, "Signing the Declaration of Independence." She brought the scene of the actors in this drama of freedom before the audience. It was a splendid rendition of the speech of the wizard Jefferson. The command "Sign" spell-bound the audience, and when she ceased tremendous applause attested the appreciation of her recitation.

Miss Aubyn Chinn, who gave a charming talk about Cumberland Gap, is a mere slip of young womanhood of this city. But for the fact that she is now a noted speaker for the State University, of Lexington, it might have been considered the impertinent confidence of youth for one so young to follow the distinguished and attractive orator, Prof. H. G. Shearin, President of Hamilton College, and Professor at Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky. His "Memories and Melodies of the Wilderness Road," was a delightful retrospect. He had for illustration, a dulcimer, a map he had drawn showing the route through Cumberland Gap to the Blue Grass Region, and beneath the map was the much admired painting of "Shaker's Ferry," by Hundleigh. This address was much enjoyed by the audience, who perhaps knew more from President Shearin and Miss Aubyn Chinn's scholarly and vivid descriptions of the Wilderness Road than they had ever read or heard before. We trust we may have the addresses at sometime for the Register.

Mr. W. W. Stephenson's "Historic Homes of Harrodsburg" was listened to with rapt attention. It will be given in the September number of the Register. The illustrations were of many of these elegant homes in this "Cradle of the Commonwealth," as the author proudly styles Harrodsburg.

Col. J. Tandy Ellis, a soldier-bard, following in the lead of O'Hara and Stanton, who were both soldiers, recited his charming dialect poem, "Under the Ellum Tree Whar Brackenridge Spoke." It was received by rounds of applause, and eyes wet with emotion and admiration were raised from the poet to the portrait of John C. Breckinridge above him, the gift of General P. P. Johnson, to the Kentucky State Historical Society.

Mrs. Bailey and her accomplished daughter, Miss Corinne Bailey, with an exquisite song concluded the program. Many thought Mrs. Bailey had reserved her best number for the last, it was so beautiful, but we learned it was substituted for the number of an absent performer, unavoidably detained at home. The thanks of the Society were tendered Mrs. Bailey for her assistance. She is an adept in pleasing the public, and gives them music, instead of "a practical demonstration of finger exercises on the piano," as our German instructor in music called the latter day eccentricities in technique, high class sound, or artistic fingering on keys or strings.

The audience was dismissed and the invited guests remained to partake of an elegant buffet luncheon prepared for the visitors and members from a distance.

The Society's rooms were beautifully decorated in pink roses, pink carnations and ferns. A round table in the Library was covered with a snowy cloth; in the center stood a cut glass bowl of splendid Killarney roses. At this table the Governor, the Judges of the Court of Appeals and other distinguished persons were served.

Mrs. Morton, Regent, received during the day a great many letters of regret from members and friends of the Society who could not be present. Among these were the regrets of the Hon. Champ Clark, from whom Mrs. Morton received the following letter:

"Mrs. Jennie C. Morton,
Frankfort, Ky.

My Dear Mrs. Morton:—

I have your very kind invitation to attend the luncheon of the Kentucky State Historical Society,

on Friday, June 7, and would be delighted to attend, but it is impossible. I cannot leave Washington while the House is in session so near the end of the session.

I trust that it will prove a most enjoyable occasion, as I am certain it will, and much regret that I cannot enjoy it with you.

Your friend,

Champ Clark."

Letters of regret were also received from Col. J. Stoddard Johnston, Louisville, Kentucky, Dr. Thomas A. Pickett, Maysville, Kentucky, Mrs. Belle Rogers, Maysville, Ky., Dr. Benj. Shambaugh, Editor of the Iowa Journal of History and Politics, Iowa City, Iowa, Dr. Jameson, Author and Editor of the American Historical Review, Washington, D. C., Rev. Alex. A. Lindsay, Poet, Franklin, N. Y., Hon. W. S. Laidley, Historian, Charleston, West Virginia (who sent with his regrets his elegant history of Charleston and Kanawa County, West Virginia, to the Regent), Hon. F. A. Richardson, Librarian Supreme Court, Denver, Colorado, Hon. Alfred Pirtle, Author of the "Chenoweth Massacre," Louisville, Ky., Judge and Mrs. James Breathitt, Hopkinsville Ky. (who sent regrets and good wishes for the continued success of the Society).

Among the number of out-of-town visitors who enjoyed the program were Col. John A. Steele, of Midway, one of the original incorporators of the Society, Miss Martha Stephenson, of Harrodsburg, Mrs. Luke P. Blackburn, of Louisville, Mrs. Henry T. Stanton and her daughters and grandchildren, Mrs. Gray McLean and Mrs. Robert Boyd Robertson, of Louisville, Mrs. George Willis, of Shelbyville, and daughter Miss Martha Willis, Miss Mar-

guerite McLean, Louisville, Ky., also Miss Bettie Tom Vimont, of Millersburg, Ky., Mrs. Jenny Kenney Lisle, of Paris, Ky., Mrs. Hubert Shearin, of Lexington, Ky., Mrs. W. J. Thomas and two children, Miss Alberta Dubourg, of Shelbyville, Ky., and Hundleigh, the artist.

An informal reception was held following the program, during which a buffet luncheon was served the strangers who attended the exercises, the members of the Society, and a number of invited guests.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

The following donations were received: A small linen table cloth. The flax was raised at "Traveler's Rest," and spun and woven into cloth by Susanna Hart, wife of Governor Isaac Shelby, first Governor of Kentucky. It was presented by Mrs. Willis Field, Versailles, Ky., a great granddaughter of Gov. Shelby; and a Mexican silver-mounted saddle and bridle, captured during the Mexican War by Lieut La Fayette Dunlap, and presented by his nephew, Dr. Fayette Dunlap, Danville, Ky.

As the Kentucky State Historical Society was founded in honor of Daniel Boone, we place here with pleasure the following clipping sent us from Philadelphia. It is well for Kentuckians to know the estimate placed upon this hero-warrior of the wilderness, whose courage and intelligence has brought world-wide renown to his name.

DANIEL BOONE IN KENTUCKY.

By Rev. Thomas B. Gregory.

April 30, 1769.

It was one hundred and forty-three years ago today, April 30, 1769, that Daniel Boone got his first glimpse of the fair region now known as Kentucky. On that day Boone, with James Robinson, a young Scotch-Irishman, stood on a mountain path and looked down upon the Watauga winding along through its enchanting valley, and he resolved that it should not be his last vision of the earthly paradise.

At the time of Boone's first sight of Kentucky from the summit of the Blue Ridge it was a vast hunting-ground upon which the savage tribes killed the elk and buffalo. No settlement existed within its borders. Its dark forests separated the tribes of the Cherokees, Creeks and Catawbas of the South from the hostile tribes of the North, who often encountered one another in deadly conflict. On this account the region had long been known among the aborigines as the "Dark and Bloody Ground."

The story of the man who gave this glorious region to the white man is one of the most interesting in the world. Justin Winsor, one of the greatest of our historians, speaks of the Father of Kentucky in words that are as true as they are beautiful:

"Boone's rugged but tender personality was hard to shroud. We see his tall and slender figure, too muscular to be gaunt. His eyes idealized his head. His experience had toughened his sinews, and made his senses alert. Any emergency brought

him well-nigh to the normal perfection of a man. His kindness draws us to him. His audacity makes us as confident as himself. His fringed hunting-shirt, belted so that its ample folds carried his food, may be ragged; his leggins may be tattered by the brush; his moccasins cut by the ledge; his knife clotted with the blood of the wolf; but the rich copse and the bounding elk share our scrutiny with his person, and we look to the magnolia, laurel and ash, to the foaming stream and the limestone cliffs as his background; and all that the man stands for in bravery and constancy is mated with the enchantment of nature."

No State in the Union has at the forefront of its history a nobler character than he who heads the story of the "Blue Grass State."

God never made a grander man than Daniel Boone, and in every public school in the land the story of his life should be made a regular part of the children's study. It would be a moral tonic. It would redden the children's blood and help to make them brave, honorable and upright citizens.

Address of the Regent, Mrs. Jennie C. Morton, which was omitted from the program.

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In my great desire to have an elegant occasion, I purposely omitted the Regent of the State Historical Society—lest ego become an intrusion, an offense. On this 15th annual commemoration of Boone Day, you have before you in large part the work of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Editor of the Register, and the Regent. Dorcas's household needle work spoke for her, in death. This is a larger, more difficult and more complicated work for the State of Kentucky that is before you in this Hall of Fame, and the able workers in this depart-

ment, officers of the State Historical Society, are before you in life, asking your approval, your co-operation and your good wishes, while you enjoy the grand results before you of their faithful endeavor.

I feel sure if the first founders of the Kentucky State Historical Society in 1836, now seventy-six years ago, could look down on the acorn of their planting, they with the world famous man, Boone, would be amazed at its growth and its foliage, now a wide spreading tree with branches in Europe and in the Isles of the Sea. They could not have dreamed of this result. They planted the seed, and seemed to have cared for it no more. It was left to struggle into existence now and then, battling with neglect and poverty of soil, but showing like the Jerusalem flower when placed in water, there was life in it somewhere.

It was after the Civil war that Governor James B. McCreary, Captain John Andrew Steele, and a number of such gallant and distinguished men undertook its care. For a few years it lived and thrived under their protection, but changes came, death and distance removed many of the members, and finally cold indifference remanded the Kentucky Historical Society to oblivion and its few curios, mss. &c., were hidden away in closets in the old Capitol.

In 1896 there came a little company of 20th century people into the old Capitol (our Society). When they saw the relics they resolved to restore the Society these once represented. Today they point you to the result of their care, loyal protection and intelligent vigilance.

We are proud of our Capitol, but we are prouder still of our rooms in it. Our splendid Library, with its wealth of historical literature,

and the paintings and portraits of inestimable value. These historical treasures that we have been able to collect by purchase, by solicitation, and influence, with the aid of our small State appropriation, have been and will continue to be of great service to the educational system of the State, as well as instructors for the masses that visit the Historical Rooms.

Our Society, under its charter, occupies a unique position in the State Government, being as one of our most distinguished jurists has said, a "Protectorate," in the recent usage of this term. It has its own rules governing the body, and directing and controlling its own interests, and electing its own officers; the while in close relation to the State, upholding its laws and extending the power of the Commonwealth under which it receives its legitimate support and for whose benefit it is conducted.

Our Reports are now published in pamphlet form, and when examined and approved by the Governor, are laid before the Legislature at each recurring session, and afterwards filed in the Archives of the State. It will be seen and known by all that though a protectorate, our time, our thought, and our most faithful service is given for the uplift, and continued success and glory of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

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