An important part of the research for writing about and painting my series “Return to the Land of My Ancestors” has included an exploration of the natives or First Peoples in North Carolina, when my Boone and Bryan ancestors arrived there in the mid-1700’s. Some of the names of the People that had been in the region they settled were the Saponi, Saura, Catawba and the Cherokee.

When I was a child and participated for years in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, I was taught and learned much about the ways of the Americans Indians. Since I grew up in Illinois, most of the Indian lore and practices that I learned were about the Tribes of the Great Plains. Many of the trails and camp sites also had American Indian names. We were taught many of their crafts such as making moccasins and clothing, how to shoot a long bow, paddle a canoe on long trips, and track wild animals. I was even taught to dance as a member of an Indian dance team, and we frequently competed at powwows. I continue to make arrows that I shoot with a long bow and make leather bags and clothing from deer hides. In recent years, I realized that even my first spiritual beliefs were those of an American Indian, which I continue to practice and believe it fits well with my more formal religious worship as an Episcopalian.

Research and exploration for my writing and painting includes exploring the landscape and attending re-enactments. Even though I had seen the sign along the interstate highway and read articles about it, I had never been to the Fort Dobbs State Historic Site in Statesville, North Carolina. I knew there was a Boone and possible Bryan family connection, so I decided to attend a “War for Empire” event there.

When I arrived, I spotted and photographed the marker about Daniel Boone’s connection to this site that was set there by the Daughters of the American Revolution. I also found many re-enactors from the French and Indian War and spent some time taking photographs and talking with them. I ran into a young gentleman who recently published the book *Carolina in Crisis: Cherokees, Colonists, and Slaves in the American Southeast, 1756 – 1763*. The author is Daniel J. Tortora, and he handed me a flyer with the description of his book, which I later purchased and read, and it includes valuable information about Chief Attakullakulla and other Cherokee and their interactions with Carolina colonists.

My first meeting with Captain Robert Rambo (United States Army, retired) was at Fort Dobbs, and he was portraying the Cherokee Chief Attakullakulla. I listened to his wonderful stories, and we came to an agreement of what he would want in exchange for me to be able to photograph him, so I could paint his portrait. The next morning, my curiosity was peaked, because I thought one of my ancestors met Attakullakulla. I read in *A Demand of Blood* by Nadia Dean that Attakullakulla’s name given to him by the English was Little Carpenter, and that my ancestor, Daniel Boone, was with him and other Cherokee at Sycamore Shoals in March 1775 for the purchase or what many say was a lease of what is now part of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As we know, the Governor of Virginia later voided the purchase saying no one had the authority to do this other than the colony of Virginia.

Chief Attakullakulla was well traveled and even at a young age went to England to King George II’s Court to negotiate a treaty. Many ask why a Cherokee Chief wore clothing of a British officer, and it was common for Cherokee Chiefs to wear a British officer’s jacket as a symbol of alliance with the British.

During the signing of the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals, a number of Cherokee Chiefs were present, including the son of Attakullakulla who was Chief Dragging Canoe. His son opposed the treaty out of concern that it would not be honored and would be broken as happened so many times before. He was also concerned about the colonists continuing to push the Cherokee and other tribes from their lands and farther west. History shows Chief Dragging Canoe’s concerns well founded.

The stories about the Cherokee and Attakullakulla and their connection to Daniel Boone in North Carolina inspired me to do a series of paintings of Attakullakulla as well as other Cherokee. The largest of these is 60” x 30” and has text in the background which reads, “Attakullakulla. Cherokee Peace Chief.”
Many treaties were signed. All were broken.

Judge Richard Henderson had agreed to pay Daniel Boone 2,000 acres to lead a team of ax men to clear a trail from Sycamore Shoals to what became Fort Boonesborough, and this trail later became known as “Boone’s Trace.” Just after the Treaty was signed, Boone and his men, along with two women, completed the task.

Another of my oil paintings of Attakullakulla is “Chief Little Carpenter’s Lament” where his head is tilted down, and he appears to be lost in thought. As a noun, “lament” is defined as “a passionate expression of grief or sorrow,” and
as a verb “to mourn.” Little Carpenter only lived two years after the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals. I was moved to paint this portrait believing before his death, he may have been saddened and even mourned, when he saw my families and many others begin our western expansion.

About the Author:

Robert Crum, as a classically trained North Carolina artist, is an oil painter, sculptor, mosaic and mural artist. He learned to complete large murals when he apprenticed under fresco painter Ben Long, and Robert developed his skills as a mosaicist while studying with Italian mosaic artists in Rome and Mexico. Robert has created numerous large mosaics and murals in Arizona, North Carolina, South Carolina, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

In 2006, Robert received a grant from the Arts & Science Council-Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and in 2011, he received a Regional Artist Project Grant from the North Carolina Arts Council. His work can be found in numerous private and corporate collections.

Thank you for your donations!
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Judy Pierson

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Compass Submission Guidelines

1. We are looking for articles related to the Boone Society’s interests, including relevant histories, genealogies, events, biographies, sites, etc. Please include pictures with captions separately. When necessary, please make sure you have proper permission to use the text or pictures.

2. Please use Times-New Roman, font size 11. Text should be single-spaced.

3. We prefer articles lightly formatted. We copy the article into a publication template which arranges the text into its own format and spacing.

4. We publish the Compass quarterly (Jan, April, July, Oct). Please submit your article 45 days prior to the first day of the quarterly month in question or submit an article or picture to be kept on file to use for a future publication.

5. We accept quality writing that is well-edited. If the submission is accepted for publication, no major changes will be made.

6. Please email your submissions as attachments to sue.ballard@kctcs.edu. Please type Compass on the subject line.