Growing up in Illinois, I was often told by family that I’m a direct descendant of the explorer and “Father of Kentucky” Daniel Boone and his wife, Rebecca Bryan. After moving to North Carolina in 1989 and conducting research on the Boone and Bryan families, I realized that I was walking in the same places as my ancestors. Along with the research and writing that I’ve been doing, I started and continued a series of paintings under the title “Return to the Land of My Ancestors.” This article describes how I was inspired to paint a small watercolor and a three foot by one-and-a-half-foot oil painting of how I imagined Lavina Boone, daughter of Rebecca and Daniel.

Since my Bachelor of Arts degree is in political science, I also studied extensively such subjects as political philosophy and history. I have continued to be a student of history and biography. As I have read and listened to so many stories over the years, I’ve noticed that the stories that are told depend on who’s telling the stories. Robert Morgan writes in Lions of the West that “Historians may concentrate on the famous, but most of what happens is the composite deeds of common folk… it was the unnoticed thousands on foot and on horseback, in wagons and ox carts, who made the story a fact, who wrote history with their hands and feet, their need and greed, their sweat and often their blood.”

Much has been written about the lives of Daniel and Rebecca Bryan Boone. However, as I wander North Carolina and Kentucky, I ask questions and wonder about a little girl and young woman who died so young, Lavina Boone, my direct ancestor.

Lavina Boone was born March 23, 1766 at Sugar Creek on the Forks of the Yadkin in the colony of North Carolina. She was the fifth of ten children born to Daniel and Rebecca. Her extended family was among the first colonists to live in this area and owned thousands of acres known as the Bryan Settlements. My home in Salisbury is only a short distance south of this area, and even though I’ve driven through the area countless times, the place where she was born is on private land. The cabin where she was born is no longer there, but I recently had the opportunity to visit the plot of land where she was born. I also frequently visit the grave of her grandparents Squire and Sarah Morgan Boone in Mocksville. Lavina never knew Squire Boone since he died the year before she was born.

As a younger man and commercial hunter, Lavina’s father Daniel was always on the move looking for better places to find game. Lavina was still a baby when, in the fall of 1766, Rebecca agreed to move several miles up the Yadkin
to Holman’s Ford near the Brushy Mountains. Daniel went on a long hunt. When he returned the next spring, the family moved to the mouth of Beaver Creek and then moved again the following year to the other side of the Yadkin River. As a baby and toddler, Lavina was always on the move with her family and living at the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Her father continued his long hunts and explorations into what is now Kentucky. Fortunately for her mother and siblings, these moves frequently involved friends and other family members moving nearby, so Rebecca and her children weren’t always left alone while Daniel was gone.

Lavina was born after the French and Indian War, so backcountry life was relatively quiet, but this calm was not to last. In 1773, when Lavina was only seven years old, her father got involved with Captain William Russell to lead a large migration of settlers into what is now Kentucky. Lavina would have been there, when her father and her grandmother Sarah Morgan Boone hugged, cried, and said their last good-byes. Sarah would die in 1777 in North Carolina without seeing them again. Lavina now had seven siblings when the family, along with many others, left the Clinch River to begin their migration. They were ambushed by Indians, and Lavina’s oldest brother, James, was killed, along with others.

My painting with images of women and children and the text “We were born on the Bryan Settlements and the Forks of the Yadkin. We followed you into that Dark and Bloody Ground” emphasizes the predicament in which children found themselves. When families decided to migrate from North Carolina into what later became Kentucky, the children had no choice but to follow. At the age of seven, Lavina began living in a world where warfare became common along with the deaths of family and friends.

In 1773, Lavina and her family lived in a borrowed cabin along the Clinch River for the next two years. In 1774, her father was commissioned as an officer by the governor of Virginia. He and Michael Stoner searched for surveyors in Kentucky to warn them about the Indian attacks during Lord Dunmore’s War. In the following year of 1775, Daniel Boone was employed by Judge Richard Henderson to lead an ax team of thirty men to clear a path from Sycamore Shoals to what became Boonesborough, Kentucky. When he completed this, he went to bring his wife and children to their new home at

"Born on the Bryan Settlements and the Forks of the Yadkin."
Boonesborough. Lavina was nine years old, and each time she moved with her family, she would have either ridden a horse or walked because Boone’s Trace was not accessible by wagon.

The Boones and their family and friends were settling into their new life on the frontier, when, in January 1778, Daniel and others were captured by Shawnee. When he didn’t return, Rebecca assumed he was dead and returned with several of her children, to North Carolina. First, they went to live along the Yadkin with her Uncle William Bryan and Aunt Mary Boone Bryan. Rebecca later took her children to her father Joseph Bryan’s plantation at the Bryan Settlements in North Carolina. Lavina was now only a girl of twelve and would again travel this long journey by horse or on foot with the thought that her father had probably been killed by Shawnee. Fortunately, Daniel survived, escaped, fought during the Siege of Boonesborough, and then returned to the Forks of the Yadkin in North Carolina to persuade Rebecca that she and their family should return to Kentucky.

Lavina was thirteen years old when she and her family returned, along with a large party that left the Yadkin River Valley in September 1779. There were more than one-hundred people. When they reached Moccasin Gap, they were joined by more, including the family of Abraham Lincoln (grandfather of our sixteenth president). Another family that joined this migration was Daniel’s cousin William Scholl and his wife, Leah. This would prove to be significant to Lavina, because she would later marry their son Joseph Scholl.

This large party traveled through the Cumberland Gap, and some were so poor that they walked barefoot all the way to Fort Boonesborough. The trail or trace was still not wide enough for wagons, but many were also able to ride horses. Boone had six loaded pack horses, and others like Captain William Bryan had twenty-six packhorses loaded with household goods and equipment.

This large group of settlers reached Boonesborough in October 1779 and found the fort in a poor state-of-affairs. The Boones only stayed long enough for Daniel and others to build cabins six miles northwest of the fort at a place to be called Boone’s Station. Among those settling there were William and Leah Scholl and their family along with a number of Bryan relatives. Daniel and Rebecca still had five of their children living with them here, which included Lavina, Rebecca, Daniel Morgan and Jesse Bryan. Their youngest child, Nathan, was born at Boone’s Station in 1781.

Lavina’s life at Boone’s Station wasn’t an easy one. On Christmas Day 1779, when Boone led his family and others to Boone’s Station, the snow was deep and continuing to fall. That winter of 1779 to 1780 was to be the worst anyone could remember and became known as the Hard Winter.

Lavina was eighteen while living at Boone’s Station in 1782, and her father, brother Israel, and the man who would later become her husband, Joseph Scholl, were among those who pursued the British and American Indians who had unsuccessfully attacked Bryan’s Station. They all caught up with the American Indians at the Blue Licks, and if you’ve read about the Battle of Blue Licks, you know that Daniel survived, and fortunately for me, Joseph Scholl survived. However, Israel was killed, and the eighteen-year-old Lavina learned of the death of yet another of her brothers, killed while fighting the British and Indians.

Again, not much is known about this child Lavina who became a young woman in the wilds of Kentucky.

Lavina married Joseph Scholl about 1785. There are several historical accounts about her husband Joseph, but not much about her. Even when her son Septimus was interviewed by John D. Shan, all he talked about was the time he spent with his grandfather Daniel Boone. We do know that Lavina had eight children and died of causes unknown in 1802 at the young age of thirty-six.

I’ve had discussions with people who say that Lavina is buried in an unmarked grave next to her sister Rebecca Boone Goe on private land in Clark County, Kentucky. I recently drove through that area known as Schollsville where Lavina spent her final days, but I was unable to visit her unmarked grave.

About her life and even her death, little is known. However, as I quoted Robert Morgan at the outset, Lavina Boone Scholl is among “the unnoticed thousands on foot and on horseback, in wagon and ox carts, who made the story a fact, who wrote history with their hands and feet, their need and greed, their sweat and often their blood.”
About the Author

Robert Alvin Crum is a direct descendant of Daniel Boone and Rebecca Bryan and their daughter Lavina. He’s a Board Member of The Boone Society, Inc. and a hereditary member of the Society of Boonesborough through eight of his ancestors. His Bachelor’s degree from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois is in political science with a history concentration, and he studied law for two years at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. In his early career, he worked for real estate and personal injury attorneys writing and conducting research. Later, he worked for large corporations in medical malpractice and marketing and then became a full time visual artist and writer eighteen years ago. After years of research about his Boone and Bryan ancestors in the colonial North Carolina backcountry, he began and continues the grant and award-winning project “Return to the Land of My Ancestors.” As part of this project, he completes and exhibits paintings, writes and is employed for speaking engagements. He resides in North Carolina in Salisbury and in the mountains at Burnsville.