



An American Tour: 12



Kentucky's *Daniel Boone's Cave*

I didn't even know Daniel Boone *had* a cave! Actually, there seems to be some question as to whether or not Daniel Boone really was ever here or not, but, regardless, this *is* Daniel Boone's Cave! Kentucky even put a state park around it, first proposed in 1924—Daniel Boone's Cave State Park. It seems Daniel Boone, the great hunter and pioneer hero, settled on the banks of the Yadkin River, in Kentucky, on May 1, 1750. The place where the Boone family lived is on a high hill overlooking the Yadkin River. Now a State Park, one can visit the reconstructed home of Daniel Boone and explore the cave believed to be his hideout on the Yadkin River. Daniel Boone is rumored to have once hidden in the cave from a group of Native Americans that were avidly pursuing him. [*and I'll bet he didn't say, "Oh darn! Here come those Native Americans!"]*

Complying with recommended Recovery Plans, the Forest Service gated Daniel Boone's Cave Branch Cave in 1989. The bat populations were dwindling for several reasons, the main one being "human disturbance" to hibernating and nesting colonies, according to Larry Martoglio, a 26-year Forest Service veteran and wildlife staff officer at Daniel Boone. The bats are also adversely affected by habitat destruction, direct killing, vandalism, and the use of pesticides on their food--insects. The slatted gates, made of quarter-inch angle iron, allow for normal air flow through the cave and don't change ambient temperatures. A gated cave retains all its normal conditions; the only difference is that vandals can no longer get in to destroy the bats or their habitat. Well-intentioned folks such as spelunkers and biologists can't get close enough to the furry creatures to cause problems either, MacGregor said. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1016/is_n3-4_v100/ai_15295480]

Here's an old newspaper article that apparently refers to the cave. *Lexington Leader*, 13 July 1908, "BOONE'S CAVE CONTAINS IMAGE OF A MASTODON Believed to Have Been Carved by Cave Dwellers - Cincinnati Party's Discovery. While exploring Boone's Cave in the cliffs of the Kentucky river, above High Bridge, a party of Cincinnati traveling men discovered the image of a mastodon carved in a solid mass of rock. They also discovered and are carrying home with them petrified bones of human beings or animals that inhabited the cave thousands of years ago, and these will be turned over to the museums when they reach Cincinnati. What they call the Chamber of needles was also entered, hanging from the roof and sides are thousands of sharp-pointed stones from one to three feet in length, and the largest not more than an inch in diameter.

They also discovered a river in the cave flowing through the ledges of rock as crooked as serpent and not more than three or four feet in width. The bottom of the river was not found." [<http://frontierfolk.net/bgg/kycaver/2006.03/15.html>]

