

NATHAN AND OLIVE BOONE HOMESTEAD STATE HISTORIC SITE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
PREAMBLE
2020

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Nathan Boone (1781-1856) was the tenth child and youngest son of Daniel Boone. He played a key role in the spread of Euro-American settlers out of the Mississippi valley. Nathan followed his father and older brother, Daniel Morgan Boone, into Missouri in 1799. He and his sixteen-year-old wife, Olive, reportedly then possessed only three horses, a rifle, an axe, and blankets. Over the next few years, in the tradition of his father, Nathan made a living by surveying, fur trapping, and trading. Nathan was active in the state militia and with the Indian affairs. During the War of 1812, he served as an officer in the Mounted Rangers trying to maintain calm along the frontier from perceived and actual threats from Native Americans.

After the war, Nathan succeeded financially in civilian life and in 1820 was elected a delegate to the constitutional convention held in St. Louis. The family prospered until the 1830s. Nathan lost his house that he had built in 1810 overlooking the Femme Osage as the result of a defaulted loan for which he was the bondsman. At the age of 51, Nathan rejoined the Missouri Rangers to fight in the Black Hawk War. He became captain of the newly formed First Regiment of Dragoons in 1833. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 1853 at the age of 72.

His sons, James, John, and Benjamin Howard had moved the family to Greene County in 1837. The extended Boone family most certainly found a landscape inclusive of a prairie and timber environment with “rolling good soil for cultivation” according to original land surveys conducted by Elias Bar in 1835. By late 1837 Olive Boone would begin her role managing the homestead, Nathan would only be in residence occasionally for the next 15 years. Olive would see the homestead grown to encompass nearly 1,200 acres by 1856. She would go on to raise 3 of her grandchildren on the homestead and care for her mother who would live to see her 104th birthday. Nathan would spend his last days on the homestead and was buried in the family plot north of the Boone Home. His wife Olive was buried beside him two years later.

The Boone’s owed much of their success on the homestead in part to the labor of enslaved people. Little is known about exact day-to-day life, but at the height of homestead operations in 1850, the Boone’s owned 15 people. The African American cemetery located north of the Boone cemetery contains at least 11 graves. The cemetery was started by the enslaved people of the Boone homestead, but saw use by the Ash Grove community for segregated burials until the late 1880’s.

The house, built in 1837, is a dogtrot log cabin modified in the 1840s by weatherboarding and enclosure of the breezeway between the two sections to the cabin. Since then, very little modification of the original fabric of the building has occurred. Archeological excavations have revealed, to date, the location of the original smokehouse, summer kitchen, and root cellar. Many additional outbuildings are suspected, including the slave quarters, and it is hoped that both

traditional archeology and remote sensing will provide additional data on the types and locations of these outbuildings.

The homestead is situated within the fabric of a landscape that has both historic and biological significance. A small population of the federally threatened Missouri bladder pod is associated with a limestone glade found within the Ash Grove cluster of bladder pod populations. The Division's responsibility in interpreting the site is to provide the visitor with an image of the total environment at the time of settlement.

Nathan Boone has ties to many other facilities in the system. With his brother, Daniel Morgan, salt production was begun at Boone's Lick State Historic Site in 1805. These two brothers obtained several land grants encompassing salt licks; one of which was later purchased by Dr. Robert Graham and later became Graham Cave State Park.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The primary mission of the Nathan and Olive Boone Homestead State Historic Site is the preservation and interpretation of the house and historic landscape as well as the interpretation of the personages of Nathan and Olive Boone and the Boone family in Missouri.

APPROVED BY:

Director, Missouri State Parks Date _____

Regional Director Date _____

Deputy Regional Director Date _____

Facility Manager Date _____