On July 14, 1776, one of the legendary events in Boone's long career occurred. It was a quiet Sunday afternoon at Boonesborough. There were no church services at the settlement, but earlier that day someone had read from the scriptures to an assembled group, and when "the customary Bible reading was over" Boone had lain down in his cabin to rest.

Jemima Boone, who was fourteen, had stabbed her foot on a stob of cut cane and wanted to go out on the river in a dugout canoe to soothe her sore foot in the cool water. As a young girl Jemima had enjoyed playing in the water so much she had been given the nickname "Duck." Elizabeth and Frances Callaway, daughters of Richard Callaway, sixteen and fourteen years old, respectively, agreed to accompany her. Nathan Reid had volunteered to paddle the canoe for them but had backed out. It was a beautiful afternoon and the girls glided out on the stream. Betsy and Fanny paddled by turns while Jemima hung her hurt foot in the water. They drifted several hundred yards downstream, floating and paddling carelessly. One of the Callaway girls suggested they stop on the north bank, near some cliffs, and gather flowers and young cane. But Jemima warned them they should stay away from the "Indian" shore "as it was against their fathers' orders to go on that shore at any time. The proposer observed that perhaps she was more afraid of the yellow boys than she was of disobeying her father." She was teasing, unaware that five Indians were indeed watching them from the brush on the north bank. The strong current pushed the canoe closer to that bank than they had intended to go.

Suddenly five Indians plunged out of the cane and one waded into the water to grab the line attached to the front of the dugout. As he tried to drag the craft to the shore, Fanny Callaway beat him over the head with the paddle until it broke. Betsy joined her in hitting the brave, and the other Indians waded in and threatened to overturn the canoe unless the girls got out. Once the girls were led ashore the canoe was pushed back into the stream so they couldn't use it to escape.

The three girls began screaming, hoping to be heard at Boonesborough, a quarter of a mile upstream on the other side of the river. One of the Indians grabbed Betsy Callaway by the hair and indicated he would scalp her if the girls did not shut up. The girls were pulled and pushed up the steep bank above the river, but at the top Jemima refused to go farther, pointing to her wounded foot and saying it was too painful to walk on. But the Indians waved their knives and tomahawks, threatening to kill her there if she didn't go on.

The Indians produced moccasins for Jemima, and for Fanny Callaway, who was also barefoot. Then they cut off the bottoms of the girls' dresses and petticoats so they could move faster through the brush. The girls wrapped the strips of cloth around their legs to protect them from briars and limbs. The Indians prodded them along, making their way on the tops of ridges where the ground cover was thinner. The lowlands along the streams were dense with cane and vines and thickets of cedar. Daniel Bryan would later say, "The Indians chose ground where they would make the least trail sometimes the Girls would mash down a weed the indians would straighten it up or turn it the other way."

The Indian party was made up of three Shawnees and two Cherokees. One of the Cherokees was a chief named Hanging Maw, whom Jemima had seen before, probably when the Boones were living on the Clinch. He spoke better English than the others, and Jemima told him who she was, hoping that he would remember that Boone had been friendly to him. He asked if the others were her sisters and she answered that they were all children of Daniel Boone. Hanging Maw laughed and said, "We have done pretty well for old Boone this time."

The five Indians were part of a larger group returning to Ohio from a conference at the Cherokee town of Chota. Called together in May by Dragging Canoe, the large gathering that included many Creeks and Shawnees, as well as Cherokees, angrily denounced the white settlement of Kentucky and lands over the mountains. Encouraged by British support, the young chiefs and warriors planned a concerted campaign against the American forts and stations. While his father Attakullakulla and other older chiefs remained silent in humiliation, ignored, Dragging Canoe roused those present to kill the Long Knives. The British had already given Dragging Canoe three thousand pounds of gunpowder to use against the Americans.

That afternoon the kidnappers and their prey traveled about six miles and camped near where Winchester, Kentucky, is now. The girls were tied with buffalo tugs so they could not reach each other, each bound to a tree and also to a brave. All night the girls sat with their backs to the trees they were tied to, unable to sleep. Jemima happened to have a penknife in her pocket, but her hands were bound so tightly she couldn't reach it.

The kidnapping was almost certainly not something planned by Hanging Maw and the four others. It must have been a spur-of-the-moment temptation, once they spotted the girls so far from Boonesborough. Taking prisoners or hostages lent prestige to the kidnapper, and capturing the daughters of Daniel Boone would bring even more honor. Kidnapping was understood by the Shawnees in a different way than by the whites. Their population depleted by disease and war, the villages needed additional members. Their birthrates were low. Women and children, and even men, could be adopted into the tribe, and after the correct rituals were performed and new names given to them, the adopted became members of the nations. The kidnapping of children was not unlike the program the Nazis later practiced called *Lebensborn*, where children in conquered countries were taken back to the Fatherland to become future citizens. To Hanging Maw and the others, Jemima and her supposed sisters must have looked like good

candidates for adoption. At the very least they could be held for ransom, or sold to the British.

The next morning, the Indians resumed the march toward the Ohio. As they stumbled along, the girls broke twigs to guide those that might follow to rescue them. When the Indians noticed this, the captives explained they were so tired and weak they had to grab limbs to keep from falling. Some accounts claim Betsy Callaway began tearing pieces from her linen handkerchief and dropping them as clues behind her. The Indians caught her leaving signs and again threatened with their tomahawks. But the girls continued to break twigs and tear off leaves to mark the trail, and blistered their hands with the effort. Betsy Callaway had shoes with wooden heels that made deep tracks in the ground by streams and through buffalo wallows. Noticing the tracks she made, the Indians knocked the heels off her shoes, but she still took care to make discernible tracks.

Using the excuse of her sore foot, Jemima fell down again and again, delaying the progress of the party. When she fell down she would scream out, hoping that anyone following would hear. She was sure Boone and other men were on their way to rescue them. She made as much noise and trouble as she could, and the captors continued to threaten but never actually struck her. That morning they came across an old pony grazing in a meadow, and the Indians caught it as a mount for the injured Jemima. In fact, all three of the girls took turns riding the pony, but they pretended they had never ridden before and kept falling off and irritating the pony to make it unruly. The annoyed pony bit Betsy Callaway on the arm. "The horse was cross and would bite," Nathan later told Draper. The Indians laughed at the girls' clumsiness and then grew impatient. One of the Indians mounted the horse himself to demonstrate how to ride, but the lesson had little effect. The girls, who were actually experienced riders, continued to tumble off into the brush by the trail, until the Indians turned the pony loose and made their captives walk.

The Indians offered the girls buffalo tongue to eat, but the fare was

tough and unsalted and pretty much inedible. The Indians sometimes referred to the prisoners as "pretty squaws" and showed they did not want to hurt them. Though they threatened the girls with tomahawks and knives, Hanging Maw and the others were surprisingly gentle with their captives. They were tolerant, even indulgent, by the standards of the wilderness. The girls were allowed to fix their hair and look for lice. Hanging Maw fondled Jemima's hair and took out the combs himself, admiring the length and brightness. In one version of the story Hanging Maw asked Jemima to dress his hair and look for lice, and she agreed. Many years later a niece told Jemima she would never have done such a thing herself. "Oh yes yes you would," said her aunt, "for the Indians were really kind to us."

By the end of the second day the Indians became talkative. They said they were on their way to the Shawnee towns north of the Ohio. They told the girls that Cherokees would attack the Watauga settlement, and a party of Cherokees were on their way to attack the Kentucky settlements. They teased the Indian whom Fanny Callaway had beaten with the paddle. That night, they camped a few miles south of the Licking River, and the girls were again tied up so tightly they couldn't sleep. Betsy Callaway, who was older, tried to cheer up the other two. The next morning the Indians seemed more confident that they had outrun any pursuers. After the party crossed Hinkston Creek, the captors felt safe enough to shoot a buffalo and cut off part of the hump for lunch. They were all hungry and the girls had had nothing to eat for two days. They stopped in a little clearing in the woods to cook the tender hump and rest.

When the girls' screams were heard at Boonesborough, Boone leapt from the bed where he had been napping and grabbed his rifle. He ran to the river without even thinking to put on his moccasins. People were dashing around sounding the alarm and grabbing weapons for pursuit. The problem was the screams were coming from the other side of the river. The dugout was gone. Boone spotted the craft far downstream,

but it was out of reach. Samuel Henderson, who was engaged to Betsy Callaway, was shaving but dropped his razor and ran for his rifle. Richard Callaway, father of two of the girls, was flustered, but Boone was calm and organized. He told young John Gass to swim after the canoe, and when the dugout was brought back Boone and five others crossed to the north bank, as Callaway, Nathaniel Hart, David Hart, David Gass, Flanders Callaway, and others on horses dashed to a ford a mile down the river to cross.

Boone directed some to look upriver for the trail and some to look downriver until the tracks were found. Then he persuaded Richard Callaway and the party on horses to ride directly to the Blue Licks, where he knew the Indians would cross on their way to the Ohio, where they could intercept the kidnappers. Meanwhile, he and the others on foot could track the Indians.

It is likely that Boone used this argument to get rid of the hot-tempered and rash Callaway, leaving himself and a few others, including John Floyd, to proceed with necessary stealth. But Callaway and his party riding to the Blue Licks also provided a kind of insurance. If all else failed, they might intercept the kidnappers there. Covering about five miles before dark, Boone and several others heard a barking dog. Following the noise, they came upon a group of men building a cabin deep in the forest. There they camped for the night.

When the alarm had been given, the men of Boonesborough had been dressed in their Sunday best, which meant cloth pantaloons instead of breechclouts and deerskin leggings. Young John Gass volunteered to return to Boonesborough during the night and get ammunition, supplies, and proper clothes for the pursuers. He found his way through the dark woods, reaching the settlement, and returned to the camp before dawn with provisions, clothes, and Boone's moccasins. Clearly he was already an experienced woodsman, and a brave one.

As soon as there was light enough to follow the trail, Boone and the others set out. Three of the cabin builders joined them. After they had found where the Indians camped the night before, they lost the trail in

a canebrake. The Indians had split up there and taken unlikely detours, making it difficult to decide which trail to follow. Here Boone made a critical decision: instead of following the trail, they would head in the direction they knew the party would take. That way they could move faster and perhaps be less vulnerable to an ambush. They struck out in a straight course, moving as fast as they could, crossing and recrossing the trail. They saw the bits of cloth, broken twigs, and Betsy's tracks, signs the girls were still alive. When it got dark they stopped to rest by a small stream and resumed the pursuit at daybreak. At Hinkston Creek they came on fresh tracks and Boone knew they were closing in. Since the Indians were now moving with less caution, he also knew it was time to start tracking them directly. The Indians would follow the Great Warrior's Path for a while, then slip off onto a buffalo trace, and then another trace, to confuse those pursuing. Boone followed every shift and feint. When they came upon the dead buffalo with its hump cut off, he told his companions the Indians would stop to cook their meal just ahead at the next stream. They saw a snake the Indians had killed and left flopping. They crossed a small stream that the Indians had waded for a few hundred yards to throw them off.

Using great caution, Boone and the others spread out, knowing the Indians would be stopped just ahead. If the kidnappers were not taken by surprise and killed, they would tomahawk the captives to death at the first sign of the rescuers. Within two hundred or three hundred yards they spotted the fire where the Indians were cooking the buffalo hump. One of the Indians was posted as a sentry, but he had laid down his rifle to light his pipe and pick up materials for mending his moccasins. Another Indian had lain down to rest, and one was getting wood, while another was preparing the meat. Hanging Maw had gone to the branch for some fresh water. Boone and the others crawled through the underbrush to get closer. "One in particular, big indn:, called Big Jimmy was spitting up meat on the side opposite to them. Fanny looked at him to see how he fixed his meat. She saw the blood burst out of his breast before she heard the gun." The girls were sitting on a log

away from the fire when William Smith fired prematurely and missed. Then John Floyd fired, wounding the sentinel. "At the crack of the guns, the girls jumped up. Jemima shouted 'That's Daddy,' and started toward their rescuers. Father yelled to them to throw themselves flat upon the ground in case the Indians might shoot back," Nathan told Draper. The girls dropped to the ground, but in the excitement they stood again, and one rescuer, mistaking them in their ragged clothes for Indians, started to club Betsy, who wore a red bandanna on her head. Boone grabbed his arm and shouted, "For God's sake don't kill her when we have traveled so far to save her." The man, when he saw what he'd almost done, wept.

In fact, there was a good deal of weeping when it was over. Nathan Reid, one of the rescuers, later said, "The exultation of the poor girls cannot be described." They embraced and thanked their rescuers. The girls were so overcome with gratitude and the men with relief, the fleeing kidnappers were forgotten. "After the girls came to themselves enough to speak, they told us there were only five Indians . . . and could all speak good English." John Floyd also described the place as covered with thick cane, "and being so much elated on recovering the three poor little heart-broken girls, prevented our making any further search."

The girls showed the effects of the three-day ordeal. Their clothes were torn, their faces dirty and tearstained, eyes swollen from lack of sleep, legs scratched by limbs and briars. Boone wrapped blankets around them and embraced them. "Thank Almighty Providence," Boone said, "for we have the girls safe. Let's all sit down by them now and take a hearty cry." Everyone in the party wept with relief and joy. After they had calmed down, Boone remembered that he had shot an Indian and pointed to the place. A rifle was found and drops of blood led into the woods. Two bodies of Shawnees were discovered, one shot by Floyd and one, possibly, by Boone. Two years later Boone would learn that one of the Shawnees killed that day was the son of the man who would become Boone's captor and adoptive father.

The girls told Boone and the others what they had heard about the Cherokee attacks on Watauga, and the war party on its way to Kentucky. Also the girls knew that a party of Indians was camped only three miles away at the Lower Blue Licks. (Dragging Canoe and his warriors did indeed attack the Watauga settlement and were defeated on July 21, 1776. And the Cherokee invasion of Kentucky proved a failure also. After that the more peaceable chiefs among the Cherokees such as Attakullakulla began to regain their influence and authority.)

Taking as much meat from the buffalo as they could carry, the group started back toward Boonesborough. The girls had not had any sleep for two nights and were worn out from the walking and worry. But the exhilaration of being rescued enabled them to make the return journey. Samuel Henderson with his half-shaved face took a lot of teasing. But he was so pleased that Betsy, his fiancée, was safe that he probably didn't mind the rough humor. Flanders Callaway, who would later marry Jemima, was with the group of riders, and romance added to the cheer and joy of the return. When they came upon the abandoned pony again the girls took turns riding it and did not fall off a single time. By the time they got back to Boonesborough on Wednesday July 17 for a welcome and celebration, Jemima's foot was healed. Jemima later recalled that when they reached Boonesborough and were ferried across the river, her mother's joy was intense beyond description. "She laughed and cried for joy, as she always did when she was overjoyed," Jemima said.

The story of the kidnapping of Jemima Boone and the Callaway girls had already spread among the settlements of Kentucky and would soon reach across the mountains to the eastern cities and the world beyond. It became part of the legend of the frontier. Its popularity was spurred in part because Jemima was the daughter of Daniel Boone. But it was also a story that anyone could interpret in whatever way they chose. To Indian haters it was an example of the perfidy and unpredictability of the Indians. After all, Hanging Maw had pretended to be