

HISTORY OF KENTUCKY.

Previous to the exploration by the Anglo-Saxon race about the middle of the eighteenth century, Kentucky formed a vast hunting ground upon which the savage tribes of the South and of the North killed the elk and buffalo, and occasionally encountered each other in bloody conflict. No permanent settlements existed within its borders. Its dark forests and cane thickets separated the Cherokees, Creeks and Catawbias of the South from the hostile tribes of Shawnees, Delawares and Wyandots of the North. All of these tribes encountered the pioneer, and fiercely disputed the settlement of the country. It is certain, however, that these were not the original occupants of the country, as ancient monuments of deep interest speak, in language not to be mistaken, of a race of men who preceded the rude tribes encountered by Boone and Finley. The origin, language and history of these men are buried in darkness which may never be dispelled; but the scanty vestiges which they have left behind them enable us to affirm that they far surpassed the rude tribes which succeeded them, in acts and civilization. They had worked the copper mines of the West, and were in possession of copper tools for working in wood and stone. Their large fortifications, constructed of solid masonry, and artificially contrived for defense, show that they had foes to resist, and that they had made some progress in the military art. How long they occupied the country, whence they came, and whither they have gone, no one is able to decide; but certain it is, that the fortifications and cemeteries which have been examined are certainly more than 800 years old, but how much older is only a matter of conjecture.

Passing over the visits to different portions of Kentucky in 1758, and again in 1767, the company, headed by Daniel Boone in 1769, and by Knox in 1770, may be regarded as the earliest visits worthy of particular attention. Boone's party remained in the State two years, and the party led by Colonel James Knox came one year later and remained about the same time; the two parties never met.