

# PART THREE

## A New Nation Rises

Chapter 7: France and Great Britain Clash

Chapter 8: A Family Quarrel Leads to War

Chapter 9: The Revolutionary War





MEMBERS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS WHO APPROVED THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



## Chapter 7

# France and Great Britain Clash

### WESTERN TREK LEADS TO WAR

VIRGINIA, through her charter, claimed a large share of the land lying between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. This area was also included in the French claim to all the territory drained by the Mississippi. Since the practical Virginians realized that the way to hold a disputed territory was to occupy it, they gave away land freely in this region.

A company of men who had received a grant of 800,000 acres from the governor of Virginia wanted to learn about their new land in the "West." To explore their grant they hired a man called Dr. Walker, who liked to wander in an unknown wilderness. He kept a diary of this journey which lasted from early in March to the middle of July in 1750. Every day Walker wrote down what happened to his party. His diary is a story of life in the wilderness. For twenty days the party of five men traveled among frontier settlers from whom they bought hominy, bacon, corn meal, and other supplies. On the twenty-sixth of March they ventured into unknown country. The next day it snowed and the Appalachians were white in the distance.

The trials of this journey for both man and beast can best be told in Walker's own words. The following entries were taken from his diary:

April 7: We rode eight miles over broken land. It snowed most of the day. In the evening our dogs caught a large bear, which, before we could come up to shoot him, had wounded a dog of mine so that he could not travel. We carried him on horseback till he recovered.

April 19: This afternoon Ambrose Powell was bit by a bear in the knee. (Powell River was named for this man.)

April 27: Another horse was bit in the nose by a snake. I rubbed the wounds with bears oil, and gave him a dose of same and another of rattlesnake root some time after. This day Colby Chew and his horse fell down a bank. I bled and gave him drops, and he recovered.

May 6: The Sabbath. I saw goslings, which shows that wild geese stay here all year. Ambrose Powell had the misfortune to sprain his well knee.

July 13: I got home about noone. We killed in the journey 13 buffaloes, 8 elk, 53 bears, 20 deer, 4 wild geese, about 150 turkeys, besides small game. We might have killed three times as much meat, if we had wanted it.

Walker was probably the first white man to go through Cumberland Gap. He named the pass in honor of the Duke of Cumberland, a son of George II, King of England at the time. Beyond the gap Walker found

coal. Today this region is mining country in the state of Kentucky.

These explorers were typical early Americans, men of action to whom adventure and danger were everyday living. To them, the great continent of North America was a challenge. In meeting it they scorned fear and hardships and developed self-reliance and courage. Like all explorers Dr. Walker mapped the rivers, mountains, gaps, valleys, and named many of them. He located mineral deposits, lumber regions, and farming lands. He took notice of the trees, shrubs, and flowers, and listed the wild geese to be found in the region.

Although the land owners who had hired Walker were pleased with his report, the company was not able to hold the grant. Families began to move in and help themselves to land. They were called "squatters."

The legislature of Virginia passed the "cabin law," giving any man a title to four hundred acres of land when he had built a log house and planted one acre of corn. To land-hungry English people four hundred acres of ground was an estate for a nobleman. As the news spread over Europe, boatloads of immigrants arrived in Atlantic ports. The more daring newcomers among them filtered inland where even the poorest could own a farm. While the French were busy nailing plates to trees, declaring the Ohio Valley belonged to their King, hundreds of families from the English colonies were quietly moving into the territory. Trouble then began with both the French and the Indians.

Most of the Indian tribes were friends of the French and enemies of the British. The reason was plain. The French trader visited, bought furs, and departed. He brought the Indians guns and powder to hunt their

food, blue and red cloth to make their clothes, knives to skin their game, copper kettles to boil their meat, tobacco to fill their pipes, vermilion to paint their faces, and brandy to quench their thirst. The British colonists cut down the trees and destroyed the breeding grounds of the fur-bearing animals which the Indians trapped to trade to the French. He plowed the land, planted a crop, built a house, moved in his family, and stayed.

Both the British and the French, however, realized the value of Indian allies when "King George's War," an extension of a war in Europe, broke out in North America in 1744. Both sides sought Indian support in the struggle which was eventually to determine who was to control North America. The British had few Indian friends outside the powerful Iroquois Confederacy.

## THE VALUE OF INDIAN ALLIES

WILLIAM PENN, in starting his colony, met with a group of Indian chiefs under an elm tree. He paid them for the land granted to him by the King. When the Indians danced to celebrate that first treaty with the Quaker, Penn who was quite an athlete asked to join in the fun as their brother. In a short time he mastered the difficult dance steps and jumped as high as an Indian. Then and there he won their hearts with his physical strength and ready wit. Through the years he gained their lasting respect because this treaty, neither signed nor sworn to, was never broken.

Because the Quakers did not believe in waging war and shooting their enemies, tribal chiefs frequently chose some town in



Pennsylvania for treaty conferences with any of the British colonies. Thus a meeting called by Virginia and Maryland to gain more land from the Iroquois Indians was held in Penn's town of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Iroquois were organized in a strong and well-run confederacy consisting of six nations – Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and the newly admitted Tuscarora. They lived in a large area extending from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River and north to the Great Lakes. This land also was claimed by the British Colonies. It was some of this “western” land that Virginia and Maryland wanted. In the opening meetings at Lancaster, which lasted for ten days, both Virginia and Maryland had gained the lands they wanted in exchange for gold.

Now, on the fourth of July, 1744, the final meeting was to be held. The little courthouse at Lancaster was crowded to the doors. For many years the British had been on good terms with the Iroquois and were anxious to remain so, especially in view of the conflict with France. Great Britain and France were already engaged in King George's War. Would the Iroquois support the British or the French? The people in the courthouse waited to hear. Canassatego, chief of the Onondagas, was the spokesman for the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. He stepped to the platform to answer the question that, in no small way, decided the fate of a nation. At a table beside him sat the trusted Iroquois interpreter, Conrad Weiser. Weiser's father had brought him to this country with his seven brothers and sisters from Germany after their mother's death. When he was a young lad, Conrad ran away from his father's house in New York to live among

the Mohawk Indians. The German boy learned to speak the languages of the Iroquois tribes. Years later, with his family of fifteen children, he lived on a thousand-acre farm near the bank of the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania. Always the red man's friend, Weiser became a powerful backwoods diplomat and worked earnestly with the Iroquois chiefs to keep peace.

Politely, the dignified chief bowed to his host, the governor of Pennsylvania, whom he called Onas in his Indian language. Then he bowed to the representatives from Virginia and Maryland.

“Brother Onas,” the chief began, “we assure you we have great pleasure in this meeting with our brethren of Virginia and Maryland, and thank you for bringing us together in order to create a good understanding.”

The Indians shouted, “Yo-hah! Yo-hah!” the red man's way of saying, “We all agree.”

“Brother Onas,” he continued, “the friendship chain between us and Pennsylvania is of old standing and has never gathered any rust. In token of our wishes we present this belt of wampum.”

Conrad Weiser read the English translation. The governor of Pennsylvania accepted the wampum presented by the chief to show his gratitude, and the colonists applauded in the white man's way. The Iroquois would protect Pennsylvania, but what about Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, if they were attacked by the French and their Indian allies? The anxious listeners fanned themselves and waited while Canassatego rested and took his own time. These treaties were always made according to Indian ritual and the white man had to accept the red man's way. With each

promise or transaction there was time out for presenting wampum, the seal of authority.

When the chief rose to answer the one question which most concerned all those gathered together, his face was serious. The men leaned forward in a tense silence.

“Brother Onas,” he said, addressing the Pennsylvania governor, “we shall never forget that you and we have but one heart, one head, one eye, one ear, one hand. Before we came here, we sent word to the governor of Canada that neither he nor any of his people could come through our country to hurt our brethren, the English, or any of the settlements belonging to them. In token of our sincerity we present you with this belt of wampum.”

The yo-hahs of the Indians could scarcely be heard above the noisy hand-clapping and loud huzzas which rang through the halls of the little courthouse at Lancaster. It was a great fourth of July for the British colonists. Seeing their joy at his words, Canasatego arose to sound a warning. He continued, “We have one thing further to say, and that is, we heartily recommend union between you and our brethren. Never disagree, but keep a strict friendship for one another, and you, as well as we, will become the stronger. Our wise forefathers established a union of nations. This gave us weight with our neighboring peoples. We are a powerful confederacy. If you will use the same methods of our wise forefathers, you will acquire fresh strength and power. Therefore, whatever befalls you, never quarrel one with another.”

This was good advice from a wise, far-seeing man. At this time the British colonies were not united and did not work together in harmony.

With the British in their front yard and

the French at their backs, the Iroquois played one against the other in a clever diplomatic game. Through treaties with their neighbors, both red men and white men, the Six Nations managed to keep peace for themselves. However, they had to pay for it. They gave up more and more of their hunting grounds to the fast-growing British colonies. Sandwiched between two strong warring nations, the Iroquois realized their best weapon was compromise and they used it. The British colonists, too, knew the value of compromise, and put forth much effort to keep the Iroquois on their side in all the wars between France and Great Britain. Well they knew that defeat and massacre might overtake them if the Six Nations suddenly joined with the French and their Indian allies. The friendship of the Iroquois did not prevent, entirely, a border warfare that raged at intervals among the frontier settlements.

## **BORDER WARFARE**

IN THE MIDDLE of winter a party of French *coureurs-de-bois* (runners of the woods) and their Indian allies made a raid on Schenectady, New York. The raid occurred on a cold night in February. After a village party, the sentinels at the palisade had jokingly built two snowmen to guard the gate. The sentinels went home to sleep in their warm beds. Although they were warned by the military commander to keep watch, the two young men had ridiculed the thought of an attack on such a bitter night.

When all the villagers were asleep, the raiding party crept cautiously on snowshoes up to the gate. The Indian warriors and the French woodsmen stared dumbly at the ghostly sentinels of snow. The party



divided into two bands, one going to the left of the silent snowmen and the other to the right. Then they walked quietly between the palisade fence and the houses until the leaders met at the opposite end. At a signal, a mighty war whoop broke the stillness. The raiders began chopping down doors with their hatchets. The settlers jumped from their beds, but only a few had time to get to their guns. Sixty men, women, and children were killed that night. Thirty-eight men and boys, ten women, and twelve children were carried off as captives. By noon the next day, the settlement of Schenectady was in ashes.

By 1750 this border warfare had terrorized the frontier settlements of the English colonies. The colonists fought back with raids on French towns and Indian villages. They contributed large sums of money to send their own armies on military expeditions into enemy territory.

By the Lancaster Treaty Virginia had gained land in the upper Ohio Valley, both north and south of the river. For this territory, Canassatego was paid one hundred pounds of gold. Governor Dinwiddie sent a young man only twenty-one years of age to explore this wilderness and to report what could be done to protect settlers seeking homes in the new country. The young man was George Washington, major and adjutant-general of the Virginia Militia, who delivered a message to the commandant of the French fort near the present site of Erie, Pennsylvania. Dinwiddie's letter politely asked the French to vacate and leave the land claimed by Virginia under the treaty with the Iroquois in 1744.

Returning from this mission to the headwaters of the Ohio River, Washington narrowly escaped drowning when his log



#### WASHINGTON ON HIS FIRST JOURNEY TO THE OHIO

On the last day of October, 1753, George Washington left Williamsburg, capital of Virginia, to deliver a message from Governor Dinwiddie to de St. Pierre, the French commandant at La Boeuf, now the town of Waterford, Pennsylvania. The distance was 500 miles. At Fredericksburg, Washington hired a Dutchman as a French interpreter and an Englishman as an Indian interpreter. At Cumberland, Maryland, Christopher Gist, who had gone into the Ohio country before, joined the party as guide along with four more men, two of whom were traders.

raft tipped over, dousing him into the icy current of the Allegheny River. Upon arrival at the junction of this stream with the Monongahela on the twenty-fourth of November in 1753, he wrote in his journal:

As I got down before the canoe, I spent some time in viewing the rivers, and the land in the fork, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has absolute command of both rivers.

In January of 1754, Washington reported to Governor Dinwiddie in Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia. He told him that the French commandant at Fort La

Boeuf insisted that territory drained by the Ohio River and its tributaries belonged to France by right of La Salle's discoveries. Therefore, British traders and settlers entering this country would run the risk of being taken prisoners by the French. The governor acted upon Washington's suggestion that a fort be erected upon the strategic triangle where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the Ohio. Forty men were busy cutting down trees and sawing logs for a fort where Pittsburgh now stands, when several hundred French and Indians arrived in canoes on the Allegheny River. They demanded the woodsmen's surrender. Outnumbered, the British troops made no resistance. Afterwards the British officer was invited to dine with the French commander who treated him kindly. Little did either man realize that on this day, the seventeenth of April in 1754, they had launched the struggle between France and Great Britain for the possession of a continent. The French completed the stockade started by the British and named it Fort Duquesne.

Later in that same year, Washington returned to this western country with Virginia militiamen to defend the right of British colonists to trade for furs with the natives. At the time of his death, Washington still owned the Great Meadows and surrounding territory where he had been forced to surrender the hastily erected Fort Necessity because his soldiers had been eight days without bread. They lacked the strength to carry their baggage in a hurried retreat.

After the second failure to hold the country purchased from the Iroquois, the British Government became alarmed and decided to send troops to defend the

American possessions. The colonists were expected to aid in supplies and men. Early in 1755 General Braddock arrived in Virginia with a small British force to train a colonial army for the capture of Fort Duquesne. This maneuver was the beginning of the French and Indian War, so named, perhaps, because the native tribes played a decisive part in the long and bitter conflict. The Iroquois kept their promise made in the Lancaster Treaty, but the majority of the Indian tribes fought with the French.

### **BRADDOCK'S ROAD TURNS DEFEAT INTO VICTORY**

DAY AFTER DAY at Fort Cumberland, Braddock drilled the raw frontiersmen. In their deerskin shirts and moccasins, the backwoodsmen looked strange as they marched beside the British soldiers in their smart red coats and His Majesty's sailors in their trim, blue uniforms. Among the backwoodsmen who enlisted in the army was a young man remembered today as an outstanding explorer. His name was Daniel Boone.

When the June day arrived for the start to Fort Duquesne, Boone was ordered to the rear of the train to shoe horses, to mend wagons, and to serve the needs of the roadbuilders. This was not a frontiersman's idea of going to war, building a road through a wilderness to get the army and supplies to the place to fight. The free lad who had roamed the Carolina hills in his favorite sport, hunting, was having his first taste of military discipline under a strict and stubborn commander.

With Boone was another blacksmith and wagon-mender, a Scotch-Irish trader, who



had bartered with the Indians living along the Ohio River. Always a hunter at heart, Boone inquired about the game. Around the evening fire, the lad from Carolina listened wide-eyed to the exciting tales of the Scotch-Irish trader who had crossed the mountains. The two became close friends while serving under Braddock. They planned to go together, when the war ended, to that wonderful hunting ground which the Indians called "Kentucky."

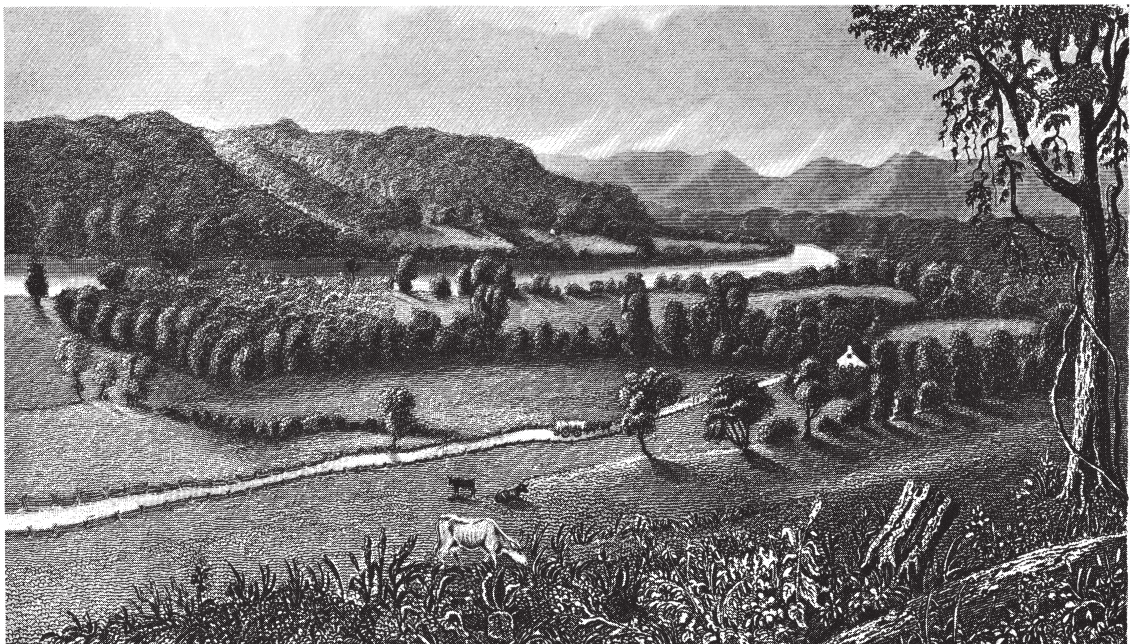
In the evenings, the men could talk of pleasure, but their days were filled with work, the hard labor of roadbuilding. The road they were building to Fort Duquesne was no more than a track. When rain fell, the artillery and wagons dug ruts into the soft and mushy earth, and sometimes they stuck in the mud. Surveyors went ahead to stake the route. The army followed to chop

down trees, to hack the underbrush, and to fill the swampy spots with logs.

Gordon, the engineer in charge of the road building, was in the front line staking the roadbed when he sighted the enemy lurking behind trees. The battle began only eight miles from Fort Duquesne. George Washington, leading the Virginia troops, advised his commander to fight in Indian fashion from behind logs, rocks, and trees. Instead, Braddock ordered his men to march in a column, the battle formation used in Europe. Their bright red coats made perfect targets against the green of the forest. Of Braddock's thirteen hundred men, more than eight hundred were killed or wounded. After having five horses shot under him, the General, with a bullet in his chest, was carried to the rear in a wagon. Before he died, three days later, he gave his favorite

#### BRADDOCK'S FIELD

This wooded area along the Monongahela River has been the scene of important events in American history. Here, in 1755, General Braddock was defeated and mortally wounded. Although Washington had two horses shot under him and four bullet holes in his clothing, he escaped unhurt. Years later along the Kanawha River in territory that was then in western Virginia, Washington was surveying farms to be used to pay his soldiers. An old Indian came to his camp. He had traveled for days through the forest to greet his former enemy, a man with a charmed life, he said. The Indian told Washington that he was the marksman ordered to shoot him during the battle, but that he stopped firing when four bullets failed. He predicted that Washington would not die in war.



horse to Washington, the young officer from Virginia, whose advice he had scorned.

The brave general was buried in the middle of the road, near the cluster of apple trees where he had died. The remnant of Braddock's army retreated over his grave to pat down the fresh mound with their marching feet. Wagon wheels leveled the spot to hide his burial place from the Indians. In later years immigrants by the thousands trudged over his lost grave to seek new homes beyond the mountain ranges. About seventy years after his burial, workmen repairing the road dug up human bones wrapped in the faded uniform of the British general. They buried them on a slope above the road he had pushed through a wilderness.

Braddock lost the battle, but his road turned defeat into victory. No longer were the mountains a barrier to keep the colonists huddled along the Atlantic seaboard. In the years to come they followed this road to board the flatboats which carried them down the great inland waterway to rout the French from the Ohio Valley forever. This humiliating loss at Fort Duquesne was the first defeat, but not the last the British were to suffer in eight years of war with the French and their Indian allies. The victorious engagements were about equally divided between the French and British in America, where geography played an important part in winning the war.

## **THE BRITISH AIM FOR THE GREAT RIVER VALLEYS**

THE FRENCH BUILT and fortified a network of water routes to carry on their trade with the Indian tribes. La Salle's

dream came true. Sixty forts protected the inland waterways in the heart of North America from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. With land travel over a few portage trails, it was possible to paddle a canoe from Montreal to New Orleans. The practical British mapped their military campaigns on the same geographical pattern the French had used in building their empire in the New World. They both aimed for control of the rivers, highways of transportation in wilderness country.

To guard the entrance to the St. Lawrence River, the French raised Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. It was the strongest fort in America and cost six million dollars. Although it took twenty years to build it, a British fleet, with the aid of land troops, battered the thick stone walls into ruins in less than two months. By this victory, Great Britain closed the St. Lawrence River to French ships bringing troops and supplies to Quebec, and gained control of the fishing industry in Canadian waters.

Soldiers from the colonies crossed Lake Ontario in open boats to capture Fort Frontenac. The fall of this key position cut the water route to the Mississippi River and interfered with the Indians who sold their furs in Quebec.

Three years after Braddock's defeat, Washington went west again, this time with General Forbes who was so ill that he had to be carried on a litter. The capture of Fort Duquesne was an easy victory. When the troops arrived, the stockade was smoldering in ashes. The French garrison set fire to it when Indian scouts informed them that the approaching British soldiers were greater in number than the trees in the forest. The French retreated down the Ohio River, leaving the strategic triangle to



the enemy. Washington had the satisfaction of helping to erect a log shelter on the spot, later known as Fort Pitt. General Forbes, a Scotsman, had named the place Pitt's Borough in honor of the British prime minister, a friend of the colonists. From this humble beginning grew the city of Pittsburgh, at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. The control of the Ohio Valley passed into the hands of the British with the fall of Fort Duquesne.

In June of 1759, an English fleet of twenty-eight ships of war with transports carrying ten thousand land troops under Major-General Wolfe, sailed up the St.

**MONUMENT ERECTED TO MONTCALM AND WOLFE, FRENCH AND BRITISH GENERALS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE BATTLE OF THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM, September 13, 1759.**

The inscription is in Latin: **MORTEM VIRTUS COMMUNEM – FAMAM HISTORIA – MONUMENTUM POSTERITAS DEDIT** (Courage gave them the same death; history, the same fame; posterity, the same monument.)

*Province of Quebec Film Bureau*



Lawrence River to Quebec. Located on a steep bluff overlooking the river, the city was well fortified.

After losing over five hundred men while attempting to unload soldiers and supplies on the opposite shore, the British ships moved up and down the river under fire from French guns, searching for a spot to land. At daybreak on the thirteenth of September, British troops in small boats discovered a steep trail poorly guarded. Although a French sentinel fired a gun, the soldiers climbed up the rocky path, hauled cannon, and sent word for others to follow them.

Due to heavy fog, it was the middle of the morning before Montcalm, the French commander of Quebec, saw the enemy lined up to fight on the Plains of Abraham behind the city. In the battle that followed, Wolfe died on the field. Montcalm, dashing forward on horseback to rally his troops, was wounded and died a few hours later. Quebec surrendered to the victorious British. Today Canada is a part of the British Commonwealth, but Quebec retains its old French atmosphere.

By the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763 after eight years of war, Great Britain gained all of the French lands east of the Mississippi River except New Orleans and a few fishing islands off the coast of Newfoundland. France lost her empire in North America to Great Britain, her ancient rival with colonizing ways.

## **WHY DID THE BRITISH WIN?**

**GREAT BRITAIN** had sea power and France did not. Many French ships carrying soldiers and supplies to New France were

captured or sunk in crossing the Atlantic. The British had the advantage in numbers because their colonies had twenty times as many persons as the French had in a territory twenty times as large. The French colonists made little or no attempt to rule themselves since most of their settlements were administered by trading companies with privileges granted by the King. In the British colonies, with more or less self-government, the people elected their own officials. In a way each British colony was a small republic, independent of the mother country, and often, too independent of one another. They were self-reliant and strong, taking action in peace and war without orders from their homeland.

In the conflict with the French the colonists learned a valuable lesson. They learned the necessity of working together for the common good of all. When this war appeared to be near at hand, Benjamin Franklin had proposed a plan of union at the Albany Congress, but it was not adopted. The King of England rejected the plan because it was too lenient. The colonies did likewise because it gave some authority to the King. The Albany meeting took place ten years after the Onondaga chief had advised the colonies to unite as the tribes of Iroquois had done. Although the war was unpopular in some of the colonies where it interfered with trade, the people were forced to help in fighting a common enemy and to share the cost of the conflict. After the peace had been signed, Benjamin Franklin declared in the House of Commons in England:

The colonies raised, paid and clothed near 25,000 men during the last war, a number equal to those sent from Britain, and far beyond their proportion. They went deeply into debt in doing this, and all their taxes and estates are mortgaged, for many years to come, for discharging this debt.

In sharing this burden, the colonists found new strength and gained more confidence in themselves. Soon after the Treaty of Paris was signed, settlers from the Atlantic seaboard crossed the mountains to find new homes in the territory France had ceded to Great Britain. They were there to claim this land when war broke out twelve years later between the colonies and the mother country. The French and Indian War turned out to be a dress rehearsal for a still greater conflict, the American War for Independence, that spread to this new frontier.

### **THROUGH CUMBERLAND GAP AND OVER THE WILDERNESS ROAD**

TWO WAGON MENDERS in Braddock's army agreed to seek adventure beyond the mountains when the war with France had come to an end. The Scotch-Irish trader kept his word and included his young friend, Daniel Boone, in the hunting party that was going into Kentucky. Boone wrote, years later, in his autobiography:

It was on the first of May, in the year 1769, that I left my family in North Carolina, to wander through the wilderness of America in quest of the country of Kentucky . . . . On the seventh of June, we found ourselves on Red River . . . . From the top of the hill, we saw with pleasure, the beautiful level of Kentucky. . . . At this place we encamped and made a shelter, . . . and began to hunt.

The hunting party followed the Scotch-Irish trader and Boone into the wilderness country to find the rich furs that were there. They passed through a natural opening between the mountains, the Cumberland Gap.



Late one afternoon, near the Kentucky River, Boone and a companion were captured by the Indians hunting in the same country. On the seventh night, while the Indians slept, the captives escaped and made their way back to camp. The Scotch-Irish trader and two hunters with him had vanished. To this day it is not known what happened to them. Of the five men who went on this hunting trip, Daniel Boone was the only one who returned home, after an absence of two years. He had with him a pack of valuable skins. Boone, a natural woodsman, survived in the wilderness where others, not trained to live off nature, perished.

In January of 1775, Judge Henderson of North Carolina and nine associates formed a company and purchased the present state of Kentucky and part of Tennessee from the Cherokee Indians. The company then offered land for sale to homeseekers. Daniel Boone was hired to mark a trail for the settlers to follow enroute to their new lands beyond the mountains. Boone's party of sturdy woodsmen cut down trees, removed fallen timber, filled sinkholes, chopped underbrush, and burned thickets to blaze this narrow trail through two hundred miles of wilderness.

Boone's wilderness trail followed through Cumberland Gap, the natural gateway to the vast acres of unsettled lands that were called Kentucky. Many land-seekers going to the West traveled through this gateway.

Before the roadbuilders had completed their work, pack trains of settlers were on the track behind them. In one party was Abraham Hanks, the uncle of Nancy Hanks, who came over the Wilderness Road fourteen years later, when she was only five years old. It is believed that this Nancy

Hanks grew up to become the mother of Abraham Lincoln. William Calk kept a diary of this early journey over the Wilderness Road. He recorded in his diary that Abraham Hanks and his friend, Drake, had more than their share of bad luck and turned back.

There were few schools on the frontier. Many bright boys and girls had no opportunity to learn to read, write, and spell. William Calk had a little schooling, but not enough to spell correctly. Nor did he know the rules for capital letters, commas, and periods. Try reading from his diary exactly as he wrote it:

#### MARCH

1775, Mon. 13th – I set out from prince wm. to travel to caintuck on tuesday Night our company all got together at Mr. Priges on rapadon which was Abraham hanks philip Drake Eaneck Inoith Robert Whitledge and my Selfthear Abrams Dogs leg got broke by Drake's Dog.

thursd 30th – We set out again and went down to Elk gardin and there suplid our Selves With Seed Corn and irish tators then we went on a littel way I turned my hors to drive before me and he got scared ran away threw Down the Sattel Bags and broke three of our powder goards and Abrams beast Burst open a walet of corn and lost a good Deal and made a turrabel flustration amongst the Reast of the Horses Drakes mair run against a sapling and noct it down we cacht them all agin and went on . . . .

#### APRIL

Saturday 8th – We all pack up and started crost Cumberland Gap about one oclock this Day Met a good maney peopel turned Back for fear of the indians but our Company goes on Still with good courage . . .

tuesday 11th – this a very lousy morning and like for Rain but we all agree to start Early and we cross Cumberland River and travel Down it about 10 miles through some turrabel cainbrakes as we went down abrams mair Ran into the River with her load and swam over he followed her and got on her and made her swim back agin – Mr. Drake

Baked Bread without washing his hands we Keep Sentry this Night for fear of the indians.

thursday 13th – Abram and Drake turn Back we go on and git to loral River . . .

thursday 20th – this morning is clear and cool. We start early and git Down to caintuck to Boons foart about 12 o'clock where we stop they come out to meet us and welcome us in with a voley of guns.

(Filson Club Publications)

Boone and the roadbuilders arrived first and started a settlement at Boonesborough. Their horses feasted upon the rich blue grass growing thick and long in the limestone soil on the banks of the Kentucky River. Today, this region is known as the blue grass country, a breeding center for race horses. The settlers lost no time. How did a settlement begin in a wilderness? Calk's diary told how:

tuesday 25th – in the eavening we git us a plaise at the mouth of the creek and begin clearing.

Wednesday 26th – We Begin Building us a house and a plaise of Defense to Keep the indians off this day we begin to live without bread.

Satterday 29th – We git our house kivered with Bark and move our things into it at Night and Begin housekeeping.

May, tuesday 2nd – I went out in the morning and killed a turkey and come in and got some on for my breakfast and then went and sot in to clearing for Corn.

The settlers would have little to eat except meat and wild greens until the first

corn crop was harvested. By the middle of June, 1775 the fort of Boonesborough was ready. Log cabins, connected by high fences, formed a rectangle, with block houses at the four corners from which the settlers could fire upon Indians if attacked. Then Boone departed for the stockade on the Clinch River where he had left his large family. They had been forced back by an Indian attack in which his eldest son was killed.

Mrs. Boone and her daughters were the first white women on the banks of the Kentucky River. Daniel's tales of the beautiful Kentucky country with tall blue grass and rich soil lured others to follow him. During the summer more families arrived at Boonesborough. Women were the homemakers. For them, the men made tables, chairs, tubs, and washboards. With patchwork quilts and turkey-tail fans, the bare log cabins of Boonesborough began to look like homes. Other settlers went on to found Harrodsburg. Kentucky pioneers named another settlement Lexington when the news reached them about the Battle of Lexington, the first engagement in a war that would overtake the settlers on this western frontier.

#### MAP:

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*Atlas of American History* by Edgar B. Wesley