

Adventures on the American Frontier

Westward Over the Blue Ridge Mountains

Part Three

Dr. Thomas Walker
Maps the Cumberland Gap



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Other books in this series:
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Daniel Boone's Bluegrass Dream



This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

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Five men hacked their way through the thick brush of the mountains of eastern Tennessee. They led a string of seven horses. The first five horses were saddled, but riding them was impossible on the rough mountainside. The last two horses carried supplies for a long journey. Ahead of the men ran their hunting dogs.



Colby Chew, the first man in the line, stepped into the tangle of brush ahead. His voice brought good news back to the men who followed him. "Dr. Walker, I've found a buffalo trail!"

Dr. Thomas Walker and the three other men caught up with Colby. They saw a worn path leading west.

"We should soon come to the old trail that leads to the gap in the mountains," Dr. Walker told the others. "But we can't go much farther today. Let's set up camp."



The men were looking for the trail called the Warrior's Path that led through the mountains, but more than half a century had passed since a man named Gabe Arthur had learned of that path from a tribe of Native Americans. During that time, a few white traders had followed the Native American trails into the land beyond the mountains, but none had tried to clear a patch of ground and build a cabin in the wilderness. And no one had made a map of the trails that led to the mountain pass.

In that spring of 1750, Dr. Walker and his men were on their way to look for good land on which to settle on the other side of the last mountain ridge. Already the valley between the Blue Ridge and the mountains west of it was dotted with cabins and tiny settlements. Dr. Walker and his men had found one settler building his lonely cabin as far west as the Holston Valley. The Native American trail known as the Great Warpath tied the new settlements together, and it had grown to become a wagon road.



But since Dr. Walker's men had left that last cabin, they had traveled ten days in the wilderness.

As they moved along the buffalo trail, they could see the great wall of the mountains ahead. Dr. Walker knew that he had to find the pass if they were to go much farther.

Just as the men were lifting the packs from the horses' backs, they heard the hunting dogs' barks turn into the excited sound that meant they had cornered a bear.