A MAN FOR ALL REGIONS: DR. THOMAS WALKER OF CASTLE HILL

Alexander Canaday McLeod

INTRODUCTION

The life of Dr. Thomas Walker of Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Virginia, spanned the seminal years of westward expansion. His multifaceted activities led him into many ventures and relationships with interesting and prominent people. His extensive, frequent travels gave him a unique sense of the potential greatness of the continent. Yet in spite of his impressive achievements, his life is relatively unknown.[1]

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1 No definitive biographies of Thomas Walker have been published. Brief notations about him have been recorded in biographical compilations and miscellaneous articles; manuscripts and parts of books offer short summaries of his accomplishments. The six single-volume works about him are not well known In 1888 Walker's great-grandson William Cabell Rives published part of Walker's 1750 journal with a biographical sketch of Walker in a preface to Thomas Walker, *Journal of an Exploration in the Spring of 1750* (Boston, 1888). J. Stoddard Johnston wrote briefly about him in *First Explorations of Kentucky* (first publication series, no 13; Louisville: The Filson Club, 1889), 4-27. Archibald J. Henderson wrote an article for the American Antiquarian Society in 1931; see his "Dr. Thomas Walker and the Loyal Company of Virginia," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (April 1931): 3-104. Two MA theses deal with Walker's life and achievements: Natalie J. Disbrow, "Thomas Walker, Man of Affairs" (MA thesis, University of Virginia, 1940) and James A. Frutchey, "Doctor Thomas Walker: Colonial Virginia's Extraordinary Entrepreneur" (MA thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1968). See also Keith Ryan Nyland's dissertation "Doctor Thomas Walker (1715-1794): Explorer, Physician, Statesman, Surveyor and Planter of Virginia and Kentucky" (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1971). Henderson implied that he planned to write a complete biography, but this work never appeared.

In a very real sense, Thomas Walker was a man for all regions. The areas to which he traveled loomed large in his own time. The westward migrations of the following generation make Walker's regions seem narrow in comparison. However, when seen in the perspective of his times, his travels anticipated the dramatic expansion that was to follow. He traveled constantly in his native Virginia, including present-day West Virginia, passed through Maryland, journeyed into Pennsylvania and New York, traveled through North Carolina and sailed to South Carolina, helped drive the wedge of settlement into Kentucky, traversed Tennessee, and reached the Mississippi River. He left his mark on each of these areas; his geographic vision awakened Americans to what lay beyond the western boundaries. This essay follows a regional, rather than chronological, format in discussing Thomas Walker's life; a chronology is included as an appendix.

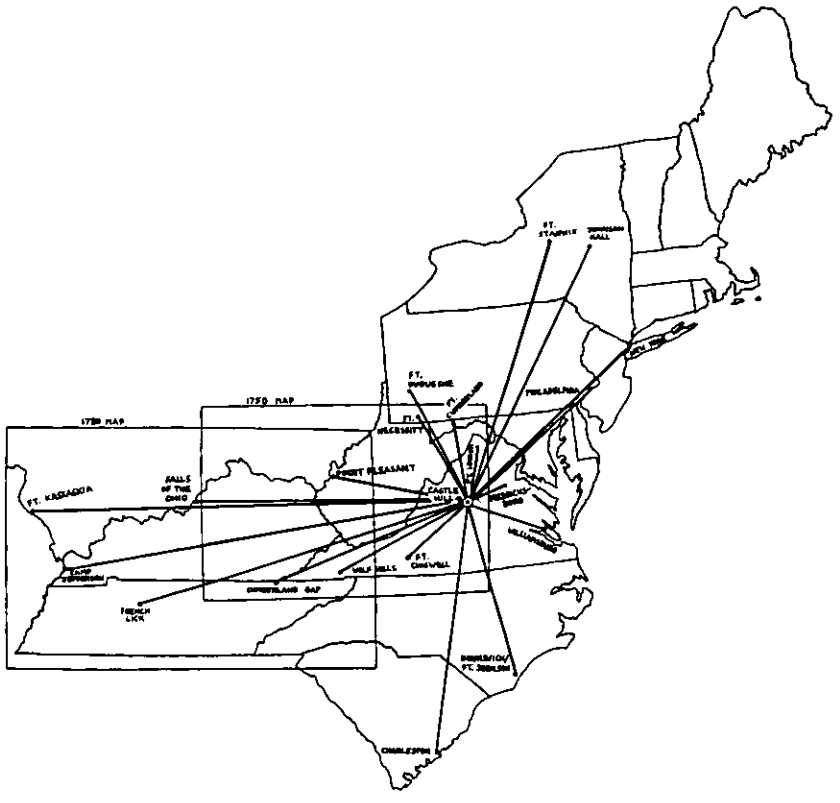
Walker was not tall, but he was a hardy outdoorsman. We have left only a silhouette of his profile—no portrait and no detailed physical description. Two of the best descriptions of his character come from the end of his life. Thomas Anbury met Walker in his travels and wrote in 1791:

> One day, in a chat, while each was delivering his sentiments of what would be the state of America a century hence, the old man, with great fire and spirit, declared his opinion that, "the Americans would then reverence the resolution of their forefathers, and would eagerly impress an adequate idea of the sacred value of freedom in the minds of their children, that if, in any future ages they should be again called forth to revenge public injuries, to secure that freedom, they should adopt the same measures that secured it to their brave ancestors.[2]

His son Francis wrote to Daniel Smith, also in 1791:

> [He] possesses all that life and good humor which we were all kept alive by in the woods. How happy is the man who at his age can with pleasure look back on a well spent life, and without distress

2 Thomas Anbury, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of America* (London, 1791). Quoted in Natalie Disbrow, "Thomas Walker, Man of Affairs," 2.



The Travels of Dr. Thomas Walker

> meet the awful moment which is to deprive his descendants of so inestimable a friend.[3]

The key phrases in these two statements are "fire and spirit" and "life and good humor." These attributes best describe the man.

After a brief overview of his life and interests, this essay traces Walker's extensive travels. This is followed by a look at his enduring impact on those who knew him, including Thomas Jefferson.

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3 Draper Collection, 7ZZ33, cited in Walter T. Durham, *Daniel Smith, Frontier Statesman* (Gallatin, Tennessee: Sumner County Library Board, 1976), 136.

THE ECLECTIC ENTREPRENEUR

Dr. Thomas Walker's family originated in Staffordshire, England. He was born on the Mattapony River in Tidewater Virginia in 1715, probably the son of another Thomas Walker of King and Queen County, who is said to have established the town of Walkerton, and his wife Susanna Peachy.[4] Dr. Thomas Walker attended the College of William and Mary and then studied medicine under his brother-in-law, Dr. George Gilmer of Williamsburg, a medical graduate of Edinburgh University. Walker first practiced medicine in Fredericksburg, and he continued to practice after his move to the Virginia Piedmont.[5]

After he left Fredericksburg about 1740, his primary residence was in Fredericksville Parish. He married Mildred Thornton Meriwether, widow of Nicholas Meriwether, in 1741 and acquired through her the responsibility for 15,000 acres in what became Albemarle County. Walker did not become the actual owner of his wife's property, although he did purchase much of it later from his stepdaughter. His initial house in the area was probably his wife's. While his family lived in that location, Walker spent much time between 1748 and 1754 near Wolf Hills, now Abingdon, Virginia, in the southwest part of the colony. In 1754 the family moved to the area where Castle Hill was built in 1765.[6] Castle Hill, which still stands today, remained his home until his death in 1794.

Within the rural society of what became Albemarle County in 1744, there were close family and friendship connections that continued in later generations and became important as westward expansion developed. Walker and his first wife, a second cousin of George Washington, had twelve children. Mary, their eldest daughter, married Nicholas Lewis, uncle and guardian of Meriwether Lewis, who

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4 Alfred Bagby, *King and Queen County, Virginia* (New York, 1908), 360-62.

5 Nyland, "Doctor Thomas Walker," 3; James O. Breeden, "The Medical World of Thomas Walker," *Magazine of Albemarle County History* 52 (1994): 22-37.

6 Edward Lay and Martha Tuzson Stockton, "Castle Hill: The Walker Family Estate," ibid., 52 (1994): 38-63.

became Thomas Jefferson's secretary and subsequently co-leader of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Another daughter, Elizabeth, married Reverend Matthew Maury, son of Reverend James Maury, who ran a private school attended for a while by Thomas Jefferson. Another daughter, Peachy, married the grandson of Colonel Joshua Fry, who extended the North Carolina-Virginia line with Peter Jefferson, the father of Thomas Jefferson. George Rogers Clark was also born in Albemarle County, and although he moved away at an early age, he later became a fast friend of Meriwether Lewis's brother, William. Clark's younger brother, William, would later team with Meriwether Lewis in their famous expedition.[7]

Although Thomas Walker was a physician, his historical significance was as an explorer and land speculator, even though he continued to practice medicine for many years and trained several younger physicians. He was also a parish leader, landowner, farmer, merchant, manufacturer, surveyor, government representative, military man, friend of the famous, husband, and father. In all of these activities, Walker was a keen businessman. He did not hesitate to bill for his professional services. He used his political positions to his own advantage and his explorations were always made with potential profit in mind.

Among his patients was Peter Jefferson, his neighbor and friend. Walker attended him in his final illness, and upon Jefferson's death in 1757 Walker was named one of four estate administrators and guardians of the fourteen-year-old Thomas. Of the four appointees, including Colonel Peter Randolph, Thomas Turpin, and John Harvie in addition to Walker, only Walker and Harvie really met their responsibilities to young Thomas.[8] Thomas Jefferson admired Walker and sought his advice on financial and other matters. Later while governor Thomas Jefferson signed a land grant to Walker for four hundred acres in Louisa and Albemarle counties. Subsequently

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7 Richard Channing Moore Page, "Walker Family," in *Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia* (Bridgewater, Virginia: C. J. Carrier Company, 1965), 217.

8 Nyland, "Doctor Thomas Walker," 123.

the two participated in various land dealings.[9] They remained lifelong friends, and the influence of Walker had a definite effect on Jefferson's expansionist activities during his presidency. In 1790 Jefferson wrote to Walker that he had "the honour to be with the most grateful sense of your favour and sentiments of the most perfect respect and esteem."[10]

Walker's estate remained under constant cultivation; wheat and tobacco were the main crops. Walker is credited for developing the Albemarle Pippen apple in his orchards, originally the Newton Pippen which he brought back from his travels to New York in 1768.[11] Beginning during his Fredericksburg days as a medical practitioner, Walker had a general store that imported and resold articles from England and Scotland. After he married and moved, he continued to be involved in mercantile activities, exporting tobacco and transacting sales of both direct imports and items received from Philadelphia. He amassed large land holdings and frequently traded in real estate. In addition to his estate and store, he once owned and ran a saloon. Although this enterprise is not fully documented, Walker was possibly an investor in a privateer, the *Phoenix*. Not all his business investments were successful, however. He was a partner in one manufacturing activity that failed, the Albemarle Iron Works. Debt problems resulting from this venture and a loan for one of his store operations lasted into his later years.[12]

Walker was active in county and parish matters. He gave land for the building of a parish church near his home. He was instrumental in obtaining the bill for the creation of the town of Charlottesville in the House of Burgesses, and he was one of the trustees for the new town when it was chartered in 1762. He was involved with the sale

9 Disbrow, "Man of Affairs," 12.

10 Nyland, "Doctor Thomas Walker," 128.

11 Ibid., 117.

12 Ibid., 141; William W. Reynolds, "Merchant and Investor: Additional Chapters on the Career of Dr. Thomas Walker," *Magazine of Albemarle County History* 12 (1994): 1-21.

of lots from his lands within the town borders. He purchased additional acreage from private citizens and also obtained lands from the government by patent. Walker held a seat in the House of Burgesses from 1752 to 1776. In addition, as commissary of the Virginia forces in the French and Indian War, he was responsible for supplying the several forts along Virginia's western frontier. Later he served on the Virginia Committee of Safety and on the Council of State, both of which expressed growing revolutionary sentiment. His treaty negotiations with Native Americans would help prepare the way for westward settlement and land speculation. He represented Virginia at the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 and negotiated a new boundary line with the Cherokee, defined in the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770. The Virginia legislature appointed him to negotiate peace with the Shawnee in 1774, and he presided as commissioner at Fort Pitt for the treaty with the Western in 1775. Walker was interested in making money, and his manipulations were sometimes questioned. He incurred the disfavor for a time of George Washington because of some billings for goods and services during the French and Indian War for which he was later investigated by the House of Burgesses. None of these investigations, however, resulted in confirmation of wrongdoing.[13]

Walker ultimately was one of the wealthiest persons in Albemarle County. Although he was a shrewd and successful businessman, it was not as a businessman that he is best remembered. It was through his travels that he gave his greatest service to his country.

THE PERIPATETIC PATRIOT

Virginia

As a youth Walker and a companion took hunting trips through the Piedmont region of Virginia, reaching the headwaters of the James River on one trip. His spirit of adventure and his interest in geography appear to have been early ingredients of his character. Walker

13 William Meade, "Fredericksville and Trinity Parishes in Louisa and Albemarle Counties," in *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1872); Disbrow, "Man of Affairs," 96; Nyland, "Walker," 64-72.

probably first ventured into what is now West Virginia with this youthful journey west. In his noted 1750 exploration he traveled even farther into that area. When Walker negotiated with the Shawnee after their defeat at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, he traveled to the site, where the Kanawha River enters the Ohio River.[14]

For over thirty years, from the early 1750s until the middle 1780s, Walker held numerous political positions which required him to be in the capital, and so he made many trips during that time back and forth from Charlottesville to Williamsburg.

It has been said that Walker lived in southwest Virginia from 1740 to 1750. He probably visited the area on many occasions because of his land acquisitions and also spent much time in residence there.[15] One source quotes Old Tom, one of Walker's slaves, as having said that Walker lived with Native Americans for seven years.[16] This observation could refer to that time of involvement in southwest Virginia, although it could also refer to the later period after the French and Indian War when Walker was a participant in Native-American treaty negotiations.

Walker had excellent relationships with Native Americans. In southwest Virginia he once found a white boy who had been captured by Native Americans and had lived with them for a number of years. The boy returned home with Walker, who cared for him and taught him the ways of the society from which he had been taken.[17] In 1777 he returned from Fort Pitt with a Native American youth whom he planned to educate. However, this boy left in 1779 and became an enemy to the Virginia colony. Native Americans frequently stopped by Walker's home to visit, and he treated them with respect and understanding.

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14 J. Stoddard Johnston, *First Explorations of Kentucky*, 9.

15 Henderson, "Loyal Company," 12.

16 Page, "Walker Family," 217.

17 Dale Van Every, *Forth to the Wilderness* (New York: William Morrow, 1961), 318.

Walker was an investor and agent for the Loyal Company of Virginia for many years. Through his relationship with that company, he first reached beyond the boundaries of Albemarle County in his real estate interests.[18] This company was the southern version of the Ohio Company to the north, in which many leading figures, including George Washington, were financially and politically involved. The Loyal Company secured its first grant in 1748 for 800,000 acres in southwest Virginia. Although not an investor in the Ohio Company, Walker was involved with the Mississippi Company and the Dismal Swamp Company. These business interests were not as important as his other land dealings, such as those within the areas surrounding his home at Castle Hill and with the Loyal Company. Legal questions concerning the Loyal Company continued long after Walker's death and into the second quarter of the next century.[19]

As one of the Loyal Company's keenest investors and because of his abilities as surveyor and explorer, coupled with his acceptance by Native Americans, Walker became increasingly involved with lands in southwest Virginia, which were the main focus of his activities until the French and Indian War.[20] His role in the Loyal Company ultimately resulted in qualification as deputy surveyor of Augusta County in 1752.[21] In addition to his participation as an investor in the Loyal Company grant, Walker in 1748 obtained a separate grant of 10,000 acres along the New River, in company with Peter Jefferson and Thomas and David Meriwether.[22] In 1748 he was surveyor in a party to locate and survey a grant of 100,000 acres to Colonel James

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18 Henderson, "Loyal Company," 13-15; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, "The Loyal Company," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 4 (no. 2 , 1922): 86-95.

19 Henderson, "Loyal Company," 39-43.

20 Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Overmountain Press, 1989; first published in 1903), index, s.v. "Walker, Thomas"; Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800* (2 vols.; Johnson City, Tennessee: Overmountain Press, 1992; first published in 1920), index, s.v. "Walker, Dr. Thomas."

21 Summers, *History of Southwest Virgina*, 43.

22 Ibid., 51.

Patton.[23] This exploration went through southwest Virginia into east Tennessee to the Indian and Clinch rivers. In 1777 Walker, along with Joseph Black and Samuel Briggs, gave one hundred and twenty acres to Washington County for the proposed town at Black's Fort (now Blacksburg).[24] In 1781 he sold nearly five hundred acres for the benefit of the town of Abingdon.[25]

During the French and Indian War, when Walker was commissary general for the Virginia troops, he made many visits to the various forts scattered along Virginia's western frontier. Over eighty such fortifications have been documented, stretching across a distance of between two hundred and two hundred and fifty miles.[26] His diaries and letters particularly mention Fort Chiswell in the south and Fort Loudoun at Winchester in the north.[27]

The North

Western Maryland was a crossroads in travels from Baltimore westward and from Pennsylvania and other northern points to Virginia. Thomas Walker made several visits to Old Town, Maryland, and farther west to Fort Cumberland.[28]

Western Pennsylvania was a focal point of the French and Indian War. Walker traveled the area extensively as a result of that war. Since the French and Indian War was the American counterpart of the Seven Years' War in Europe, Thomas Walker and his contemporaries were involved not only in local conflict but in an international struggle.

In the beginning of the conflict between Great Britain and France, each colony stood on its own, independent from its neighbors.

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23 Ibid., 42-43.

24 Ibid., 268-69, 619, 621.

25 Henderson, "Loyal Company," 13.

26 Ibid., 20-26; Louis K. Koontz, *The Virginia Frontier: 1754-1763* (Bowie, Maryland, 1992; first published in 1925), 98-148.

27 Annie Walker Burns, *First White Man to Explore Kentucky: Dr. Thomas Walker* (Nashville: Tennessee State Library, 1930, mimeographed), 21-30.

28 Allen Powell, *Fort Cumberland* (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1989); Allen Powell, *Fort Loudoun: Winchester's Defense in the French and Indian War* (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1990).

Virginia was concerned about its western boundaries, as was Pennsylvania. New York was concerned about its northern boundaries as well as its western boundaries, as was Massachusetts. Virginia was threatened by Pennsylvania's claims to the Ohio River Valley and by North Carolina's claims to what someday would be Tennessee and Kentucky. Whether the western boundaries of the colonies really extended to the Pacific Ocean, as several colonial charters claimed, was a perennial question. Great Britain was responsible for the protection of the colonies from the French and from the Native Americans but had to rely on help from the colonies. As early as 1749, the French had begun efforts to mark the entire length of the Ohio River with lead plaques claiming their rights to the lands along its banks and tributaries.[29]

Virginia's first aim was to attack Fort Duquesne at the juncture of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers where the Ohio River begins at the present site of Pittsburgh. Fort Duquesne was renamed Fort Pitt by the English. Virginia's second aim was to protect its western frontiers at the eastern boundary of the mountains. Its last aim was to protect its southern and southwestern boundaries. As a result, the interests of the Loyal Company were superseded as the need for arms at the northern edge became dominant.[30]

In 1753 George Washington, acting under orders from Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie, informed the French that their claims to the lands of the Ohio River were not recognized and demanded that they leave. The French refused. Governor Dinwiddie instructed Washington to return with troops. Washington then engaged the French at Fort Necessity, near the present Uniontown, Pennsylvania, where he was defeated.[31] In response to this defeat, plans were made

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29 Van Every, *Forth to the Wilderness*, 58; Tom Morgan, "The Frontier in 1750," in *Wilderness at Dawn* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993); Arthur Quinn, "A Worldly War," in Arthur Quinn, *A New World* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994).

30 Henderson, "Loyal Company," 26.

31 Robert C. Alberts, *A Charming Field for an Encounter* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975).

for General Edward Braddock to march against Fort Duquesne. In 1755 Thomas Walker became commissary general of the Virginia troops with the rank of major. His earlier ventures into trade served him well in this new capacity and his ability to endure the hardships of exploration prepared him for the difficulties of war. His earlier contacts with Native Americans and their respect for him put him in a unique position to deal with them effectively.

In 1755 General Braddock implemented his military plans. As commissary general, while procuring supplies for this expedition, Walker traveled to Philadelphia, where he met and dined with Benjamin Franklin in March.

Walker accompanied Braddock and George Washington on the expedition later in 1755 and was an eyewitness to the battle which Braddock lost. This battle has been called the Pearl Harbor of the French and Indian War.[32]

Walker returned to Philadelphia again in 1761 on business, and he revisited the site of Fort Duquesne on several later occasions. He was appointed to the commission to negotiate a treaty with the Ohio, or Western, tribes and was in Fort Pitt from mid September until late October 1775. In August 1776, Walker revisited the battle site of Braddock's defeat and described the battle to the members of his party.

Walker traveled to New York in 1768 when he represented Virginia at the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, in what is now Rome, New York. He left on his journey on 16 July and arrived at Johnson Hall, home of Sir William Johnson, superintendent of the Iroquois Confederacy and northern Indian superintendent, on the Mohawk River east of Fort Stanwix, forty-one days later. He left Johnson Hall on 14 September and arrived at Fort Stanwix three days after that, where he waited for the Native Americans almost a month.

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32 Samuel Elliot Morrison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 163.

The deed of cession was finally executed on 5 November. On his way back to Virginia, he visited New York City and Philadelphia.[33]

The Iroquois were dissatisfied over the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, by which they lost all lands in Virginia. As a result, they were not friendly toward the Virginians. The Virginians had had good relationships with the Cherokee to their south. The Proclamation of 1763 had set the western line roughly along the Shenandoah Valley. A meeting was scheduled for 1768 with the Cherokee at Chiswell's Mines in southern Virginia at the same time as the Fort Stanwix meeting. While Walker was at Fort Stanwix negotiating with the Iroquois, John Stuart in South Carolina negotiated a separate treaty prematurely with the Cherokee, the Treaty of Hard Labor. The Treaty of Hard Labor was not favorable to Virginia's interests, and when Walker returned to Virginia from Fort Stanwix, he was assigned the duty of working with Stuart to renegotiate the treaty. This led to his only major excursion into the Carolinas in 1750.[34]

The Carolinas

Thomas Walker's southern travels to the Carolinas were less extensive than his other journeys. The relationship between the colonies of Virginia and North Carolina was not always smooth. Walker's 1750 trip took him across what would become the North Carolina-Virginia border. Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas and neighbor of Thomas Walker, along with Joshua Fry, was appointed to extend the boundary line between the two colonies farther west to a point in southwestern Virginia, and in 1751 they produced their new map of Virginia, which was not published until 1754.[35] Thomas Walker and Daniel Smith completed that survey in 1779 and 1780, going to the Tennessee River and then on to the Mississippi River.

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33 Nyland, "Doctor Thomas Walker," 85.

34 Burns, *First White Man*, 21-30.

35 Guy Meriwether Benson, *Exploring the West from Monticello: A Perspective in Maps from Columbus to Lewis and Clark* (Charlottesville, Department of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, 1995), 38.

The two border expeditions and his trip to Charleston, South Carolina, seem to have been Walker's only travels to the Carolinas.

Walker returned from Fort Stanwix, New York, in late November or early December 1768, and on 20 December, the governor, Norborne Berkeley (Lord Botetourt) instructed him to proceed to South Carolina to confer with John Stuart about some errors in the Treaty of Hard Labor.[36] Stuart served as royal superintendent of Indian affairs for the southern districts of North America, a position comparable to Sir William Johnson's in the north. He was the major negotiator with the Cherokee as Johnson was with the Iroquois. After leaving Williamsburg, Walker and Andrew Lewis, who was also a Virginia commissioner, visited Governor William Tryon at Brunswick, North Carolina, on 5 January 1769, and the next day visited Fort Johnson, North Carolina, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. They sailed from there for Charleston with two Cherokee on 9 January and met Stuart in Charleston two days later. Both men then met with the Native American chiefs on 13 and 16 January. Walker returned to Virginia and gave a final report on 2 February.

The new treaty was signed at Lochaber, South Carolina, on 18 October 1770. With the Treaty of Hard Labor, the borders started at Chiswell's Mine and went northwest to Point Pleasant on the Ohio River and southwest to a point near present Knoxville, Tennessee. In the revised Treaty of Lochaber, the line ran from Point Pleasant to the same southwest point. With the border moved westward, new lands opened for settlement with less fear of Native American interference.[37]

The Old Southwest

Walker's interest in southwest Virginia drew him farther westward. His impact on what would become Kentucky and Tennessee was the most significant contribution of his travels to the expansion of settlement beyond the eastern mountains. He was the first to record exploration through the Cumberland Gap, which he

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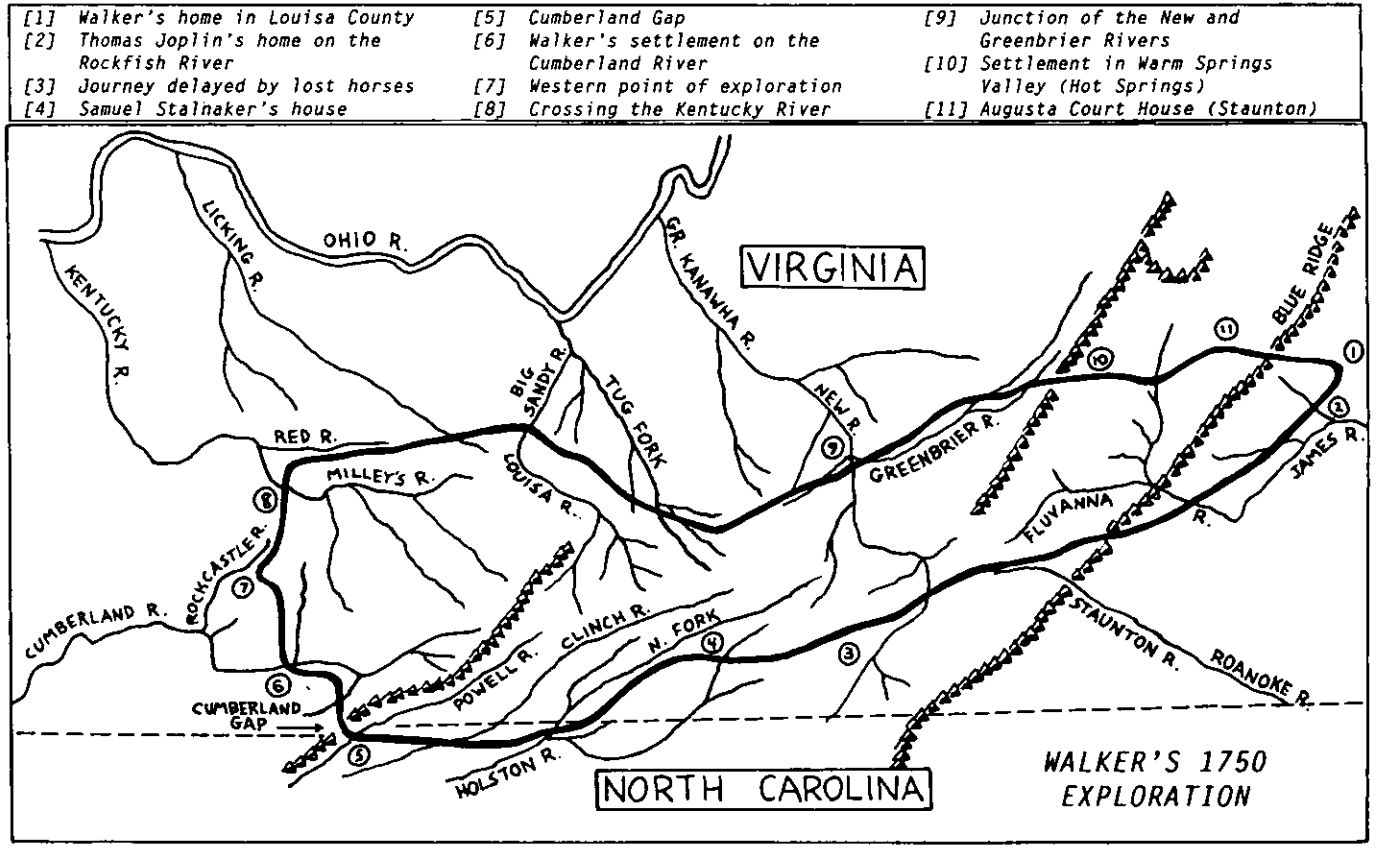
36 Burns, *First White Man*, 71-79; John L. Nichols, "John Stuart: Beloved Father of the Cherokees" *The Highlander* 31 (no. 5, September/October 1993): 37-40.

37 Nichols, "John Stuart," 21-30.


[1] Walker's home in Louisa County
[2] Thomas Joplin's home on the Rockfish River
[3] Journey delayed by lost horses
[4] Samuel Stalnaker's house
[5] Cumberland Gap
[6] Walker's settlement on the Cumberland River
[7] Western point of exploration
[8] Crossing the Kentucky River
[9] Junction of the New and Greenbrier Rivers
[10] Settlement in Warm Springs Valley (Hot Springs)
[11] Augusta Court House (Staunton)
OHIO R.
LICKING R.
KENTUCKY R.
GR. KANAWHA R.
VIRGINIA
BIG SANDY R.
TUG FORK
NEW R.
RED R.
MILLEY'S R.
LOUISA R.
GREENBRIER R.
BLUE RIDGE
JAMES R.
FLUVANNA R.
ROCKCASTLE R.
CUMBERLAND R.
POWELL R.
CLINCH R.
N. FORK
STAUNTON R.
ROANOKE R.
CUMBERLAND GAP
HOLSTON R.
NORTH CAROLINA
WALKER'S 1750 EXPLORATION

named; he discovered and named the Cumberland River and later helped establish the boundary between Tennessee and Kentucky. His travels to the Old Southwest were thirty years apart but closely knit in purpose which was to move the settlement across the mountains toward the Mississippi River.

In 1750 Walker made his famous trip into Kentucky as agent and surveyor for the Loyal Land Company. He established the first homestead built by white men near what is now Barbourville. He preceded Christopher Gist's exploration of Kentucky by a year, although Gist travelled much farther into the region than Walker. Walker preceded Daniel Boone by almost twenty years. Several French explorers and hunters preceded him, but Walker kept a detailed record of his explorations and built the first homestead beyond Cumberland Gap.

> Walker left home with a party of five other men on Monday, 6 March 1750: Having, on the 12th of December last, been employed for a certain consideration to go to the Westward in order to discover a proper Place for a Settlement, I left my house on the Sixth day of March, at 10 o'clock, 1749-50, in Company with Ambrose Powell, William Tomlinson, Colby Chew, Henry Lawless & John Hughs.[38]

They spent that night at the home of Colonel Joshua Fry, who had jointly drawn the map of Virginia with Peter Jefferson. The next day they traveled the short distance to Thomas Joplin's home on Rockfish River. Traveling in a southwesterly direction, they spent the fourth night at John Harvie's home, with whom Walker would serve as commissioner for the treaty with the Westerns in 1775. Two days later they crossed the Fluvanna River and traveled the main wagon road leading to Wood's [New] River. At the beginning of their second week out they made an easy crossing of the Blue Ridge, and the next two days they followed the Staunton River. After being delayed by lost

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38 Walker's journal is reprinted in Johnston, *First Explorations*; the original is the Library of Congress. The quote is found on page 34. Prior to 1752 the English and colonial new year began on 25 March. In this and all subsequent quotations from Walker's journal, the spelling, capitalization, and sentence structure are his.

horses, they resumed their journey at the end of their second week. Reaching the Holston River, they proceeded to the house of Samuel Stalnaker, listed on the Fry and Jefferson map as the extreme western habitation.

Following first the north branch of the Holston River and then Reedy Creek, they returned to the Holston River before traveling west over hills to Holly Creek, reaching the Clinch River one week later. Continuing west, they reached Bear-Grass River in southwestern Virginia, subsequently named Powell's River, for one of the men in the party. Five and a half weeks into their journey, they reached Cave Gap:

> April 13th. We went four miles to large Creek, which we called Cedar Creek, being a Branch of Bear-Grass, and from thence Six miles to Cave Gap, the land being Levil. On the North side of the Gap is a large Spring, which falls very fast, and just above the Spring is a small Entrance to a large Cave, which the Spring runs through, and there is a constant Stream of Cool air issuing out. The Spring is sufficient to turn a Mill. Just at the foot of the Hill is a Laurel Thicket, and the Spring Water runs through it.[39]

Walker later named it Cumberland Gap in honor of William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, son of George II and Queen Caroline.

Crossing though Cumberland Gap and turning north, they followed a large creek, which they called Flat Creek, now known as Yellow Creek, near the present site of Middlesborough, Kentucky. In another two days they reached Clover [Clear] Creek, which later joined Yellow Creek, to form what Walker named the Cumberland River:

> [April] 17th. Still Rain. I went down the Creek a hunting and found that it went into a River about a mile below our Camp. This, which is Flat Creek and Some other join'd, I called Cumberland River.[40]

The next day they followed the Indian Road to the ford through the Cumberland River but continued to follow the south side of the river, crossing it for the first time near the present site of Barbourville.

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39 Ibid., 48-49.
40 Ibid., 50.

From that location, Walker and two others left to explore farther, leaving the other three of the party:

> [April] 23rd. Having carried our Baggage over in the Bark Conoe, and Swam our horses, we all crossed the River. Then Ambrose Powell, Colby Chew, and I departed, Leaving the others to provide and salt some Bear, build an house, and plant some Peach Stones and Corn.[41]

Deciding to return to the remaining party, they reached the Cumberland River about twenty miles below where they had crossed it five days earlier:

> [April] 28th. We kept up the River to our Company whom we found all well, but the lame Horse was as bad as we left him, and another had been bit in the Nose by a Snake. I rub'd the wounds with Bears oil, and gave him a drench of the same and another of the decoction of Rattle Snake root some time after. The People I left had build an House 12 by 8, clear'd and broke up some ground, & planted Corn, and Peach Stones. They also had killed several Bears and cured the meat. This day Colby Chew and his Horse fell down the Bank. I Bled and gave him Volatile drops, & he soon recovered.[42]

Reunited with the remaining party, they began their trip's eighth week by traveling north.

The exploring party traveled north and west, finding the land poor; they missed the magnificent Bluegrass country by only some fifteen miles. The next day they reached the Indian Road that they had earlier left where it met the Cumberland River; this road later became known as the Wilderness Road. Continuing west, following the Rockcastle River, they reached the western point of their exploration and turned northward, ultimately reaching Milley's River, now the Kentucky River.

Proceeding in a northeasterly direction, they reached the Red River and later came to Licking River, which Walker named Frederick's River for Frederick, prince of Wales, son of George II and

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41 Ibid., 52.
42 Ibid., 55.

father of George III. Continuing farther, they reached another river, a fork of the Big Sandy River, and named it Louisa River, for the sister of the duke of Cumberland. Moving in a southeasterly direction, they reached the headwaters of Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River. They were into their sixteenth week. Between the two forks, in the flooding waters of a stream, they lost a tomahawk on which Walker's name was stamped. Some one hundred years later it was found by a passerby downstream on the upper waters of Salt River in Mercer County, Kentucky. Since Walker's journal indicates that he never went west of Rockcastle River, the tomahawk presumably washed down in flooding waters. It subsequently came into the possession of one of Walker's descendants who lived in Louisville, Kentucky.[43]

Turning in a northeasterly direction, they reached the New River near where the Greenbrier River enters. They followed the Greenbrier River, then left it and traveled east, passing Hot Springs and Staunton, Virginia. On 13 July, four months after his departure, Walker was back home.

Walker's journal details his daily travels. It also reveals the abilities and humanity of the man himself. For example, he noted injuries sustained by the party:

> In the Evening our dogs caught a large He Bear, which before we could come up to shoot him had wounded a dog of mine, so that he could not Travel, and we carried him on Horseback, till he recovered.[44]
>
> This afternoon Ambrose Powell was bit by a Bear in his Knee.[45]
>
> We kept down the Branch almost to the River, and up a Creek, and then along a Ridge till our Dogs roused a large Buck Elk, which we followed down to a Creek. He killed Ambrose Powell's Dog in the Chase, and we named the Run Tumbler's Creek, the Dog being of that Name.[46]

43 Ibid., 68, note 1.
44 Ibid., 46.
45 Ibid., 51.
46 Ibid., 64.

He described difficult passages and their mode of life:

> Thunder, Lightning, and Rain before Day. . . It began to Snow in the morning and continued till Noon.[47]

> We could not find a ford Shallow enough to carry our Baggage over on our horses. Ambrose Powell Forded over on one horse, and we drove the others after him. We then made a Raft and carried over one Load of Baggage, but when the Raft was brought back, it was so heavy that it would not carry anything more dry. . . we waded and carryed the remainder of our Baggage on our shoulders at two turns over the River.[48]

> I made a pair of Indian Shoes, those I brought out being bad.[49]

> We got to Lawlesses River which is much like the others. The Mountains here are very Steep and on Some of them there is Laurel and Ivy. The tops of the Mountains are very Rocky and some part of the Rocks seem to be composed of Shells, Nuts and many other Substances petrified and cemented together with a kind of Flint. We left the River and after travelling some Miles we got among Trees that had been Blown down about 2 years, and were obliged to go down a Creek to the River again, the Small Branches and Mountains being impassable.[50]

> It left off raining about 8. We crossed several Ridges and small Branches & Camped on a Branch of Hunting Creek. In the Evening it rained very hard.[51]

> We got on a large Creek where Turkey are plenty and some Elks. we went a hunting & killed 3 Turkeys. Hunted & killed 3 Bears & some Turkeys. . . We killed a large Buck Elk. . . having prepared a good stock of Meat, we left the Creek crossing several Branches and Ridges. the Woods still continuing bad the weather hot & our Horses so far spent, that we are all obliged to walk.[52]

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47 Ibid., 42.
48 Ibid., 46-47.
49 Ibid., 50.
50 Ibid., 59.
51 Ibid., 62.
52 Ibid., 69.

In this precise recording in his neat script, we can sense the unique combination of intellect and woodsman that was Thomas Walker. His journal ends with a summary of their hunting tally:

> [July] 13th. . . We killed in the Journey 13 Buffaloes, 8 Elks, 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.[53]

One of the most significant and productive relationships in Walker's life was that with Daniel Smith.[54] Smith, originally from Tidewater Virginia, came to Castle Hill around 1768 when he was twenty years old. He came to study medicine with Walker and in turn tutored Walker's son Francis. Smith moved to Tennessee in 1784 and became a man of many parts, as was his mentor. He was surveyor in Davidson County, corresponding secretary of the Tennessee district, secretary of the territory of the U.S. Southwest of the Ohio River, chairman of the committee to draft the first constitution of the State of Tennessee, U.S. senator, Native-American treaty negotiator, farmer, mapmaker, and college trustee. Francis Walker later became a member of Congress. Thomas Walker, Daniel Smith, and Francis Walker—were to continue their closeness to the end of Thomas Walker's life. The most important event in this enduring relationship occurred in 1779-1780 when Walker and Daniel Smith extended the North Carolina-Virginia boundary to the Tennessee River; the fifteen-year-old Francis accompanied them as camp cook.[55]

At the time of Smith's arrival, Thomas was fifty-three years old and Francis was four. In this family setting the young Smith learned surveying and business and had the opportunity to observe Walker's political activities and gain at least some basic legal knowledge. These other interests soon overtook medicine. Smith did not pursue a medical career, but all else he learned from Walker left a firm imprint

53 Ibid., 75.
54 Durham, *Smith*, 4-6.
55 Ibid., xi.

on his future contributions. Smith conducted surveys in Albemarle County in the early 1770s, many of which no doubt were on behalf of Thomas Walker. Smith married in 1773 and moved to Fincastle County in the Clinch River Valley in southwest Virginia. He was deeply involved in the management of Walker's land investments in that area and by 1778 was working on the development of Abingdon as county seat.[56]

With independence nearing, the settlement of the Old Southwest was imminent. The Ohio tribes were capitulating to Virginia armies under George Rogers Clark. Preparations were underway to settle French Lick, now Nashville, Tennessee, on the Cumberland River. The leaders of Virginia and North Carolina realized that increasing numbers of settlements in their western areas would soon appear, so they agreed to extend their common boundary to the Mississippi River. Each state chose boundary commissioners. North Carolina's were Colonel Richard Henderson, who was later a founder of the Transylvania Company, John Williams, and William Bailey Smith. Virginia chose Thomas Walker and Daniel Smith.[57]

Smith's close association with Thomas Walker gave him an appreciation for written records and as a result he kept a journal during his exploration, beginning in August 1779 and continuing to July 1780. The journal is remarkably like the 1750 journal of Thomas Walker. Smith and Walker were to begin at a point on Pond Mountain where Fry and Jefferson had extended the line in 1749.

Smith and Walker met on 15 August and searched for the western end of the existing line. Eighteen days later the North Carolina party joined them, and a week later they chose a starting point. North Carolina disagreed with the line established by Virginia, so Walker

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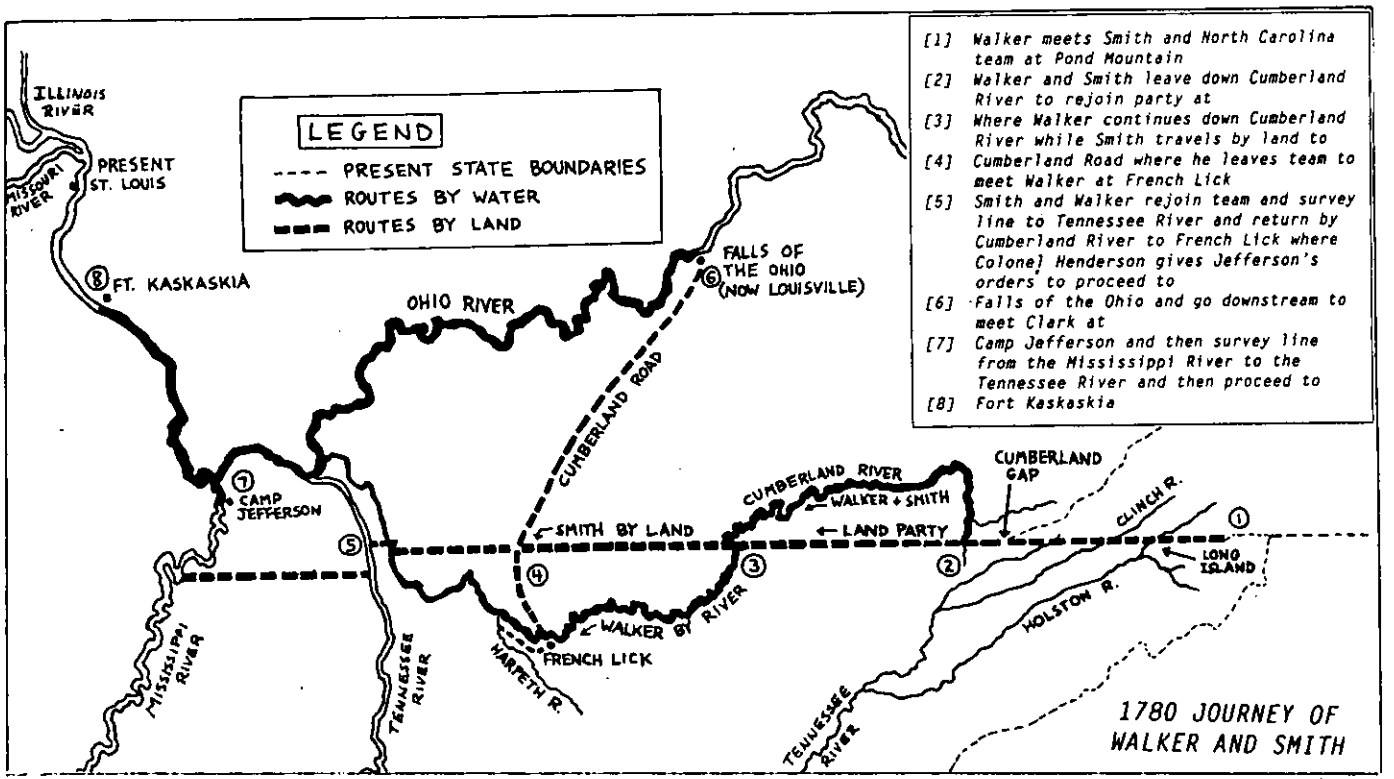
56 Ibid., 136.

57 Archibald Henderson, *The Star of Empire* (Durham, North Carolina, 1919). In some ways Colonel Henderson was North Carolina's version of Thomas Walker in that his interest in western lands was coupled with speculation and the profit motive. Henderson did not have Walker's national reputation, but still, his efforts at empire-building with the Transylvania Company were at least temporarily more successful than Walker's.


LEGEND
PRESENT STATE BOUNDARIES
ROUTES BY WATER
ROUTES BY LAND
[1] Walker meets Smith and North Carolina team at Pond Mountain
[2] Walker and Smith leave down Cumberland River to rejoin party at
[3] Where Walker continues down Cumberland River while Smith travels by land to
[4] Cumberland Road where he leaves team to meet Walker at French Lick
[5] Smith and Walker rejoin team and survey line to Tennessee River and return by Cumberland River to French Lick where Colonel Henderson gives Jefferson's orders to proceed to
[6] Falls of the Ohio and go downstream to meet Clark at
[7] Camp Jefferson and then survey line from the Mississippi River to the Tennessee River and then proceed to
[8] Fort Kaskaskia
ILLINOIS RIVER
PRESENT ST. LOUIS
MISSOURI RIVER
FT. KASKASKIA
OHIO RIVER
FALLS OF THE OHIO (NOW LOUISVILLE)
CUMBERLAND ROAD
CAMP JEFFERSON
SMITH BY LAND
CUMBERLAND RIVER
WALKER + SMITH
LAND PARTY
CUMBERLAND GAP
CLINCH R.
LONG ISLAND
HOLSTON R.
WALKER BY RIVER
FRENCH LICK
WABASH R.
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
TENNESSEE RIVER
TENNESSEE RIVER
1780 JOURNEY OF WALKER AND SMITH

negotiated an agreement that each party would run its own line parallel with the other. By 22 September, they were on the Long Island of the Holston River in conference with the Cherokee, who were concerned that the survey meant further loss of their lands. Continual disagreements between the two surveying parties occurred during the next month. On 5 November, Smith discovered that the North Carolina party had been using an inaccurate instrument. Ten days later they crossed Cumberland Gap, and the North Carolina party withdrew the guards they had provided the Virginia party and quit the survey.[58]

Walker and Smith decided to continue the survey and they convinced the guards to remain. Their westward movement resumed, but the onset of severe winter weather led them to travel the Cumberland River. They built one canoe in a ten-day period and launched it on 1 January 1781. The other canoes were not ready until the middle of February. Using the canoes to travel downstream to hunt, the party survived increasing cold; the river froze over for several days. Only in mid February did rain cause floods to clear the river of ice. On 15 February, Walker and Smith with a few others of the party headed downstream. Other members of the party headed west overland with their horses, planning to meet where the Cumberland River crosses the present Kentucky-Tennessee line.

The river party reached the meeting place three days later after traveling some one hundred and seventeen miles. The land party arrived, but harsh weather again beset them. Finally, near the end of his twenty-eighth week away from home, Walker left with the canoes and most of the party for French Lick. Smith remained with the land party, and they continued the line due west. The plan was for Smith to run the line to the Cumberland Road, which ran between French Lick and the Falls of the Ohio. He then planned to turn south to meet at French Lick. Three weeks later they crossed the road, and Smith arrived in French Lick five days later.

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58 Durham, *Smith*, 295.

The next day Smith left to meet his surveying party and continue running the line. He, like Walker in 1750, lost a tomahawk; a French-made tomahawk thought to be Smith's turned up two hundred years later in a private Connecticut collection.[59] Smith was concerned enough about the loss of the tomahawk to delay the reunion for five days. Upon joining the party, Smith found the line had been run too far south, perhaps because of magnetic variation. In 1812 Smith explained the error in a letter to the governor:

> When we had run it to the trace which led from Kentucky to the French Lick, or a little west of it, I left them to meet Dr. Walker, and gave the line runners instructions to continue their course till they should strike Cumberland River or the Ohio promising to meet them again in the right latitude. On meeting Dr. Walker and his party we continued down the river and met with the line party, not indeed in the right latitude but about two miles to the south of it. This we found owing to a change of the variation; it had changed from about 7 degrees to nothing, and once it was about a quarter or half of a degree west. We went into the right latitude, and continued the line to the Tennessee (our instructions forbade to continue it further). When we came back to the Cumberland we continued it eastwardly in the right latitude—but it ran into open barrens as the first line had done & after a while, as there was little or nothing to mark, we concluded to report it straight to the Kentucky trace, and then started for the French Lick. Here we fell in with Col. Henderson, who seemed pleased at what we had done, and told us he would report to his state his assent that our line was right. Dr. Walker & myself reported to our state what we had done—they approved it.[60]

On 23 March 1781, Smith reached the Tennessee River, the eastern bank of which was to be the end of the line. The next day the surveying party left by land, while Smith and several others made a boat and traveled up the Cumberland River, which lies only some nine miles east of the Tennessee River at that point. One week later they arrived at the mouth of the Harpeth River, landed, and set out cross-country to French Lick, which lay farther up the Cumberland River. They arrived on 2 April, the end of the thirty-third week of the journey.[61]

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59 Ibid., 72.
60 Ibid., 253.

When they were together in French Lick, Colonel Henderson delivered a letter from Governor Thomas Jefferson, ordering them to travel to the Falls of the Ohio rather than return home. Jefferson's order directed Smith and Walker to join George Rogers Clark and his party and travel to the mouth of the Ohio River. They were then to establish the point at which the Virginia line would meet the Mississippi River. Eighteen days later the party reached the Falls, only to find that Colonel Clark had headed downstream twelve days earlier. The party left the Falls and drifted for seven days on the Ohio River. On 3 May, they entered the Mississippi River. The stronger current carried them down the Mississippi some five miles to meet Clark at the site of Camp Jefferson where Fort Jefferson was later built. Smith then traveled southward, making sightings along the way; he established the southwest corner of Virginia, some four miles southwest of the earlier line. While it is clear that Walker traveled with Smith down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, the journal does not indicate whether Walker was with the surveying party when it established the Mississippi River point, although it is quite likely that both were present.

Later surveyors would discover that the North Carolina-Virginia line was actually some thirty degrees off at its eastern junction with the Tennessee River. When the line as sighted on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River was run eastward, it left either what was then North Carolina, later Tennessee, with additional lands on the eastern bank of the Tennessee River, or Virginia, later Kentucky, with additional lands to the west of the Tennessee River. Thus the oddity in the line at the Tennessee River as one looks at a Kentucky-Tennessee map today. These three variations—the starting point, the change from the Cumberland Road-Tennessee River line, and the line east from the Mississippi River—created political difficulties well into the nineteenth century for Tennessee and Kentucky before they were finally resolved.

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61 Ibid., 136.

Smith rejoined Clark on 12 May. They left the next day for Kaskaskia, a French settlement in the Illinois country, taken from the British by Clark in 1778. There is an eighteen-day gap in Smith's journal from the arrival at Kaskaskia until the return to Camp Jefferson. It is again unclear whether Walker accompanied Smith on this journey, although it seems likely that he did. Upon the return to Camp Jefferson the party learned that Native Americans had attacked, murdering three settlers near the town, and that provisions were low. Had Walker been at Camp Jefferson under these circumstances Smith would probably have said so; Walker was certainly not one to be left behind when new lands lay ahead. A week after returning to Camp Jefferson on 5 June, Clark left by land for the Falls, and two days later Smith and Walker left by boat, arriving at the Falls on 4 July. There they reclaimed their horses and left for their eastward trip home, a journey of nearly three weeks. When Smith and Walker arrived at their homes on 25 July, they had been gone two weeks short of a full year.[62]

WALKER AND THE WEST

To discuss Thomas Walker and the West, defined as the lands beyond the Mississippi River, seems at once both unrealistic and redundant. Unrealistic because Walker never crossed that great river and redundant because to define his impact on later explorations requires a summary of his earlier travels.

Just where "the West" is depends on where one is standing and how far in that direction one has traveled. For Thomas Walker "the West" was in different places at different stages of his life. His life truly represented the "Three Virginia Frontiers."[63] When he was a youth in the Tidewater, it was the western part of central Virginia. Later when he was a young physician and merchant in Fredericksburg, it was in what is now Albemarle County. When he was in Albemarle County, it was first southwest Virginia, then the

62 Ibid.

63 Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Three Virginia Frontiers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1940).

lands beyond the Cumberland Gap. His ultimate vision was directed to the lands he viewed from the mouth of the Ohio River, from Camp Jefferson and from Kaskaskia, that lay across the Mississippi River and beyond.

Thomas Walker's broad vision was established before the French and Indian War. In a letter to an uncle in England in 1756, Walker's neighbor and friend Reverend James Maury of Fredericksville Parish in Louisa County indicated that perhaps as early as 1753 there was a definitive plan for Walker to lead an exploration in search of the Missouri River and determine if it connected to the Pacific Ocean.[64] In the three years since Walker's journey into Kentucky for the Loyal Company of Virginia, Christopher Gist had extended the exploration for the Ohio Company as far as the Falls of the Ohio. There were speculative geographic publications about the possible waterways to the Pacific Ocean, and there were maps to study.[65] At least some of the publications, if not all, would have been available to Maury and his neighbors. The next step west was obvious—leap the Mississippi River and find the path to the Pacific Ocean not only to open new lands to settlement but also to capture world commerce for the North American colonies, geographically situated as they were between Europe and the Far East. This would have been Thomas Walker's next adventure.

The French and Indian War, however, delayed that possibility and turned Walker's attention toward Pennsylvania and the keystone to the West at the juncture of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. This area protected Virginia's western frontier along the mountains just west of Virginia's Piedmont. After the end of that conflict, Walker was involved in treaty negotiations with Native Americans.

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64 Bernard DeVoto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 414-15.

65 Donald Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson & the Stony Mountains: Exploring the West from Monticello* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993; first published in 1981), 5-12.

Then came the Revolutionary War, but it did not halt the westward thrust.[66] Realizing the importance of the lands above and below the Ohio River, the colonies—soon to be states—made efforts to secure those areas while still fighting Great Britain in the east. This was the situation when Thomas Walker and Daniel Smith set out to complete the Virginia-North Carolina boundary line. Governor Thomas Jefferson's continental concept added the journey to the Falls of the Ohio and on to the Mississippi River. In this journey Walker at last reached the Mississippi River. If he did accompany Smith to Kaskaskia, just below what on the opposite shore would one day be St. Louis, Missouri, later known as the "Gateway to the West," Walker would have been near the mouth of the Missouri River which was to be so significant for the Lewis and Clark expedition. One wonders if they could have been given additional, unrecorded instructions by Jefferson to proceed farther up the Mississippi to St. Louis, under Spanish control at that time, and the mouth of the Missouri River, to reconnoiter the area.

When Thomas Jefferson became president in 1801, he brought with him a strong base of knowledge, awareness, and vision of a continental nation. He gave due credit to the classical schooling he received under the Reverend Maury and continued his respect for Walker. He made Meriwether Lewis his private secretary. He had remained in close communication with George Rogers Clark over the years. When Jefferson initiated negotiations to buy New Orleans in 1803, his ultimate idea was much larger; he knew that the new nation must acquire all of Louisiana. The subsequent Louisiana Purchase came sooner than expected, but the Lewis and Clark expedition that followed had been in his mind for years, and he had made several unsuccessful attempts earlier to gain support for the exploration. When, at last, in 1803, he did gain congressional support for his goal, Thomas Jefferson, in a very real sense, realized the dream of Dr.

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66 Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937).

Thomas Walker. The acorn of westward movement planted in Albemarle County by Walker grew into the oak of Jefferson, nurtured along the way by the unique combination of adventuresome neighbors and friends shared by both.[67]

CONCLUSION

This essay has traced the travels of Dr. Thomas Walker from his origins in Tidewater Virginia to the Mississippi River and from New York in the north to the Carolinas in the south. The legacy of Walker shows a keen intellect, an inquiring and adventuresome spirit, a concern for human beings and animals through both medicine and civic responsibility, a love of the land and of family. These characteristics reflect the best of the American dream.[68] But most important, Walker pointed the way West and left his imprint on the future expansion of the new nation he loved and helped forge.

The impetus for Thomas Walker's extensive travels can be divided into two major categories: land and politics. His interests in land included exploration, investments, and surveying. His political interests included public office, military service, and Native-American negotiations. The common threads throughout all his travels are his westward vision and his entrepreneurial spirit, both of which continue to manifest themselves in the American ideal.

Nearly one hundred years after Thomas Walker's death in 1794, his great-grandson, William Cabell Rives, wrote an appropriate conclusion to this narrative:

> In this home, the birthplace of his twelve children, the old pioneer, near the end of his eightieth year, on the 9th of November, 1794, closed his eyes on earthly scenes. He lies in the midst of a neighboring grove, to which the purple redbud and the white dogwood lend in succession the beauty of their vernal bloom, and where the secular oak, the tall tulip tree, and the fragrant wild grape

67 Jackson, *Thomas Jefferson*, xvii.

68 Thomas Perkins Abernethy, "Comments on Virginia's Contribution to American Civilization," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 53 (April 1945): 83-88.

make a bower for the birds which in spring and summer time ceaselessly carol his requiem.[69]

A Thomas Walker Chronology

1715 Born 25 January
1738 Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson petition House of Burgesses to produce a new map of Virginia
1741 Married Mildred Thornton Meriwether
1742 Mary Walker born 24 July
1744 John Walker born 13 February; Albemarle County formed
1748 Susan Walker born 14 December; explored southwestern Virginia
1749 Thomas Walker, Jr., born 17 March; may have spent much time at Wolf Hills from this year until 1754; formed Loyal Company of Virginia
1750 Explored Kentucky, leaving 6 March and returning 13 July; Fry and Jefferson commissioned to prepare new map
1751 Lucy Walker born 5 May; Fry and Jefferson map completed
1752 Member House of Burgesses almost continuously until 1759, from Louisa County 1752-55 and elected by both Hampshire and Louisa counties, choosing Hampshire 1758; commissioned deputy surveyor of Augusta County
1753 Elizabeth Walker born 1 August; has possible plans for an expedition to find the route to the Pacific
1754 Business operations recorded in Louisa County; Fry and Jefferson map first published in London
1755 Appointed commissary general to Virginia troops serving under Washington with rank of major; in Philadelphia in March; Mildred Walker born 5 June; at Winchester 22 September, Fort Cumberland 17 October, Winchester 26 November and 4 December and at Fort Cumberland 7 and

69 Dr. Thomas Walker, *Journal*, 27.

26 December; present at defeat of Braddock at Fort Duquesne

1756 Again in House of Burgesses for Hampshire until 1761; in Williamsburg 14 April; in Winchester 30 June

1757 Becomes one of Thomas Jefferson's guardians

1758 Sarah Walker born 28 March; in Fort Loudoun (Winchester) 1 and 24 July; in Winchester 14 August

1759 Charges brought in House of Burgesses by Thomas Johnson of Louisa County that commissary accounts were irregular

1760 Martha Walker born 2 May; in Williamsburg 11 April

1761 Representative for Albemarle County in House of Burgesses continuously until 1771; in Williamsburg 11 April; at home on way to Fort Chiswell 15 April; left home for Philadelphia 25 May; business concluded in Philadelphia 19 June and left for Fort Chiswell; in Fort Chiswell 4 July

1762 Reuben Walker born 8 October

1763 Appointed commissioner to sell lots in Charlottesville

1764 Francis Walker born 22 June

1765 Built Castle Hill; supported resolution against the Stamp Act

1767 Peachy Walker born 6 February

1768 John Stuart negotiated treaty with Cherokee at Hard Labor, South Carolina, 13 October, three weeks before treaty at Fort Stanwix; represented Virginia at negotiations leading to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix along with Andrew Lewis; began journey 16 July, arrived Johnson Hall 27 August, left for Fort Stanwix 14 September, arrived Fort Stanwix 17 September; waited for Native Americans until 12 October; treaty completed 5 November; in Williamsburg 14 December; instructed by Governor Berkeley on 20 December to proceed to South Carolina to confer with Stuart about errors in the Treaty of Hard Labor relative to land owned by Six Nations

1769 Signed non-importation agreement; negotiated with Cherokee along with Andrew Lewis; visited Governor Tryon of North Carolina at Brunswick 5 January and visited Fort Johnson

at the mouth of the Cape Fear River 6 January on way to Charleston, South Carolina; sailed with two Cherokee chiefs on 9 January and met Stuart in Charleston on 11 January; met with Native-American chiefs 13 and 16 January; Stuart wrote Governor Berkeley 19 January that he had met with Walker and Lewis; final report by Walker and Lewis received 2 February by Governor Berkeley; treaty signed 18 October 1770

1774 Appointed Indian commissioner with John Harvie after battle of Point Pleasant, 10 October, where Lewis defeated Shawnee Chief Cornstalk

1775 Named to commission to negotiate with the Ohio (Western) at Pittsburgh; in Pittsburgh 12 September to 21 October; represented Albemarle County in Virginia Assembly; member of Revolutionary Convention; member of State Committee of Public Safety and served until 1776

1776 Appointed member of Privy Council of Virginia and served until 1778; headed Virginia Commission to extend North Carolina-Virginia boundary with Daniel Smith 11 October

1777 Gave deposition in Williamsburg 15 March; member of Council of State

1778 First wife died; in Williamsburg 9 July

1779 In Fort Chiswell 11 August; ran North Carolina-Virginia line

1780 At Cumberland River 25 February; at French Lick on Cumberland River (Nashville, Tennessee) 9 March

1781 Married Elizabeth Thornton 14 January; declined reappointment to Council of Virginia

1782 Represented Albemarle County in House of Delegates

1783 Thomas Jefferson unsuccessfully promotes exploration to find a route to the Pacific by George Rogers Clark

1787 Thomas Jefferson unsuccessfully promotes exploration to find a route to the Pacific by John Ledyard

1793 Thomas Jefferson unsuccessfully promotes exploration to find a route to the Pacific by Andre Michaux

1794 Died 9 November