Thomas Walker

Thomas Walker (January 25, 1715-November 9, 1794) was born in King and Queen County, Virginia. He was a physician, explorer, land speculator, farmer, merchant, legislator, and friend of famous Virginians. His skill as a physician and surgeon was widely recognized. Walker was an investor, agent, and surveyor for the Loyal Company of Virginia. In 1748, he explored Virginia's New River Valley on a journey that took him on to the Holston River in present Tennessee. In 1750, Walker led the first recorded expedition into Kentucky and named the Cumberland Gap and Cumberland River. His return route through present southern West Virginia crossed the headwaters of the Tug Fork, traversed the confluence of the New and Greenbrier rivers at present Hinton, and ascended most of the Greenbrier.

In an active career of government service, Walker served in the House of Burgesses, (1752, 1756–61, and 1775–76) and the House of Delegates (1782) variously representing Albemarle, Louisa, and Hampshire counties. He served as commissary general for troops at more than 80 forts on Virginia's western frontier during the French and Indian War, 1754–53. He was with Braddock and Washington at Braddock's defeat in 1755. Walker negotiated various Indian treaties, including the Treaty of Hard Labor and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Appointed commissioner of Indian affairs after the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, he presided over treaty negotiations representing both Virginia and the Continental Congress.

Walker was a member of the Revolutionary Conventions of 1774–75, the Committee of Safety, and the Virginia Executive Council. In 1780, Walker surveyed the extension of the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina. He died at his long-time home in Albemarle County, Virginia.

Written by Harold Malcolm Forbes

Sources


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Answer the following:

1. Other than an explorer, what was Thomas Walker known as?
2. What land company did Walker work for?
3. On his expedition into Kentucky, what did Walker name?
4. What rivers did he follow in what is now West Virginia?
5. Walker represented Hampshire County as what elected official?
6. He helped negotiate what two treaties with the Indians?