

The Explorers of Cumberland Gap



The Trails were traveled by Indians long before the Europeans came to America. General Abraham Wood of Petersburg, Virginia crossed through Cumberland Gap after 1670.

And Thomas Walker named the river in 1750 and land was claimed by his party for settlement but were chased out of the area by Native Americans. Joseph Martin had built a fort but did not return until later. Daniel Boone was hired by the Transylvania Company in 1775 to lead a company of men to widen the path through the gap.

When he did, he discovered that Martin was already in the Powell Valley where he and his men were clearing land for settlement.

The trail which Boone and his men built was widened during the 1790s to accommodate wagon traffic. This trail was called " Wilderness Road." It is estimated that between 200,000 and 300,000 migrants passed through the gap en route to Kentucky and the Ohio Valley before 1810.