

Dr. Thomas Walker had a dream. He wanted to find rich farmland on the far side of the Cumberland Mountains. But first he had to cross them.

Somewhere, he knew, there was a pass. An old Indian trail led to it. But no one had ever made a map of trail or pass.

In 1750 the doctor and four other men set out. They walked for weeks until they found the Indian trail. It soon took them to the pass itself.

They camped there that night. The doctor took time out to map their path. He didn't draw it for himself, but for hundreds of other people. In his mind's eye he saw them moving through the pass. He saw them making homes in the great West.

The men went on. A few days later they found the first good land. There wasn't much, but it was nice and flat.

"We'll build a cabin here," said the doctor.

"Why?" asked another man. "We aren't going to stay here."

"*We're* not," said the doctor, "but others will use it." Again he was seeing those hundreds of people.

"Three of you stay here and build the cabin," said the doctor. "One will go with me to find more land."

In three days the cabin was built. Next, the men planted corn that Dr. Walker had brought with him. (Fields of corn would feed those hundreds of people.)

Dr. Walker still had not returned. So they spent a day hunting bear. The hunt was a good one. But now how would they keep the meat?

They remembered a salt lick they had seen. Why not go get salt to pack the meat in? They left Dr. Walker a note.

They did not return for several days, but they found the cabin still empty.

On the next day, the doctor appeared.

"What did you find? How far does the good land reach?" the men asked.

Dr. Walker shook his head. "What did I find?" he said sadly. "Miles of mountains. Land full of stones. A man would break his back trying to farm it."

Dr. Walker's dream was dead. But his trip was not wasted. In years to come, hundreds of people *did* go through the pass—guided by his map. And farther west they found fine land.

The little cabin finally rotted away. But it was the first house in what would one day be Kentucky. Years later, men built another cabin on the same spot. There, in Dr. Thomas Walker State Park, it stands today.

## CHECK YOUR READING

1. Dr. Walker's dream was about
  - A climbing mountains
  - B finding farmland
  - C mining gold
  
2. To cross the Cumberlands, the first thing he had to find was
  - A an Indian trail
  - B a mountain pass
  - C a wide river
  
3. The cabin that the doctor wanted built was mainly for the use of
  - A himself
  - B the men with him
  - C people who came later
  
4. While the cabin was being built, Dr. Walker
  - A went hunting
  - B planted corn
  - C searched ahead
  
5. The men needed salt for
  - A keeping meat fresh
  - B growing good corn
  - C catching wild birds
  
6. When Dr. Walker returned to the cabin, he was
  - A sad
  - B worried
  - C angry
  
7. The land Dr. Walker saw was no good for farming because it was too
  - A rocky
  - B flat
  - C dry
  
8. The main way in which Dr. Walker helped the people who came later was by
  - A mapping the pass
  - B making the trail
  - C building the cabin
  
9. Dr. Walker's cabin was the first house built in
  - A Ohio
  - B Missouri
  - C Kentucky
  
10. Today, the land where that cabin was first built is
  - A a desert
  - B an apple orchard
  - C a state park