

Summary: Tennessee Settlements

Pioneers Cross the Appalachians

The first British colonists lived between the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian Mountains. A British law said they could not move west of the mountains onto American Indian lands. However, the land where they could settle soon grew crowded with farms and towns.

Daniel Boone found an American Indian trail through an opening in the mountains. Later he helped build a road along this trail called the Wilderness Road. Thousands of settlers were able to use the Wilderness Road to cross the Appalachians.

After crossing the mountains, settlers could travel even farther west on rivers. They both fought with and borrowed ideas and customs from the American Indians that lived west of their frontier.

Moving to Tennessee

It was against the law to settle in Tennessee. However, many people moved there anyway. Some came to trade with the Cherokee for animal skins and furs. Others came so that they would be free to follow the religion of their choice. Some came to get away from the laws of the other colonies. Others came for adventure or to get cheap land.

The people in the Watauga settlement wrote a plan to govern themselves called the Watauga Association. It was the first colonial government in what later became Tennessee. This government helped them decide who was right when people disagreed. It also worked to keep them safe from American Indian attacks.

Settlers and the Cherokee

The Cherokee leaders Attakullakulla and Oconostota signed a treaty that let the settlers stay on the land for 10 years if they gave the Cherokee trade goods. Later, the Cherokee agreed to a second treaty, the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals, and sold some of their land for more trade goods. Attakullakulla's son, Dragging Canoe, refused to follow this treaty and led other Cherokee in attacks against the Tennessee settlers. He believed that the treaty was a bad idea because the settlers would always want more land.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

wilderness *noun*, a wild area where few people live and the plants and animals are still in their natural state

frontier *noun*, the edge of a country or a settled area



After You Read

REVIEW How did Daniel Boone help people settle land west of the Appalachian Mountains?

Draw a box around the sentence that tells how people used the road Daniel Boone built to travel across the Appalachian Mountains and settle the land to the west.

REVIEW Why is the Watauga Association important to the history of Tennessee? Highlight the two sentences that tell what the Watauga Association was and why it was so important.

REVIEW Why was Dragging Canoe against the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals? Circle the sentence that tells why Dragging Canoe did not think this treaty was a good idea.