

Searching for Ancestors:  
Focus on Kentucky Genealogy  
Section V

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*Searching for ancestors  
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SECTION V

KENTUCKY COUNTIES: LOCATION AND TIME

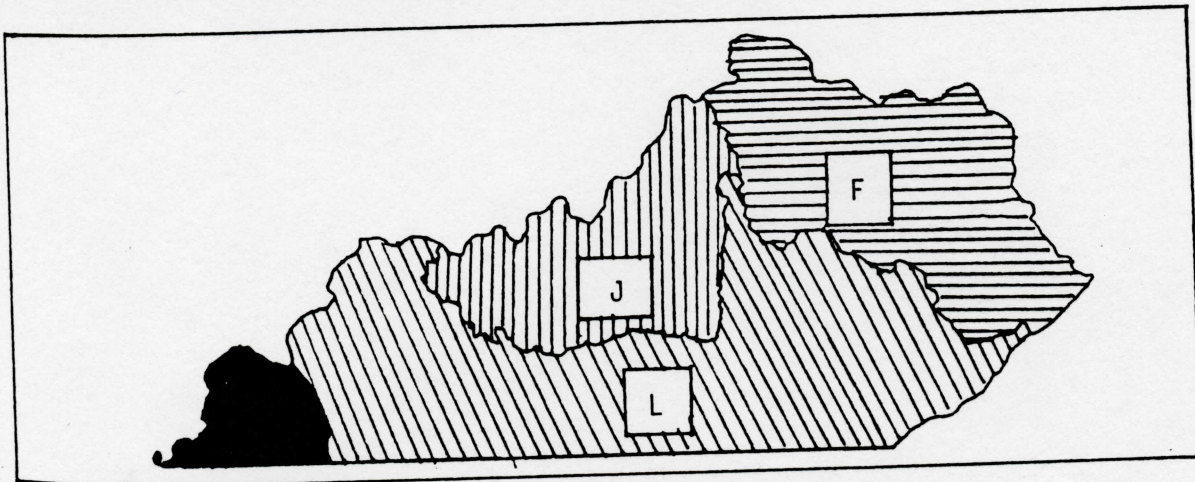
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Before any white man had explored the entire Kentucky area, it was claimed by Virginia as part of Augusta County. Augusta County had been formed from Orange County in 1738.

The settling of Kentucky took place from the mid-1700s to the early years of the 1800s. The eastern section of the area was explored by Thomas Walker as early as 1750. In 1775 the Transylvania Company was organized under the leadership of Col. Richard Henderson of North Carolina. Col. Henderson purchased from the Indians almost half of what is now the Commonwealth of Kentucky--all of the land between the Kentucky River, in the central part of the Commonwealth, and the Cumberland River, in the extreme western part.

Daniel Boone moved his family to central Kentucky from the Yadkin River in Rowan County, North Carolina, in the 1770s. He had previously explored the Kentucky area.

Previous to these explorations all of Kentucky had been made a part of Fincastle County, Virginia. In December of 1776, Kentucky was designated as Kentucky County, Virginia. In 1780, Kentucky County, Virginia, was divided into three counties: Fayette, Jefferson, and Lincoln.



By 1790 these three counties had been subdivided into nine counties: Bourbon, Fayette, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Mason, Mercer, Nelson, and Woodford.

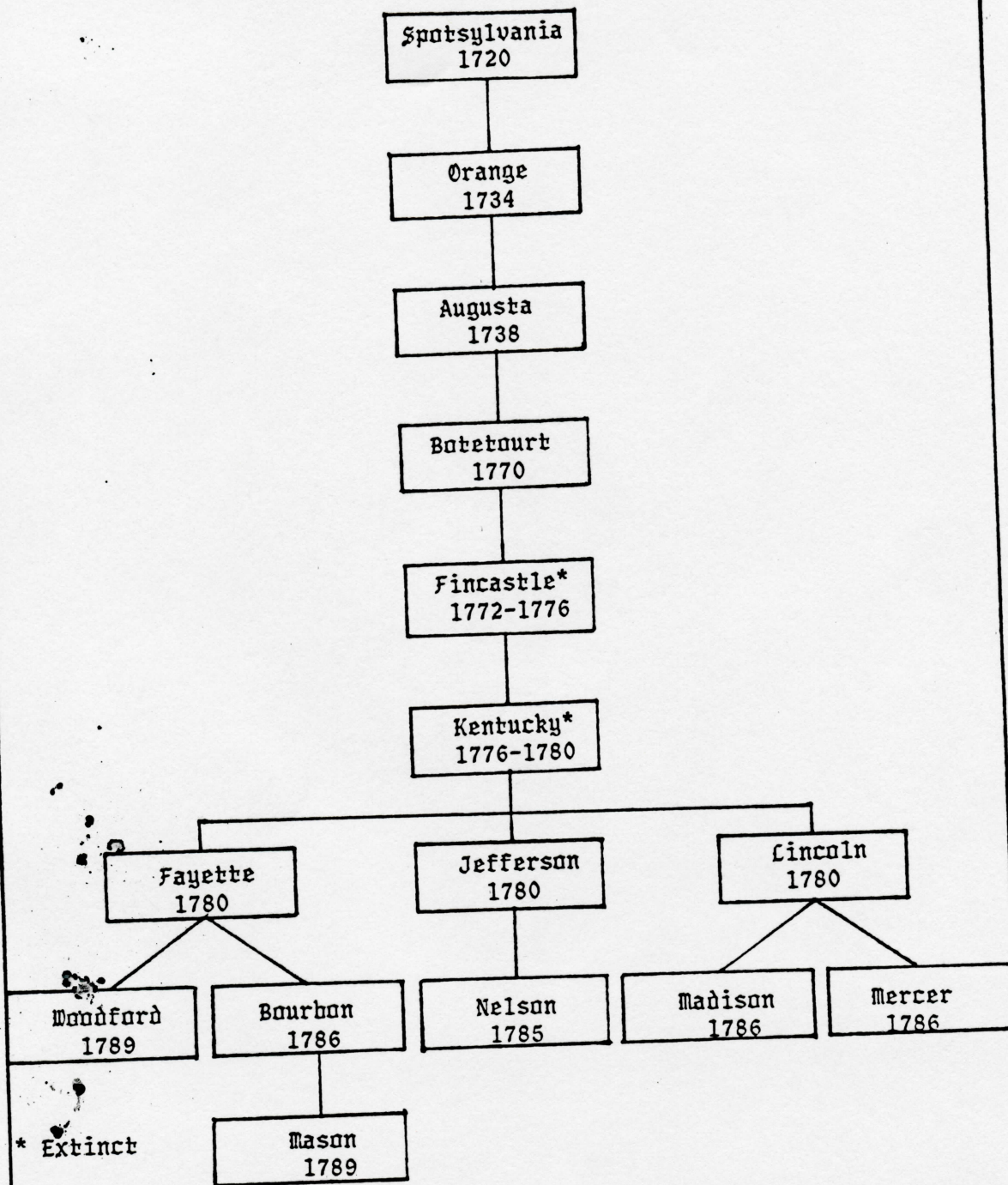
By 1912 these nine counties had been further subdivided into the present 120 counties. (See map on following page.)



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VIRGINIA ORIGINS OF THE COUNTIES  
OF  
KENTUCKY (1720-1790)



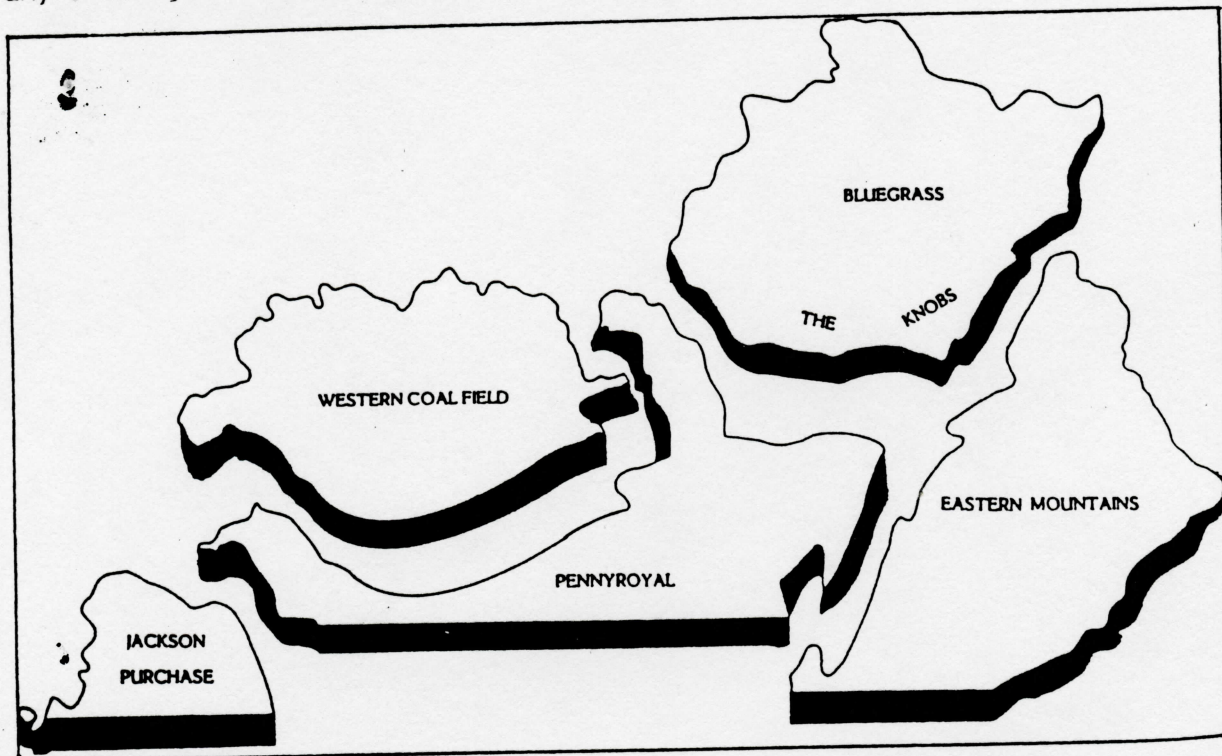
Kentucky Counties at the Advent of Statehood on 1 June 1792



## Geographic Regions

Since genealogy is a study of man and his progeny, it is of necessity tied to geography and time periods. The genealogy of early Kentucky pioneer families is closely tied to Kentucky's relative location to many of the original thirteen colonies, the five unique geographic regions of the state, the streams and watersheds, early Indian and explorer trails, and migration routes.

In each of the distinctly different regions are to be found family names peculiar to the region. In the first half of the 19th century, families by the name of Renaker were concentrated in Harrison and Grant Counties. Ammerman families were concentrated in Bourbon, Harrison, and Pendleton Counties. Allnutts and Lusby's were located in Fayette and Owen Counties. Browns, Joneses, Johnsons, Scotts, and Taylors were found in all the regions and none of these later mentioned surnames were associated with any one region exclusively.



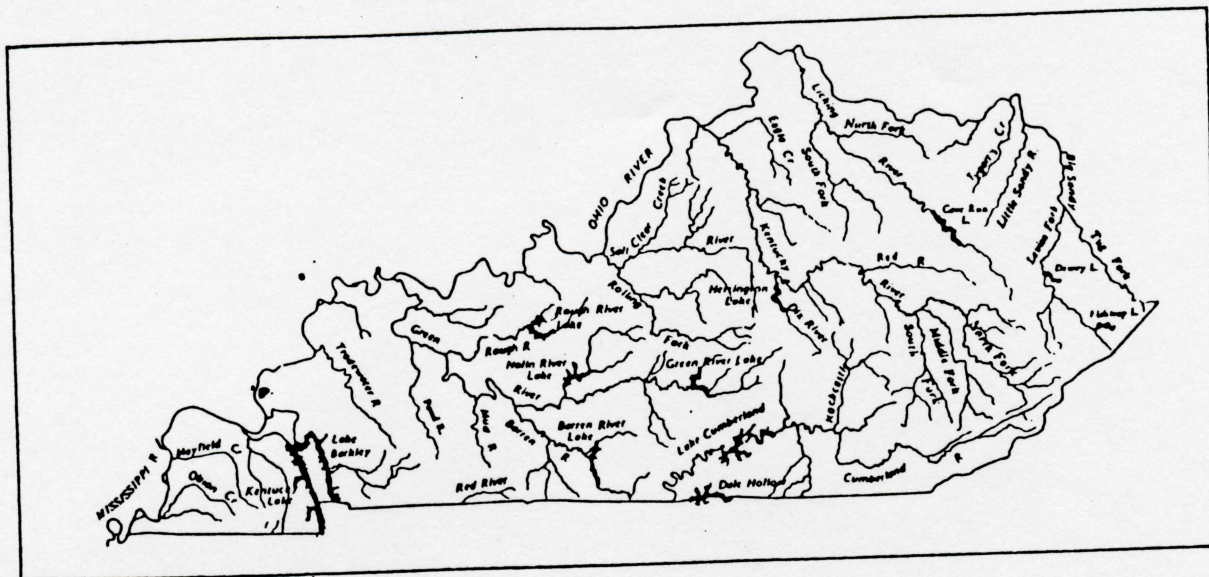
## Streams and Water Sheds

Kentucky land was surveyed in indiscriminate metes and bounds east of the Tennessee River and in townships and ranges west of it. Land warrants were issued between 1816 and 1873 for lands purchased from the state east of the Tennessee River. Land grants were made from 1822 to 1858 for land west of the Tennessee River.

Land grants south of the Green River were made between 1797 and 1866. County court orders between 1836 and 1924 abound with warrants sold by each county court east of the Tennessee River for any vacant lands within its bounds.

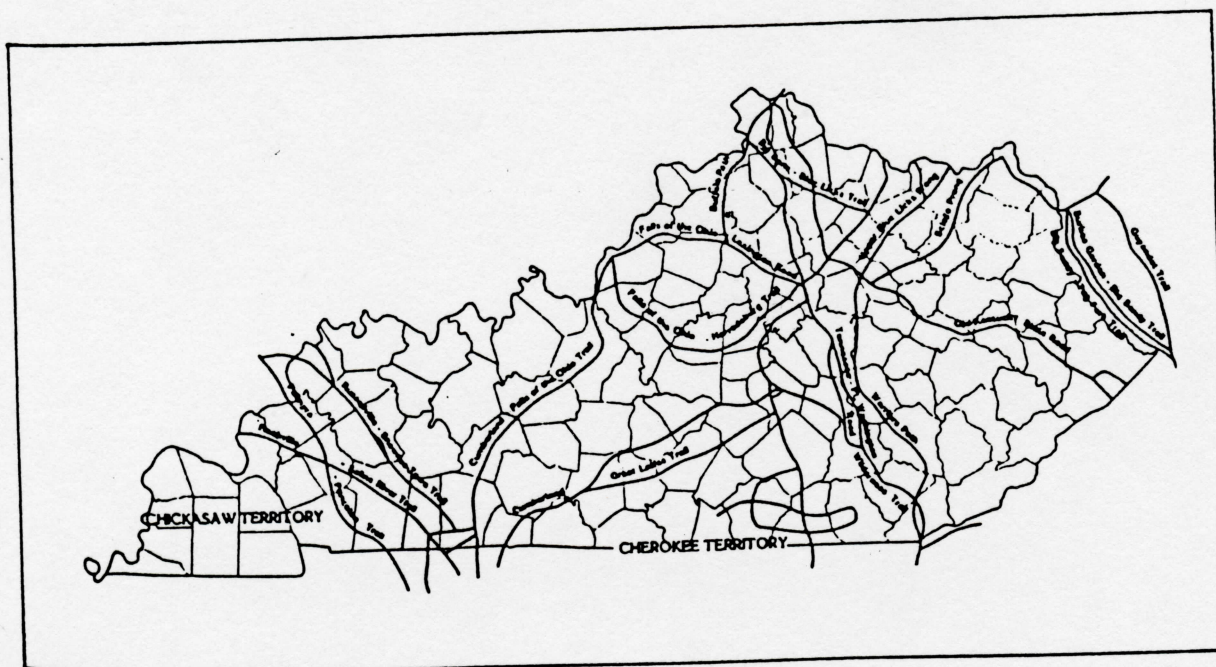


When the Jacob Lemmon and allied families migrated to Kentucky in 1795 from Maryland, they came down the Ohio River by flatboat from Pittsburg, having crossed over the mountains of western Maryland. They settled in Harrison County on the "waters of Twin Creek," a part of the South Licking River water shed.

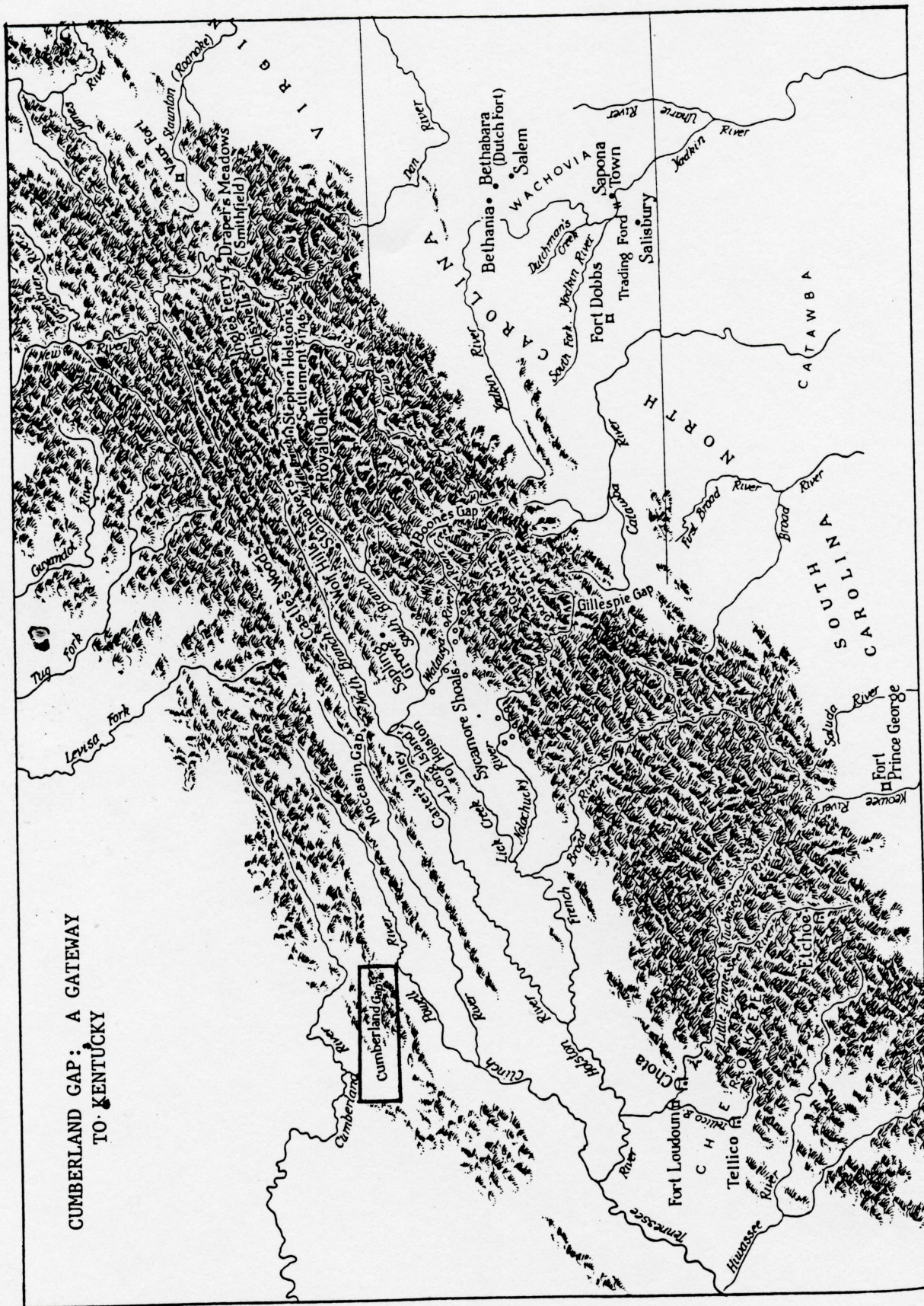


### Early Indian and Explorer Trails

By 1794, Kentucky had been criss-crossed by Indians and explorers, leaving distinct trails many of which have become major highways and roads.

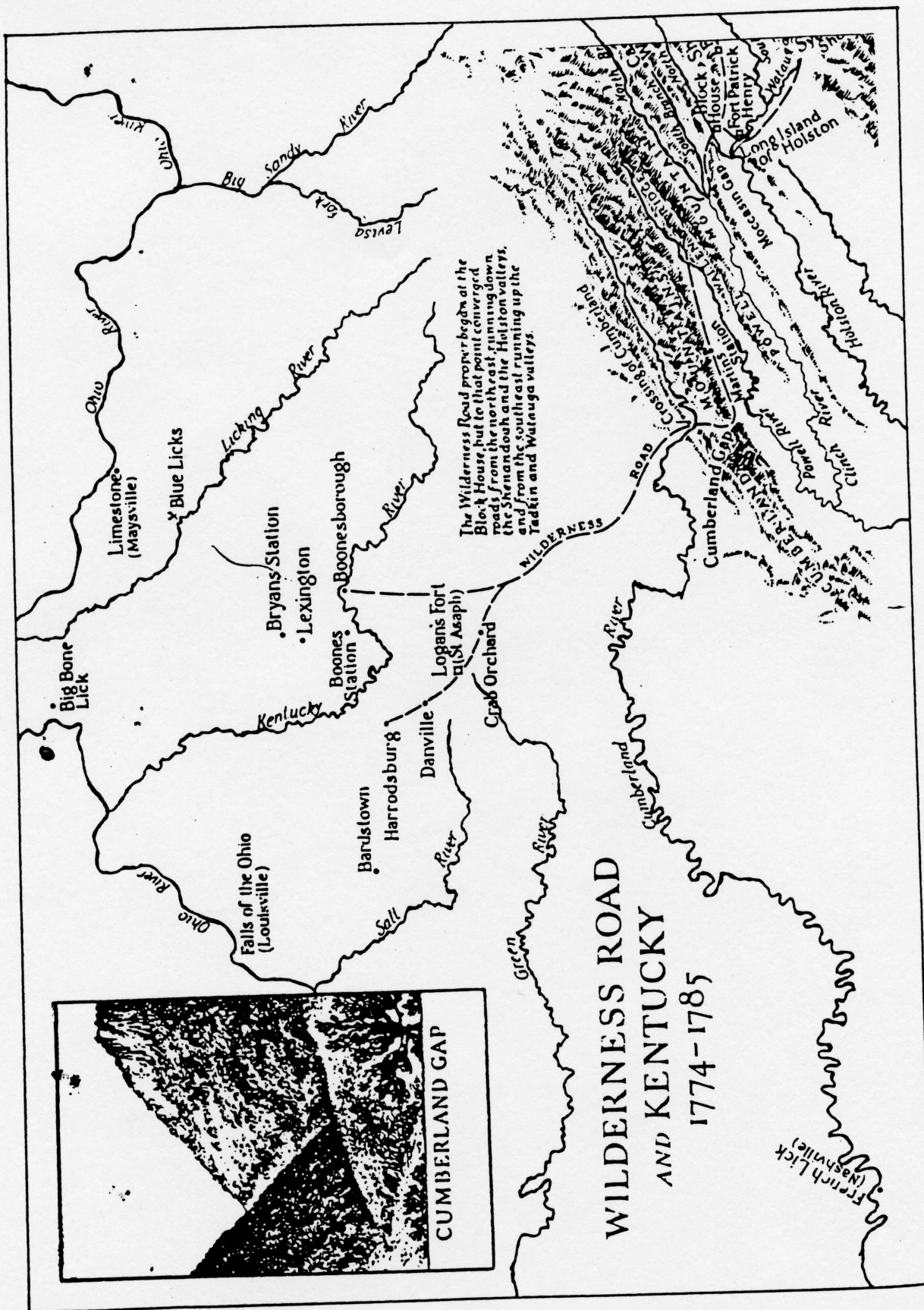






CUMBERLAND GAP: A GATEWAY  
TO KENTUCKY







## Wilderness Road

At the end of the Revolutionary war, restrictions which had been placed on westward expansion by England were lifted. Virginia rewarded her Revolutionary war soldiers with grants of land in Kentucky. Daniel Boone had explored Kentucky and made a concerted effort to encourage settlers to move westward. The mountains of eastern Kentucky and Tennessee (then a part of North Carolina) were a formidable barrier to the Westward Movement. The Wilderness Road was at best a rough horse trail into the heart of Kentucky from the mid-1770s to the mid-1790s over which thousands of settlers traveled. The Wilderness Road passed through Cumberland Gap at the juncture of the Kentucky-Tennessee-Virginia boundaries.

## Migration Routes

Kentucky felt the effects of all national and ethnic groups that settled in the South. The mainstream of migration did not enter its borders until after 1780. Kentucky particularly felt the influx of settlers shortly after Daniel Boone came through the Cumberland Gap and explored the region in 1769-1772. The earliest settlers were mostly from Virginia and North Carolina.

Our Kentucky ancestors tended to migrate across its borders in rational patterns, following the best routes available to them. Many tried to settle near former neighbors; many had land fever; and many had plain wander lust.

It should be noted also that Kentucky was settled from the Ohio region particularly after 1794 when the Indians ceased to be a serious menace. The earliest settlers from the Ohio were primarily from Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The 1850 census was the first to indicate where every member of a family was born. An examination of the census for any county will show patterns of original migration for those not born in Kentucky. (See "Patterns of Migration to and from Kentucky compiled from the 1850 Federal Census" on Page 73.)

## Kentucky's Relative Location

The map on Page 77 shows the relative location of Kentucky and her 120 counties to the eastern half of the United States from which its early immigrants came. It also shows Kentucky's relative location to states and early territories west of the Mississippi River. As has already been pointed out, Kentucky became a funnel state for receiving and dispersing migrating families. Perhaps no other state east of the Mississippi was the recipient of migrating groups from so many other states. Likewise, migrating families went from Kentucky to many states and territories. (See map on Page 49.)