
JOHANN LEDERER'S
BOOK OF TRAVELS

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NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA
AND GEORGIA

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THE first attempt of a scientific exploration and description of the Eastern slope of the Appalachian (Alleghany) Mountains, and all the territory lying between tide-water and the Alleghanies in general, from Maryland to Florida, was made

in the years 1669 and 1670 by Johannes Lederer, a German, under the auspices of Sir William Berkley, Governor of Virginia. It was done with the expectation to discover an easy and short route to India, which was then generally supposed to be but a short distance. Johannes Lederer, a native of Germany and a scholar, arrived in 1668 at Jamestown, Va. He said he was a son of the Alps, and had come to America to explore the country. He could speak German, French and Italian fluently, was a master of the ancient languages, but spoke English imperfectly. Gov. Berkely engaged him and fitted out an expedition under his leadership to discover a pass through the mountains to India. Lederer made within two years three expeditions to the mountains and extended his explorations as far South as Florida, but he did not discover a pass through the mountains, nor did he ever cross them.

In his third expedition his escort deserted him and returned to the Virginia colony, and he continued his journey until he reached the Mickasukee lake in Florida near the Spanish possessions, when being afraid that he might be suspected by the Spaniards of being a spy and sold by them into slavery to work in their mines, he returned to Virginia.

His escort who had abandoned him, had in the mean time spread evil reports about him, and aroused prejudice against him on account of the expenses incurred by the expeditions, which had to be borne by the colony. Lederer was threatened, and

being afraid of his life, escaped to the colony of Maryland and found a refuge with Lord William Talbot, the Governor of the Province. Gov. Talbot after careful investigation of the rumors against Lederer came to the conclusion, that they were unfounded. He describes Lederer as a modest, intelligent person of much learning, who had been wronged a great deal, and says his prejudice against him gave way to admiration. He became Lederer's friend and protector, conversed often with him, and translated the written description of the journeys by Lederer from the Latin into English and in the year 1672 caused the same to be published in the city of London under the following title:

"The Discoveries of John Lederer in throe several marches from Virginia to the West of Carolina and other parts of the Continent. Begun in March 1669 and ended in September 1670. Together with a general map of the whole Territory which he traversed. Collected and translated out of Latin from his Discourses and Writings. By Sir William Talbot, Baronet. London, printed by J. C. for Samuel Heyrick at Gray's Inn Gate in Holborn 1672."

It is dedicated by Sic Wm. Talbot to the Highly Hon. Anthony Lord Ashley, Chancellor of the Exchequer, &c. In this dedication Talbot expresses his belief that the long hoped for discovery of the Indian Ocean is near at hand, and that Virginia is only separated from it by the Appalachian mountain ranges. Which is rather a strange conclusion from the text of the book, where Lederer expressly says:

"Those who believe that the Indian Ocean is but eight or ten day's journey from the Atlantic Ocean are very much mistaken, from what I learned from strange Indians in Akenatzy who came from a far distant Northwestern country."

His book, which contains but 27 pages, is most interesting in the account it gives of the customs, manners, government and religion of the Indians. The Indians in the town of Akenatzy, which was situated on an island in the river Schawan formerly Rorenock (Roanoke ?), raised Indian corn on well-cultivated fields, and had at all times as much as twelve months corn in storage. They had every thing, with the exception of their wives, in strict

communism. A chief for civil and a chief for military affairs. Some Indians lived under a monarchial and others under despotic form of government.

Lederer's book is very rare, as far as known, there is but one copy of it in this country, which is on the shelves of the Congressional Library in Washington. W. H. Rattermann of Cincinnati copied it, and in 1876 translated it into German and published the translation in the "Pionier," a German periodical.



