

John Lederer, Adventurer



The Discoveries of John Lederer

In 1669 and 1670, John Lederer was known to have made three journeys into the interior of Virginia. These journeys took him up the York and James Rivers and the third he describes as "from the Falls of the Rappahannock River to the top of the Apalataen Mountains."

Although he obtained the consent of Sir William Berkeley before making his explorations, he seems to have incurred the ill-will of the Virginians themselves who were being attacked and thieved upon by local Indians. Governor Berkeley was well aware of the Indian difficulties, but refused to do anything about it. It was a climate of danger for European settlers and

Lederer being friendly to the natives may have sparked off a flame, as he was afterwards forced to flee into Maryland. Lederer met Sir William Talbot in Maryland, who sympathized with and befriended him and translated the story of his travels from the latin. It was published in London in 1672 with a "foreword" by Talbot in defense of Lederer. The account of Lederer concerning the Indians then inhabiting the western parts of Carolina and Virginia, he said:

"The Indians now seated in these parts are none of those which the English removed from Virginia, but a people driven by the Enemy from the northwest, and invited to sit down here by an Oracle above four hundred years since, as they pretend for the ancient inhabitants of Virginia were far more rude and barbarous,[9] feeding only upon raw flesh and fish, until they taught them to plant corn, and shewed them the use of it."

Lederer referred to the Piedmont region as "The Highlands" and wrote:

"These parts were formerly possessed by the Tacci, alias Dogi, but they are extinct and the Indians now seated here, are distinguished into the several nations of Mahoc, Nuntaneuck, alias Nuntaly, Nahyssan, Sapon, Managog, Mangoack, Akernatatzy and Monakin &c. One language is common to them all, though they differ in dialects. The parts inhabited here are pleasant and fruitful because cleared of wood and laid open to the Sun." The Tacci, alias Dogi Indians described by Lederer are suggested by Mooney may have been those participating in the Bacon rebellion in 1676, probably a branch of the Nanticoke. Source: Legends of Loudoun by Harrison (1938); The Discoveries of John Lederer. List of Traced Virginia Families on this website