

Lederer Expedition ^[1]

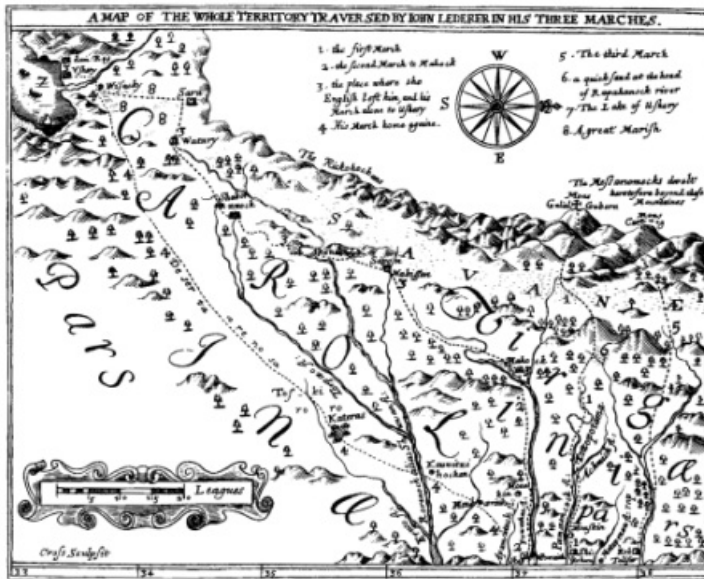
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Lederer Expedition

by Lindley S. Butler, 2006

See also: [Johann \(or John\) Lederer](#) ^[2]



"A map of the whole territory traversed by John Lederer in his three marches." Image courtesy of Research Laboratories of Archaeology , UNC.

^[3][John Lederer](#) ^[2]'s expedition of 20 May 1670 to 18 July 1670, the second of three journeys by the German explorer, was the first extensive exploration of the Carolina [Piedmont](#) ^[4] and provided the first description of the backcountry American Indian tribes. Virginia governor [Sir William Berkeley](#) ^[5], one of the [Lords Proprietors](#) ^[6] of Carolina, commissioned young Lederer, a recent arrival from Germany, to explore the South and West in preparation for opening the region to trade and future settlement. The Hamburg native, who had studied medicine, had a scientific interest in the area's natural resources and the [Native Americans](#) ^[7].

Leaving from the falls of the James River, Lederer returned to the Appomattox River in Virginia nearly 60 days later, claiming to have traveled hundreds of miles and seen fantastic sights, including strange native customs, a large inland sea, and a vast desert. Although his account was discredited in his own day, scholars have been divided over Lederer's credibility and the interpretation of his confusing record. A recent study based on geographic analysis has established a plausible route for Lederer through the North Carolina Piedmont. His description and map, though containing faulty information, provided the first topographic glimpse of the interior and appeared on the earliest maps of the Proprietary province of Carolina. Shortly after returning to Virginia, Lederer left for Maryland and later went to Connecticut. He returned to Germany in 1675.

References:

Alan V. Briceland, *Westward from Virginia: The Exploration of the Virginia-Carolina Frontier, 1650-1710* (1987).

William P. Cumming, ed., *The Discoveries of John Lederer* (1958).

Additional Resources:

The Discoveries of John Lederer, UNC: <http://rla.unc.edu/Archives/accounts/Lederer/LedererText.html> ^[3]

Image Credit:

"A map of the whole territory traversed by John Lederer in his three marches." Image courtesy of Research Laboratories of Archaeology, UNC. Available from <http://rla.unc.edu/Archives/accounts/Lederer/LedererText.html> ^[3] (accessed May 24, 2012).

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