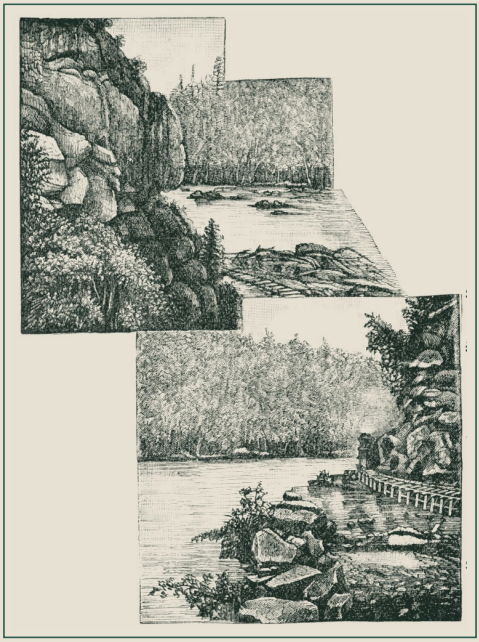
WAKING UP IN
BOONE

ANDRÉ MICHAUX

IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS

of the Carolinas
From his journal, 1794, 1795, and 1796



EARLY EXPLORERS · NO. 3

ANDRÉ MICHAUX

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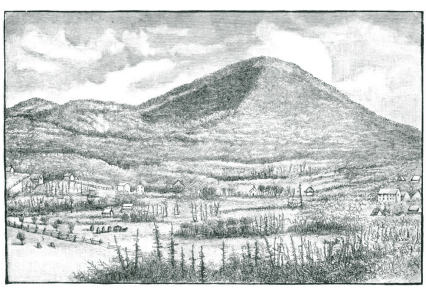
of the Carolinas

From his journal, 1794 to 1796
translated by Reuben Gold Thwaites, 1904,
and for this edition



WAKING UP IN BOONE
Boone, North Carolina

The entries for 1794 are translated for this edition from Michaux's French, as printed in "Portions of the Journal of André Michaux, Botanist, Written during His Travels in the United States and Canada, 1785 to 1796," edited by Charles Sprague Sargent, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 26 (1889).

The entries for 1795 and 1796 are from *Journal of André Michaux, 1793–1796*, translated by Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, volume 3 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1904). They are reprinted with Thwaites's spelling, capitals, and bracketed words.

The journal is abridged. Lists of plants and Latin descriptions are shortened, and each omission is marked […]. Spaced points without brackets are Michaux's own blanks. The section headings and the short notes under them are new.

Notes signed C. S. S. are Sargent's, and notes signed ED. are Thwaites's. Some of their notes are left out. Notes marked "Note to this edition" are new.

The engravings are from Wilbur G. Zeigler and Ben S. Grosscup, *The Heart of the Alleghanies; or, Western North Carolina* (Raleigh and Cleveland, 1883). Text and engravings are in the public domain in the United States.

Cover: *The French Broad Cañon*. Title page: *The Macon Highlands*.

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Started to go and herborise in the high Mountains of the Carolinas.

ANDRÉ MICHAUX
April 19, 1795

INTRODUCTION

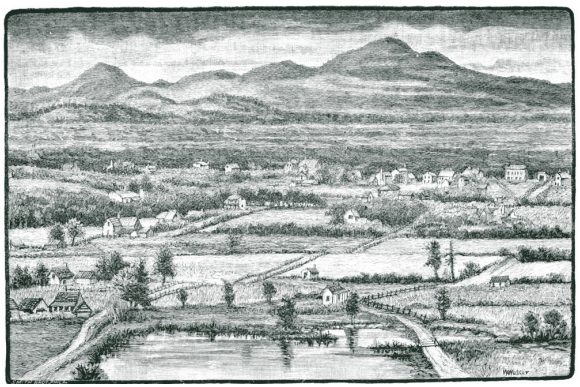
André Michaux was a botanist in the service of the king of France. In 1785 the French government sent him to the United States to collect trees and seeds that might be grown in France. He set up a nursery garden near Charleston, South Carolina, and over the next eleven years he traveled from Hudson Bay to Florida and west to the Mississippi. He came into the mountains of North Carolina on at least six trips.

This volume follows him on the last three. In the summer of 1794 he went from Morganton into the Linville Mountains and the Black Mountains, then to the Roan and the Yellow Mountain. On August 30 he reached the top of Grandfather Mountain, which he believed was the highest mountain in North America, and he and his guide sang the Marseillaise. France had become a republic two years before, and the man who had come to America as the king's botanist now wrote of the garden of the Republic. He was wrong about the mountain. Mount Mitchell, in the Black Mountains he had climbed earlier that month, is more than 700 feet higher.

His guide was Martin Davenport, a hunter who lived near the Toe River below the Roan. Michaux came back to Davenport's house in May 1795, on his way west to Tennessee and Kentucky, and again in March 1796, on his way home to Charleston. On the second visit he pulled up several hundred young shrubs to plant in his garden. In August 1796 he sailed for France. His ship was wrecked on the coast of Holland, and part of his collections was lost. He died in Madagascar in 1802, collecting plants.

The journal is a working record, not a story. Most entries give the date, the distance traveled, the house where Michaux slept, and the plants he saw. He wrote it in French. His son gave the manuscript to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and Charles Sprague Sargent printed it in 1889. Reuben Gold Thwaites published an English translation of the journal for 1793 to 1796 in 1904, but he left out the 1794 trip to the North Carolina mountains. The entries for that summer are translated here for this edition.

Michaux spelled names as he heard them. The Lineville is the Linville, Roun and Round Mountain are the Roan, and Hock-bill is Hawksbill. Davin Port and Davinport are Davenport. Burke Court House is Morganton, and Johnsborough is Jonesborough, Tennessee. Asa Gray, who followed part of Michaux's route in 1841, read this journal in manuscript and told the story of all three trips in his own account, Early Explorers No. 2.



Ochlawaha Valley, from Dun Cragin, 1883

FROM THE JOURNAL OF ANDRÉ MICHAUX

SUMMER 1794

Michaux left his garden near Charleston on July 14, 1794, and rode north through Camden, Charlotte, and Lincolnton. The entries below begin on July 26 at Morganton. They are translated from his French for this edition.

The 26th arrived at Morganton, formerly Burke Court House, 30 miles from Robertson's. […]

Sunday the 27th of July 1794, stayed over because of the rain and the creeks, torrents that could only be crossed by swimming.

The 28th stayed over.

The 29th set out and slept at John Rutherford's, near whose house crossed Muddy Creek on a bridge.

The 30th came back to the ordinary road that leads to Turkey Cove and arrived at the house of one Ainswort.

The 31st herborised on the Lineville, high mountains to the southeast of Ainswort's house, and on rocks and mountains bare of trees collected a small shrub, *Clethra buxifolia*?[1]

Friday the first of August herborised on mountains to the northeast, where the soil is very rich: *Veratrum viride*, *album*? *Convallaria majalis*, *Convallaria*? *umbellata*. Measured a Tulip tree 23 French feet in circumference.

[1] *Leiophyllum buxifolium*, var. *prostratum*, Gray? — C. S. S.

Saturday the 2nd, herborised on the mountains to the north: *Convallaria umbellata* […]; *Conv. racemosa*; *Conv. multiflora*; *Conv. majalis* […].

Sunday the 3rd of August 1794, herborised among the sedges and other water plants.

The 4th prepared for the journey to the Black Mountain.

The 5th put off for want of provisions.

The 6th set out and arrived at the place called Crab tree. Plants noted: *Azalea lutea*,[2] with very long styles; *Veratrum viride*, *album*.

The 7th herborised on the mountains around Crab tree: *Clethra montana*; *Cassine* . . . ; *Rhododendron maximum*; *Kalmia latifolia*; *Convallaria bifolia*; *Trillium cernuum* […]; *Magnolia auriculata*, *acuminata* […]; a shrub with the look of an Azalea; a *Vaccinium* […] with a pear-shaped scarlet berry;[3] two species of *Cypripedium calceolaria*; *Veratrum viride* on the hills, *album*; *Melanthium* . . . ; *Veratrum luteum* in the brooks; *Spiraea* (*paniculata*) *trifoliata*; *Robinia pseudo-acacia*, *viscosa*, *hispida*; *Monarda coccinea*, in the brooks; *fistulosa* […].

The 8th herborised: *Hamamelis* . . . *Nyssa* . . . *Halesia tetraptera* […].

The 9th continued my herborising: *Abies canadensis*, *Abies nigra*? […] *Pinus strobus*.

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[2] *Azalea calendulacea*, Michx. — C. S. S.

[3] *Vaccinium erythrocarpum*, Michx. The fruit of this species, however, when fully ripe is quite black and not scarlet as described here and in the Flora: a mistake which has been often copied by American botanists since the days of Michaux. — C. S. S.

Sunday the 10th of August 1794 arrived at the foot of the Black Mountain: *Podophyllum?*[4] […] with blue berries; *Vaccinium coccineum*; *Fagus castanea americana*, etc.

The 11th arrived on the . . . side of the Black Mountain. *Abies nigra*; *Diervilla*; *Acer pensylvanicum* […]; *Sorbus aucuparia*; *Rubus odoratus*; *Rhododendron maximum*, *Kalmia latifolia* […]; a grape with leaves woolly beneath and large berries (fox grapes, a fruit good to eat).[5]

The 12th came back from the mountain.

The 13th arrived at Mr. Ainsworth's house.

The 14th, thick fog, and the high mountains hard to get across; herborised in the valleys.

The 15th, rain.

The 16th traveled toward the Yellow Mountain and Roun Mountain,[6] and arrived on Towe River,[7] Bright Settlement. The principal inhabitants of this settlement are Davinport, Wiseman . . .

Herborised: *Azalea coccinea*, *lutea*, *flava*, *alba*, and *rosea*; all these varieties of the *Azalea nudiflora* are found in this territory. A *Vaccinium*, a cranberry, related to the *Oxycoccus*; *Pinus Strobus*, *Abies Canadensis*, etc., etc.; *Gaultheria procumbens*; *Epigaea repens*.

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[4] This is probably his *Diphylleia cymosa*. — C. S. S.
[5] *Vitis Labrusca*, L. — C. S. S.
[6] The now well known Roan Mountain. — C. S. S.
[7] Toe River. — C. S. S.
[8] Davinport. — C. S. S.

Sunday the 17th agreed with a hunter[8] to go up on the mountains.

The 18th herborised and described several plants [...], *Helianthus atrorubens*, *Rudbeckia*, etc., etc.

The 19th set out to go toward the high mountains.

The 20th herborised in the mountains: *Acer pensylvanicum*, *canadense*, etc.

The 21st of August 1794 arrived at the summit of Roun Mountain. Found in abundance a little shrub with leaves like box,[9] which I had earlier called *Ledum buxifolium*, but whose capsule has three cells and opens at the top [...]. *Potentilla tridentata*; *Sorbus aucuparia*; *Pinus abies balsamifera*, etc.[10]

The 22nd arrived at the summit of the Yellow Mountain.

The 23rd returned to Davinport's house.

Sunday the 24th of August 1794, put my collections in order.

The 25th, rain.

[9] *Leiophyllum buxifolium*, Ell. var. *prostratum*, Gray. One of the common and most characteristic plants found on the summit of the Roan. — C. S. S.

[10] *Abies Fraseri*, Lindley. At the time of Michaux's visit the cones, if any were produced that year, were nearly fully grown, and it is remarkable that he did not notice their long exserted bracts and detect a different species. It is probable that, misled by the general resemblance of this species with the Northern *A. balsamea*, he did not critically examine the Firs which abound just below the summit. It is more remarkable that no mention is made in the Journal of the thickets of *Rhododendron Catawbiense*, which is nowhere else so fine and luxuriant as near the summit of the Roan. — C. S. S.

The 26th set out for Grand-Father Mountain, the highest mountain of all those that form the chain of the Alleghanies and the Appalachians.[11]

The 27th arrived at the foot of the highest mountain.

The 28th climbed and got as far as the rocks.

The 29th continued my herborising: among the various mosses, *Pinus Abies balsamifera*, *Abies nigra*, *Acer pensylvanicum*, etc., etc., etc.

The 30th climbed to the summit of the highest mountain in all North America, and with my companion and guide sang the hymn of the Marseillais and shouted, Long live America and the French Republic, Long live Liberty, etc., etc.[12]

Sunday the 31st, rain all day; stayed in camp.

Monday the 1st of September 1794 came back to the house of my guide, Davin Port.

The 2nd, rain, and herborised.

The 3rd wrote up my collections.

The 4th, the same work.

The 5th set out for Table Mountain.

The 6th visited the rocks of Hock-bill Mountain[13] and of Table Mountain. These mountains are very

[11] No less than fifty peaks in the Alleghany system, including both the Roan and those of the Black Mountains, are now known to exceed the Grandfather in elevation. — C. S. S.

[12] Note to this edition. Asa Gray, who read this entry in the manuscript, quotes the shout as "Vive la Liberté et la République Française." This translation follows the journal as Sargent printed it in 1889, which reads "Vivre l'Amérique et la Républiq. Française, Vive la Liberté &c &c."

[13] Note to this edition. Hawksbill Mountain, which stands with Table Rock on the east rim of the Linville Gorge.

barren, and the new shrub, *Ledum? buxifolium*, is the only rare plant to be found there. It is abundant there. Slept 6 miles away at . . . Park's.

Sunday the 7th set out for Burke Court House or Morganton; slept at General Mac Douwal's. Saw near his house *Spiraea tomentosa* in abundance.

From Burke to John Wagely's, about 12 miles. From John Wagely's to Th. Young's . . . From Thomas Young's to Davin Port's, 8.

The 8th of September arrived at Burke Court House or Morganton; visited Colonel Avery and slept at his house.

◊

SPRING 1795

Michaux left Charleston again on April 19, 1795, bound for the mountains and then for Kentucky. The entries below are from Reuben Gold Thwaites's translation of 1904.

The 1st of May spent the day at Morganton and herborised in the neighborhood.

The 2nd spent the day at Colonel Avery's, 4 miles from Morganton.

Sunday 3rd of May started for the Mountains; at a distance of 14 Miles from Burke is Wagely's house.

The Lineville Mountains at whose foot this house is situated, abound in *Magnolia auriculata*. They were then in flower. From Wagely's to Captain Young's is 8 Miles.

The 4th of May left Young's. The distance to Ainswort's is 2 Miles but by going to the right one

reaches the foot of a very high Mountain 3 Miles from Young's. The summit is 5 Miles from Young's.

From the summit of the Mountain at Young's to Bright's, called Bright's Settlement, the distance is 3 Miles and from Bright's to Davin Port's 2 Miles, making 10 Miles in all from Young's to Davin Port's.[14]

The 5th of May herborised in the vicinity of the dwellings of Davin Port and Wiseman.

The 6th started for the Mountains, namely: Round [Roan] Mountain and Yellow Mountain; Toe River flows between these Mountains. All the *Convallaria* were in flower as well as the *Podophyllum diphyllum* and *umbellatum*.

Sunday 10th of May 1795 returned from the Mountains to the dwelling of Davin Port.

The 11th herborised on the Mountains facing the dwelling. The distance to the summit of the Bleue Ridges at the part called Rompback is about 3 Miles; on the first Mountains are to be seen in very great abundance the *Azalea foliis apice glandulosis*, *Azalea lutea*. There is no other Azalea on the Hills surrounding the dwellings of Davin Port and Wise-

[14]Michaux followed the well-known Bright's trace, by which communication was maintained between the settlements of East Tennessee and those of Western North Carolina. Over this road came the men who won the victory at King's Mountain in 1780. Bright's place is now in the possession of the Avery family. Martin Davenport resided at a noted spring not far from Toe River, in Mitchell County, North Carolina. He was a well-known Whig; his son William became a man of prominence, several times representing his county in the state legislature. — ED.

man but this yellow-flowered species. That on the River banks is generally that with carnation flowers and that with white flowers.[15]

The 12th ascended the summit of the Blueridges, *Rhododendron minus* in flower, *Cypripedium Luteum*.

The 13th of May started to continue my journey. At Noon arrived at the foot of Yellow Mountain 10 Miles. In the evening came to sleep at the house of John Miller 12 Miles from the Mountain. Thus there are 22 Miles from Davin Port's to Miller's; at a distance of half a mile one commences to cross Doe River.

The 14th followed and crossed Doe river 27 times. It is dangerous when the waters are high. Slept at the house of Colonel Tipton,[16] 20 Miles from Miller's.

The 15th passed by Johnsboroug[17] 10 Miles from Colonel Tipton's dwelling and 84 Miles from Burke Court house. Slept at the house of Anthony Moore near Noleychukey river. During the night my horse strayed away.

[15] *Rhododendron arborescens*, Torrey. — C. S. S.

[16] Col. John Tipton was one of the noted pioneers of Tennessee. Born in Virginia, he early removed to Eastern Tennessee, and was engaged in the defense of the frontier. Upon the inauguration of the state of Franklin, Tipton joined the North Carolina party, and a fierce factional struggle ensued, which culminated in the arrest of Colonel Sevier by Tipton's agency. Tipton lived east of Jonesborough, on Sinking Creek. — ED.

[17] Jonesborough is the oldest town in Tennessee, having been founded in 1779 and named in honor of Willie Jones, Esq., an active patriot of Halifax, North Carolina, and a warm friend of the Western counties. — ED.

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SPRING 1796

Michaux spent the winter in Kentucky and Tennessee and started home to Charleston in February 1796. He came back over the mountains from Jonesborough, Tennessee. The entries begin on March 19 and are from Thwaites's translation.

The 19th passed by Johnsborough 25 Miles from Green [ville]. Several merchants are established at Johnsborough who obtain their goods from Philadelphia by land.

Sunday the 20th started from Johnsborough. Saw in passing Mr Overton of Kentuckey, Major Carter of Wataga[18] at whose house I had lodged several years previously with my son, and Colonel Avery.

Sunday 20th of March 1796 saw in bloom *Corylus americana* […] *Ulmus viscosa* […] *Acer rubrum* […]. Slept at Colonel Tipton's 10 Miles from Johnsborough.

The 21st remarked that the Mountains were covered in several places with *Sanguinaria*, *Claytonia* and *Erythronium* with spotted leaves. These Plants were in bloom. *Magnolia acuminata et auriculata*; *Rhododendron*; *Kalmia*; *Pinus abies canadensis*, *Pinus strobus*; *Azalea* etc. etc. grow in abundance at the foot of those Mountains. Arrived at Lime Stone

[18]John Carter was the foremost man of the early Watauga settlement. Coming from North Carolina, he had the prestige of family and a superior education, and was chosen head of the new community, serving efficiently in many capacities. He was concerned in the State of Franklin movement, and was frequently called out at the head of the militia, on Indian expeditions. Carter County was named for him, and he had therein a large estate. — ED.

cove and slept at Charles Collier's 18 Miles from Colonel Tipton's.

The 22nd crossed Iron Mountain and arrived at night at David Becker's, 23 Miles without seeing a house.

The 23rd started from Becker's on Cane Creek to Rider's 6 Miles; from Rider's to Widow Nigh's 7 Miles; from Nigh's to Samuel Ramsey's 2 Miles; from Ramsey's to David Cox's on Paper Creek 4 Miles and from Cox's to Young's 1 Mile; from Sam Ramsey's to Davinport's 8 Miles.[19] Total 23 Miles. Slept at Davinport's. Remarked the *Salix capreoides* in flower on the banks of the streams.

The 24th visited the high Mountains opposite Davinport's house; pulled up several hundred Shoots: *Azalea lutea fulva*; *Anonymos azaleoides*. *Rhododendron minus* etc.

The 25th of March 1796. Saw in flower the *Corylus cornuta*[20] […].

This species flowers about 15 days later than the species of *Corylus americana* found in all the Climates of North America even in lower Carolina in the neighborhood of Charleston. The *Corylus cor-*

[19] Michaux returned across the mountains by a different route from the one by which he went out. The northern or upper road over Yellow Mountain appears to have been the more frequented; the lower road, over the Iron Mountain range and down the Nolichucky, the more direct. Limestone Cove was probably at the mouth of Limestone Creek, a tributary of the Nolichucky on the western or Tennessee side of the mountain. Cane and Paper Creeks are small tributaries of the Nolichucky, on the eastern or North Carolina grade of the mountains. — ED.

[20] *C. rostrata*, Ait. — C. S. S.

nuta is found only on the highest mountains and in Canada. […]

The 26th herborised and pulled Shoots of shrubs and fresh Shoots to transport them to the garden of the Republic in Carolina.

Sunday 27th of March . . .

The 28th prepared and packed my Collection of fresh Mountain Plants.

The 29th started from Davinport's and slept at the house of . . . Young. Violet with dentate reniform leaves, villous petiole and yellow flower in full bloom on the banks of streams and very cool places.

The 30th continued my journey and by mistake took a road to the right leading to Wilkes [County]. Another *Viola lutea* […] in flower in cool places and also less damp places. This one is a little more tardy than the previous one.[21]

The 31st arrived at Colonel Avery's and slept at Morganton or Burke Court house.

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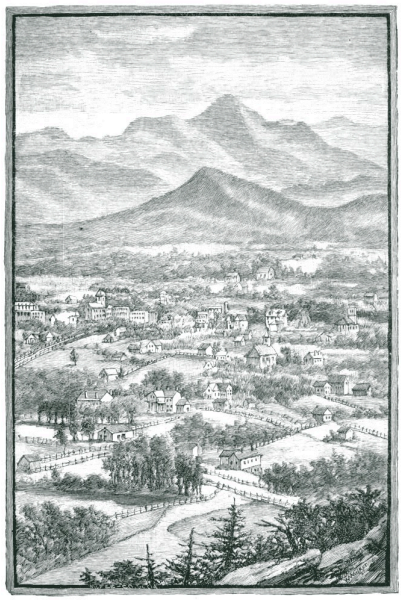
[21] *V. hastata*, Michx. — C. S. S.



Mount Pisgah, 1883

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Stories of people and places in the mountains of North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee.

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