

Francois André Michaux essays, 1820, 1849
1820-1849
Mss.Film.298

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
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Abstract	There are two essays, one on the trees of North America, the other on a project of a nursery of foreign trees and plants in the vicinity of Bayonne; with accompanying letters.

Background note

François André Michaux (1770-1855, APS 1809) was a French botanist, silviculturist, and explorer. With his father André he established and managed nurseries in Hackensack, N.J. and Charleston, S.C.. His primary scientific contributions were more practical than his father's. He described the properties and uses of various woods, plants, soils. His major works were *Voyage à l'Ouest des Monts Alléghanys* (Paris, 1804) and *The North American Sylva; or, A Description of the Forest Trees ... Considered Particularly with Respect to Their Use in the Arts and Their Introduction into Commerce*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1818-1819).

Michaux was born at Satory near Versailles, France on August 16, 1770, the son of André Michaux, a botanist and his wife Cécile Claye. In 1785 he accompanied his father to the United States to establish a botanical nursery in Hackensack, N.J., where they grew trees for shipment to France. In 1787 he assumed primary responsibility for managing a second nursery near Charleston, S.C.. Also in 1787 Michaux explored the Tennessee Valley, Florida and the Bahamas. In 1790 he returned to France to begin the study of medicine while participating in the French Revolution. Six years later in 1796 he helped his father to cultivate the plants brought back from America. In 1801 he returned to the United States under a commission from the French government to dismantle and sell the nurseries in Hackensack and Charleston. The following year he traveled from Philadelphia to Kentucky and Tennessee before returning to France in 1803. In 1806 he was back in the United States, collecting trees for France. In 1809 he explored the eastern states from Maine to Georgia and the Great Lakes. After returning to France, he prepared his monumental *North American Sylva; or, A Description of the Forest Trees . . . Considered Particularly with Respect to Their Use in the Arts and Their Introduction inot Commerce*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1818-1819). Afterward, he spent the rest of his life working as the administrator of an experimental estate belonging to the Société Centrale de l'Agriculture.

Michaux, whose scientific endeavors were practical in nature, examined and described the characteristics and uses of various woods. He became a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1809 and received the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. He married late in life and had no children. Michaux died on October 23, 1855.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

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Provenance

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Indexing Terms

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- Essays.
- Microfilm Collection

Subject(s)

- Nurseries (Horticulture) -- France.
- Trees -- France -- Bayonne.
- Trees -- North America.

Other Descriptive Information

This is a microfilm of an early American collection that may be of interest to researchers at the APS and may complement an original manuscript collection at the APS.