

GERMAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

EMINENT SCIENTISTS - PART I

If it were necessary to demonstrate the internationality of science, there is no better evidence than surprisingly large number of learned Germans who participated in the founding and development of science in America.

Following the German pioneers of science, already mentioned in former chapters, as for instance Lederer, Pastorius, Herrman and Rittenhausen, there appeared in later times a legion of others, many of them authors of excellent works and regarded here as high authorities in their special lines. We enumerate GOTTHILF HEINRICH MÜHLENBERG (1753-1815) as the first to publish a series of books on the flora of Pennsylvania. One of the "Latin farmers," GEORG ENGELMANN, was the first to describe the unknown vegetation of the Far West. American scientists acknowledged his labor and perpetuated his memory by naming one of the most beautiful pines of the Rocky Mountains "Albis Engelmanni."

The same honor was extended to FERDINAND JAKOB LINDHEIMER in appreciation of his splendid investigation of the flora of Texas. As botanists distinguished themselves also ADOLF WISLIZENUS, DAVID VON SCHWEINITZ, JOHANN N. NEUMANN, WANGENHEIM, FENDLER, RÖMER, CREUTZFELD, BOLANDER, HOFFMANNSEGG, ROTHROCK, HARTWEG, KUHN, METZGER and many others.

The first scientist, who investigated the fishes of American waters, was DAVID SCHÖPF, a physician, who during the war for independence came to this country with the Hessian soldiers. After the war he remained here to study the fishes of New York Bay, of which he furnished splendid descriptions.

The first entomologist was FRIEDRICH VALENTINE MELSHEIMER (1749-1814). He published the first book about the insects of the Eastern United States. His brother ERNST MELSHEIMER is the author of a voluminous work on the bugs of North America. SAMUEL HALDEMAN was author of several works about the sweet-water mollusk of our continent.

GERHARD TROOST, a pupil of the famous mining academy at Freiberg, Saxony, was the first who lectured in America on geology. From 1810 to 1827 he was professor of mineralogy in the Philadelphia Museum, and was also the founder of the "Academy of Natural Science" In 1827 he went to Nashville, where he was appointed professor of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy, a chair which he held until 1850, the year of his death. He was also State geologist of Tennessee. One of his colleagues, KARL ROMINGER, was State geologist of Michigan. The reports of his explorations, carried on for many years, were published in four volumes in 1873 to 1881.

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