Biannual Meeting a Success

October’s biannual meeting in Gainesville was testament to the relevance of William Bartram’s Travels in our own time. What a variety of people he reaches! Naturalist and artist, ethnographer and archaeologist, Bartram left a legacy that continues to speak in equal measure to historians and lovers of literature, backpackers, environmental activists and garden club presidents.

The program beautifully covered the full range of Bartram’s interests, with Charlotte Porter and the Florida Museum of Natural History playing gracious hosts. The setting was perfect—October just north of the Alachua Savanna. We learned about William Bartram’s appetite on the trail, alligator group feeding, archaeology, and the art of natural history. We heard poetry, gawked at the “crocodiles” and browsed through some beautiful books. Edward J. Cashin spoke movingly about Bartram and the American Revolution during Friday’s banquet, and we walked off the previous evening’s excesses with a hike to the Great Sink on Saturday morning.

But the meeting also provided an opportunity to join with some fine people, and this recalls still one more aspect of William Bartram’s legacy – he was a good friend. A few weeks ago, I received a photocopied letter, written in May 1796, from the New-York Historical Society. In this letter, Bartram described how he was in his garden when the nephew of a companion from his travels, young Lachlan McIntosh, came to visit. This sign of renewed friendship with the family stirred Bartram deeply: “I took his hand press’t with a truly Fraternal salutation,” he wrote (after starting with embrace) and pumped his guest for news about the other McIntoshes in Georgia. Bartram compared “this memorable interview” and the prospect of joining the elder Lachlan McIntosh to “the meeting of Friends in Paradise.”

Was this reunion in the Afterlife a literary convention? Yes. A bit over the top for our times? Perhaps. But gatherings like the one in Gainesville honor Bartram’s spirit by providing a forum for renewing old and forming new friendships. When we join together, as in Gainesville, we close the space between us and nurture the kinds of relationships that eighteenth-century travelers cherished. (Those letters of introduction were not idle exercises.) And this shared commitment, to continue in the enlightenment vein, advances Bartram’s legacy by renewing our dedication to the land through one another.

With friendly collaboration, we help preserve reminders of the past and the remarkable landscapes that William Bartram so passionately described over two centuries ago. Thanks to the BTC Board for a wonderful meeting. And may we continue to honor William Bartram’s achievement as we cultivate both new and old friendships.

Thomas Hallock, Newsletter Editor

Alligators fascinate all readers of Bartram, as evidenced by the BTC Conference’s visit to the “Great Sink.” Photo by Brad Sanders. Brad has made this image available on the BTC web-site, www.bartramtrail.org.
President’s Notes

I shall endeavour to assist his inclination,” wrote Dr. John Fothergill. Fothergill was referring to William Bartram, and his assistance was seed money for Bartram's southern journey. Fothergill’s generosity—at once munificent and self-serving—made Bartram’s journey possible. Without his support, William could not have made the journey, nor written Travels.

To honor Fothergill’s foresight and generosity, the Board of Directors of the Bartram Trail Conference voted at their meeting last October to establish a research fund to assist young scholars following Bartram’s trails. One of the prime goals of the BTC is to encourage the study, preservation and interpretation of the William Bartram heritage. Our newly established Fothergill Award, will be awarded annually to a deserving student in any field engaged in research relating to Bartram and his eighteenth-century world. This year the award carries a $200 honorarium to be used to help offset research and writing costs, including travel. The Fothergill Award represents our commitment to Bartram research—and to the future.

And the future is bright indeed. The first recipient of our Fothergill Award is Mr. Jeff Schenck, a student at the University of Georgia who is completing a Master’s degree in journalism. In order to complete the requirements for his Master’s degree, Jeff must write two magazine articles. His choice of topics will delight BTC members: an article about the Bartram Trail in North Carolina and another on how William Bartram and his trail can be used to educate young people about history, literature, Native Americans and the natural environment of the South. Jeff attended our conference in Gainesville, and introduced himself to many of you.

Everyone with whom he spoke was impressed by the young man from Georgia. Since then, Jeff has been hard at work, researching, reading and interviewing many BTC people in Florida, Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina. Jeff has also been sighted at several Bartram locations, including most of the great hiking trails. Like Fothergill, we must recognize and reward those who help us pursue our larger aims. I know that all Bartram Trail people join me in wishing Jeff great success in his master’s work and his career.

I also hope that each of you will consider making a contribution to replenish our Fothergill Award fund. The award was made possible due to generous donations by BTC members in honor of family members. One donation honored a son-in-law, two other honored fathers. Think of your donation as seed money. Spring is here—it is time to plant and nurture the next generation of Bartram scholars. It is also time to renew your membership in the BTC; the form is included with this newsletter.

Kathryn H. Braund, President, Bartram Trail Conference

Crosby Arboretum

Nestled in the deep Piney Woods of south Mississippi, The Crosby Arboretum, Mississippi State University Extension, allows visitors to appreciate and understand the Deep South’s rich cultural and biological heritage. Dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and interpretation of a little studied ecosystem, the Piney Woods, The Crosby Arboretum has garnered national and international recognition for its pioneering approach to the land.

The Arboretum preserves nearly 1,000 acres of pristine ecological habitats on seven different sites, which are utilized for research and conservation. Information gained from the natural areas are interpreted to the general public at the Arboretum’s Interpretive Center, a 104-acre native plant center located in Picayune, Mississippi. Here, plant communities found within our area are being restored and managed.

Visitors to the Crosby Arboretum Interpretive Center will see condensed glimpses of the Gulf Coast’s original environments—including a 20 acre pine savanna, pitcher plant bogs, beech-magnolia woodlands, bottomland hardwoods, and other plant communities. A 2-1/2 acre “beaver pond” provides visitors a rich taste of wetland ecosystems.

Tucked along the pond edge is the award-winning Pinocote Pavilion, a 4,000 square foot shelter designed by noted architect, E. Fay Jones. The pavilion is a stunning architectural example of human structure inspired by its surroundings. Nearly five miles of walking trails are graced by interpretive signs about the plants and communities encountered. The newest trail, the William Bartram Trail, is dedicated to telling the story of the first American naturalist to the Gulf Coast.

The Crosby Arboretum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and is located at Exit 4 of Interstate 59 in Picayune, Mississippi. For more information on programs and the facility, visit http://msstate.edu/dept/crec/camain.html.

Bob Hall
BTC Field Trip to New Ebenezer, Georgia

Why not join a group of BTC members on a field trip to New Ebenezer, Georgia? Founded in 1736, and settled by a group of Lutheran Salzburgers seeking a place of religious freedom, New Ebenezer once had about 2000 residents. The museum is small but well done and a must see for those who go, and the 1769 church still has a congregation of over a hundred. Some other things to see: a William Bartram marker; cemetery; a section of the original Bartram Trail; family retreat and conference center; the original Ebenezer cottages; and the John Treutlen house, who was a member of the church and Georgia’s first governor.

Anyone who is interested can contact Brad Sanders (706-548-6446, bvsanders@charter.net) for details. To get to Ebenezer, from the viaduct in Rincon, GA, stay on Highway 21 and go NW 3 miles to Ga 375 and turn right. Go 5 miles to Ebenezer. Park in the large church parking lot. There are two walking trails, one short one (not kept up) and one long one (car can be used). There are 43 acres to the site. For those coming on the field trip, bring bug repellent, sunscreen, shoes that can get wet, water container and lunch.

John Hall

Alabama Archaeology Camp

The Alabama Museum of Natural History will conduct an archaeology camp this summer at Old St. Stephens in Washington County, Alabama, near the bluffs of the Tombigbee River where William Bartram made his famous 1775 river boat journey. The Museum will sponsor the 24th annual summer expedition to excavate the foundation of the Globe Hotel at the townsite of St. Stephens (the territorial capitol of Alabama from 1817 to 1819).

Each day, expedition participants work alongside scientists at an archaeological site to learn excavation techniques, laboratory procedures, and artifact identification. Each evening, there is a group discussion about the day’s discovery, followed by a natural history presentation provided by a member of the museum staff. Participants will also have the opportunity to take part in a fossil survey at the St. Stephens Quarry and explore the South Alabama woodlands along the banks of the Tombigbee River.

There are four weekly sessions this summer, beginning June 9 and ending on July 6. Each session starts on Sunday afternoon and ends on the following Saturday morning. Program tuition is $400 per week, or $350 for members of the Alabama Museum of Natural History. Accommodations, food, and scientific equipment will be provided. Participants should bring bedrolls and personal items (a detailed list of what to bring is included in the full registration packet). For more information visit http://amnh.ua.edu, or call at (205) 348-7550. You may also contact them by email at museum.expedition@ua.edu.

Two Academic Gatherings on Early American Science

I write, the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture is sponsoring “From Bacon to Bartram: Early American Inquiries into the Natural World,” at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (March 22-24, 2002). This conference examines inquiries into America from the Spanish colonies to New England, and from the age of scientific revolution as defined by Francis Bacon to the early romanticism of William Bartram. Papers from the conference are expected to be published. For more information, visit www.wm.edu/oieahc/conferences/bacon/Introduction.htm.

Later this Spring will be an international symposium on André Michaux, the noted French explorer, collector and botanist. The symposium, from May 14-19, will include talks and presentations, workshops, field trips, historical re-enactments, as well as many other activities. It is expected that the symposium proceedings will be published. For more information, contact www.michaux.org, or AMIS, P. O. Box 942, Belmont, NC 28012; (704) 868-3181. Jeanie Miller, the Symposium Co-ordinator, also can be reached at miller@dsgb.org.

Compiled from web sources by Thomas Hallock
Bartram’s Art in Liverpool

A rare display of natural history drawings by William Bartram forms part of a major exhibition in Liverpool (England) in Summer 2002, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Liverpool Museum. The exhibition covers the life and work of the zoologist and art collector Edward Smith Stanley, 13th Earl of Derby, who acquired many fine examples of the art of natural history for his library at Knowsley Hall, Prescot.

Bartram’s drawings were sent by his father John Bartram to Peter Collinson, a London Quaker businessman, who pasted some of them into a copy of Mark Catesby’s Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands. They included the famous drawing of his father’s botanic garden at Kingsessing near Philadelphia, which is also going on show. A catalogue edited by Dr. Clem Fisher, Liverpool Museum’s Curator of Birds and Mammals, is being published in conjunction with the exhibition, whose exhibits are largely drawn from the Museum’s foundation collection (the Derby Museum) and from the Earl of Derby’s collections at Knowsley Hall. “The Earl & the Pussycat: Lord Derby’s Life and Legacy” will go on show at Liverpool’s Walker Art Gallery from June 1 to September 8, 2002. For further information visit http://www.nmhm.org.uk/.

John Edmondson

Altamaha River Trail

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing a section of the Bartram Trail in the Sansavilla Wildlife Management Area. This area is located on the right bank of the river in today’s Wayne County, about twenty miles northwest of Brunswick. It is located upstream from Fort Barrington, near where father and son, John and William Bartram, discovered the Franklinea alatamaha. The trail will be a loop more than four miles in length, with spur trails to the river bank. The trail will be developed for both hiking and biking. This effort is led by John Evans of the Georgia DNR. Any BTC members who would like to volunteer for this effort (trail construction, trail maintenance, public interpretation) please David Hatfield, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, J. Strom Thurmond Lake and Dam, Visitor Center (phone: 800-533-3478, ext. 1129) or Chuck Spornick (email lbcds@emory.edu, 770-923-0058).

Chuck Spornick

Restoration of Bartram Trail at Clarks Hill Lake

In the 1970s the Georgia Bartram Trail Society, working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, built more than 40 miles of foot trails along the shore of Clarks Hill Lake, also known as J. Strom Thurmond Lake. By the early 1990’s much of the trail, save for the bike trail at Keg’s Creek, was overgrown. Long segments of the trail (especially from Petersburg Campground to GA 104) vanished altogether. In the last five years the COE has worked with the Southern Off Road Bicycle Association (SORBA), scout groups from the Augusta area, and other volunteers to restore much of the original trail. This effort, led most recently by Pepper Shields (with the COE), has recovered the trail to the restoration of the footpath from the West Dam Recreation area westward to Wildwood Park. This section is more than fourteen miles long. It is an easy to moderate hike, well marked and blazed in yellow.

The COE has plans to further improve the trail by reestablishing the trail bed to make this section suitable for both hiking and biking. To further this effort the Corps has applied for a federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant, from the Georgia DNR, that would provide for both professional trail restoration and for the construction of new bridges and walkways, as well as re-routings where needed.

The Corps is looking for trail volunteers to help with trail maintenance. BTC members who would like to volunteer for this effort (trail construction, trail maintenance, public interpretation) please David Hatfield, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, J. Strom Thurmond Lake and Dam, Visitor Center (phone: 800-533-3478, ext. 1129) or Chuck Spornick (email lbcds@emory.edu, 770-923-0058).

Chuck Spornick

NEWSLETTER NEEDS SUBMISSIONS

The Traveller welcomes submissions that may be of interest to friends and members of the Bartram Trail Conference. If you have an idea, suggestion or contribution for this newsletter, contact Tom Hallock at tbhallock@cs.com or (after 5/1/2002)

Copy for the next issue should be received by 9/1.
New Books on Bartram and Friends

[Editor’s Note: This year will bring us several books on William Bartram and his circle. The following notices were prepared by the respective editor and/or author; both Bartram guides will be available this Summer. We look forward to making these books part of our library. The best place to find these titles is probably on the web; you can support the BTC by ordering books from www.bartramtrail.org.]


William Bartram made his famous travels through the Southern colonies in the years 1773 through 1776. He traveled through a region that was still a wilderness, much of it uninhabited and still in its natural state. Soon after his journey of discovery, the South was dramatically altered as settlers scattered westward and converted the frontier into farms and towns. Bartram’s story is told in his book, Travels, which was published in 1791 and has been continuously in print for two hundred years. Travels is one of the few accounts to describe the state of the natural environment of the South before the coming of settlement and it is certainly the most complete. Re-tracing William Bartram’s footsteps is a rewarding way to honor America’s first great naturalist and learn about the natural history of the Southeast.

This guide is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the life and accomplishments of William Bartram and the cultural and natural history of the colonial Southeast. It is intended as a companion for those who wish to make excursions through the territory visited and explored by William Bartram, to visit historical sites and areas of environmental significance.

This comprehensive guide contains descriptions of parks, natural areas, museums, trails, and communities that travelers encounter as they retrace William Bartram’s footsteps. A historical overview of each section provides a context for the cultural and political events that occurred during the years of William Bartram’s Travels. The 384-page Guide includes 47 maps drawn specially for this publication; 8 reproductions of historical maps; 145 black and white photographs; itineraries, biographical sketches, and identifications of important Bartram sites; and a chronology of Bartram’s life and the colonial history of the Southeastern United States.

A special prepublication price of $19.95 for Bartram fans includes shipping and any applicable sales taxes. Visit www.fevertreepress.com for more details, or send a check to Fervertree Press, 189 Hidden Hills Lane, Athens, GA 30605


A Contemporary Guide to Bartram’s Travels reconstructs the explorer’s trip through the American South for the modern reader and traveler, closely following the original route recorded by the naturalist. From the urbane gardens of Charleston and Savannah to Bartram’s beloved Payne’s Prairie in central Florida, this book retraces his path through colonial outposts, Indian country, and still unspoiled wilderness. The detailed narrative of the guide—thoroughly investigated and measured—lets the hiker, canoeist, bicyclist, or ordinary driver range through Bartram country.

At one level, the guide is an invitation into the past, traveling with Bartram as he visits the home of the Creeks, Cherokee, and American colonists—all on the eve of the American Revolution. At another level, it is an invitation to the present, to see the lands of the American Southeast, how they have changed in the last two centuries, and how some places have survived in all their wild splendor. From the mountain grandeur of the Blue Ridge to the coastal beauty of Cumberland Island, the present answers the past with the story of what endures.


“Forget not Mee & My Garden. . . ,” Peter Collinson wrote his Maryland friend George Robins in 1721. “If you have any Shells, Curious Stones, or any other Naturall Curiosity Remember Mee. I want one of your Humming Birds which you may send dry’d in its Feathers, and any Curious Insect.” Alan Armstrong sees this theme echoed through Collinson’s letters for the rest of his life, along with thanks for rarities received, introductions, cultivation instructions, encouragements, importunings, queries. Armstrong describes Collinson’s correspondence as “vigorous, brisk, and emphatic.”
Collinson’s letters talk mainly of plants, but topics cover the expected range of curious men: antiquities, birds, butterflies, British imperial interests, sheep management in Spain, electricity, weather, fossils, insects, earthquakes, vine culture, colonial policy, tithes, wars, terrapins, “an Infalible Remedy for the bite of a Mad Dog,” red Indians, astronomy, the making of salt, cheese fairs, the price of wheat, the power of snakes to charm, the Spanish threat to Florida, geology, French expansion, “Hints . . . to Incorporate the Germans more with the [Pennsylvania] English,” the history of rice growing, premiums to encourage the production of silk, whether swallows migrate or winter-over under water, “Old Hock” as a remedy for gout, thundergusts, magnetism, Bezoar stones, and now and then some Quakerly comments.

This selection of 187 letters is enhanced with over 120 illustrations (portraits and botanical drawings among them), some by Mark Catesby, Georg Dionysius, Ehret, William Bartram, many in color. The edition contains notes and commentary for most letters.

Recreational Trails Program

This program, authorized by Congress in 1991, provides funds through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Each state administers its own program, usually through a State resource or park agency. In Georgia, for example, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is administered by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR); in Florida, the RTP is administered by the state Office of Greenways & Trails. For 2002 and 2003 Congress has authorized $50 million annually. Half of the funds are distributed equally among all States, and half are distributed in proportion to the estimated amount of off-road recreational fuel use in each State-fuel used for off-road recreation. For more information; visit the U.S. DOT website: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rtbroch.htm.

Book Review


Farming American buffalo on the South Dakota Plains might not seem a subject close to the interests of Bartram scholars and devotees, but Dan O’Brien’s approach to the landscape and its ecology and to writing about his experience does follow Bartram traditions. O’Brien’s book, Buffalo for the Broken Heart, is a personal history of ranching in the Black Hills which recounts a journey, not so much in miles, as in years. As a child on an automobile trip with his parents, O’Brien decided immediately upon seeing this landscape that he would make his home on the desolate high plains.

After years of struggle to make cattle farming profitable on his ranch, patching together a life as a teacher, environmental consultant and handyman, O’Brien reaches a standstill. He recognizes how unsuited the cattle are for the fragile soil and plant ecosystem, and how inappropriate they are for the extremes of climate on the plains. A door opens when a neighbor introduces him to buffalo, an animal that has evolved in the landscape. Most stories would stop here, but O’Brien documents not only his slow acceptance of the switch from cattle ranching to buffalo, but his questioning of how buffalo ranching can remain free of the abhorrent practices of cattle production.

I once traveled through this South Dakota landscape with little understanding of the sweeping mounded earth forms. I felt displaced and even frightened by the treeless horizon. O’Brien’s book, much like William Bartram’s Travels, brings understanding of a particular place, and gives it visual detail Coupled with scientific description. Like Bartram, O’Brien is a master of catching the interplay between land and living forms. In a passage where O’Brien is musing and contemplating (in Bartram fashion) over his buffalo and their patterns of movement, he asks, “who decides when it’s time to move, who gives the command for the flock to turn?” When the herd does move as one across the land, their hooves have an impact that is healthful for the prairie ecosystem. Whereas cattle’s hooves seem to impact the land differently, causing the grass to die off, buffalo make the grass thrive. O’Brien says, “Of course that makes sense, since our grass evolved to thrive under buffalo hooves... only buffalo are a force that can match the scale of this land. Only buffalo have the power to massage this land back to health.”
O'Brien's decision to market his buffalo independently is another aspect of his searching spirit. For those interested in sampling his frozen (very healthful and delicious) buffalo steaks, O'Brien can be reached at www.wildideabuffalo.com.

Nancy Hoffmann

Trail Mix: Member News

Alabama. The Alabama Wildflower Society hosted Dr. John Hall, research associate at the Alabama Museum of Natural History at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on November 5, 2001. He did a personality sketch of Bartram. He'll be doing a repeat performance on April 28, at Sherling Lake Park in Greenville. Congratulations also go to John on his engagement to be married.

The city of Mobile celebrates its tricentennial this year, and the city has planned a fantastic celebration. Visit http://www.mobile.org for details. The Butler County Historical and Genealogical Society is offering tours to groups that would like to visit the Bartram Trail or Fort Tolouse in Butler County. Contact Annie Crenshaw at southern.tradition@ mindspring.com.

North Carolina. The North Carolina Bartram Trail group remains busy. Members hold monthly work hikes on the first Saturday of each month, they have erected two trail head signs with maps, and they have done some trail clearing on Section 6 of the NC BT (a busy section near the Nantahala Outdoor Center at the Nantahala River "put-in" west of Cherokee). In addition to an excellent turnout on February 16, 2002 for building steps (adding 42 to the 110 already contracted there) on a newly purchased access at the west end of the Fishhawk Mts. (near Otto), the NC BTC had some publicity by the 21-mile Endurance Race sponsored by Nantahala Outdoor Center and others Jan 26. They continue to improve the "best hiking trail of the southern Appalachians" by putting up yellow blazes and constructing the rerouted Section 2. Contact Ina Warren (wildwood3@citcom.net) for further information on the hikes, bi-annual meetings or general info on their trail club.

The group held its annual meeting on Sunday, October 7 at the Cashiers Community Library in Cashiers. After a business meeting, Dr. C. Ritchie Bell (director emeritus of the NC Botanical Gardens of the UNC-CH campus) gave a slide-illustrated program entitled "The Value of Wild Flowers." Dr. Bell's contribution to the field of botany is immense; in recognition of that achievement, NC BTS presented him with an honorary lifetime membership to the club. Among his many works, he is co-author of the "botanical bible" of the area, the Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas. Currently he and his wife, Dr. Anne H. Lindsey, are producing colorful and authoritative natural history videos on fall color, trees, eastern wild flowers and topics related to conservation. An unusual topic for a recent video is "Woodland Harvest of the Eastern Forests," highlighting fruits rather than flowers; it is narrated by the late Charles Kuralt. Their most recent venture is "Plants and the Cherokee," a 26-minute video that provides a closer look at the relationship of plants to the Cherokee people. For more information on the videos, check out www.laurelhillpress.com.

Florida. Once again, both thanks and kudos go to Charlotte Porter, the Florida Museum of Natural History and the University of Florida for hosting a terrific conference. Keep an eye out for an article by Tom Hallock on William Bartram as Florida's first "ecotourist" in this summer's EcoFlorida magazine; see the magazine's website, www.ecofloridamag.org.

Georgia. Louis De Vorsey, Jr. (profiled in the Fall 2001 Traveller) continues to generate interest in the Great Buffalo Lick. His article on this important colonial landmark, described by William Bartram and served as a boundary-line checkpoint in treaty negotiations, has been lost in modern memory. Following up on research from the 1960s, De Vorsey provides a precise location. His analysis appears in Southeastern Geographer 31.2 (9/2001) and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (2/4/01) picked up the story as well.

Thanks for help with this issue of The Traveller go to Kathryn Holland-Braund, Chuck Spormick, Bob Hall, and to the many others who submitted articles; to Julie Armstrong for proofreading and licking stamps. We welcome contributions for the Fall 2002 issue. Thomas Hallock, editor