

The Traveller

"The attention of a traveller, should be particularly attuned, in the first place, to the Various works of Nature"

Newsletter of the Bartram Trail Conference

Fall 2004

President's Notes

As I sat in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, under darkening skies and menacing winds waiting for Hurricane Ivan to visit in mid-September, I was prompted to re-read Bernard Romans's account of the 1772 hurricane that hit Mobile, Alabama. This naturally lead me to consider Bartram. Before the power went out, I was able to dash off a quick note to the Bartram Trail electronic mail group and ask my fellow BTC members if they could recall any references to hurricanes by Bartram. From Philadelphia – so very far from the raging winds – came a reply from Nancy Hoffmann, now co-editing a new collection of Bartram's manuscripts. She had on her desk a copy of the *APS Transactions*, containing Bartram's 1773-1774 report to Dr. Fothergill, with an account of the hurricane as he approached Beresford Plantation. She noted that the hurricane was mentioned in *Travels* too. She sent her best wishes for dodging damage.

Then came more replies from Alabama and Georgia, reminding me that the famous dogwood grove Bartram encountered in Alabama may have resulted when a high canopy of longleaf pines was destroyed by a hurricane or tornado leaving the understory of dogwoods undamaged and thriving. Naturalist John Hall mused that it would be interesting to identify blown-down areas following Ivan and monitor them for resurrection of understory species. John urged me to hang on tight, as did Brad Sanders of Georgia. Then, as those of us in hurricane country expect and dread – the power went out.

And as the terrible dark beauty of Ivan's power enveloped me, I sat on my front porch and watched my hickory tree lean with the wind to its death and I read Bartram's account of his own hurricane experience: "I beheld with astonishment and Terror the strength & fury of this Storm, the crash & wrenching of trees in the Woods a little way off of me. Trees twisted off by the top & others split to the ground, vast splinters flying like javelin in the air, the tops of the tough yielding hickory bent down into the water, but what is incredible, I beheld the invincible sturdy live Oak, almost inflexible limbs, as thick as large Trees, twisted

off, as flax or dry seeds whirl'd aloft & floating in the Air" (*Report to Fothergill, APS Transactions* 33:2, 162-3.).

The power lines surged to life five days later, and then the damage reports came in. From Florida, Charlotte Porter wrote that one of the previous storms, Frances, had "absolutely trashed" Alachua County and she compared the damage to Bartram's description of Mobile following the 1772 hurricane. Later, Carolyn Whitmer reported massive damage around her home in the Pensacola region. The reports of damage continued, including e-mails relating to downed trees and ruined bridges on the Georgia portion of the Bartram trail. Fortunately, we all survived the ordeal and volunteers have taken on the task of clearing the trail. I now can reflect on what a wonderful thing it is to have a circle of friends scattered along Bartram's route, thinking about the past and each other as the threatening winds roared down upon us. In such times, Bartram serves to reaffirm the close link we have to nature and to each other.

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Florida Studies Program, U. South Florida St. Petersburg, to sponsor *The Traveller*, 2004-05

Thanks to the Florida Studies Program, U. South Florida St. Petersburg, for sponsoring *The Traveller* for the 2004-05 academic year. This arrangement, made possible through the generosity of co-directors Gary Mormino and Raymond Arsenault, allows the Bartram Trail Conference to expand still further its efforts to preserve the environmental and cultural legacy of the American Southeast. Learn more about the Florida Studies Program (offering a Master of Liberal Arts) which brings together courses in history, economics, geography, political science, anthropology, and literature at their web-site:

www.stpt.usf.edu/coas/florida_studies/

I encourage everyone to keep in touch between newsletters and conferences. One way to do so is to visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bartramtrail/join> and join our Yahoo e-group and post messages to a community of Bartram lovers. And don't forget to send news and articles to our newsletter editor for inclusion in our next newsletter. And if you haven't renewed your BTC membership, please do so now. And by all means, mark your calendar for our next conference, scheduled for Augusta in October 2005. We'll have all the details in the next issue of *The Traveller*.

Kathryn Holland Braund
BTC President

Hurricane Damage on Bartram Trail

The recent spate of hurricanes has dealt a blow to several Bartram sites, notably the Alachua Savanna (today's Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park) and the Georgia portion of the Bartram hiking trail. Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne were the culprits in Florida, while Ivan was responsible for damage in Alabama and Georgia. At both locations, the hiking trails sustained damage from tree falls and debris, and part of the trail at Paynes Prairie remains submerged. From Gainesville, Charlotte Porter writes:

"William would weep. Hurricanes and severe storms have caused great damage to trees, especially the grand oaks, in the beautiful mesic hammock surrounding Paynes Prairie. Many water oaks split. Other large live oaks fell over as roots gave way in the wet ground; many cedar trees have lost branches and their tops; pine trees are leaning and crashed. The town of Cross Creek was hard hit and lost many old trees, particularly along the road. Water levels are high in the prairie basin, forcing wildlife to move across local roads, but I am told the fishing is good in nearby lakes. I am seeing many roadkills, notably foxes, and tree refuse piled up on roadways in rural areas around the prairie makes for limited visibility, especially at night. Walkways everywhere are covered with sticks, acorns, and other forest litter, and, as it is rather dry now, we may get unwanted fires. As for water quality, unfortunately, the city of Gainesville has diverted untested storm water into the Alachua Sink. There is much standing flood water in nearby Marion County, and waters passing through Orange Lake smell rather ripe, to say the least, but the higher lake level may lead to the return of birds to rookeries abandoned in recent drought years. Right now, our temperatures are cold

40s, setting back the mosquitoes.

"On the happier side, the William Bartram marker stood the storms at the walkout ramp off 441. The Bartram Trail in the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia, which is maintained by the Forest Service, is in poor condition after Ivan. According to reports from various hikers, the second footbridge, going north from Russell bridge on Hwy 28, was washed out. Shortly after that, there is a very large section of downfall, possibly caused by a tornado, that will require mechanical means to clear. South from Warwoman Dell, the footbridge was destroyed by falling tree and there are dangerous areas along the trail where passage is almost impossible due to wash-out and fallen trees. For an updated condition report, contact the USDA Forest Service, Tallulah Ranger District."

Living with Franklinia

The thought that *Franklinia alatamaha* would find a permanent place in my life was unimaginable when I began researching the history of Mead Garden, located in urban Winter Park, Florida. None of us on the 45 member Friends of Mead Garden (FMG) Board had ever heard of the Franklin tree. And we had no idea that it is prominent in the history of the Garden, a 55 acre green space being rejuvenated by a partnership between the Friends and the City of Winter Park.

The swamp that became Mead Garden was discovered and developed by two men connected with Rollins College, six blocks away. Jack Connery had been a student curator of Rollins Museum of Natural History and worked for Theodore Mead, a renowned hybridizer of orchids, amaryllis, hemerocallis, and fancy leaf caladiums. Connery had inherited this large collection and needed a place to house it. Dr. Edwin Grover, professor of books, became Vice President of the College, and needed an outdoor laboratory where students could do research in the natural world.

In 1937 the two men hacked their way into a morass of deep peat, spiky palmettos and twisted vines next to a well traveled street. They realized this swamp-jungle could be developed into an urban oasis that would meet their needs. The imaginative explorers persuaded generous owners to donate contiguous parcels of land. With WPA grants and private contributions, Mead Garden began to take shape.

To commemorate William Bartram's 200th birthday, Rollins College held a celebration on February 9, 1939. Rollins planted a four foot Franklin tree in Mead Garden rather than on the campus... the growing conditions seemed closer to those of south Georgia where John and William Bartram had dis-

covered the wild tree. Mead Garden became a prime attraction for local residents and tourists, and the lone *Franklinia* was promoted as a gorgeous flowering tree.

From a recent picture of a bloom, FMG members agreed that *Franklinia* is gorgeous. Displaying the signature tree with comprehensive details of *Franklinia*'s flamboyant, world famous history would be an extraordinary achievement for Mead Garden.

There was a major problem: Where had the tree been planted? Mention of a definitive location did not appear in archives. Eager FMG members searched tirelessly, a daunting task in a world of trees. *Franklinia* could be growing among Loblolly Bay trees (*Gordonia lasianthus*) and never be recognized. The two close relatives are members of Theaceae, the great Tea Family, and look much alike. Our first mistake was laughable: we were searching in January and February for *Franklinia*, and it is deciduous! In winter the tree is almost impossible to recognize, so we had to wait for summer.

Which part of summer? Reports describe the *Franklinia* as blooming from mid to late summer into the fall. That's in the north and the mountains of North Carolina. No one is quite sure when it blooms at this latitude. We kept looking. A blooming *Franklinia* branch is described this way: It displays snow white, five petaled, cup shaped blossoms four inches in diameter, on very short stalks. Petals are "crisped" at the edges, and centers of the blooms are packed or crowned with yellow stamen. Flowers exude a heady scent of orange blossoms. Blooms appear at the tips of branches, last about 36 hours, then drop. New ones soon grow. In autumn the large, pointed, glossy green leaves turn crimson before dropping. Seed capsules are spherical rather than globular and require a year to ripen.

When William Bartram made his amazing trek through southern states, he carried seeds of the wild trees in Georgia back to his father's special garden in Kingsessing near Philadelphia. With John's supervision, William successfully planted two sprouts from the seeds, and later offered *Franklinias* in his commercial catalogue. Hearty trees flourish in Bartram's garden, across the U.S., and in Europe. Two trees planted in 1905 at Harvard's Arnold Arboretum still bloom. But gardeners variably have difficulty in cultivating the tree. *Franklinia* is finicky. Two trees work best for strong growth and progeny, and unless certain root fungi are avoided and an acid pH is maintained, the trees decline. Hurricane Jeanne may have wiped out a few large *Franklinias* growing in Pensacola. Hurricane Charley, which toppled countless trees in Winter

Park, may have ended hopes of finding Mead Garden's *Franklinia*. However, Mead Garden is prepared. The Winter Park Garden Club, which sits in the center of Mead Garden and maintains close ties, ordered two saplings months ago. They will be planted in line of sight so that bees can cross pollinate them.

With research came the delightful acquaintance of Joel Fry, Curator of Bartram's Historic Garden at Kingsessing, the 45 acre remnant of the original Bartram garden and now part of the Philadelphia park system. Fry is an energetic, dedicated *Franklinia* expert. In summers on a tour boat that plies the meandering Schuylkill River, he gives a lecture on the tree. In 2000 he wrote a definitive paper on the turbulent events of naming and classifying *Franklinia* in a separate monotypic genus. As busy as Fry is, without his patience and unflagging, almost joyful, responses to my far too many questions, composing an in-depth story about *Franklinia* would have been impossible. However, the tree's epic tale is not finished.

Scientific legend maintains that all *Franklinias* growing today originated from one tree in Bartram's original garden. The belief has relied on descriptive morphology and logical history. Now the legend may be queried at the molecular level with a DNA project at the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida. Curator Dr. Charlotte Porter, a BTC Board member, has asked BTC and other growers to send in leaves for DNA analysis. More genetic diversity than predicted will stir the tree's restless history. Paleobotanist Dr. David Dilcher, who studies plant fossils 45 million years old, notes that *Franklinia*/*Gordonia*-like fossils are found in clay deposits "from Asia to northern South America to southeastern North America." His DNA studies encompass the evolution and relationships of *Franklinia* to other members of the Tea Family. Researchers at North Carolina State and University of North Carolina have developed a hybrid between *Franklinia* and another Theaceae tree, *Schima argentea*, common in forests. It is a lovely ornamental and is easier to grow than *Franklinia*, but beware...if its pollen does not remain sterile, the entire *Franklinia* population could be threatened with hybridization. The proposed name of the hybrid is *Schimlinia floribunda*.

Ironically, in the late 1960s I looked at one *Franklinia* many times. Fry recently sent a picture of a tree in full bloom at the corner of 42nd and Spruce in West Philadelphia. He calculates its age to be between 69 and 94 years. When heavy snows broke its limbs, the plucky tree grew more. It still stands, blooming happily in city pollution. When I was a medical student at University of Pennsylvania, where William Bartram turned down a professorship, I lived at 42nd and Pine,

one block from the tree. Buried in medical books, I walked by that *Franklinia* every day on my way to the hospital. I never knew.

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BTC Canoe Outing

Members of the Bartram Trail Conference are planning a one-day canoe and kayak trip on the Bartram Canoe Trail in Baldwin County, Alabama, just north of Mobile. The trip date is April 23. The route passes through areas explored by William Bartram in 1775 and is home to a variety of birds and wildlife as well as myriad plant species. The group that paddled the trail in May of 2004 was treated to giant cypresses, ospreys, a swallowtail kite and abundant wildflowers. Keith Gauldin, who manages the trail for the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, has volunteered to lead this trip for the Bartram Trail Conference. We will try to find canoes for those who do not have them. If you are interested in joining the expedition, contact Jim Kautz at 770-321-9826 or jrkautz@earthlink.net and he can provide details. If you decide to join us, make sure you stay in touch since water conditions may mean a change in trip plans.



A "solitary pilgrim," Baldwin County, Ala.

Mountain Treasures and the Bartram Trail

In the 1990's the Wilderness Society published a series of books defining their "Mountain Treasures" concept [1]. Mountain Treasures are areas in National

Forests, in the five Southern Appalachian states (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia), which are forested, roadless and in need of preservation. Notice that these five states are five of the states of William Bartram's travels. Small portions of the Mountain Treasure areas are already protected as wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, National Parks, trail corridors and important botanical or historical sites. However, most of the Mountain Treasure areas are not protected and are still open for road building, logging and/or mining.

The Southern Appalachians are among the oldest mountains on Earth and contain an amazing range of fauna and flora [1]. More than 2000 species of plants including over 130 species of trees are found in these mountains. Some 150 species of nesting birds and over 50 salamanders among a myriad of other animals find their homes here. Often the animal and plant species are unique to this area. The Georgia Bartram Trail and North Carolina Bartram Trail pass through several of the Mountain Treasures. These areas are listed in our guide books for the trails [2], [3], and [4]. The Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia comprises 750,000 acre in the Southern Appalachians. The Wilderness Society suggests protecting 236,000 acres of which 47,000 acres are currently protected from timber protection and road building. Four primary consequences of this protection would be 1. clean water, 2. backcountry recreation; fishing and hunting, 3. conservation of biological diversity and beauty, and 4. impact on jobs and income for recreation and tourism in Georgia. Less than 0.5 % of harvested timber in Georgia comes from the Chattahoochee National Forest. The cost to build and maintain roads in these steep and rugged areas often exceeds the funds received by the Forest Service. This is obvious, since it the reason the Weeks Act of 1911 was passed to allow for creation of the National Forests in the first place. For more details of these points see [1].

A Mountain Treasure area has no roads and has not been recently savaged by logging. It contains 14,000 acres. The Georgia Bartram Trail [2] travels about 15 miles, or close to half its length through the central region of this Mountain Treasure area, from near Warwoman Dell to near Hale Ridge Road. Along the trail in this section we pass Martin Creek Falls, Bartram's [5] Falling Creek, Pinnacle Knob, Bartram's Mount Magnolia, as well as Rabun Bald with its stunning views from the elevated observation tower. Also there are regions of spectacular flora in the area. For most of 15 miles the Georgia Bartram Trail travels along the Tennessee Valley Divide of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Mountain Treasure areas are our last chance to save parts of the original eastern forests for future generations. We should, individually and as a group, do everything we can to preserve these wonderful areas.

John R. Ray

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[1] These guides are called by the state names, for example, *Georgia's Mountain Treasures, The Unprotected Wildlands of the Chattahoochee*. Ed. William Meadows and George Gay. (Washington, D.C.: Wilderness Society, 1995). [900 Seventeenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20006, 202-833-2300. Each of the five states mentioned has such a guide.]

[2] Ray, J. R. and Skove, M. J., *Bartram Trail, Detailed Guide With Maps For The Trail In the Chattahoochee Nantahala National Forest in Georgia*, 3rd edition (2003). [Available from the authors.]

[3] Ray, J. R. and Skove, M. J., *Bartram Trail, Detailed Guide With Maps For The Trail In the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina*, 1st edition (2001). [Available from the authors.]

[4] Ray, J. R., Skove, M. J. and Kenyon, Bill, *Chunky Gal Trail and Fires Creek Rim Trail, Detailed Guide With Maps For The Trail in the Nantahala National Forest In North Carolina*, 3rd edition (2004) [Available from the authors.]

[5] Bartram, William, *The Travels of William Bartram: Naturalist Edition*, ed. Francis Harper (Athens: U. Georgia P, 1998).

Two Friends and the Scarlet Tanager

Editor's Note: We often think of William Bartram as a one-book author, writing Travels in 1791 then doing little else. This view is unfortunate (and sure to be rectified by Elizabeth Fairhead's scholarship – see below), for Bartram lived a long time. His peers sought him out and Bartram's hand can be seen in works of natural history through the early nineteenth century. Such was the case with Alexander Wilson, whose American Ornithology (1808-14) took shape under William's tutelage in drawing and engaged the services of John Jr.'s daughter, Nancy. Several memorable passages in American Ornithology capture the life of our friend and his family in their King-sessing Garden. The following, on the Scarlet Tanager, is excerpted from volume 2 of the AO.

Passing thro an orchard one morning I caught one of these young birds that had but lately left the nest. I

carried it with me about half a mile, to shew it to my friend Mr. William Bartram; and having procured a cage, hung it upon one of the large pine trees in the botanic garden, within a few feet of the nest of an *Orchard Oriole*, which also contained young; hopeful that the charity, or tenderness of the Orioles would induce them to supply the cravings of the stranger. But charity with them, as with too many of the human race, began and ended at home.

The poor orphan was altogether neglected, notwithstanding its plaintive cries; and, as it refused to be fed by me, I was about to return it back to the place where I found it; when, towards the afternoon, a Scarlet Tanager, no doubt its own parents, was seen fluttering round the cage, endeavouring to get in. Finding this impracticable he flew off, and soon returned with food in his bill; and continued to feed it till after sunset, taking up his lodgings on the higher branches of the same tree. In the morning, almost as soon as day broke, he was again seen most actively engaged in the same affectionate manner; and notwithstanding the insolence of the Orioles, continued his benevolent offices the whole day, roosting at night as before. On the third or fourth day, he appeared extremely solicitous for the liberation of his charge, using every expression of distressful anxiety, and every call and invitation that nature had put in his power for him to come out.

This was too much for the feelings of my venerable friend; he procured a ladder, and mounting to the spot where the bird was suspended, opened the cage, took out the prisoner, and restored him to liberty and to his parent, who with notes of great exultation accompanied his flight to the woods. The happiness of my good friend was scarcely less complete, and shewed itself in his benevolent countenance; and I could not refrain saying to myself – If such sweet sensations can be derived from a simple circumstance of this kind, how exquisite, how unspeakably rapturous must the delight of those individuals have been, who have rescued their fellow beings from death, chains and imprisonment, and restored them to the arms of their friends and relations! Surely in such godlike actions virtue is its own most abundant reward.



A Journey with William Bartram

Elizabeth Fairhead is the winner of the BTC's Fothergill Award for 2003. The award helped her to complete research at the Academy of Natural Sciences and the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. She is a Research Associate at the American Historical Association and currently completing her dissertation, "Botanical Academy of Pennsylvania: William Bartram and Natural History in Philadelphia, 1790-1825" (Michigan S. U.).

Recently, at the annual National History Day competition in Washington, I helped judge the middle-school papers. One requirement of the competition is that each competitor has an interview with the judges. A question that worked well to get those very nervous 12 year olds talking about their research was: how did you first get interested in your topic? When it came time for me to discuss my own work, I remembered this question, so I asked, how did I first get interested in William Bartram?

My first significant exposure to Bartram came while I was researching a paper focusing on American travel literature, more specifically Americans traveling to exotic places during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bartram's *Travels* was one of many travel narratives that I read but it stood out as one of the most compelling. I completed the paper on travel literature, making note of the phenomenon of "speechlessness" that struck all of the travelers studied. Each of the travelers reached a place in his or her journey where the sight of some vista or natural creation left them dumb. This was interesting to me because I had been looking for ways to examine how Americans conceived of nature. In those early days of my research I searched for a topic that would allow me to address broader questions of the connections between concepts of the infinite and concepts of the finite or – even more basically, the intersections between science and religion.

I confess that I lost interest in travel literature as a genre, but I continued to be drawn to Bartram. The *Travels*, as both a scientific treatise and a spiritual celebration, stood out as an obvious choice to begin an exploration of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual convergence of the belief in a divine power and the scientific study of nature. Bartram's language lends itself to discussions of how scientific exploration affects and is affected by the scientist's spiritual beliefs. Not only is his major work one that provided me with a

window into the very issues that most held my scholarly interest but also Bartram is an appealing character. I imagine him to be unassuming, gentle, and of generous spirit. So, I was hooked.

Over time, the process of researching Bartram has led me away from the *Travels*; in fact, my dissertation will not include an analysis of that work, but focus on Bartram's later years. After Bartram returned from the Southeast, he continued to work as a naturalist, leaving the traveling to a younger generation. He published a number of short pieces, (including "An Account of the Species, Hybrids, and other Varieties of the Vine in North America," "Anecdotes of an American Crow," and "Observations on the Pea Fly or Beetle, and Fruit Curculio"), continued to work in the family seed and plant business, and conducted experimental and observational research. Most importantly, for my study, Bartram did not work alone. He was surrounded by a community of scientists, working to make sense of their natural world. By focusing on the people, their publications and the intellectual paradigms of the community that lived and worked with Bartram, my study traces the end of the Enlightenment and follows the intellectual developments that replaced the eighteenth-century ideals in scientific communities in America.

It seems somehow appropriate that my research started with a study of travel literature because doing a dissertation is in so many ways analogous to taking a journey. At the beginning of both the traveler is filled with wild enthusiasm, anxious to see and do everything, excited to visit every site or track down every piece of information. But over time the topic would become more focused for the researcher just as the traveler would start to select only the activities of the greatest interest. By now I am beginning to tire a little, but the interest that I felt in those early days has not waned and my love for the topic keeps me putting one intellectual foot in front of the other. The vote of confidence that I received with the Fothergill Award has been a metaphorical roadside inn to rest my anxiety and to strengthen my resolve. Perhaps one day soon, our paths will cross and we can share stories of our "travels" with each other.

*Elizabeth Fairhead
American Historical Association
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On the Bartram Trail: 2001-2004

A Bartram Trail sign set my path. I knew that William Bartram had skirted the Smokies, fought alligators in the St. Johns basin and searched the flatlands of the Mississippi at Baton Rouge. And I had a notion of his discoveries and descriptions of a beautiful and diverse America in the days of the nation's birth. But here eroded ditches, rusting mobile homes and raw, ugly clearcuts marred a place where he had walked in the shade of forests beyond my imagination.

Tossing a discarded beer can into a trash bag, I wondered: *If I were to follow Bartram into the valleys, town sites and swamps that he described, what would I find?* After a couple of years of pondering, I bought a slightly worn copy of Harper and set off on my odyssey.

Ardent followers of Bartram know much of what I found: a stadium at Cow Ford (Jacksonville), condos at Mount Hope, and a propane dealer, dance studio and food bank surrounding the mound at Nucassee (Nikwasi.)

On the Mississippi levee at Manchac, where Bartram "stood for a time as it were fascinated by the magnificence of the great sire of rivers," levee crews had parked seven blue tractors. The behemoth machines, their yellow rotary mowers behind them like tails of steel beavers, presided over the river, assuring that it remain within its man-made banks and not spill its sediment into the Louisiana marshes to restore and nourish them.

Only the faintest trace of the "noble Indian highway" at Mount Royal remains. A grass air-strip, the soul of the Mount Royal Airpark, cuts it at a right angle. Residents can glide over the surrounding pines and oaks, bounce along the runway, and taxi to the driveways of their homes beside the St. Johns River.

With *Travels* in one hand and an atlas in the other, I sense the effects of the explosion of machinery upon America. Bartram traveled on the verge of the industrial age. The cotton gin was less than twenty years ahead of him, the steamboat just three decades away. Rails would carry trains along his route within sixty years and men with saws would follow, wasting forests and burying pitcher plants under brush piles. By 1909, Exxon would refine oil near William Dunbar's plantation at Baton Rouge.

Bartram's world was filled with eccentricities and surprises, but our nation is homogenizing. A Whopper at the Burger King on the banks of the St. Johns, near Charlottia, matches the ones the kids munch in Atlanta.

The "trade goods" in the Walmart Supercenter a few miles from Fort Toulouse are identical to those in the Vale of Cowee.

Not every spot on Bartram's trail is degraded, developed and standardized. Wild azaleas bloom in the woodland at Ebenezer. "Trout" are smaller and alligators fewer at the Battle Lagoon (now Stagger Mud Lake), but the water lettuce and water chinquapin thrive, aided by the Corps of Engineers' persistent work to rid the St. Johns River of destructive, invasive water hyacinth and hydrilla. Although armies forced the Cherokee families of Cowee into reservations, their mound rises, grassy and unplowed, beside the clean waters of the Little Tennessee River. And, Bartram's word pictures can guide a hiker to Falling Creek Falls in Rabun County, Georgia, where forests are restoring themselves, tree ring by tree ring.

My travels impress me that, while Bartram was an astute observer and an eloquent spokesman for nature and Indians, he was a sorry futurist. Sunbury, Georgia is a suburban settlement with condos and one shrimp boat. Hardly a "rising city." And the agriculture based cities he predicted at Alachua and the Alabama village (Fort Toulouse) will never be built. How could he have known that the agrarian economy, spread across four continents and ten millennia, would collapse under the weight of industrialization?

What he lacked in predicting technology he made up for in his sense of human capacity to mutilate nature. He awoke one morning at Mount Royal (probably close to the pink, stuccoed two-story where a white-haired lady scoops her poodle's droppings from her manicured lawn). Bartram had visited the site fifteen years before with his father. Over those years, a planter had farmed, then abandoned, the place. Noticing the degradation the planter left behind, he prayed: "look down upon us, we beseech thee, with an eye of pity and compassion."

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Contact Tom Hallock
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Book Reviews

Deborah Kogan Ray. *The Flower Hunter: William Bartram, America's First Naturalist* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004). \$17.00, 40 pp.

The subject of this gorgeously illustrated children's book needs no introduction to the readers of this newsletter, but the book itself provides a very nice introduction to the life of William Bartram for the uninitiated, both young and old. The book presents an illustrated adaptation from the diaries of the young Bartram, who already at eight years old was described as "my young botanist" by his father John. Deborah Kogan Ray has created a fine picture biography, surprising both for the wealth of information she is able to pack into such a small space and for the simplicity of style that makes the story easy to understand for young readers. My six-year-old was captivated throughout the story by the beauty of the pictures and the excitement of exploring, and my eight-year-old was inspired to renew her own journaling efforts.

The story is told in the form of a journal, written by the young William Bartram, and is accompanied by very helpful maps and vivid illustrations of scenes from his various journeys. Begun on his eighth birthday, the brief but evocative journal entries tell of the boy's early interest in botany, and of his longing to accompany his father John Bartram on his explorations. He learns to make detailed renderings of leaves, and to identify the various types of plants in the region. He tells of his encounter with a friend of his father's, Benjamin Franklin, who explains to him the marvels of electricity. He recounts his amazement at the great waterfalls of the Catskills, that he visited with his father on their first long journey, and of his early decision to spend his life portraying nature's beauty.

Historical details, that could serve as the basis for further discussion with children, are introduced casually, in the matter-of-fact manner of a child. The journals tell, for example, how a journey had to be cancelled because the British and French were fighting over control of the colonies, and because the French had aroused the anger of the native peoples against the British. As the journals progress, we see a boy grow into a man, who is both sensitive to nature and respectful of the diverse cultures of the various inhabitants of the American land. Particularly poignant is the subtle manner in which Ray portrays the young man's attachment to and feeling for his aging father.



Barbara Middleton, Annie Crenshaw, and Dr. Michael Daniel join other Bartram Friends at the dedication of a new trail marker in Butler County, Ala.

In a pivotal scene, whose heroic aspects are underplayed by the journalist, the father has to be rescued from drowning. Just as William had once been too young to accompany his father, it is clear that now John has become too old to be companion to his son on his wanderings. But William can continue to bring home his discoveries, and share stories of his adventures. On one such return, he brings seeds and a drawing of a beautiful but as yet unnamed tree to his elderly father. Although the father, now nearly blind, cannot see the drawing, they name the tree species *Franklinia* in honor of their old friend Benjamin Franklin, and are able to plant the seeds on their farm. As Ray points out in her afterword, which includes more historical detail about both father and son in addition to a number of reproductions from the actual drawings of William Bartram, *Franklinia* continues to exist today only as a result of Bartram's plantings.

In this very fine book, Ray is thus able to tell the story of a remarkable man, evoke the early events and culture of what would become the United States of America, illustrate the wonders of observing nature and the power of journaling, and help her readers understand the processes of growing up, of choosing a vocation, and of aging. That she can do all of these things in such a simple and unassuming manner, makes her accomplishment all the more remarkable. I would definitely recommend this book for naturalists, young and old, and for children interested in the early days of America.

Nathan Andersen
Eckerd College

John Kunkel Small. *From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*. Forewords by Bill Belleville, Randy Mejeur, and Jay Exum (Sanford, Fla.: Seminole Soil & Water Conservation District, 2004.) [www.sswcb.org]. \$14.95, 121 pp.

In Spring 1922, the botanist John Kunkel Small (1869-1938) took a jalopy tour through the state of Florida. He had been covering this ground since 1901, and as curator of the New York Botanical Garden, he was in an excellent position to assess the region's environmental health. What he saw terrified him – middens stripped for roadfill, earth scarred by fire, botanic treasures lost to rapid development. In Small's blunt words: "a reckless, furious, even a mad desire to destroy every-thing natural." He chronicled his trip in a prophetic book, *From Eden to the Sahara: Florida's Tragedy*, a slim but hard-hitting volume that can be read in one sitting. It is the complement to *Travels* (indeed, several of William's flowers were later described by Small); the precursor to Marjory Stoneman Douglas; a key but unheralded piece in the fight for Everglades National Park.

The book has been out of print for years, however. Its one printing, in 1929, was through the Science Press (Lancaster, Pa.) and used copies of the first edition can run to \$200. This current publication was a labor of love. Mike Barr, of the Seminole Soil & Water Conservation District tracked down a copy, nature writer Bill Belleville served as de facto editor-publisher, and others contributed their time – keying text, adding a glossary, and designing a finished product that rivals anything you'll find at your local bookstore.

Small was a grumpy sort, but it's precisely this capacity for outrage that reaches us today. "Yesterday a botanical paradise! Tomorrow, the desert!" he bellows. Literary fancy and rhetorical tone were not his strong points (natural history was). Still, environmental historians and wildlife ecologists will find great use in Small's botanic lists. Others will be fascinated by his explorations of Indian midden flora. And while Small's thoughts on the fate of Indians can sound like warmed-over Darwinism, anyone who reads *The Traveller* will Amen this self-proclaimed prophet Daniel's case for setting aside just a sliver of vanishing Florida. "This natural history museum should be preserved," Small warned, "not only for its beauty, but also for its educational value, for it is within easy reach of the majority of the population of the United States." Yes. Puc Puggy would agree.

Thomas Hallock

Editor, BTC Newsletter

And bear in mind

Nancy E. Hoffmann & John C. Van Horne (eds.). *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram, 1699-1777* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004). \$40.00, 227 pp.

Splendidly illustrated with maps and plates, exhaustively annotated, this book provides a definitive one-volume source on John Bartram and his world. Based upon papers presented at the 1999 symposium, *John Bartram, 300 – A Gathering*, at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

Thomas Hallock. *From the Fallen Tree: Frontier Narratives, Environmental Politics, and the Roots of a National Pastoral, 1749-1826* (Chapel Hill: U. North Carolina Press, 2003). \$19.95, 297 pp.

Literary study of nature writing and frontier politics in the early republic. "Seemlessly combines cultural critique and literary readings" (Wayne Franklin). "Buy three copies and give them to your friends" (Tom's mom).

Sue Ann Prince (ed.). *Stuffing Birds, Pressing Plants, Shaping Knowledge: Natural History in North America, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003). \$20.00, 113 pp.

Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title at Philosophical Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. Beautifully illustrated articles discuss the role of display in popular and academic science.

Bernard Romans. *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*. Ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: U. Alabama P, 1999). \$30.00, 442 pp.

Definitive edition of an essential work.

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