

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
www.bartramtrail.org

Spring 2004

President's Notes

The weather forecast was gloomy – wet, chilly and just plain nasty. The kind of weather that makes one even fonder of a warm bed. But avoiding the storm clouds and pelting rain was not an option. As my husband and I drove toward the appointed rendezvous for the Tallapoosa River canoe float on the last day of the 2003 Bartram Trail Conference, my thoughts were just as gloomy as the weather. I feared the nocturnal storms would have convinced folks to skip the field trip and instead, make an early start back home – to Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Florida and various parts of Alabama – even to England. What a surprise waited for me at the launch site!

Gathered there upon our arrival was a great gaggle of wet and smiling Bartram Trail members, swaddled in rain gear of every hue, eagerly anticipating a canoe trip whatever the heavens cared to deliver. Old and young, men and women, these fantastic happy people had come from far and near to view the greatly changed landscape so beautifully described by Bartram over two hundred years before. Away we went. And as canoe after canoe left the launch site and we paddled toward our destination of Fort Toulouse, the clouds gave way to happier skies. What a wonderful day it was as we quietly paddled together, enjoying conversation, local landmarks and a variety of birds and vegetation. I could not help but think that William Bartram would have been very proud of our intrepid group and would have enjoyed the paddle.

Like the canoe paddle, I think the rest of the conference was a great success. From the opening barbeque on the steps of the Alabama Department of Archives and History to the picnic pavilion at Fort Toulouse, we had a marvelous time. The speakers were all great and for those of you who missed the conference I can only say you missed some of the most exciting scholarly presentations, beautiful artifacts, the most visually appealing natural history

presentations and certainly the most entertaining visit by William Bartram (aka John Hall) that the BTC crowd has seen in a long time. Next year, we re-assemble at Augusta. I can't wait!

We have great plans for the coming year. In Gainesville, Charlotte Porter and others are beginning work on a multi-media project that will take William Bartram into classrooms. A number of new Bartram book projects are in production by various members. We are planning to publish our conference proceedings. Speakers such as Brad Sanders are making appearances far and wide educating public audiences about William Bartram and his world. And students and researchers from a variety of fields across America are embarking on Bartram-related projects.

It is a great time to stop and consider the benefits of belonging to the Bartram Trail Conference. Our web site is the first stop for all internet research on Bartram, and our number of "hits" increases annually. We provide information to a variety of environmental and historical and educational organizations about Bartram and the eighteenth-century South. The BTC provides a place for like-minded people (i.e., Bartram nuts) to gather and enjoy discussion, fellowship and share ideas. Our newsletter is a wonderful source of information on Bartram-related news and events.



Billy Bartram (or is that John Hall?) paying a visit to the BTC meeting in Montgomery. Photo by Chuck Spornick.

I encourage all of you to renew your membership in the BTC and also consider an additional donation to help fund our Fothergill Award and get other projects, such as membership brochures, underway. We are busy planning for future events and working to educate our children about history, literature and the natural world. Help keep this wonderful organization afloat by your membership commitment and your participation at our events. And if you have an idea about a Bartram project, don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to seeing all of you soon somewhere along Bartram's trail.

*Kathryn H. Braund, President
Bartram Trail Conference*

Canoe Paddle Planned in Alabama

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 May 1. Depending on water levels, we will paddle from French's Lake landing to Upper Bryant's Landing. The route is not long and has been run by paddlers with little experience. It 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 Bartram Canoe Trail has been reorganized over the past three years by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to provide an enjoyable experience for everyone.

A limited number of canoes will be provided 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 launch locations.

Check the BTC web site (www.bartramtrail.org) for information about the trip, including local hotel and camping accommodations.

The Bartram Trail Conference and The Southern Appalachian Trail Initiative

Who says that history doesn't repeat itself? In 1975, the Bartram Trail Conference was established as part of America's Bicentennial observance to identify William Bartram's contribution to American heritage and the heritage of the Southeast. Part of their work involved identifying the route of the prominent native-born naturalist in eight southern states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana).

The Conference works to promote public trails and historical sites within the general area of Bartram's route [1]. The original dream for the Bartram Trail was a Trail of about 2500 mi. going from Charleston, S.C. to Baton Rouge, La., which would correspond to Bartram's original route. Because of development on much of this land in the 200 years since Bartram's travels it was only possible to construct a small section of the trail envisioned and the Conference created a "string of pearls concept," which identifies sites within a approximately fifty mile corridor that follows Bartram's most likely route [2,3].

In 2002, the American Hiking Society, together with the National Park Service [4], established a regionally focused program, the Southern Appalachians Initiative (SAI), to build a conservation constituency among trail volunteers, conservation organizations, and agencies to help link up approximately 5,000 miles of hiking trails in the Southeast. The effort is regionally focused in Bartram's eight southern states mentioned above plus Kentucky and southern Virginia (Bartram traveled through Virginia but not through Kentucky). Some of the trails are/will be in the Bartram corridor.

Over the past year, the SAI has formed a Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition of regional hiking organizations to carry out this mission: (1) Promote a regional network of long-distance hiking trails. (2) Protect the natural hiking trail corridors by jointly raising the visibility of the value and importance of hiking trails to the public. (3) Build hiking trails in the Southeast, as well as the relationships between the organizations and individuals who are seeing our foot trails.

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Here is a current list of coalition members: Alabama Hiking Trail Society; Alabama Trails Association Appalachian Trail Conference; Benton MacKaye Trail Association; Carolina Mountain Club; Chattanooga Hiking Club; Cumberland Trail Conference; Florida Trail Association; Foothills Trail Conference; Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail; Georgia Appalachian Trail Club; Georgia Bartram Trail Group; Kentucky Trails Association; Hiwassee Hiking Club; Mountain High Hikers; Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club; Palmetto Conservation Foundation-Palmetto Trails; Pine Mountain Trail Conference; Rivanna Trails Foundation; Smoky Mountains Hiking Club; Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club; Tennessee Trails Association.

The American Hiking Society and National Park Service have established a regional office in Chattanooga, Tenn. with the mission of carrying out the goals of the SAI. Each member organization endorses the mission and pledges to support it. The only cost for membership in the Coalition is time. There is no fee.

If you are in an organization in the southeastern states that supports the ideals of the Coalition consider joining and throwing your support behind this important project. Hiking clubs that work on trails and sponsor hikes should strongly consider joining the Coalition to support this trail effort in the Southeast. You can find application forms on the web site [4].

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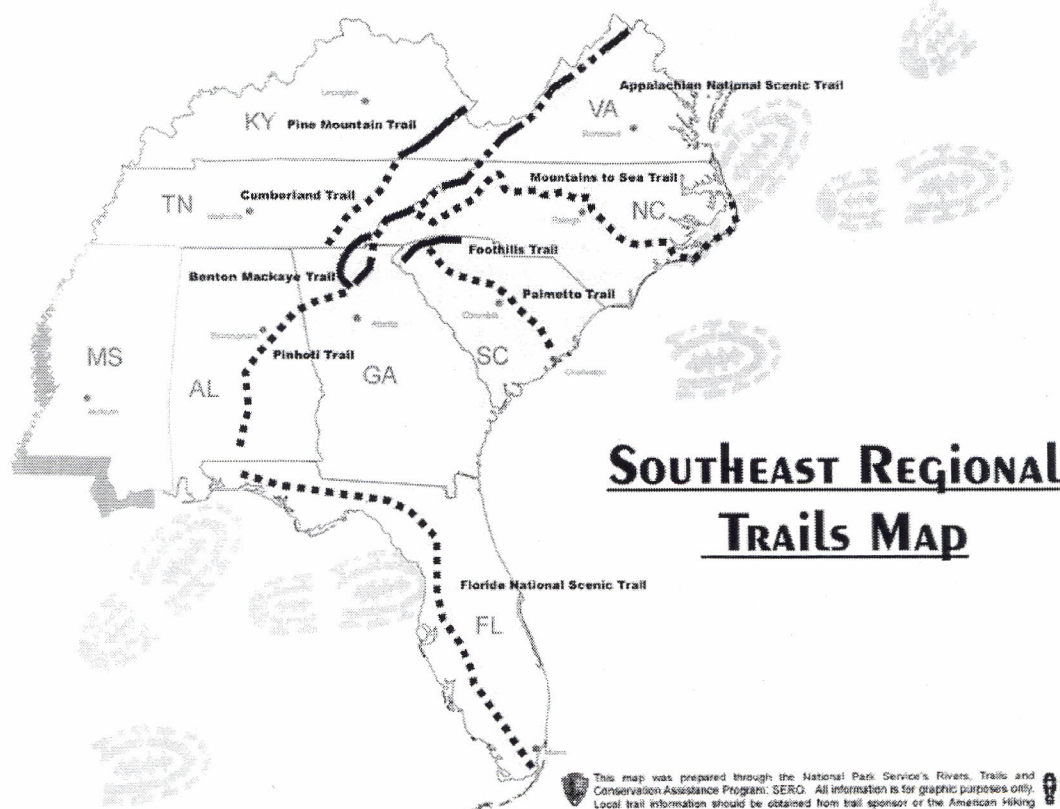
Notes

[1] See the Bartram Trail Conference web site (www.bartramtrail.org).

[2] Brad Sanders, *Guide to William Bartram's Travels*. Athens: Fevertree Press, 2002 (www.fevertreepress.com).

[3] Charles D. Spornick, Alan R. Cattier, and Robert J. Greene, *An Outdoor Guide to Bartram's Travels*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003.

[4] See the American Hiking Society web site for the Southern Appalachian Initiative (<http://www.americanhiking.org/alliance/sai.html>).



This map was prepared through the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program: SERO. All information is for graphic purposes only. Local trail information should be obtained from trail sponsor or the American Hiking Society.

How the Heart Opens

Editor's Note: The following selection begins the chapter "How the Heart Opens," from Janisse Ray's American Book Award winning Ecology of a Cracker Childhood. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1999 (www.milkweed.org). Ray's memoir of growing up in a junkyard, and amidst the longleaf pines of south Georgia, belongs on the bookshelf of any BTC member; thanks to for her allowing us to share this account of a botanic specimen that also fascinated William Bartram.

One essential event or presence can save a child, can flower in her and claim her for its own. The French novelist and humanist Albert Camus said, "A man's work is nothing but this slow trek to rediscover, through the detours of art, those two or three great and simple images in whose presence his heart first opened."

For me, growing up among piles of scrap iron and glittering landmines of broken glass that scattered ivory scars across my body, among hordes of rubber tires that streaked my legs black, among pokeweed and locust, I attribute the opening of my heart to one clump of pitcher plants that still survives on the backside of my father's junkyard. I know it now to be the hooded species, *Sarracenia minor*, that sends the red bonnets of its traps knee-high out of soggy ground. In spring it blooms loose, yellow, exotic tongues.

In fifth grade my 4-H project was carnivorous plants. The only information I could find was a short entry in the outdated set of *Encyclopedia Americana* we owned. On a poster I sketched the innards of a pitcher plant, showing how its upright, trumpet-shaped leaves are lined with downward-pointing hairs, how it lures insects through its lips with a sweet-smelling nectar. The insects can descend but never climb out again. I sliced open one of the *Sarracenia* stems to show the judges at the regional competition in Jesup that it was full of a ripe stew of insect parts – ant bodies, fly legs, beetle wings – but they weren't impressed.

The pitcher plant taught me to love rain, welcoming days of drizzle and sudden thundering downpours, drops trailing down its hoods and leaves, soaking the ground. In my fascination with the pitcher plant, I learned to detest artificial bouquets of plastic and silk. Its carnivory taught me the sinlessness of

predation and its columns of dead insects the glory of purpose no matter how small. In that plant I was looking for a *manera de ser*, a way of being – no, not for a way of being but of being able to be. I was looking for a patch of ground that supported the survival of rare, precious, and endangered biota within my own heart.

My brothers and sister and I worked hard, cleaning bricks and hauling junk, tearing down old buildings and pulling nails and stacking lumber, handing Daddy tools and feeding the sheep and cutting grass, nailing shingles and ferrying Sheetrock and measuring and sawing boards, and Daddy had neither the time nor the inclination to take us hiking or camping or fishing. Not a hard-hearted man, he could have paved the country with his empathy to the down-trodden and his compassion for hurt animals, although he wouldn't waste his breath offering congratulations to anyone enjoying health, happiness, and success. Nature wasn't ill regarded, it was superfluous. Nature got in the way.

One morning, out scrambling to get a tractor running, he stepped on a toad. The loam of the junkyard was rich and fertile, streaming with healthy earthworms, mole crickets, and warty toads camouflaged against the ground. They could be found in cool, moist places – under boards and cement blocks – where they burrowed to keep from dessicating. When you picked a toad up, it peed instantly.

Fothergill Award

Ms. Elizabeth Fairhead is the recipient of the 2003-2004 Fothergill Award. Ms. Fairhead was one of a number of scholars who competed for the grant of \$500.00. She is a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University and she will use the award to assist with completion of her dissertation, which is tentatively titled, "William Bartram and Natural History in Philadelphia, 1800-1815." The Fothergill Award is funded by generous contributions of our membership. To help support future research, please see the membership application/renewal form.

Reviews

The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810. Ed. and Intro. by H. Thomas Foster II. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003. Cloth, \$75.00, Paper, \$34.95.

Among historical documents on the Creek Indians of the late eighteenth century, William Bartram's writings are rivaled in importance only by the accumulated jottings of Benjamin Hawkins. Appointed "Principle Temporary Agent for Indian Affairs South of the Ohio River" by President Washington in 1796, Hawkins for the next twenty years devoted all his considerable energy to "civilizing" the southern Indians by advocating a shift from traditional farming to cattle raising and slave-based plantation agriculture. His efforts to impose the U.S. government's "program of civilization" met with unequivocal rejection among the Upper Creeks of central Alabama and directly precipitated the Red-stick War of 1813-1814.

Despite Hawkins's appalling misreading of Creek reactions to "civilization," considerable evidence (much of it found in this volume) indicates how much he learned about the Creeks and their culture during his two decades living among them. In fact, Hawkins's writings reflect a deeper knowledge than Bartram acquired during his comparatively brief visits to Creek Country, when he necessarily relied on white traders to answer his many questions about the native Southerners. Taken together, the writings of these two sensitive and observant Anglo-Americans offer richly complementary portraits of the Creek Indians during their traumatic transition from an independent people to a dependent nation caught within the borders of the young United States.

H. Thomas Foster II has included three major works to represent Hawkins's writings. Lengthiest of the three is a facsimile reprint of the "Letters of Benjamin Hawkins," originally published in 1916 as volume 9 of *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*. Hawkins's important "A Sketch of the Creek Country, in the Years 1798 and 1799" also appears in facsimile as it was published by the Georgia Historical Society in 1848. Thirdly, although first in this volume, Foster has included a previously unpublished "Viatory" or field log (the original is now in the Library of Congress) kept by Hawkins as he traveled

throughout the Southeast between 1797 and 1810. This viatory contains much new information on the cultural and natural landscapes of the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century South. Modern geographical sleuths will undoubtedly enjoy the challenge of re-tracing Hawkins's perambulations across the region.

This volume makes accessible to modern readers the bulk of Hawkins's published works. Despite the editor's view that this compilation "constitutes the complete works of Hawkins," he does acknowledge the numerous other letters found in archives across the country that remain unpublished. Hawkins was a prodigious correspondent, and the volume of his surviving letters suggests how great our loss from the fire that consumed many of his personal papers immediately after his death. Some additional material has appeared in print in the *American State Papers, Indian Affairs* (Washington, DC: 1832) and *Letters, Journals and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins*, edited by C. L. Grant, two volumes (Savannah, Ga.: The Beehive Press, 1980). There still remains a need for a fully annotated edition of Hawkins's writing, but, in the meantime, Foster's compilation is a handy introduction to Benjamin Hawkins and the early historic South.

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Cold Mountain. Dir. Anthony Minghella. Miramax, 2003.

Let me begin with a couple of caveats. First, I'm giving away the plot. So if you haven't seen *Cold Mountain* yet, head over to your local two-dollar theater or drive-in (this one needs the big screen!) and check it out before reading any further. Second: I have to confess that I had my doubts about this one. Good books often make bad movies and a film adaptation of Charles Frazier's novel struck me as a recipe for disaster. I expected the worst kind of cinematic epic – orchestra swells over a sprawling plot; blood and guts and candle-lit love scenes; beautiful faces wandering through the rain-swept woods. Think Daniel Day Lewis in *Last of the Mohicans*; think Natty Bumppo with a southern accent.

Yet the movie, like the novel, somehow works. Certainly some strange dislocations occur. You could ask, for example, where are the black folks? Screenwriter-director Anthony Minghella made a Civil War flick in which slavery has all but disappeared. The genteel Reverend Monroe (Donald Sutherland) and his daughter Ada (played by the too-beautiful-to-believe Nicole Kidman) work (in the absence of a better word) a North Carolina farm without servants or field hands. *Whatever*, you might protest, *this is a movie, not history* – and so we turn to the improbabilities of plot. *Cold Mountain* (both novel and film) intertwine two story lines through a romance that is itself pretty but difficult to believe.

Here's how it goes: Having spoken just three times to his beloved Ada, the hero Inman (played with graceful stoicism by Jude Law) sets off for war, gets wounded, goes AWOL, and journeys back to Cold Mountain and Ada. It's all quite epic: a mix of the *Odyssey*, Faulkner, and *Foxfire* manuals. Back on the farm, meanwhile, the crystalline Nicole Kidman (whoops! – Ada) transforms from Charleston transcendentalist to farm girl, having been rescued by the scrappy survivor Ruby Thewes (Renée Zellweger). Ruby kills a surly chicken, gets food on the table and the farm back to rights, then partners with Ada in what is the closest thing to a same-sex relationship that our current regime will allow. They marry, in a sense, both in their affection for one another and in their shared love for the land, showing (without a hint of preachiness) how two women can survive on their own. When poor Inman makes it back to Cold Mountain, the war will have dealt him a final, crushing irony: He is no longer necessary.

Of course Ada and Inman must have their moment. They profess their love in a drippy scene rescued only by a comic intrusion by Ruby ("if y'all are going to wimble wimble all night," then something about flatulence and a cow), and the stars do what audiences across America paid for them to do. But love needs more than good looks and theirs cannot last: a stringy-blond from the Home Guard (the devil incarnate) kills off Inman and the journey ends with our hero dying on the mountain (and in the arms of the woman) that he called home.

But thankfully the story does not stop there – and it's in the closing that *Cold Mountain* comes into thematic focus. The final scene jumps forward several years, to springtime on the Monroe farm. Ada

and her daughter (Inman's legacy) tend to a lamb that will not suckle (how far this former debutante has come!) while a voice-over by Kidman insists that she thinks about her one-true-love everyday. It's Easter (the lamb ... get it?) and Ada sits down for a outdoor holiday dinner with her makeshift family – Ruby, Ruby's pliant husband and redeemed father, the children, plus a stray friend. Given the good life that Ruby and Ada apparently carved out for themselves, in other words, the wistful homage to Inman hardly seems convincing. The movie's ending is in fact much closer to a feminist utopia than to the conventional Hollywood romance. A minor episode in the final scene confirms this line of thinking: Ruby sends her doormat husband back to the kitchen to fetch some cider. One cannot imagine Inman fetching cider; he does not fit in here. Were he watching from Heaven, I bet, Inman would be thanking that surly member of the Home Guard for sparing him the wrath of Ruby Thewes. But I doubt most audiences saw it my way.

Funny things, pastorals. They work in complicated ways. And the touchstone of *Cold Mountain* is, after all, an emotive and geographic place. Charles Frazier and Minghella draw from not only one of the oldest modes in the western literary tradition (in classical times, two rustic shepherds would talk on a hillside, offering a veiled commentary on corrupt Rome), but one of the more slippery ones. They use nature in a conventional manner – as the counterpoint of war, as the balm for a troubled mind – and they give the hero a copy William Bartram's *Travels* to remind us that, indeed, this movie is about place. Bartram provides a heart's compass to guide the soldier home.

Another funny thing about pastorals: they can redeem the most implausible turns of plot, giving weight to a story that might otherwise feel syrupy or implausible. And in *Cold Mountain*, it's Ruby and Ada on the farm that one cannot quite dismiss. Inman endured a hellish passage, for sure, but the real action takes place back home – where the two women forge a kind of visionary landscape. (For an earlier version of this prototype, check out Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!*) Ruby has the practical know-how, Ada has the education to recognize a literary idyll; together, the two offer a pastoral vision, the two eyes of one sight. Place is the movie's focal point. (Music exercises a strong presence in the film for similar reasons. T. Bone Burnett, who managed that department, recognized

that the fiddle-playing and shape note hymns provided a true expression of locale.)

But I'm prattling on.

So to close: Why Bartram? Does he not provide a voice for the American Southeast? By the time Inman makes it home, his beloved Ada had all but married Ruby already – exchanging a bracelet in his absence, declaring their love, making their lives twain in the recovery of a farm. Like William Bartram's journeys two hundred years before, theirs was a story of the land.

Thomas Hallock
BTC Newsletter Editor

Forthcoming

Nancy Hoffman and John Van Horne (eds.). *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram (1699-1777)*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003. \$40.

The Academy of Natural Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, John Bartram Association, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and the Philadelphia Botanical Club sponsored a three-day symposium in May 1999 to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of John Bartram's birth. This collection of essays arises from that symposium. All of the essays contribute to the telling of the story of the multifaceted John Bartram, whose life spanned most of the eighteenth century and who was called "the greatest natural botanist in the world." The work is published in cooperation with the Library Company of Philadelphia and John Bartram Association.

Volume includes contributions by several BTC members!

Recently Published

Carolyn Ross Johnston. *Cherokee Women in Crisis: Trail of Tears, Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003. \$48.00, cloth \$29.95.

American Indian women have traditionally played vital roles in social hierarchies at the family, clan, and tribal levels. In the Cherokee Nation, specifically, women and men are considered equal contributors to the culture. With this study, however, we learn that three key historical events in the 19th and early 20th centuries – removal, the Civil War, and allotment of their lands – forced a radical renegotiation of gender roles and relations in Cherokee society.

Carolyn Johnston (who is related to John Ross, principal chief of the Nation) looks at how Cherokee women navigated these crises in ways that allowed them to retain their traditional assumptions, ceremonies, and beliefs and to thereby preserve their culture. In the process, they both lost and retained power. The author sees a poignant irony in the fact that Europeans who encountered Native societies in which women had significant power attempted to transform them into patriarchal ones and that American women struggled for hundreds of years to achieve the kind of equality that Cherokee women had enjoyed for more than a millennium.

Johnston examines the different aspects of Cherokee women's power: authority in the family unit and the community, economic independence, personal autonomy, political clout, and spirituality. Weaving a great-grandmother theme throughout the narrative, she begins with the protest of Cherokee women against removal and concludes with the recovery of the mother town of Kituwah and the elections of Wilma Mankiller and Joyce Dugan as principal chiefs of the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokees.