By October 1762 the Moravians had been actively settling, building and generally establishing themselves in the North Carolina Piedmont for nine years. They had purchased a tract of nearly 100,000 acres, which they called Wachovia, from John Carteret, the Earl of Granville, a Proprietor of the Royal Province of North Carolina.

As word spread that these reliable people were establishing towns in the wilderness, travelers regularly visited them in their first two settlements, Bethabara and Bethania. Four other communities followed, including the primary town for government and trade, Salem, in 1766.

The Moravians kept voluminous written records, and the 1762 Diary for Bethabara and Bethania records:

Oct. 2. A botanist from Philadelphia stopped on his journey and inspected our medical garden, and certain other places. He said the slope below our God's Acre [cemetery] was a great treasure-house."

This botanist was John Bartram (1699-1777) who was traveling in the south, and he recorded visiting the Moravians in two letters written in the autumn of 1762. He seems to have been the first of a long list of notable American and European naturalists and botanists who found their way to the Moravian lands in North Carolina.

His son, William, also made extensive travels through the southeast. The result of Williams' travels was his book, Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida... published in Philadelphia by James and Johnson, 1791.

Unlike his father, it does not seem that William visited the Moravians, and it is not known how much the Moravians stayed in contact with the Bartrams. But by May 1792 Samuel Kramsch of Salem had ordered a copy of William Bartram's new book for £15 through a prominent Philadelphia merchant, Godfrey Haga, also a Moravian.
William Bartram’s sponsor for his travels in the southern colonies was Dr. John Fothergill. Fothergill, was a well known physician, Quaker philanthropist, botanist, campaigner for the abolition of slavery, and the owner of one of the best known gardens in England. Fothergill built a very successful career as a doctor and in 1762 he was able to purchase a house and thirty acres near West Ham, northeast of London. The estate, named Rooke Hall, was previously owned by Admiral Elliot and dates back to the late sixteenth century. Elliot had begun improving the property, including the planting of Cedars of Lebanon from seeds brought from the Near East. Fothergill began enlarging the estate, renamed the home Upton House, and created a grander garden where he could feature plants acquired from foreign lands. He travelled from Upton to London to attend his medical practice, but it is not certain that he spent all of his time at Upton House for he was much in demand as a physician. Possibly Upton House was a retreat that he used as often as he could. A local legend says that Fothergill had so little time to devote to his garden during daylight hours, because of the demand of his patients, that he would inspect the garden in the evening by lantern light.

Fothergill began adding acreage to the estate and built hot houses attached to Upton House. He enlisted the help of sailors in searching for new and interesting plants. He paid collectors to travel to Canada, the Alps, and Africa. Fothergill employed fifteen men to work the gardens and artists to draw his plants. He employed Daniel Solander to catalogue the plants, including those acquired from William Bartram. A contemporary description of the estate says, “On the banks of a winding canal rare and exotic shrubs flourished. In the midst of winter, evergreens were clothed in full verdure, without exposure to the open air; a glass door from the house gave entrance to a suite of hot and greenhouses, nearly 260 feet in extent, containing upwards of 3,400 species of exotics, whose foliage was a perpetual verdure, and in the open ground in summer nearly 3,000 distinct species of plants and shrubs vied with the natives of Asia and Africa.

“That science should not suffer a loss when a plant he had cultivated should die, he liberally paid the best artists to draw the new ones as they came to perfection; and so numerous were they that he found it needful to employ three or four artists in order to keep pace with their increase. His garden was known all over Europe. Foreigners of all ranks asked permission to see it.”

Fothergill died in 1780. From the time of his death to 1786 the property was in the hands of the executors of the estate and his sister, Anne, lived on in the house. James Sheppard bought the house in 1787 and renamed it Ham House, possibly because there was another Upton House nearby. After his death in 1812 Sheppard’s son-in-law, Samuel Gurney, purchased the estate and lived there until he died in 1856. The house was demolished in 1872. In 1874 the Gurney family offered the estate for sale to West Ham Corporation, at below value, for use as a park and the West Ham Park opened on July 20, 1874. It is today the largest park in the Newham Borough of London at 77 acres. All that remains of Upton House is a stone cairn that was erected when the park was built.

Today West Ham park is one of east London's most popular parks. It has seven acres of ornamental gardens and is noted for its nursery that supplies 200 species of plants for surrounding parks. The web site for West Ham Park is http://bit.ly/T9Dj5v

Park opening – The Park is open from 7.30am every day until dusk. The Toilets are open from 7.45am until 15 minutes before closing. Children’s Playground – The playground is open from 9.30am every day until 30 minutes before park closing time (6pm in the summer months). Catering – An ice-cream van is available in the summer providing refreshments. Picnics are welcome and benches are provided in the Park.

If you would like to tell us your ideas for how the park could be improved, contact us by emailing parks.gardens@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Want to get involved? To find out more about helping to shape future plans for the park and volunteering opportunities please contact the Park Office on 020 8472 3584 or parks.gardens@cityoflondon.gov.uk or see www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/westhampark.
John Bartram and his family influenced generations of artists and explorers, by modeling passionate observation and discovery of nature. The American Society of Botanical Artists, in collaboration with Bartram’s Garden in Philadelphia, PA, is curating an exhibition of original contemporary botanical artworks depicting plants discovered and introduced by the Bartrams, American pioneers in botany and horticulture.

Artists from ASBA’s international membership will submit artworks for consideration, and a team of four jurors will select approximately 40 works for inclusion. Focusing on the native plant discoveries made by John and William in their travels throughout the eastern wilderness between the 1730’s and 1790’s, the exhibition allows a fresh look at their seminal body of knowledge and art. An illustrated, full-color booklet will be published to elucidate the exhibition’s artworks and their links to John and William Bartram.

Exhibition Schedule
- Bartram’s Garden Gallery
  54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard
  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
  April 26–May 24, 2013
- South Florida Museum
  201 10th Street West
  Bradenton, Florida
  September–December, 2013
- Cherokee Garden Library/Atlanta History Center
  130 West Paces Ferry Road NW
  Atlanta, Georgia
  March 17–June 17, 2014

For more information, contact
Carol Woodin, Director of Exhibitions
American Society of Botanical Artists
The New York Botanical Garden
2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458-5126
866.691.9080
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www.asba-art.org

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Chuck Spornick, President
Dorinda Dallmeyer, Vice President
Anne Hurst Weeks, Treasurer
Marc Jolley, Editor
Brad Sanders, Publisher

©Karen Kluglein, Franklinia alatamaha, watercolor on vellum
“The traveler and poet”: Niemcewicz visits William Bartram

Kathryn Braund

In March 1798, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz journeyed to the Kingsessing home of another traveler, William Bartram, who was then 59 years old. The Polish traveler seemingly had little in common with the American botanist. Born in 1757 (some sources say 1758), the younger man’s passion was literature, not plants. And as Bartram returned to his garden, Niemcewicz became embroiled in Polish politics, serving as a deputy in the Polish parliament. While Bartram’s Travels was advertised in 1790, Niemcewicz was publishing a scathing political comedy, Powrót posła (The Deputy’s Return). Like Travels, Niemcewicz’s work proved popular. The writer-politician turned soldier in 1794 when he joined the Polish insurrection against Russia, serving as Tadeusz Kościuszko’s aide-de-camp.

Americans revered Kościuszko for his earlier efforts in the American Revolution. He helped erect fortifications in the Hudson River theater, thereby contributing to the defeat of General John Burgoyne at Saratoga in October 1777. He later served with distinction in the southern campaign, and was hailed as a hero for his role in the American victory at Ninety-Six in South Carolina. He ended the war as a brigadier general in the Continental Army and was a life-long friend of leading American commanders, including George Washington.

Kościuszko did not achieve the same success against the armies of Catherine II of Russia, who smashed the Polish insurrection. Kościuszko and Niemcewicz were both imprisoned in Russia for two years. While in prison, Niemcewicz passed the time by translating major works of English literature into Polish. Following their release from prison, Niemcewicz and Kościuszko headed to America, where the pair visited George Washington as well as Thomas Jefferson and other leading Americans. How Bartram’s work came to his attention remains a mystery, but both Jefferson and Washington were customers of the Bartram horticultural business and it is clear from his own writing that Niemcewicz found Bartram’s writing as appealing as his botanizing. Like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, he appears to have been particularly impressed with Bartram’s East Florida adventures. Niemcewicz settled for a time in the United States and married an American. He returned to Poland in 1807 and later published an account of his American travels in Polish: Podróże po Ameryce 1797–1807. The work, translated by Metchie J. E. Budka, was published in 1965 by the New Jersey Historical Society with the title: Under their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America in 1797–1799, 1805, with Some Further Account of Life in New Jersey.

The excerpt below describes his visit to the Bartram house in March, 1798, and provides interesting observations on Bartram and the family’s business, as well as Bartram’s brother, John Bartram Jr., who had inherited his father’s house and horticulture business and was perhaps a little annoyed that yet another visitor had arrived to distract him and his famous brother from their work. Niemcewicz mentions Franklinia alatamaha, a beautiful flowering tree that is the Bartrams’ most famous discovery and Gaultheria procumbens, a small shrub with a wintergreen scent and bright red fruit, best known today as teaberry or creeping wintergreen, which was included on the family’s 1783 plant catalog. As Niemcewicz observed, the leaves are used to brew an herbal tea that the Americans substituted for imported tea during the period of the American Revolution. He also notes the efforts of the Bartrams to produce oriental teas.

This excerpt comes from page 52 of Budka’s translation. Budka’s footnotes have been omitted and some text supplied in brackets for clarity.

I was acquainted with Bartram through his voyage into the Floridas. Having learned that he was settled with his brother five miles from Phil[adelphia], I went to see him. It was 24th of March. The season was very late for this country; not a leaf had opened, but in spite of the winds, or rather the hurricanes, which were blowing for many days the roads were terribly muddy and our horses were sunk to their girths. We crossed at Grays ferry, which is skirted on the other side of the Skulkill [River] by a picturesque and wild cliff. We arrived at the farmhouse. It is built of great stones with a few rustic columns of the same material. The garden extends as far as the Skulkill. It was not the moment to see it. There was not yet a green leaf. Straightway I came upon Bartram, the traveler and poet. He is a man between 50 and 60, small, spare, with a quick-tempered air. A little further on his brother was squatting on the bank of a sort of stream, his hands completely buried in the mud; he was planting something. His manner was not affable; he improved later; he showed us a few trees and bushes, brought for the most part from Georgia and the Carolinas, and the remainder from the Continent. His interest in botany, added to the profits he has made from it, has led him to undertake, at times, journeys of 100 miles solely to go into a forest to collect there a plant or a bush. Franklinia is a tree from Georgia, with a superb flower; Gaultheria procumbens from Jersey with its little leaves of deep green speckled with red; they taste like honey; during the wars it was served instead of tea. The hothouse is neither big nor luxuriant. I have seen there green tea from China and Bohl[e]a. Its leaves are a deep green, an inch and a half in length when they are allowed to grow; but for drinking they are picked very young, especially those of Imperial Tea. Bartram deals and plants, flowers, bushes, etc.; he sells much to Europe. He is the best botanist in this country.
Spalding’s Lower Store Tour

By Sam Carr

The Putnam Blueways and Trails Citizen Support Organization are dedicated to the use of the trails in this small Florida county. On their paddling trip from Hermit Cove Marina on the Seven Sisters Paddling Trail in October a small group passed the site of Spalding’s Lower Store at Stokes Landing near Palatka, FL.

The Putnam County Waterways Committee has formed a Bartram Trail Committee. Its chair, Sam Carr, was leading the paddle. Mr. William Wilson spotted the paddlers and invited them to land and join him on a guided tour of the site of the Lower Store. He has lived here for all 80 of his years and had a fantastic knowledge of Bartram’s hangout. He even has a Spanish Land Grant survey marker in his yard. His homestead is the location of part of the Lower Store site. His barn built in the 1920s is still standing. He pointed and said, “I was born between those two oak trees.”

Wilson witnessed the University of Florida’s excavation of the site years ago and remembers where the stockade post-holes were found and where charcoal and bricks identified the location of fireplaces. He pointed out the location of the Trading Post and the McLatchie residence where William Bartram stayed during his 1774 tour. The group was fascinated at the detail and amount of information he recalled.

As the group departed Mr. Wilson asked “Do you want to see the treasure map?” which brought them to a halt. He explained that a treasure hunter he chased out of his yard had given him an old map of Stokes Landing. He didn’t know where the map came from but it sure looks authentic and old. It has a lot of the Bartram characteristics—complete with drawings of a battoe and schooner—both used by Bartram in and out of Stokes Landing. The elements are numbered for illustration like Bartram’s detailed maps and drawings. The map excited the group. It is below.

For Bartram aficionados, it was a delight. The Bartram Trail Committee is discussing with Mr. Wilson and his neighbors how to use part of the property for a memorial and kiosk. This would be a major win for the group.

Copy of Mr. Wilson’s ‘treasure map’. Notice old English writing on left side. Mr. Spalding also owned Stokes Island.
The BTC will hold its 2013 biennial conference in western North Carolina at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center (aka The Mountain). The Mountain, a few miles west of Highlands, NC, was used at the site of a joint BTC/ North Carolina Bartram Trail Society (NCBTS) meeting in 1999; and has been used several times by the NCBTS for meetings.

The dates for our meeting are:

Friday October 11, 2013 through Sunday October 13, 2013.

The registration fee for the conference has not been set. For more information about The Mountain:

http://mountaincenters.org/pages/home.php

Special thanks to members of the conference planning committee, Kathryn Braund, Dorinda Dallmeyer, Tom Halllock, and Brad Sanders. The group looked at various sites and scenarios and selected The Mountain for its location, amenities, and price. Also thanks to Jim Kautz and the NCBTS for their suggestions and advice. Jim, Lamar Marshall, and Walter Wingfield from the NCBTS will be working with us in developing the program for the meeting.

Looking forward to the mountains of western North Carolina in 2013!

Chuck Spornick

On the North Carolina Bartram Trail at Scaly Mountain
Bartram Trail Conference
Membership Form

___ RENEWAL
___ NEW MEMBER

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________

___ Individual $25
___ Family $30
___ Student $10
___ Contributor $50
___ Sustainer $100
___ Sponsor $250
___ Patron $500

E-Mail address: ____________________________________________________
Phone: ( ) _____________ Date: ______________________

Primary Areas of Interest in the Bartram Trail
(try to be specific about geographic locations and activities, i.e., specific Bartram sites, and whether or not you like to hike, read, garden, etc. Use back if necessary)

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Please send payment to:
Anne Hurst Weeks, 138 N Chaparral Ct., Hull, GA 30646