

# The Traveller

A Newsletter of the Bartram Trail Conference

Fall, 2014

## Remembering Bartram on Georgia's Fall Line



An “airy grove” of longleaf pine on nearby Fort Benning, sustained by frequent low-intensity fire. According to biologists with *The Nature Conservancy*, this forest structure (with grassland openings) is similar to what Bartram would’ve seen frequently on his Fall Line journey of 1775.

By Wade Harrison

Director of Land Protection, The Nature Conservancy, Atlanta GA, wharrison@tnc.org

**M**ARION COUNTY, GEORGIA. In July 1775, on his horseback journey toward the Creek Indian towns on the Chattahoochee River, William Bartram was tormented by summer heat, severe thunderstorms, and biting flies. Nevertheless, he described the natural wonders of Georgia’s western frontier with his typical eloquent passion, as the group paused at mid-day “on the acclivity of a high swelling ridge planted with open airy groves of the superb terebenthine Pines, glittering rills playing beneath, and pellucid brooks meandering through

an expansive green savanna, their banks ornamented with coppices of blooming aromatic shrubs and plants perfuming the air.”

A motorist retracing Bartram’s path today through Marion County, Georgia, might find refuge from uncomfortable weather and biting flies, but would have to search mightily to discover the airy groves of pine, the glittering rills and pellucid brooks, and the expansive green savannas that Bartram described so frequently and famously in *Travels*. Much of that landscape has been lost to cattle pasture, farm ponds, brushy second-growth woods, industrial pine plantation, and the scattered sprawl of rural landowners. The

“superb terebenthine Pines” described by Bartram refer to the fire-sculpted groves and savannas of longleaf pine that once grew extensively and anciently on the Fall Line sand hills in this part of Georgia. The longleaf pines and associated flora and fauna are vanishing icons of our natural heritage, increasingly recognized as worthy of conservation and restoration for their rare ecology, natural beauty, benefits to wildlife, and economic value—all things that William Bartram recognized and appreciated about this landscape, two and a half centuries ago.

In recent years, an unlikely partnership of Army trainers, foresters, ecologists, and hunting enthusiasts have been collaborating on a project that might just resurrect *continued on page 5*



Monument to William Bartram on the new Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA in Marion County, GA. The other side is inscribed “Erected by the Bartram Trail Society, which was founded at Zion Episcopal Church Talbotton, Georgia on 2 February 1970 in the morning and journeyed here to hike this portion of the trail in the afternoon.”

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# Searching for Bartram Historical Markers



*Bartram marker at the Silver Bluff Audubon Center*

*Harry Gatzke*

The Bartram Trail Conference convened October 2011 on the Macon State College campus. On Saturday afternoon, near a spring where William Bartram likely paused en route to the Gulf coast, we dedicated a new William Bartram Trail historical marker. The next day we reassembled at Ocmulgee National Monument. There, near the parking lot, a second Bartram marker stood. Encountering two such markers in as many days provoked my curiosity. At the first opportunity, I googled “Bartram Historical Marker” and began a search. Target of the search is any historical marker with “Bartram” in its title or inscription, referring to either William or John. Historical markers erected with assistance of the Bartram Trail Conference (hereafter referred to as BTC markers) are of particular interest, but markers emplaced independently of the BTC are also included in the search findings.

The initial Google search yielded fifty thousand web site hits. Fortunately, near the top of the list were two database sites: Historical Marker Database (Hmdb.org) and waymarking.com. Each of these databases includes a sub collection specifically designated to contain William Bartram historical markers. These two sources pro-

vided information on an initial collection of 50 Bartram markers. Since anyone with internet access can contribute additions to these databases, they are revisited from time to time to take advantage of any newly added Bartram marker information. Both database sites included latitude and longitude for each marker. Knowing these coordinates was chosen as one criterion for declaring a marker to be “found.”

Expanding the list of found markers using all available resources has been an on-going effort. Most references to a Bartram marker (excluding the two databases) describe at best its approximate location, such as the county, the city, or sometimes a nearby intersection. Extensive travel is not a part of this project. Consequently, a technique to determine a marker’s latitude and longitude remotely was needed. Google’s StreetView is a useful tool to achieve this end. StreetView digital images are captured along many highways. The images are accessible through Google Maps. Using StreetView one can virtually travel along a highway looking for a roadside marker. If a marker is observed, its latitude and longitude can then be determined by interrogating Google Maps. For example, the map on page 180 of Brad Sanders’ *Guide to William Bartram’s Travels*, shows a BTC marker along South Carolina State Route

130 near Lake Keowee. StreetView visual searching discovered this marker and its latitude and longitude were determined to be N34.80490, W82.90550. At this location the StreetView image date is May 2013, and guarantees that this marker was in place recently.

In some cases, StreetView reveals only that some other technique is needed. A Historical Attractions web page discovered by an internet search showed a Bartram marker to be located near an intersection in Aiken County, SC. StreetView searching did not discover a marker anywhere in the vicinity. Fortunately, that Historical Attractions page also listed phone numbers for local historical organizations. Phone contact lead to the discovery that this marker had been knocked over by a utility crew working after an ice storm. The marker had then been moved to the Silver Bluff Audubon Center. Its location is too distant from the roadway to be observed in StreetView. During a Christmas visit to the area, a side trip to the marker permitted me to directly measure the marker’s latitude and longitude. The marker is now listed as one of the found markers.

The count of found Bartram markers now stands at 77. Three of the markers, all referring to John Bartram, are in Pennsylvania. The remaining 74, which include 45 BTC markers, are located in six of the eight states represented on the original BTC Board of Managers. Most of the Bartram markers are in Georgia and Florida, 28 and 25, respectively. Lesser numbers are in Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Mississippi, 11, 6, 3 and 1, respectively. The search to date found no Bartram marker in Louisiana or Tennessee. Evidence exists that Louisiana once had a marker, but it has not been located by this search. The Bartram marker status for Louisiana should change in the future. LSU Hilltop Arboretum’s web site details their plan to erect four new markers in cooperation with the BTC. There is no hard evidence that Bartram traveled in what is now the state of Tennessee. An online dataset of 2337 Tennessee historical marker inscriptions was located during this effort. A search in that dataset turned up no occurrence of “Bartram.” This result suggests that it is unlikely a Bartram historical marker is located in Tennessee.

The list of found Bartram markers is available on a Google site titled "Bartram Marker Search" <sites.google.com/site/bartrammarkersearch> and will be updated as additional markers are located. The list document includes embedded links to web pages for many of the markers. Inscriptions are included on these pages. The broad range of topics and styles embodied in these inscriptions reflect the diversity of the persons who put forth the effort to make these Bartram historical markers a reality.

### About HMdb.org

The Historical Marker Database is an illustrated searchable online catalog of historical information viewed through the filter of permanent outdoor markers. Anyone can add new markers to the database and update existing marker pages with new photographs, links, and commentary. Each proposed addition or change is reviewed by an editor before public access is granted. The database has grown to more than 67,000 markers since its inception in 2006. If your favorite historical marker is not in the current collection, you may add it. Guidelines are available on the website's "Add A Marker" page. Anyone possessing some insight into a marker's subject may share that information. The "Add Commentary" link is found near the top of each marker page. In Hmdb.org a group of markers about a specific subject is called a Series. Anyone may propose adding a marker to an existing Series or even create a new Series. The William Bartram Trail Series currently contains 46 markers. The Field Trip App for smart phones uses HMdb.org as one of its sources. ❀

### Bartram Trail Conference Board 2014–2016

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# The Bethesda Academy Marker

By Elliott Edwards

The installation of the Bethesda Academy William Bartram Trail marker was the second marker to be installed by the Bartram Trail Conference commemorating John and son William Bartram's visit to Savannah in 1765. The Wormsloe marker was installed in fall 2013; the Bethesda marker was installed in spring 2014. The effort's to obtain the Bethesda marker were coordinated by the Bethesda Women's Board and the Bartram Trail Conference. Three people were instrumental in obtaining the marker; Mrs. Archibald (Betty) Morris of the Bethesda Women's Board, Mr. Terry R. Henderson with the Bartram Trail Conference, and Dr. Elliott O. Edwards Jr., past Chairman, of the Bartram Trail Conference. The marker has been installed next to the museum where a mulberry tree will be planted behind it and will be visible at the end of the sidewalk. There is much interest in the Bartrams at these two institutions and these markers are expected to promote the growth in this area of our natural history because the explorations of John & William Bartram continue to enthuse natural historians since the Bartrams' first trip to the south in 1765.

John Bartram (1699–1777) was just appointed Botanist to King George III, where he was to travel to Florida on a one-year assignment to Georgia and Florida that would include a survey at Shell Bluff, Georgia, taking his son William Bartram age 26 (1739–1824) to collect seeds and specimens for the King, friends and fellow gardeners. This was William's first botanical expedition and would inspire him to lay the groundwork for his own career as a naturalist. While on the expedition, they stopped off in Savannah on September 25, 1765. They would visit George Whitefield at the Orphan House (Bethesda) and later in the day travel to Wormsloe, property of Captain Noble Jones, father of Revolutionary patriot, Noble Wymberly Jones.

These markers, hopefully, will encourage visitors to learn more about the Bartrams that will certainly lead to a greater



From left Dr. Elliott O. Edwards, Jr. Past Chairman, BTC; Ruth Q. Edwards; Dr. David Tribble, Pres. Bethesda Academy; Betty Morris, Bethesda Women's Board.



Dr. David Tribble, President of Bethesda Academy

appreciation of their significant contributions to science. The marker commemoration was part of an all day family event with several anniversaries being celebrated on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Dr. Elliott Edwards presented a paper on the Bartram's visit to Savannah in 1765 to the Georgia Academy of Science at the annual meeting March 28–29, 2014, held at the Regents University in Augusta, Georgia. The paper was given to the Bethesda Academy and Wormsloe Historic Site as background history on the Bartrams and their visit to Savannah as part of the commemoration. ❀



# Into the Cowee Valley with Bartram

# Book Announcement

Philip Lee Williams

Our small group sat in Rickman's Store, a museum of a roadside shop in the beautiful Cowee Valley just a few miles north of Franklin, N.C. I was teaching one session of a summer course on the literature of western North Carolina, sponsored by the Highlands Biological Station. We were looking at the influence of 19<sup>th</sup> century American botanist and explorer William Bartram on that area of the country.

I have been fascinated with Bartram since I was a boy. From the time Bartram died on July 22, 1823, while walking in his garden in Philadelphia, readers have been fascinated with the book he wrote about his four-year trip around the American South between 1773 and 1777. Though it has an endless typically early nineteenth century title, the volume has been known for two centuries simply as Bartram's *Travels*.

I first read the *Travels* when I was a boy of about 13 or so, and I loved it passionately. It led to my writing of *The Flower Seeker: An Epic Poem of William Bartram* that Mercer University Press published in 2010.

During his trip into the Cherokee country on his travels, Bartram made it as far north as the gorgeous Cowee Valley in southwestern North Carolina. I've been going to this area since I was a child, taken there by my parents to mine for rubies and sapphires. My new friend Brent Martin, head of the Southeast office of the Wilderness Society, invited me to visit this class that he teaches here every sum-

mer. (Brent is also a first-rate poet.)

The group of those taking the class in early June was small. But they were intelligent and massively motivated. And so I spoke about *The Flower Seeker* and Bartram for well more than an hour before we packed up and headed to visit the Cowee Mound.

This Indian mound was built in antiquity but used by the Cherokees as a temple mound during their occupation of the valley. There was a substantial Cherokee village there that served as capital of the so-called Middle Towns of the Cherokee nation. It was in private hands for centuries, and the public was not allowed to visit it.

Then, several years ago, the owners sold the mound and the land around it to the Eastern Band of the Cherokees. Since Brent had been involved with helping smooth the transaction, he was able to get our small group permission to walk across a wide field beside the Little Tennessee River and up the steep slopes of the mound. Bartram's last night among the Cherokees before he tried to head further into the mountains was at the large structure on this mound.

A steady wind on a gorgeous blue day wrote its memoirs in the chest-high grass that now covers the area. The sight was breathtaking, the feeling that we all had, overwhelming.

Mercer University Press also published a new edition of Bartram's *Travels* at the same time they published *The Flower Seeker*. If you love the natural world of the American South and the history of its native peoples, look up our books. ☘

Matthew Jennings, ed. *The Flower Hunter and the People: William Bartram in the Native American Southeast*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2014

Matthew Jennings is a Fothergill recipient.

William Bartram has rightly been hailed as an astute, perceptive chronicler of Native American societies. In some ways he was able to see beyond the dominant ideologies of his day, some of which divided the world's peoples into categories based on perceived savagism and civility. This was a noble effort, and worthy of praise more than two centuries later. Bartram could also use Native American civilization as a foil for an emerging white American society he saw as crass and grasping. Writing in this romantic mode, he was capable of downplaying the extent to which Native communities were fully part of the modern world that they and European invaders created together. *The Flower Hunter and the People* tries to capture both of these aspects of Bartram's works. Its main purpose is to introduce Bartram's writings on Southeastern Native Americans, and to let Bartram and his indigenous consultants tell their stories in their own words. Along the way, readers should also consider this underlying fact, which rarely strayed from the Flower Hunter's mind. William Bartram was a guest in the Native Southeast. He traveled on paths smoothed, figuratively and literally, by Native Americans. He stayed in Muskogees' houses, ate Cherokees' food, and was, at times of their choosing, permitted glimpses of his hosts' world-views and life ways. It would be too much of a stretch to say that Native people co-authored the passages concerning their societies in Bartram, but the things they allowed Bartram to record bore cultural and political weight in their own times, and they can speak to us in ours as well. ☘

Fall Line, *continued from page 1*

some of the wonders that Bartram described, for all to witness, remember, and even emulate. The Chattahoochee Fall Line Conservation Partnership is protecting land and natural resources, demonstrating longleaf pine restoration, recovering rare species, and promoting sustainable forestry. Most recently the partners have created a new Wildlife Management Area (WMA) that covers over 10,000 acres in Talbot and Marion Counties. Opened to the public this year, this new

Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA includes many types of forestland, and many legacies of natural and human history, some ancient, others more recent.

One such legacy stands in an obscure patch of unplowed ground that has attracted little attention for a generation. It is not a 300-year-old "terebenthine pine" (though savvy explorers may still find such a thing, not too far away). It is instead a beautiful granite monument, likely erected in the 1970s, by some of the first

*continued on page 7*

# A Word from the President

Dorinda Dallmeyer

I hope you have had the opportunity to be out on the trail of William Bartram this summer. In June I paddled 110 miles on one of his rivers, the Chattahoochee, along with 400 other people participating in Paddle Georgia 2014, the largest organized paddle in America. This is the fifth year I have participated. And so has William—at least a laminated copy of the Peale portrait has. Some of the rivers we have been on were familiar to him: the Broad River and its “goldfish,” the Savannah near Augusta, and certainly the lower reaches of the “peaceful Alamaha, gentle by nature.” I’ve taken him paddling down some of the rivers he only had time to cross: the Oconee, the Flint, and the Chattahoochee. Every year I get the question “Why do you have a picture of Thomas Jefferson strapped to your kayak?”—a perfect opportunity to tell people a little bit about someone who appreciated exploring the Southeast nearly 250 years ago as much as they do today.

BTC board member Sam Carr and his organizing committee want you to join William on another of his rivers: the St. Johns. Palatka, Florida, will host our 2015 Bartram Trail Conference where the river will be the centerpiece of our visit October 16–18. Check out the details on page 4. We are grateful for Sam’s hard work and the enthusiastic support of the people, civic organizations, and the local government in Putnam County. Mark your calendar and come get your feet wet with William and me. ☼



# Fothergill Report

Thomas Bullington

I am honored that the Bartram Trail Conference awarded me the Fothergill Research Award. I first read William Bartram’s *Travels* on 22 April 2012, which appropriately was Earth Day that year. I read Bartram’s work at first to write a seminar paper, but little did I know that Bartram would spark my interest in eighteenth century botanists. Since then, I have been working on my dissertation in British literature under the direction of Karen Raber and Jason Solinger at the University of Mississippi. My project examines the intersections of Enlightenment botanical texts and eighteenth century British literature through the ecocritical lens of invasive species. By recovering the stories eighteenth century literature tells about exotic plants, and the ways these stories interact with the observations of botanists, I recover a way of understanding the natural world that predates ecological imperialism, as well as the ideological, imaginary roots of what has become a very real ecological problem for us in the twenty-first century.

My research on Bartram and his contemporary, André Michaux, indicates that both botanists saw species introduced into the American landscape from abroad, even in landscapes they considered wilderness. Through my Fothergill funding, I went to Charleston, South Carolina, where I visited the archives of the College of Charleston and the South Carolina Historical Society. These archives contain not only the original Latin of André Michaux’s *Flora Boreali-Americana* (1803) but also a complete French transcription of the *Journal of André Michaux 1787–1796* by the American Philosophical Society. Both of these documents revealed Michaux’s awareness that some of the exotic flora he witnessed in the American landscape did not originate there. Michaux’s *Flora* entry for the *Oxalis corniculata* L. (creeping woodsorrel) puzzles over whether this humble woodsorrel is its own distinct new species, or “An inde indistincta ab Europæa species?” (“A species possibly from that place [but]

indistinguishable from the European”). Michaux’s question mark here, along with his use of the Latin interrogative “An,” signals his confusion as to whether this oxalis species originated from America, or from Europe; indeed, any gardener familiar with this oxalis would recognize it as a common weed. Similarly, Michaux’s *Flora* entry for *Prunus chicsa* (possibly *Prunus angustifolia* L., the Chickasaw plum) suggests that this shrub was “Ab indis introducta” (“introduced by the Indians”). Michaux’s suggested origin for this *Prunus* species complicates what William Bartram observes in the “ancient cultivated fields” of the lower Creek territories near Wrightsborough, Georgia: here Bartram notes that “The Chickasaw plum I think must be...certainly a native of America, yet I never saw it wild in the forests, but always in old deserted Indian plantations.” If we ought to believe Michaux’s entry, where would this Chickasaw plum have been introduced from? Or, if Bartram’s claim holds true instead, is this plum indeed a native species? Whether an invasive oxalis from the old world, or a native plum from the new, these plant species suggest that for both botanists the native-ness of American wilderness was not a certainty.

These minor details suggest that the American landscape these botanists chronicled already bore witness to the botanical effects of European colonization. Indeed, the very flora themselves, introduced from abroad, hint that the wilderness Bartram travels bears the traces of colonization. Thus, while both naturalists claimed it as their mission to discover, in John Fothergill’s words, “rare and useful productions of nature, chiefly in the vegetable kingdom”, both naturalists list among those productions non-native species. The presence of these naturalized, introduced species in the American wilderness as early as the eighteenth century suggests that the very wilderness these naturalists explored already betrayed signs of European influence, signs that perplex the botanists’ attempts to assign which flora count as authentically “American.” Interrogating the awareness of these early

naturalists to the environmental impact of invasive species demonstrates the immediacy these early scientific accounts of the American landscape hold for scholars in the twenty-first century: the human footprint of our anthropocene era dates much further back than our popular awareness of it. Likewise, that human impact manifests on the landscape in ways that can appear just as natural as a wood sorrel springing in a field.

Thanks to the Bartram Trail Conference's support of my investigation, I aim to continue my research of these eighteenth century botanists, further enriching my understanding of what a native (or a non-native) plant means to these early flower hunters. These investigations not only figure in my broader project to uncover ecocritical ways of understanding Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century, but also illustrate William Bartram's enduring importance to the twenty-first century as we try to make sense of our impact on the environment, both now and in the past, both on the physical landscape, and in the landscapes created by texts. Thank you for this award, and for the opportunity to pursue my interests in the world William Bartram observed. ❁

Fall Line, *continued from page 5*  
 latter-day advocates for Bartram's legacy, who travelled here from nearby Talbotton to retrace a portion of Bartram's journey. The inscription suggests that Bartram passed "very near this spot in a virgin forest now unknown and unimaginable to us." It further records their motivation, "in an effort to preserve our vanishing natural heritage, this monument is erected by the Bartram Trail Society and dedicated to the memory of all men who come to nature with a sense of awe and wonder."

Perhaps a more fitting monument to Bartram will surround this marker someday, a monument represented by the resurrection of the natural wonders Bartram enjoyed, no longer unknown nor unimaginable, but real and functional, biting flies and all. And visitors might once again travel, as Bartram did, "over a delightful territory, presenting to view variable sylvan scenes, consisting of chains of low hills affording high forests, with expansive savannas, Cane meadows and lawns between, watered with rivulets and glittering brooks..."

For more information contact LuAnn Craighton, The Nature Conservancy, Columbus GA. [lcraighton@tnc.org](mailto:lcraighton@tnc.org) ❁



*An ancient longleaf pine found elsewhere on the new Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA, estimated by ring count to exceed 300 years in age, according to foresters with The Nature Conservancy. It would've appeared to be a mature pine tree to William Bartram in 1775.*

## Bartram Trail Conference Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Your dues support our newsletter, web site, Fothergill Fellowship Awards and other Bartram Trail Conference projects.*

You may also join online at <http://www.bartramtrail.org/pages/join.html>  
 All you need is a PayPal account!

### Annual Member Dues.

Please check one.

- |                                      |       |
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