

# The Traveller

A Newsletter of the Bartram Trail Conference

Spring, 2021

## “Venerable Father Friend” William Bartram’s Relationship with Lachlan McIntosh

By Christopher Robinson

As far as can be determined, William Bartram met Lachlan McIntosh in April 1773 and for the next three years used Lachlan’s house near Darien, Georgia, as a base for his exploration of the coast and the Altamaha River corridor. Also, Lachlan’s son traveled extensively with William when William traveled with those surveying the boundary lines of the newly ceded Indian lands in 1773.

To the degree McIntosh is remembered at all, it is for his service as a Revolutionary War general and for his duel with Button Gwinnett. But we care about Lachlan because William and Lachlan cared about each other.

William clearly wanted to impress Lachlan, whom he viewed as a father figure, although McIntosh was only fifteen years his senior. As evidence of their friendship, we have two letters from William to Lachlan. In the first letter, written in 1774 in the middle of his grand travels, William immediately sets out to tell his adventure: traveling from Spalding’s Lower Store on the St. Johns to an Indian village near present day Manatee Springs in west Florida.

On the way, William waxes poetic about a pond called Halfway Pond (now Cowpen Lake):

*“At the return of the morning, by the powerful influence of light; the pulse of nature becomes more active, and the universal vibration of life insensibly and irresistibly moves the wondrous machine: how chearful and gay all nature appears.*

*Hark! the musical savanna cranes, ere the chirping sparrow flirts from his grassy couch, or the glorious sun gilds the tops of the Pines, spread their expansive wings, leave their lofty roosts, and repair to the ample plains” (p. 179)*

He then describes his favorite place of all: Alachua Savanna (now Payne’s Prairie). Aside from its beauty, William tells Lachlan—who was a planter—there are opportunities to cultivate the prairie.

As William describes it,

*The extensive Alachua is a level green plain, above fifteen miles over, fifty miles in circumference, and scarcely a tree or bush of any kind to be seen on it. It is encircled with high, sloping hills, covered with waving forests and a fragrant Orange grove, rising from a exuberantly fertile soil . . . [One’s] attention is quickly drawn off, and wholly engaged in the contemplation of the unlimited, varied, and truly astonishing native wild scenes of landscape and perspective, there exhibited: how is the mind agitated and bewildered, at being thus, as it were, placed on the borders of a new world! On the first view of such an amazing display of the wisdom and power of the supreme author of nature, the mind for a moment seems suspended, and impressed with awe.*

From here, William describes accompanying traders to Manatee Springs to re-establish trade relationships with the local Indians. Underscoring the closeness of his relationship with McIntosh is that it will be another year before he sends a



William Bartram by Charles Willson Peale (1808)



Lachlan McIntosh



*Halfway Pond (Cowpen Lake).*



*Alachua Savannah (Payne's Prairie)*

similar letter describing his travels to his own father John.

Throughout his journey, William spent a great deal of time with Lachlan, perhaps he even accompanied Lachlan to a skirmish with the British and Indians along Scrubby Bluff on the St. Marys River in 1776. A few months later, William was back home in Philadelphia.

William would not see Lachlan for nearly three years, when Lachlan and Henry Laurens dined with William at the Bartram home in 1779. So much had happened in those intervening years. John Bartram had died. Lachlan's brother George was arrested for treason against the colonies. And, in a duel, Lachlan had killed Button Gwinnett, one of Georgia's signers of the Declaration of Independence.

In 1776, Button Gwinnett expected to be appointed a general, but because

of some infighting, Lachlan McIntosh was chosen instead as a compromise. The following year, as the President of the Georgia Provincial Congress, Gwinnett hounded McIntosh's brother George with accusations of being a traitor against the Revolution. In essence he alleged that George was behind the sale of rice that ended up in the hands of the enemy in the British West Indies. George was hauled off to jail, lost everything, and eventually lived a vagabond life until his much-hastened death.

As the war raged on, in 1777, Lachlan called Gwinnett a "scoundrel and lying rascal" because of the way Gwinnett tried to explain away his military failure to capture St. Augustine. In response, Gwinnett challenged him to a duel. In that 18th century world, a man's reputational honor served as his letter of recommendation and creditworthiness. Lachlan was ob-

essed with his honor.

After receiving the request for a duel, early the next morning, McIntosh met Gwinnett at Wright's pasture downriver from Savannah. They faced each other about 12 feet apart. They then fired simultaneously, wounding each other. Gwinnett died three days later. At subsequent trial, Lachlan was acquitted and returned to military service.

He saw serious military action in Savannah during the Battle of the Rice Boats and spent the winter in Valley Forge while Philadelphia was occupied by the British. Stationed at Fort Pitt, Lachlan would lead a doomed attempt to protect the western border from the British and their Native allies.

By the time of that last meeting between the two friends over dinner at the Bartram home in 1779, Savannah had been captured. Lachlan was heading home in hopes of rescuing his family while British forces were rolling through Georgia and South Carolina.

After their parting, the men, these revolutionaries, would never see one another again. Their last contact was in a letter William wrote in 1796 with their world a much-changed place.

William's letter was prompted by a visit from Lachlan's nephew, a visit William compared to those joyful moments to "meeting friends in paradise." In his letter, William cannot contain his emotions. Although Lachlan was only fifteen years older, he calls him his "venerable father friend," his heart is filled with gratitude, and he is reminded daily of the "happy scenes, happy hours" he spent with Lachlan's family and enjoying their philosophic conversation. I must let William tell of one of his favorite conversations: "O my friend, what a degree of intellectual enjoyment our nature is susceptible of when we turn our views frequently to behold and contemplate the Moral System impressed on the Human Mind by the Divine Intelligence."

William tells us some of what has happened to him in the intervening seventeen years. He is living with his brother, he remains a bachelor, his fall from a tree had broken his right leg. Otherwise, he had his health and eyesight, but wondered if he would be able to endure the difficulties and dangers of another exploration.



*Button Gwinnett memorial and possible location of his grave*

## Sewah Roadside Markers

By T.R. Henderson

The Bartram Trail Conference initiated the service of providing roadside historic markers for Bartram related sites in 2011. Drs. Kathryn H. Braund and Dorinda Dallmeyer and artist Donna Weaver designed a unique marker mast head, plaque layout and size. Dr. Braund determined a standard for the message/text. A working relationship was established with the most prolific historic marker manufacturer in the country, probably the world, Sewah Studios.

At present there are 12 markers which were processed through The Bartram Trail Conference (BTC) using this marker design, with layout and then manufacture by Sewah Studios. Prior to BTC, state and local historical organizations, and particularly Garden Clubs erected the markers citing Bartram related locations across the Southeast, many using their own plaque and emblem design.

In this country, until roadways were improved to allow convenient individual transportation, monuments to notable events and people were chiefly set up in public spaces where people had access. The locations of where many events actually happened, especially here in the South, were out of reach to all but the most mobile agile individuals, out on some country lane. With the exception of short lived wood or canvas plaques the monuments or informational signs of this time were built of stone, bronze, cast iron or wood. These mediums were bulky, heavy for transporting on rural roads and bridges, expensive, and required a great deal to bring about.

As the country began recovery from the American Civil War there was great interest in marking battlefield sites. And following soon after was the advent of automobile tourism. People became much more mobile via improvements in both roads and automobiles. Automobile tourism became a national passion and an economic asset. There was a need for a less costly, durable, and easy to handle marker.

In 1927 Mr. E.M.Hawes, an individual with an intense interest in sharing local histories, and historical roadside marking, determined to utilize the relatively new technologies for castings of light-weight, inexpensive, corrosive resistant and strong



*Lachlan McIntosh's grave*

And with his usual humility, he doesn't mention the 1791 publication of his masterpiece, the *Travels*.

As for Lachlan, after his return to Savannah in 1779, he would fail in the Colonials' attempt to retake the town from the British and would flee to Charleston where he was captured and imprisoned for a year. While he would remain respected in some circles, he would never again be a wealthy man.

As the war wound down, Lachlan returned to a shattered Georgia. He served as president of the Georgia Society of the Cincinnati and he welcomed George Washington on his visit to Savannah in 1791. He also helped delineate the state boundary between Georgia and South Carolina. Otherwise, Lachlan held few positions of real influence; although he was elected to the U. S. Congress, he did not attend. He never received reimburse-

ment for property damage he suffered during the war, when both Colonial and British troops pillaged his plantation. Reduced to buying and selling land just to break even, he never managed to return to being a wealthy planter. Perhaps Harvey Jackson gives the best summary of his life after the war, "he was, to many, a relic of another era, a curiosity—a man who was respected for what he had done but, increasingly, was expected to do little else".

We don't know how much of this turn of events Lachlan's nephew told William when they met that day in 1796. From the tone of the letter, not much at all. If Lachlan replied, his letter is lost. Thus ended a 25-year friendship forged during William's great adventure. Lachlan would die a decade later, and is buried in Colonial Park cemetery in Savannah—about 50 yards from Button Gwinnett.



*Scrubby Bluff*

aluminum to drive a small sign company. He opened this in Marietta, OH in the building which formerly housed the Stevens Organ Factory. He gave this new business the name Sewah Studios, Sewah being his name, Hawes, backwards.

After 1914, castings of zinc and aluminum alloys began to emerge. Intricate yet large castings of this new aluminum material would require new techniques, new details to be worked out, and acceptance of a new materials by potential clients.

The first significant purchase came about in 1929 via the Ohio Revolutionary Trail Commission for plaques to mark the Old Revolutionary Trail across the state. This purchase involved 110 large and 400 small plaques.

WWII cut into the availability of metals required for castings. Sewah began casting plaques of concrete. The nation's energies were directed into the war effort, with little left over for roadside history. Hawes took employment during the slack war years with an aircraft propeller manufacturer.

By 1948 auto tourism was again running strong in the United States, with the Council of State Garden Clubs and their Blue Star markers honoring war veterans. States were working to attract auto tourism by making highways attractive and interesting. Historic markers were central to this endeavor. Aluminum castings were now the standard.

E.M.Hawes sold the company to Gerald Smith and Lloyd Thomas in 1954. Production moved to a new shop built just for the business in 1959. Brad Smith, the grandson of Gerald, took over management duties in 2003. They operate with 20-plus employees with typical annual production of 1200 markers. Demand has remained brisk through the years. Today Sewah markers can be found in all 50 states as well as in other lands.

The process from idea to what Sewah calls 'history on a stick' for a Bartram Trail Conference roadside marker goes roughly like this:

- An individual or a local organization determines to share local history related to William Bartram's 1800 century adventures via a smart looking roadside marker
- Funding is arranged (will cost just under \$2000 with an approximate 8 week delivery for the BTC design plaque).



*Preparing the mold at Sewah Studios*

- Proposed message is submitted to BTC. The message is reviewed for accuracy, clarity of message, and how well this fits on a marker read from an automobile at a distance.
- Marker is placed on order by BTC
- Sewah Studios lays out the marker, creates a mold, casts the plaque
- Casting is dressed and cleaned
- Casting is powder coated/painted—many require hand painted details
- Marker is shipped
- Customer receives marker and inspects
- BTC pays Sewah's invoice when customer approves of the marker
- Customer erects marker

This is how your roadside marker came to be.

*TR Henderson*

#### References:

*A Brief History of Die Casting*, posted on Premier Die Casting Company website, dated 2-29-2016

*Manufacturer of America's Finest Historic Markers*, posted on Sewah Studio's Facebook page

*Friends of Horseshoe Bend newsletter*, Fall 2020, Horseshoe Bend Congressional Monument, William Gregory Wilson

*Thoughts on Roadside Markers for Historic/Archaeological Sites*, Stones and Bones, AAS newsletter, TRHenderson

## Repairs of Historic Cast Aluminum Markers

### *Recommendations from Sewah*

Many existing markers would greatly benefit from a little simple maintenance. There are 3 levels of Repairs/Maintenance:

1. Simple cleaning
2. Repair paint
3. Structural repair

#### *Simple cleaning supplies and tools:*

Water, spray bucket, nonabrasive detergent or cleaner, scrub brush, cotton cloth, step ladder and personal protective equipment (rubber gloves and safety glasses).

#### *Procedure:*

Wet it down with water. Wash it down with the detergent. Brush it down. Rinse it down with water

#### *Repair Paint*

The marker must be taken down and sent to a shop specially equipped for the work. Sewah Studios will do this work, and there are other local shops. Costs in 2021 may approach \$1000.

#### *Structural Repair*

A broken or distorted plaque, broken pedestal. Inquire about the feasibility of a shop repair. A replacement will likely be more cost effective than a repair.



# From the President

## *Our Full-Contact Bartram Trail Adventure Tour*

This summer, I had a great trip with my grandchildren. We called it our full-contact Bartram Trail Adventure Tour. We camped at one of our BTC Affiliates—the Historic Blakeley State Park in Spanish Fort, Alabama. The experience was just wonderful and my kids had a great time—our first campout in the woods. Boy, were we in the woods—2.5 miles from the paved road.

Knowing there was a Bartram kiosk made our trip a quest—“Where’s Billy?” It was a great way to see the park and we were very pleased to find a nice interpretative marker placed on the banks of the Tensaw River. Marshall (age 8) rode his bike fast on the bike trails. We hiked to find some Bartram plants including a spectacular bigleaf magnolia. Later, we also found the Splinter Hill Bog Preserve and Major Farmer’s Plantation in Stockton. Lorelei (age 7) using her plant journal identified the crimson pitcher plants, Maryland meadowbeauty and longleaf pines.

Besides the fun of our Bartram Adventure Tour, I was delighted to see how well the kiosk was done. Past-president TR Henderson had worked with the park verifying the information. BTC was given credit for his effort. It occurred to me this is exactly what it means to be recognized as an affiliate of the BTC. We shared information with the park that fulfills both our purposes. This is exactly the kind of association we need with all of our Bartram sites. Thank you, TR and Mike Bunn.

I met with park director Mike Bunn. Mike had attended our Conference in Montgomery and later enrolled the park as an Affiliate. I thanked him and asked him what the BTC could do to enhance our relationship. He mentioned a couple of things. He would like for us to be available for Bartram presentations at some of his many events at the park. He also said a “badge” or sign recognizing the park as an Affiliate of the BTC. In other words, he welcomes whatever we can do to recognize Bartram’s legacy in the park.

It occurs to me that the Bartram Trail really does exist. The park is definitely one

verdant landscape, he recorded observations on a variety of shrubs, flowers, and other herbaceous plants. He wrote that he believed some of the lands in this area to be the “richest I ever saw, or perhaps any where to be seen.”



Historic Blakeley State Park is a part of the William Bartram Trail, a multi-state heritage tourism project which traces the route of the naturalist’s journey in the 1770s and seeks to promote interest in the diverse cultural and natural heritage sites it contains.

Sponsored by Historic Blakeley State Park and the Gulf Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council in association with the Bartram Trail Conference



*Marshall and Lorelei searching for Billy in the Historic Blakeley State Park. They found him next to the bigleaf magnolia on the trail*

of the “pearls” in our chain. We need to secure the BTC to these places and trails.

Later, on our quest, we visited other Bartram sites in Pensacola including the beach at Perdido Key, Bartram Park in downtown Pensacola, Fort Pickens, and two more Bartram Trail historic markers placed by the Althea Garden Club. It was truly a great Bartram Trail Adventure Tour. We used Brad Sanders’ Bartram trail map on our website to locate all of our Bartram sites. My family enjoyed our “Where’s Billy?” quest—it took us three

days and we were able to do it safely.

I see the BTC’s direction as one of organization and recognition. The Bartram Trail is out there. We need to gather the information, support the affiliates, and become more visible as the steward of the Bartram Trail and his legacy. Please join us by becoming a Bartram Trail Conference member or affiliate (<http://www.bartramtrail.org/Affiliates>).

I have shared with you how I enjoyed the Bartram Trail this summer searching for Billy. Get out there, go find Billy in your neck of the woods and share it with us on Facebook.

“peace and love...”WB  
*Sam Carr, President*

### **Bartram Trail Conference Board 2019–2021**

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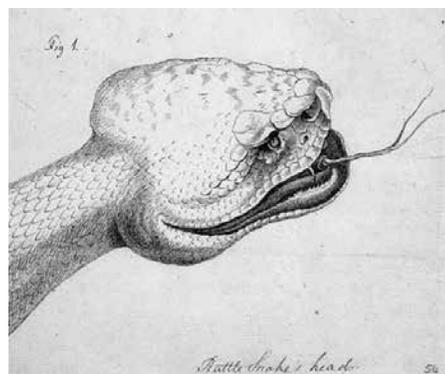
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# Publication Announcements

The Bartram Trail Conference can celebrate three recent publications. Tom Hallock's *A Road Course in Early American Literature: Travel and Teaching from Atzlán to Amherst*, recently published by the University of Alabama Press, contains the following sentence in his acknowledgments: "Over the years, finally, I have been the beneficiary of three academic groups that have given shape to my career—the Society of Early Americanists, the Bartram Trail Conference, and the Association for



William Bartram's drawing of a rattlesnake

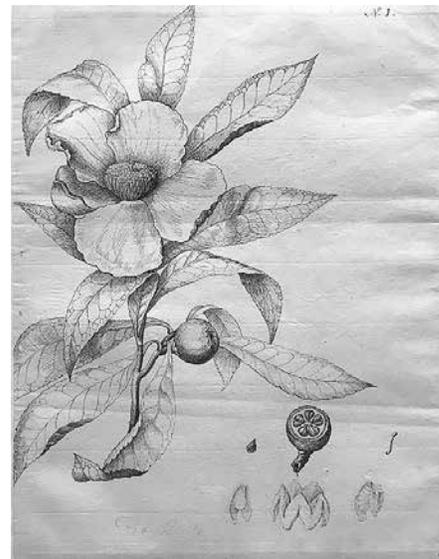
the Study of Literature and the Environment. I would not have envisioned this project without these three organizations—thank you to their leaders and organizers."

Whitney Barlow Robles, who presented her paper on the rattlesnake at the BTC meeting in Montgomery, has just seen publication of her article "The Rattlesnake and the Hibernaculum: Animals, Ignorance, and the Extinction in the Early American Underworld." Her dissertation research was supported by a Fothergill Award. Her paper was published in the prestigious *William and Mary Quarterly*, which is considered by historians to be the most highly regarded journal for early American history.

Heather Gladfelter, another of our Fothergill Award recipients who presented her paper at the Montgomery meeting, also recently had her research published as lead author in the journal

*Tree Genetics and Genomes*. In "Genetic diversity and population structure analysis of *Franklinia alatamaha*, a tree species existing only in cultivation," Heather describes how her research group is using genetic techniques to create a root rot-resistant *Franklinia* which once again could be grown in its native habitat.

Read more about genetic diversity in *Franklinia* at [Rooted in Revelation](#)



*Franklinia alatamaha* by William Bartram

## 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:

<https://bartramtrailconference.wildapricot.org/page-1655351>

All you need is a PayPal account!

### Annual Member Dues

Please check one.

- |                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual  | \$25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family      | \$30  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor | \$50  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron      | \$500 |

Please check one of the choices:

- I am a new member.  
 I am renewing my membership.

Please send payment to:

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c/o Ken & Janice Mahaffey  
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