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PHILADELPHIA STORY: FLORIDA GIVES WILLIAM BARTRAM A SECOND CHANCE

by CHARLOTTE M. PORTER

WILLIAM Bartram's book, *Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida . . .*, published in 1791, presented the most "consistent aesthetic theory produced in America up to his day."¹ Two hundred years later, appreciation of this complex work requires an understanding of the author's intellectual growth, for the *Travels* is both a volume of natural history and autobiography.

A "late bloomer" to say the least, Bartram was educated by his travels in the largest sense of the word. To his mind, the existence of established Indian village states alongside the emerging United States of the Southeast established a shared human dignity and rationale for the peopling of Indian lands under a republican form of government. Central to his north Florida experience was the "Great Alachua Savanna," present-day Paynes Prairie State Preserve, which he viewed as a fragment of the original state of nature awaiting European settlement. In the *Travels*, Bartram looked to nature to justify and sustain the pursuit of happiness. In the process of preparing his book, the naturalist expanded his moral philosophy to include animals as well as other human races. "It evidently appears," he wrote in 1795, "that the Animal creation are endowed with the same passions & affections We are & that their affections operate in the same manner."² Bartram's Florida travels were central to his maturation since they were the excuse for his best natural history studies.

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1. L. Hugh Moore, "The Aesthetic Theory of William Bartram," *Essays in Arts & Sciences* 12 (March 1983), 19.
2. See notes on the verso of Benjamin Smith Barton to William Bartram, September 14, 1795, Bartram Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (hereinafter, HSP).

William Bartram and his twin sister Elizabeth were born April 9, 1739. He was the fifth son of botanist John Bartram, and, with his father, Billy began traveling by the age of fourteen. He illustrated natural history specimens for his father's English correspondents who held botanical and horticultural interests. In an era before established natural history presses, these drawings were a resource John Bartram used to advantage. Within two year's time the Bartrams had assembled the largest collection of North American trees and flowering shrubs ever imported to the British kingdom.³ The father admired and encouraged the lad, but, a plain man himself, John did not comprehend the depth of William's aesthetic focus and moods. Concern over young William's temperament fills John's botanical correspondence with Peter Collinson, a wealthy London Quaker. Although the two men never met, they developed a candid rapport. In 1756 Collinson advised John Bartram that it was time for William to forego his childhood interest in drawing and to decide upon a livelihood.⁴ John sought counsel in others as well, and his old friend Benjamin Franklin suggested that William learn the printer's trade. To this, Collinson responded that since printing involved engraving, William's interest in drawing might be advantageous.⁵

Collinson meant well, but his own requests for William's drawings continued to divert the youth from a more practical plan. Collinson was aware of this conflict and wrote to John Bartram that he hoped botany would not distract William from learning the printing business.⁶ William, however, had not resolved to abandon his "favorite amusement." Furthermore, after Franklin claimed that he was the only printer in the British colonies to make any money, the father reconsidered and chose instead a medical career for William. To that end, he wrote another botanical correspondent, the noted Charles Town

3. "A List of Seeds and First Trees & Flowering Shrubs Gathered in *Pensilvania*, the *Jerseys*, & *New York*," Linnean Society Microfilm No. 629, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA (hereinafter, APS). For context, see Sarah Stetson, "The Traffic in Seeds and Plants from England's Colonies in North America," *Agricultural History* 23 (January 1949), 45-56.
4. Peter Collinson to John Bartram, February, n.d., 1756, transcribed by Edward E. Wildman, APS. The Wildman transcripts in APS are the source of all subsequent correspondence unless otherwise noted.
5. *Ibid.* The reader should also consult Edmund and Dorothy Berkeley, eds., *The Correspondence of John Bartram, 1734-1777* (Gainesville, 1992), 394.
6. *Ibid.*, 393.

physician Alexander Garden. William, he claimed, longed to work with Garden, but not on medicine or surgery. John Bartram continued to fret that William would not be able to support himself by drawing or by pursuing plant studies.⁷

For some reason John resolved to apprentice William to a merchant.⁸ By January 1757 William was outfitted with wares, but he did not apply himself and was soon busy preparing a "pocket" of fine drawings for Jane Colden, the scientific daughter of Cadwallader Colden of New York.⁹ He also continued to draw for Collinson who wanted to believe that William had learned to budget his time wisely, confining his botany only to leisure hours.¹⁰ As a reward and a reminder, Collinson sent him a book on self-improvement. Collinson's optimism continued, and in 1759 he praised William's writing to John but continued his criticisms of the young man's spelling. Again, he sent William books to help him, this time spelling guides.¹¹ Despite Collinson's attentions, William was not receiving stimulation commensurate with his needs, and, beginning a practice that would characterize his intellectual growth, he was sent south.

In 1760 John arranged for the youth to live with his uncle, William Bartram, at Cape Fear River, North Carolina, and to pursue the merchant's trade— actually that of a traveling salesman. Colonel Bartram was by all accounts a kind man, and William seems to have been a welcome addition to the household. He wrote with apparent relief, "Here no Preaching."¹² His father continued to chide his unsteady ways. John plied his son with requests for seeds and roots of plants that he might find along his trade routes.¹³ Not surprisingly, young William's interests remained divided, and his name soon dropped out of John Bartram's letters to Collinson. In spring 1764 the London Quaker discretely referred to Billy in the past tense, as if he were dead or disgraced. Referring to Bartram's sixth son, John,

7. John Bartram to Alexander Garden, March 14, 1756.

8. John Bartram to Collinson, March 14, May 30, 1756.

9. John Bartram to Jane Golden, January 24, 1757.

10. Collinson to John Bartram, February 10, 1757.

11. *Ibid.*, March 10, 1759.

12. William Bartram to his father John Bartram, May 20, 1761. See also William Bartram to his brother John Bartram, May 18, October 31, 1761, Bartram Family Papers, HSP.

13. John Bartram to William Bartram, September 1, 1761, Misc. Mss. Bartram, New-York Historical Society, New York (hereinafter, NYHS).

Jr., he hoped this boy too would study nature, but in a more reliable and profitable fashion than Billy.¹⁴ Nature study, of course, had been William's undoing, but Collinson was eager for an enthusiastic and inexpensive collector in the colonies and continued to send messages to this effect for Johnny. Three months later Collinson was still left with a troubled picture of William's exact whereabouts and well-being, but his hints persisted to the father. On the news of a large, fossilized bison discovered in the colonies, Collinson wished for a skilled artist to draw it.¹⁵ Although he always spoke well of John, Jr., he was clearly hopeful that William would come forth with pen and paper in hand.

By autumn 1764, John Bartram, ever resourceful but losing his eyesight, hit upon a partial solution. Collinson would procure for him an appointment as botanist to the king to explore East Florida, and William would accompany him. This was a clever idea, spurred on in part by the recent appointment of the Bartrams' young neighbor, William Young, as botanist to Queen Charlotte.¹⁶ John hoped to enjoy similar formal recognition and prestige for his botanical contributions. William was to gain suitable employment. In return, Collinson would receive specimens and drawings, and the crown would benefit by exploration of the little-known headwaters of the St. Johns River. The larger British gain would be the settlement of East Florida.

News of John's appointment did not come until May 1765.¹⁷ By June 1, Thomas Lamboll was referring to him as "Kings botanist, with a Salary" – actually a meager stipend of £50 per annum.¹⁸ John, under the impression that he was to survey the natural productions of East Florida, used the excuse of his ailing eyes to pressure William to join him.¹⁹ This tact may not have been effective in soliciting William's cooperation, and in June, John informed William that his friend Peter had ordered him to take along a son or servant.²⁰ In fact, Collinson had ordered no such thing. William's services spared John the cost of an

14. Collinson to John Bartram, March 7, June 1, 1764.

15. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1764.

16. For more on William Young, a neophyte botanist, see Raymond Phineas Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana, IL, 1970), 582,592.

17. Collinson to John Bartram, May n.d., 1765.

18. Thomas Lamboll to John Bartram, June 1, 1765.

19. John Bartram to William Bartram, May 19, 1765.

20. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1765.

assistant, if indeed he would have been able to procure one for so difficult and uncomfortable a journey. John further pressed William to sell the merchandise he had forced him to buy at Cape Fear and to have a lawyer settle any debts. The father emphasized in no uncertain terms the venture was a fair opportunity for William to redeem his reputation.

John Bartram returned from East Florida in 1766 under some misunderstanding. The trip had been dangerous, and John was in poor health. Collinson did deliver a part of their collections to the royal gardens at Kew, where some of the plants can be seen growing today, but he seems to have kept the lion's share. Furthermore, Bartram was discouraged from overloading his royal patron with too many specimens and notes.²¹ Collinson explained that the king was no botanist, and there were formalities to be observed.²² Collinson also retained William's drawings, for which he sent payment, and circulated them among professional and amateur circles in hopes of finding an admiring benefactor for the unknown young man.²³ From the onset Collinson appeared to have been more interested in William's contributions than in John's dubious new status.²⁴

John Bartram was also less than forthcoming. He did not forward his manuscript account of the Florida journey to Collinson, but allowed the British Land Office to publish it as part of William Stork's *Account of East-Florida*. This breach, rightly or wrongly, miffed Collinson who vented his petty wrath in one of his last letters to Bartram.²⁵ Collinson threatened that Bartram's annuity might be withdrawn. Collinson regretted this possible action because Bartram's eyesight was so poor. Good vision was of course essential for a plant collector. More telling than this reference to John's health, however, was Collinson's revelation that the man had no formal title as king's botanist beyond one

21. Collinson to John Bartram, February 10, 1767.

22. *Ibid.*, February 29, 1768.

23. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1767.

24. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1768.

25. *Ibid.*, n.d., but probably February 3, 1767. See Berkeley and Berkeley, eds., *Correspondence*, 680; see also William Stork, *An Account of East-Florida with a Journal Kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia, Botanist to His Majesty for the Floridas; Upon a Journey from St. Augustine Up the River St. John's as far as the Lakes* (Woodfall, Charing-Cross, 1766), published again with the revised title *A Description of East Florida* (London, 1769). Dr. Stork also published an abstract of the *Account* in 1766, to which were added "Observations of Dews Rolle."

of his own making. No one else, including Bartram's biographers, seems to have cared about this detail.²⁶ By August 1768 Collinson was in his grave, and John Bartram soon was receiving accolades as the "Botanici Regii" from the Academy of Science at Stockholm. He was even addressed as "Sir John."²⁷

William's comprehension of the situation is even murkier. Both he and his father appear to have been misled on the Florida venture. More importantly, both men lost control over their scientific findings as Collinson shared their findings with botanic friends and others to whom he owed favors. The Florida trip served Collinson well, but it was personally disastrous for the Bartrams. John became seriously ill in East Florida and, footsore and exhausted, was handicapped by a recurrent ulcer.²⁸ Collinson had refused to push his luck with the king by asking the crown to pay for a horse. William decided to become a planter along the St. Johns River. Furthermore, somewhat out of the blue, he obstinately convinced his father to obtain a plantation of 500 acres for him near St. Augustine. A provincial census lists William as a "draughtsman," and his land grant was one of 121 issued in East Florida between 1764 and 1774.²⁹ The terms of these grants required the settlement of white, Protestant families to work the land, but, in practice, slave labor was used for the cultivation of rice and indigo. A Quaker by upbringing, John Bartram unwillingly followed custom and bought slaves for William in South Carolina.³⁰ By April, John had also outfitted William with tools, including a "shovel much better than any spade," lead for bullets, "3 stone cups," "20 yards for crocus," "hizing [gunny or sacking] for bags to fill with

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26. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *The Life and Travels of John Bartram: From Lake Ontario to the River St. John* (Tallahassee, 1982), 272-92; and Rodney H. True, "John Bartram's Life and Explorations," *Bartonia* 12, special issue (1931), 19.
 27. See John Bartram's diploma from the Academy, April 26, 1769, Bartram Family Papers, HSP; and John Weiksell to Bartram, August 31, 1773.
 28. John Fothergill to Collinson, May 10, 1766, Wildman transcripts, APS. This letter is not included in Betsy C. Corner and Christopher C. Booth, eds., *Chain of Friendship: John Fothergill of London, 1735-1720* (Cambridge: MA, 1971).
 29. See "A List of the Inhabitants of East Florida, their Employes, Business and Qualifications in Science from 1763 to 1771," in Louis DeVorse, ed., *De-Brahm's Report of the Survey General in the Southern District of North America* (Columbia, SC, 1971), 180-86.
 30. Berkeley and Berkeley, *Life and Travels of John Bartram*, 263.

moss which the people here say makes good beds," and other household items. The father also sent much advice, some of it tiresome: "Above all take care the negroes dont fall trees upon one another."³¹ A few days later a second letter continued, "It will be best for thee to plant as many pease as possible for the negros." John added the sobering news that he was "altering his will."³²

The father's attitude became increasingly harsh. A July letter chastised William for his "usual ingratitude" and concluded, "Thee must expect to suffer the first year as all do in new settlements[.] In the meantime I remain thy loving father."³³ William failed his father in East Florida, and in August the eminent Henry Laurens felt compelled to urge John Bartram not to disown his son, a gentle man with no wife or friend.³⁴ Laurens was a successful Charleston merchant and planter who speculated in Florida land. Having visited William, he offered an all-too-real picture of the young man's circumstances. He implored the senior Bartram to exchange the inexperienced slaves since they were not plantation workers but sailors. Furthermore, the location, Laurens continued candidly, was the worst he had seen— a pine barren verging on stagnated swamp. The father's desire for a vegetable garden was clearly out of the question. In Laurens's considered opinion the pineland John hoped to have timbered was too inferior. This was not welcome news to the penny-pinching father, but Laurens, who was later elected president of the Second Continental Congress and then imprisoned in the Tower of London, was a man of conviction. He closed his letter with the warning that William's hopelessness might drive him to despair.

Laurens wrote with insight. By the end of the year a forlorn William had fled the swampy undertaking and presumably found residence in or near St. Augustine.³⁵ Prior to William's failure, the saddened father wrote Collinson in June 1766 that the consequences of the Florida trip for both him and William had placed him in great financial straits.³⁶ To make matters

31. John Bartram to William Bartram, April 5, 1766, HSP.

32. Ibid., April 9, 1766, Misc. Mss. Bartram, NYHS.

33. Ibid., July 3, 1766.

34. Henry Laurens to John Bartram, August 9, 1766.

35. Ernest P. Earnest, John and William Bartram: *Botanists and Explorers* (Philadelphia, 1940), 104.

36. John Bartram to Collinson, June, n.d., 1766.

worse, during that interval unemployed William had also refused William Gerard DeBrahm's offer to join a general survey of West Florida.³⁷ William was described as too whimsical and unhappy to take advantage of this opportunity to do what he liked best—traveling and drawing in Florida. With no more self-help books to send William, Collinson offered the distraught father the usual advice: get the lad a hard-working, honest wife.³⁸

John's leadership among Pennsylvanian farmers must have made William's agricultural failure especially humiliating for both men. William had expended his birthright and his father's patience. Overshadowed by his father's more outgoing personality and direct manner of expression, William once again seemed unable to find a profitable place for himself in life. Surviving a shipwreck off St. Augustine, William, now in his late twenties, left Florida in November 1766.³⁹ Debts and personal defeat, however, did not long dampen William's interest in Florida, and he returned for a short time the next year before taking a job as a day laborer in the North.⁴⁰

Despite his personal fiasco as a planter, William Bartram described Florida in the *Travels* as "delightful territory," "expansive savannas," and "glittering brooks." He contrasted the prospects of the Florida interior with the less happy existence of the British along the east coast.⁴¹ Some readers failed to grasp this distinction. In 1831 a disappointed John James Audubon, the famous bird painter, wrote from the St. Johns River, "I am now truly speaking in a wild and dreary and desolate part of the World." "No one in the Eastern States," he continued in a letter to his wife Lucy, "has any true Idea of the Peninsula." Audubon reiterated his own impressions in a letter to a support-

37. *Ibid.*, August 26, 1766.

38. Collinson to John Bartram, April 10, 1767.

39. Francis Harper, "Travels in Georgia and Florida, 1773-74: A Report to Dr. John Fothergill," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series 33, pt. 2 (1943), 125.

40. Collinson to John Bartram, December 25, 1767.

41. William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, Mark van Doren, ed. (New York, 1955), 312. By the time the *Travels* was published most Americans recognized the advantages of acquiring Florida for the United States. See Joseph Burkholder Smith, *The Plot to Steal Florida, James Madison's Phony War* (New York, 1983), 45-46; Bernard Bailyn, *Voyages to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1986), 31-36, 430-73.

er. “Mr. B[artram] was the first to call this a garden, but he is to be forgiven; he was an enthusiastic botanist, and rare plants, in the eyes of such a man, convert a wilderness at once into a garden.”⁴² Audubon was not far from the truth. In 1767 John Bartram’s British correspondents had wished to establish a botanic garden in West Florida.⁴³

In the *Travels*, William Bartram’s conversion of “a wilderness at once into a garden” is a literary accomplishment, but he did not undertake his trip with writing in mind. In 1772 his gloomy occupational horizons changed with the promise of a patron, Dr. John Fothergill— a wealthy friend of American intellectual enterprises known to the late Peter Collinson. After preliminary courtesies to John Bartram, Fothergill assured William by letter, “I should be glad to contribute to thy assistance in collecting the plants of Florida.”⁴⁴ Actually, the physician preferred more hardy plants from the North, but William wished to return to the Southeast. Fothergill expected Bartram to travel in Georgia with a group of British land speculators. To these ends he arranged for Lionel Chalmers, a Charles Town physician, to serve as middleman for collections and supplies.

Bartram set out for Savannah, Georgia, in April 1773. The following September Fothergill wrote, “I cannot expect great things from this first summer.” He urged Bartram “to take proper opportunities of conveying things to Chalmers in Charles Town.”⁴⁵ Apparently fearful that Bartram was not completely “sober and diligent,” Fothergill warned Chalmers not to let Bartram run up a bill of more than £50 per annum. He reiterated, “I do not want every little diminutive plant that grows. Drawings of such would be sufficient.” Fothergill also excluded trees exceeding fifteen feet in height, “because [in En-

42. Kathryn Hall Proby, *Audubon in Florida* (Miami, 1974), 26, 31, 96. Note that Audubon’s confusion of William Bartram with the latter’s botanical friend William Barton was not uncommon. See Charles Evans, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of all Books, Pamphlets and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America*, 14 vols. (New York, 1941), III, 120, which lists Barton, not Bartram, as the author of the *Travels*.

43. Roy A. Rauschenberg, “John Ellis, Royal Agent for West Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 62 (July 1983), 14; and Julius Groner and Robert R. Rea, “John Ellis, King’s Agent and West Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 66 (April 1988), 392.

44. Corner and Booth, eds., *Chain of Friendship*, 391, letter of October 22, 1772.

45. *Ibid.*, 401, letter of September 4, 1773.

gland] we cannot easily give taller trees the shelter they require."⁴⁶

After more than a year of transatlantic arrangements, Bartram's duties thus began as those of artist and collector. Traveling with several "gentlemen" of Georgia, Bartram assembled and forwarded a collection of dried plants to Charles Town for Fothergill, but he did not remain long in this company. Lured by the beauties of Georgia's Altamaha River, Bartram borrowed "a neat light cypress canoe" from Broughton Island, one of Laurens's properties, and "formed the resolution of travelling into East Florida." Fothergill, however, preferred that Bartram "confine his rambles within narrower bounds."⁴⁷ As luck would have it the American Revolution spared both men argument and freed Bartram to follow his own course of action. He joined a group of British Indian traders and moved with them throughout northern Florida. He traveled in the same fashion across the Indian nations of Alabama. After satisfying his desire to see the Mississippi River, he ended his travels in January 1777 and returned to his family home in Kingsessing, Pennsylvania.

In September of that year John Bartram died. John, Jr., inherited the Kingsessing property and allowed William to live with him. William stayed at Kingsessing for the rest of his long life, and it was there, within the confines of a rather small house, that he passed fourteen years before publishing his famous book of *Travels*. These years of domesticity were profitable for Bartram. He and his brother turned their father's hobby garden into a nursery business. After the restoration of the mails to Great Britain in 1783, their first catalog, a printed broadside, listed more than 400 trees and shrubs, many from East Florida.⁴⁸ Response was good as so-called "American gardens" became fashionable after Loyalists returned to England. For example, in 1784, Benjamin Vaughan wrote the Earl of Shelburne about

46. *Ibid.*, 403, 394, 392, letters of September 4, 1773, October 23, 1772, and Autumn 1772.

47. Bartram, *Travels*, 64, 69; Corner and Booth, eds., *Chain of Friendship*, 464, Fothergill to Chalmers, n.d. 1775.

48. *Catalogue of American Trees, Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants, Most of Which are Now Growing, and Produce Ripe Seed in John Bartram's Garden, Near Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1784). Copies of this rare 1783 broadside can be seen at the APS and HSP.

seeds for Lady Shelburne from “the famous Bartram who has sent me a list of American plants fit for this country.”⁴⁹ Vaughan seemed unaware of the death of the senior Bartram, and William’s business continued to benefit from the confusion with his father.⁵⁰ Thirty-five years later the southern travels of the two men were indistinguishable in the minds of some horticultural devotees.⁵¹ This situation was compounded by the fact that John Bartram’s account of the East Florida trip was published in London in 1769 under William’s name.⁵² In 1791 the publication of William Bartram’s *Travels* further contributed to the Bartrams’ composite reputation abroad and boosted nursery sales as transatlantic demand for Kingsessing seeds continued.⁵³

Recognition of William Bartram’s efforts extended beyond garden circles. William Dunlap, art critic for the *New York Mirror*, referred to him as “philosopher, philanthropist, and naturalist” who with his father opened the field for subsequent observers.⁵⁴ William Rush, the American sculptor of Linnaeus and George Washington, exhibited a bust of William Bartram at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts in 1812. As for scientific acclaim, Thomas Pennant cited Bartram five times in the first volume of his *Arctic Zoology* (1784-1787), and Benjamin Smith Barton mentioned William Bartram’s name fifty times in his forty-two-page *Fragments of Natural History*. The year after Bartram’s death, Charles Alexander LeSueur, a colleague of Bartram’s grandnephew, Thomas Say, named the flying squid *Loligo bartrumi* (now *Sthenoteuthis bartrami*).

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49. Benjamin Vaughan to the Earl of Shelburne, January 28, 1784, Benjamin Vaughan Papers, APS.
 50. For John’s legacy, see Joseph Kastner, *A Species of Eternity* (New York, 1977), 45, 60.
 51. Johannes Heckewelder to Peter S. Du Ponceau, July 25, 1819, Manuscript Division, APS.
 52. “An extract of Mr. Wm. Bartram’s Observations in a journey up the River Savannah in Georgia, with his son, on Discoveries,” *Gentleman’s Magazine* 37 (April 1767), 166-69. Harper, ed., “Travels in Georgia and Florida,” attributes this to John, 228.
 53. William Strickland to John Bartram, July 19, 1797, Misc. Mss. Bartram, NYHS. A new edition of the Bartram’s catalog in 1807 was followed by a catalog twice as large in 1814, 1828, and 1836. Refer to John Hindley Barnhardt, “Bartram Bibliography,” *Bartonia* 12 supp. (1931), 66-67, and original catalogs, HSP.
 54. William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, 3 vols. (New York, 1834; reprint ed., New York, 1969), II, pt. 1, 202.

The earliest work to call attention to William's botanical discoveries was *The American Grove*. This handbook contained the first printed description of the beautiful flowering shrub *Franklinia alatamaha*, now extinct in the wild.⁵⁵ The author, William's cousin, carefully noted that although John and William Bartram had first observed the rare new species in Georgia in 1765, it was William who brought back the first specimens to Philadelphia in 1777. It was William, too, who chose "to honor [the species] with the name of that patron of sciences" and great friend of his father, Benjamin Franklin. Today it is wonderful to remember that all Franklin trees are derived from these specimens and that remarkable friendship.

When John Bartram, Jr., died in 1812, his daughter Ann inherited the garden at Kingsessing. After her marriage to Robert Carr, customers contacted him rather than William to order plants. Europeans were willing to pay high prices for American plants: \$6.00 to \$10.00 for oaks, \$2.00 for *Franklinia*, and \$5.00 for the fragrant American lotus (*nelumbo lutea*) which Bartram had described in Florida.⁵⁶ Carr, printer for the illustrated bird books produced by William Bartram's student and Audubon's rival, Alexander Wilson, was no gardener so William must have continued to do much of the work.

Given the demands of the nursery business, it is a wonder that Bartram ever found time to turn his field work for Fothergill into a four-part volume. Friends described him working barefoot in his garden, reading or watching birds, but none talked about his writing. In 1796 Bartram recounted an accident he had suffered some years earlier: "I had the misfortune of a violent fracture of my Right leg by a fall from a Tree where I was collecting seeds which laid me up for near 12 months & which prevented me from undertaking Botanical excursions for some time."⁵⁷ The preparation of the *Travels* for publication may be one of the few happy results of this confinement. Unfor-

55. Humphrey Marshall, *Arbustrum Americanum: The American Grove, or, An Alphabetical Catalogue of Forest Trees and Shrubs* (Philadelphia, 1785), 49-50.

56. François André Michaux to Robert Carr, July 1, 1818, Manuscript Division, APS.

57. Ewan assigns this mishap to 1787 on the basis of an undated letter from Bartram to B. S. Barton describing an injury. See also William Bartram, *Botanical and Zoological Drawings, 1756-1788*, Joseph Ewan, ed. (Philadelphia, 1968), 12.

tunately, we have no idea of Bartram's methods of composition. The only known manuscript for the voluminous *Travels* (at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania) has few editorial markings or corrections. Yet, the inconsistencies of spelling, time, and place strongly suggest that Bartram reconstructed large portions from memory. After the books publication, Bartram confessed to Lachlan McIntosh that he took pleasure in recollecting "the various scenes & occurrences of my long pilgrimage."⁵⁸ As for primary sources, the only extant journal Bartram sent back to Fothergill records his exploration of the biologically rich Alachua Savanna south of Gainesville, Florida. This journal is dated March 22, 1774, but is not daily field notes. Rather, the neat and uniform execution suggests a copied synopsis.⁵⁹ Whatever the explanation, the writing is pedestrian.

Bartram's *Travels* presents his Florida journey in literary terms as attractive to delicate feelings and sensibilities as the European Grand Tour. Ironically, despite their interest in travel, the Bartrams did not participate in the Grand Tour, a custom initiated in Philadelphia in 1748 by the young Quaker Francis Rawle.⁶⁰ Furthermore, after 1777, despite invitations from Wilson and Thomas Jefferson, William Bartram never traveled again. He appeared content to spend the rest of his life at Kingsessing gardening and being "alone in the Garden reading a favorite Book."⁶¹ As identified at present, however, the Bartram library appears inadequate to provide the literary dimension Bartram eventually brought to his published book.⁶² One surprising lacuna is the burgeoning travel literature of the eighteenth century. William Bartram did own a two-volume work published in 1789, *Travels through the Interior Parts of America*. Whether or not he read this work as he prepared his *Travels*, it was passed along to a nephew the next year.

William Bartram was impressionable as his responses to nature demonstrate. Although John Bartram had nurtured his son's botanical interests, he did not understand his artistic temp-

58. Bartram to Lachlan McIntosh, May 31, 1796, Misc. Mss. Bartram, NYHS.

59. A photocopy of this journal at the British Museum can be seen at HSP. See also Harper, ed., "Travels in Georgia and Florida," 134-71.

60. Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York, 1962), 171.

61. Bartram to McIntosh, May 31, 1796, Misc. Mss. Bartram, NYHS.

62. See Robert McCracken Peck, "Books from the Bartram Library," in *Contributions to the History of North American Natural History* (London, 1983), 46-50.

erament. During his travels, William turned to others to foster his late personal growth. In 1796 he addressed General Lachlan McIntosh as “Venerable Father Friend.” During his last summer spent in Georgia in 1776, William apparently found the McIntoshes more understanding of his nature than his own relatives. “My heart,” he wrote at age fifty-seven, “fills with gratitude and I seem to be really in your happy family, enjoying with you that improving Philosophic conversation you used to indulge me with Parintal, Filial & phylanthropic society.”⁶³ He signed this letter, “Your obliged Friend, Puggpuggy, The Flower hunter” – the name given to him by the Creek leader Cowkeeper near present-day Micanopy, Florida. Bartram was, as he confessed, “traveling over again” in memory the complex pathways that led to his remarkable book of 1791.

63. Bartram to McIntosh, May 31, 1796, Misc. Mss. Bartram, NYHS.