

Video	Audio
	<p><b>Narrator: On this episode of Georgia Outdoors we'll explore the natural history of Georgia through the eyes of William Bartram. Considered by many to be America's first native-born naturalist, William Bartram traveled extensively in Georgia in the 1770s cataloguing the diverse flora and fauna of the region.</b></p>
	<p>Narrator:          The attention of a traveller, should be particularly turned, in the first place, to the various works of Nature, to mark the distinctions of the climates he may explore, and to offer such useful observations on the different productions as may occur.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: William Bartram wrote this as part the introduction to his 1791 book The Travels of William Bartram. William Bartram spent nearly four years, from 1773-1777, traveling throughout the southeast, an area that now consists of 8 states. A man with a deep respect of nature, science, art and leisure, William Bartram was the first writer to portray nature through his personal as well as scientific experience. He is widely considered to be America's first naturalist.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:          I am continually impelled by a restless spirit of curiosity in pursuit of new productions of nature, my chief happiness consists in discovering and introducing into my native country, some original productions of nature which might become useful to society.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: And indeed, William Bartram was quite successful in introducing many new plants and animals to society, as was his father John Bartram who had during his own career earned the title Royal Botanist to the King of Great Britain. Now dotted with historic markers, William Bartram's path through southeast criss-crosses Georgia several times.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sanders:</b>          William Bartram spent more time in Georgia and on the coast of Georgia than any other place during his travels.          A lot of places where William Bartram traveled are now owned by private citizens; they're not public property. Some of the places where William Bartram traveled and that he wrote about are now actually just highways because Indian trails became wagon roads and became modern highways.</p>
	<p>Narrator: Though many of the exact areas that Bartram described have been lost development ... there are a handful of trails that approximate his footsteps. And of course, many of the plants and animals that Bartram described still exist, though are not quite so foreign or exotic to us as they were to Bartram at the time. One plant that does not exist anymore however is the Alatomaha Franklinia, named in honor of friend and neighbor Benjamin Franklin.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: The first month of Bartram's travels was spent on the coast of Georgia. He arrived in Savannah and traveled to Midway for a religious service. Bartram is thought to have visited several of the barrier islands</b></p>

	<b>during this period, though he writes only of Colonel's Island.</b>
	<p>Bartram:          The roebuck, or deer, are numerous on this island; the tyger, wolf, and bear, hold yet some possession; as also raccoons, foxes, hares, squirrels, rats and mice, .... Oposoms are here in abundance, as also pole-cats, wild-cats, rattle-snakes, glass-snake, coach-whip snakes, and a variety of other serpents.</p> <p>HERE are also a great variety of birds, through out the seasons, inhabiting both sea and land.</p> <p>THE bald eagle is a large, strong, and very active bird, but an execrable tyrant: he supports his assumed dignity and grandeur by rapine and violence, extorting unreasonable tribute and subsidy from all the feathered nations.</p>
	<p>Sanders:          While he was traveling south of the Altamaha, he wrote about the Okefenokee Swamp. And it's one of the first descriptions of the Okefenokee in literature, but he didn't say that'd he actually visited it. So we don't know.</p>
	<p>Bartram:          THE river St. Mary has its source from a vast lake, or marsh, called Okefenokee, which lies between Flint and Ocmulgee rivers, and occupies a space of near three hundred miles in circuit. They say it is inhabited by a peculiar race of Indians, whose women are incomparably beautiful but all their attempts have hitherto proved abortive, never able to find any road or pathway to it; yet they say that they frequently meet with certain signs of its being inhabited, as the building of canoes, footsteps of men, etc.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: Today there are several areas from which you can access the Okefenokee Swamp. On the eastern border of this 400,000 acre swamp is the Suwannee Canal National Recreation Area, on the western border is the Stephen C Foster State Park, and in between run several canoe trails for both overnight and day trips.</b></p>
	<p><b>Spomick:</b>          Much of the landscape that we see today has to be viewed in terms of loss, in terms of what Bartram saw with the travels, but it is encouraging to see landscape at a place like the Okefenokee where in many ways the landscape is in better shape than it was 50 years ago</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: Fifty years ago the American Alligator was on the Endangered Species list. The population has since rebounded and today can be viewed in abundance. While Bartram may not have the first person to describe the American Alligator, he was the first to portray their living and nesting behavior.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:          I believe they commonly lay from one to two hundred eggs in a nest: these are hatched I suppose by the heat of the sun, .... The female, as I imagine, carefully watches her own nest of eggs until they are all hatched, ....I believe but few of a brood live to the years of full growth and magnitude, as the old feed on the young as long as they can make prey of them.</p> <p>BUT what is yet more surprising to a stranger, is the incredible loud and terrifying roar, which they are capable of making, especially in the spring season, their breeding time; it most resembles very heavy distant thunder, not only shaking the air and waters, but causing the earth to tremble; and when</p>

	<p>hundreds and thousands are roaring at the same time, you can scarcely be persuaded, but that the whole globe is violently and dangerously agitated.</p>
	<p><b>Spomick:</b>          In 1773 William was intent on visiting Cherokee Country and he had been warned that it may not be a good idea because of recent violence between the Cherokees and the whites. However, he did decide to attend what was the Indian conference in 1773 in Augusta. So he traveled from the GA coast,</p> <p>Sanders:          and went with the entourage to Augusta for the meeting with the Creek and the Cherokee Indians where they were going to cede some land to pay for their debts that they had incurred during the French and Indian war.</p>
	<p><b>Narration:</b>  <b>Near the historical marker of Cherokee Comer lies the Bartram Trail Roadside Park. This park occupies the approximate site of the surveyors' camp on Moss Creek, which was then the western most boundary of Georgia. Bartram and the survey party made another stop along the way.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:          On the evening of the second day's journey, we arrived at a small village ... called Wrightsborough, it was founded by Joseph Mattock, Esquire of the sect called Quakers; They gave the new town this name, in honour of Sir James Wright, then Governor of Georgia.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: Today, the town of Wrightborough is a National Historic District and what remains are the bare outlines of the town and a few buildings. This Methodist Church built to replace Quaker Meeting House in 1810 probably looks much like the original that Bartram would have visited. After completing the survey, Bartram returned to Augusta using the Upper-Cherokee Path along the western bank of the Savannah River. Much of this area is now inundated with water by the Clark's Hill Reservoir. One of the two trails named for Bartram in Georgia tracks the southern perimeter of Clark's Hill Lake. This multi-use trail is marked with yellow blazes and starts just west of the dam. Augusta was once home to a trail named for William Bartram and it ran along the Augusta Canal, in fact it still does but it is now called simply, the Augusta Canal Pedestrian and Bike Trail.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:          The site of Augusta is perhaps the most delightful and eligible of any in Georgia for a city, an extensive level plain on the banks of a fine navigable river, which has its numerous sources in the Cherokee mountains, from Augusta downwards to the ocean, a distance of near three hundred miles by water. The Savannah uninterruptedly flows with a gentle meandering course.          Augusta is thus seated at the head of navigation. I do not hesitate to pronounce as my opinion, will very soon become <b>the</b> metropolis of Georgia.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: After returning to Savannah by way of Augusta, Bartram spent the next several months exploring the low countries between Carolina and Florida. Along the way, Bartram would have encountered some of the animals for which he is credited as being the first to describe in writing.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:          OBSERVED as we passed over the sand hills, the dens of the great land</p>

	<p>tortoise, called gopher: this strange creature remains yet undescribed by historians and travellers. The first signs of this animal's existence, as we travel Southerly, are immediately after we cross the Savannah River. The upper shell is near eighteen inches in length, and ten or twelve inches in breadth; the back is very high, the head is of a moderate size, the upper mandible a little hooked, the edges hard and sharp; the eyes are large; the nose picked; the nostrils near together and very minute; the general colour of the animal is a light ash or clay. They form great and deep dens in the sand hills, casting out incredible quantities of earth.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: With no official descriptions of these animals anywhere else in writing, Bartam used the common name in his travels. These are sometimes entertaining.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:        Here is in this river and in the waters all over Florida, a very curious and handsome bird, the people call them Snake Birds. They seem to be a species of cormorant or loon but far more beautiful and delicately formed than any other species that I have ever seen. They delight to sit in little peaceable communities, on the dry limbs of trees, hanging over the still waters, with their wings and tails expanded, I suppose to cool and air themselves, when at the same time they behold their images in the watery mirror:</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: Bartram was known to be a kind and friendly person, well-liked where ever he went...even among the wild creatures of southern Georgia.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram:        ... the rattle snake; a wonderful creature, when we consider his form, nature and disposition. I have in the course of my travels in the Southern states (where they are the largest, most numerous and supposed to be the most venemous and vindictive) stept unknowingly so close as almost to touch one of them with my feet, ...But however incredible it may appear, the magnanimous creature lay as still and motionless as if inanimate, then he often slowly extends himself and quietly moves off in a direct line,        THE rattle snake is the largest serpent yet known to exist in North America, I have heard of their having been seen formerly, at the first settling of of Georgia, seven, eight and even ten feet in length, ... but there are none of that size now to be seen. It is generally believed that they charm birds, rabbits, squirrels and other animals, and by steadfastly looking at them possess them with infatuation to creep into their mouths or lay down and suffer themselves to be taken and swallowed.</p>
	<p><b>Sanders:</b>        He was, I think, the first true American in that he looked at nature kind of apart from purely scientific curiosity. He was the first person to write about being interested in the welfare of animals and the respect of animals and other peoples that were not like you, like the Indians.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: Upon returning from Florida Bartram took two excursions in order to understand the Indians better. His first trip set out from Augusta north into Cherokee country.</b></p>
	<p><b>Spomick:</b>        And then he worked his way up along the Savannah River and then he crossed</p>

	<p>over on a trading path to the west, crossing the Blue Ridge probably at Courthouse Gap. In fact you can see remnants of an old road at Courthouse Gap</p>
	<p>Ray: This is courthouse gap, we first hit the bartram trail there</p> <p><b>Narrator: Marked with yellow blazes, the Georgia Bartram Trail meanders for 37 miles through the Chattahoochee National Forest in Rabun County Georgia. The pair have written a guide to the Georgia Bartram Trail and have devoted their retirement from academia to maintaining the trail.</b></p> <p>Skove: And the mountain over here is Pinnacle which we'll be climbing next.</p> <p>Ray: Which is Mt. Magnolia in Bartram's travels.</p> <p><b>Narrator: John Ray and Malcom Skove are the Georgia Bartram Trail Society. The pair have written a guide and have devoted their retirement from academia to maintaining the trail.</b></p> <p>Skove: There used to be a Georgia Bartram Trail society, but the vestiges of it are lost and we can't find anybody who does work on the trail, so the two of us have sort of decided to be guardians as much as we can of the trail</p> <p>Ray: I think the Bartram Trail attracts people partly because of the history of Bartram hiking it. He hiked it in an important period in our country's past. The revolutionary war started while he was hiking up through here.</p> <p>Skove: When we're walking on the trail, we do often imagine what Bartram saw and what the Indians saw when they first got here as well.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator: One of those places is Martin Creek Falls, though Bartram called it Falling Creek.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram: I now enter upon the verge of the dark forest, charmin solitude! As I advanced through the animating shades, observed the unparalleled cascade of Falling Creek, rolling and leaping off the rocks, which uniting below, spread a broad, glittering sheet of crystal waters, over a vast convex elevation of plain, smooth rocks, and are immediately received by a spacious basin, where, trembling in the centre through hurry and agitation, they gently subside. I here seated myself on the moss clad rocks, under the shade of spreading trees and floriferous fragrant shrubs, in full view of the cascades.</p>

	<b>Narrator:</b> <b>The Georgia Bartram Trail crosses the most northwestern tip of Georgia. But the trail doesn't stop at the state line, it continues for another...northward.</b>
	Skove: Perhaps it was at its prettiest when William Bartram came through, what we have now is pretty but it was prettiest perhaps then.  Ray: Ah, look Malcom. You can see Rabun Bald today.
	<b>Narrator:</b> <b>With his curiosity of the Cherokees somewhat satisfied, Bartram next made arrangements to visit the Creek Nations.</b>
	Sanders: In 1775, Bartram got in with a group of traders who were leaving South Carolina and Augusta and were traveling to the lower Creek towns and the upper Creek towns and then they were going on to Mobile and he saw it as an opportunity to see more land that he hadn't covered before and he would be protected traveling with the traders.
	<b>Narrator:</b> <b>The Old Tading Path crossed the Ocmulgee River near present day Macon. From that point on, Bartram and his companions were in Indian Country.</b>
	Bartram: On the east banks of the Ocmulgee, this trading road runs nearly two miles through ancient Indian fields, which are called the Ocmulgee fields: they are the rich low lands of the river. On the heights of these low grounds are yet visible monuments, or traces, of an ancient town, such as artificial mounts or terraces, squares and banks, encircling considerable areas. Their old fields and planting land extend up and down the river, fifteen or twenty miles from this site.
	<b>Narrator:</b> <b>Bartram continued his exploration of the Lower-Creek towns along the Old Trading Path eventually crossing the Chathoochee River into Alabama near present-day Columbus. Bartram was successful in reaching Mobile and west Florida, he returned to Augusta the next year using the same trading road.</b>
	<b>Narrator:</b> <b>William Bartram spent his remaining time in the southeast along the coast of Georgia. He returned to Philadelphia, his birth place, in October of 1776. He never embarked on another excursion as immense, or as influential, as his Travels in the Southeast.</b>

	<p>Sanders: William Bartram is much more significant than I originally imagined that he would be. He wrote one of the early books of the American republic that's still in print today and has never been out of print and it came widely printed all over Europe.</p> <p>Spornick: I think in many ways his work was read by people in London in the 1790's in much the same way we do now that he was describing a land that seemed exotic and a land full of alligators and creek Indian villages. And I guess with our own loss of landscape and with the removal of the Indians I guess we have that same sort of sense that he's describing a world that we find fascinating, but in many ways not there.</p>
	<p>Bartram: This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, is furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all His creatures.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator:</b> <b>William Bartram traveled the southeastern United States for 3 years and 6 months; in that time he covered 25 hundred miles. Bartram described over 350 species of flora and fauna in his Travels, 130 of which he was the first to describe. Together, William Bartram and his father are responsible for introducing over 200 species of plants into the horticulture trade. And believe it or not, there were far fewer Indians in the southeast in Bartram's day than when the first explorers arrived. In the 1770s there were just forty thousand Indians scattered in Cherokee, Creek and Seminole villages—just two hundred years earlier there had been nearly one and a half million Indians living in the same region.</b></p>
	<p><b>Narrator:</b> <b>William Bartram traveled most often by horse, but also by boat and on foot. He carried some provisions with him, but also hunted and fished. Some of the most interesting stories from the Travels are about such hunting and fishing excursions. He offers this description of fishing with artificial bait for largemouth bass, which he calls "trout".</b></p>
	<p>Bartram: They are taken with a hook and line, but without any bait. He ingeniously swings the bob backwards and forwards, just above the surface, and sometimes tips the water with it; when the unfortunate cheated trout instantly springs from under the weeds, and seizes the supposed prey. The head of this fish makes about one third of his length, and consequently the mouth is very large: birds, fish, frogs, and even serpents, are frequently found in its stomach.</p>
	<p><b>Narator:</b> <b>Bartram was not shy about consuming any game. His Travels include not only descriptions of the size, shape and habits of various fauna, but</b></p>

	<p><b>also their flavor. Such creatures thus described are the soft-shelled turtle, the white ibis and the anhinga. In the 1770s there was only one weapon that a man like Bartram would have acquired for his travels...the flintlock.</b></p>
	<p>Freeland:          It was a necessity of life, but the average person probably knew how to work on his own gun and repair it to a much greater extent because it wasn't convenient to take them to...you know, they didn't have Walmart and that type of thing...so, the average person was intimately familiar with firearms, much more so than today because they used them all the time.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator:          Flintlock rifles are in a class of weapons that we today call "primitive weapons". And remarkably, they are still in wide use. Today, Dr. Freeland and his dog, Dempsey, are after squirrel.</b></p>
	<p>Pope:          In Georgia, primitive weapons are designated as crossbows, archery equipment and muzzle loading rifles of 44 caliber or larger.          A large advantage of primitive weapons is that you can use them anytime during a regular rifle season, but it also provides many extra days for you to be able to go out and enjoy the woods.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator:          The primitive weapon hunting season start one week earlier than the standard hunting season. Sometimes considered more sporting, primitive weapons attract hunters ready for a challenge and a connection with historical traditions.</b></p>
	<p>Freeland:          I got interested in primitive weapons through my interest in history. I taught history in high school for many years and I became interested in antique weapons and I began back in the 1960's and I really got into it in the last 20 years. I guess I never got tired of playing cowboys and Indians. I think there's a touch of that in all of us. (Talking to dog: C'mon Dempsey, get it Dempsey!) It does put me in touch with our ancestors and a little bit of the experiences that they had in their lives. And that's a very important part of it to me.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator:          Dr Freeland's enjoyment of "hand's on" history has spilled over into his professional life as well.</b></p>
	<p>Freeland:          Well, I'm principle at the local middle school and we have a rather elaborate living history at our school that deals with the cultural life of people in Scrabin county from primitive times right on up to the modern era. One of those aspects is blacksmithing, another is firearms. It's quite a large project that involves hundreds of children and thousands of visitors as the recreate frontier activities.          It's called a walk through time, and we generally do it every thanksgiving,</p>

	<p>generally several days before thanksgiving. We live in a world today of such material abundance that I think it's hard for us to imagine what it was like when people had to literally make everything that they used. And, to me that's intensely satisfying to do a little bit of that. I think I'd get tired of it if I had to do it all the time, I'm sure I would, but it gives you a sense of independence and accomplishment that's kind of difficult to put your finger on.</p>
	<p><b>Narrator:</b> <b>William Bartram, like Dr. Freeland, was pragmatic about the times he lived in and necessity of harvesting many types of game. But Bartram was always a romantic naturalist at heart.</b></p>
	<p>Bartram: Our hunters went out into the forest, and returned towards evening; amongst other game, they brought with them a savannah crane, which they shot in the adjoining meadows. This stately bird is above six feet in length from the toes to the extremity of the beak when extended, ... We had this fowl dressed for supper and it made excellent soup; nevertheless as long as I can get any other necessary food I shall prefer his seraphic music in the ethereal skies, and my eyes and understanding gratified in observing their economy and social communities, in the expansive green savannahs of Florida.</p>