

Bartram Garden Club Scrapbook Section 28

In April 2024 The Bartram Garden Club proactively participated in two events that helped promote and sustain the legacy of William Bartram by celebrating the 250th anniversary of his arrival on Amelia Island in 1774. Garden club members presented a proclamation to declare April 2024 as William Bartram Month in Nassau County, FL which was approved and read into the record on April 8, 2024 by County Commissioner Jeff Gray. Below are two articles commentating the pronouncement.

On April 14, 2024 the garden club promoted a joint effort by the Bartram Garden Club, the Bartram Trail Society of Florida, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions and Amelia Island Footprints as a part of the bicentennial of Fernandina Beach — celebrating 250 years since Bartram's visit to Amelia Island and the local shrimping industry. Below is an article from the April 17, 2024 issue of the The Fernandina Beach *News-Leader* which highlights the interpretative talk by Bartram re-enactor, Mike Adams.

Bringing history to life

County honors Billy Bartram 250 years after he landed on Amelia Island



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY CHANDLER/NEWS-LEADER

Billy Bartram talks to Rich Riley ahead of the Interpretive Talk held Saturday at Egans Creek Park. Right, Mike Adams, also known as Billy Bartram, stands in front of Egans Creek River on Saturday after giving an Interpretive Talk about Bartram and his travels.



ASHLEY CHANDLER
News Leader

There's an important figure in the history of Nassau County that many people don't know about. Before cameras were invented, a botanist, artist and the son of Benjamin Franklin's good friend traveled the "new world" down to Florida, landing on Amelia Island.

He drew what he saw of plants and animals, he learned from Native Americans and documented these experiences for the rest of the world to see.

County commissioners joined forces with a few Nassau County organizations to bring this figure back into the public's eye this month.

On April 8, county commissioners proclaimed April 2024 as William Bartram Month in Nassau County. This

comes almost exactly 250 years after Bartram landed on Amelia Island.

Along with several events put on in the county to teach the public about Bartram's Travels, an official county trail marking Bartrams travels also is in the works.

Bartram, who went by Billy, is known for the book he published in 1791, "Bartram's Travels," which described plants and animals in "the new world" during the 18th century.

The presentation during the commissioner meeting, read by Commissioner Jeff Gray, described Bartram as "... America's first native-born naturalist. He was an explorer, artist and author."

Bartram began his well-documented travels in 1773, landing on Amelia Island in April of 1774. Bartram described it as a "fertile island."

Bartram Garden Club member, master gardener and retired teacher Linda Martin was the primary writer of the proclamation.

"This is the first place he set foot in Florida. And all of his travels are very important for different reasons, for documentation of what species, the flora and fauna – plants and animals – were, and so we know, well we lost this, or why don't we ever see that anymore? ... There are many species of plants that bear part of his name ... to designate that he's the one who first described this as a unique species in the new world," Martin said.

"I've lived in the Southeast all my life ... every once in a while you come across a historical marker ... Bartram

BARTRAM Continued on 9A



BARTRAM *Continued from 1A*

was here ... the closer you are to history where you discover that, the more alive it becomes," Martin said.

But if you want to know more about Billy Bartram, you could have asked him yourself on Saturday at Egans Creek Park. Well, you could have asked Mike Adams, Bartram actor, who gave an Interpretive Talk free to the public discussing Bartram's journey.

Adams moved around and talked to the crowd as if he was Billy Bartram himself. During the talk, he paused after a bird tweeted, "You hear that osprey?"

Attendees of the talk learned about Bartram's travels on Amelia Island, including how he was shown "Indian mounds" and his endeavors with indigo. He even told some anecdotes such as eating raccoon curlew and one of his more famous stories about killing and eating a rattlesnake.

"Amazing indeed, the resources that you have right here on this end of Amelia Island," Adams said during the talk.

"He brings the history to life," Garden Club corresponding secretary and founding member Beverly Williams said about Adams.

The talk was part of a joint-effort event put on by the Bartram Garden Club, the Bartram Trail Society of Florida, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions and Amelia Island Footprints as a part of the bicentennial of Fernandina Beach – 250 years of Bartram's travels and the local shrimping industry.

Before the talk, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions took kayaks out for a guided tour with guests. The group followed a small portion of Bartram's path along Amelia River. At the same time, Amelia Island Footprints took

Trail in Nassau County after the Interpretive Talk. The West Nassau Historical Society has created a mockup of the trail markers and the trail society is in the process of getting the sites confirmed before placing the trail markers.

"When I think that Billy Bartram sailed, paddled or however he got there, passed my house, at least six times, it starts to mean something," Carr said.

A trail marker that has been standing in Nassau County since 1981 also will be part of the official trail. Due to weather, the marker was recently refurbished in 2020-21. On Jan. 14, 2021, the Bartram Garden Club rededicated the marker in memory of the Rose Garden Club that originally erected the marker, but no longer exists.

"We're trying to keep the legacy alive," Williams said. "William Bartram's most exciting adventures happened in Florida."

Earlier this month, the Garden Club held an informational event focusing on the native plants Bartram drew and talked about in his writings in honor of the 250th anniversary of his landing.

Williams, who also is a member of The Bartram Trail Society of Florida, said, "Florida was really a wild pioneer world – infested with mosquitos, alligators, he (encountered) wolves and bears, and because of his passion and his love of learning and nature, I feel like he needs a more prominent place in history. I think the state of Florida is responsible for keeping that legacy alive. It's natural for the Garden Clubs to do that because we love nature."

According to the Bartram Trail Conference website, "Bartram landed on the north end of Amelia Island to the headquarters of Lord Egmont's plantation. Bartram remained



Members of The Bartram Garden Club pose with Commissioner Jeff Gray after the proclamation of William Bartram Month April 8 at the Nassau County Commissioners meeting. From left are Gray, Linda Martin, Beverly Williams, Marc Williams, Karen Reily, Pam Dawson and Jerry Walthall.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY CHANDLER/NEWS-LEADER

Mike Adams, also known as Billy Bartram, stands in front of Egans Creek River on Saturday after giving an Interpretive Talk about Bartram and his travels.

Before the talk, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions took kayaks out for a guided tour with guests. The group followed a small portion of Bartram's path along Amelia River. At the same time, Amelia Island Footprints took guests on a historic van tour to teach about the shrimping industry.

The informational events aren't all these groups are doing to preserve Bartram's memory within the county. The Bartram Garden Club, The Bartram Trail Society of Florida, Amelia Island Kayak Excursions and Amelia Island Footprints are working with West Nassau Historical Society, Amelia Island Museum of History, the city of Fernandina Beach, Nassau County and State Parks to create an official Nassau County Bartram Trail.

"We have been working on an official Nassau County Bartram Trail," Amber Tipton of Amelia Island Kayak Excursions said before the talk. "William Bartram was here, right here, where our feet are, 250 years ago, So it's kind of nice during the bicentennial of the county to showcase a unique piece of history ..."

Sam Carr of the Bartram Trail Society of Florida discussed the plans for the Bartram

do that because we love nature."

According to the Bartram Trail Conference website, "Bartram landed on the north end of Amelia Island to the headquarters of Lord Egmont's plantation ... Bartram remained several days on this plantation and reported that he was much impressed with the fine state of cultivation, particularly of the indigo."

There are more events to be held this month in honor of Bartram among other events for the Fernandina Beach Bicentennial, including more guided tours. The Bartram Trail Society also is holding its annual Bartram Frolic later this month. For the calendar of events and more information, visit bartramtrailsociety.com/annual-bartram-frolic/ and island-chamber.com/2023/11/30/city-of-fernandina-beach-bicentennial-celebration/.

For more information on Bartram or these organizations, visit bartramsgarden.org, bartramtrailsociety.com/ or bartram-trailconference.wildapricot.org/.

For information on future guided kayak tours visit ameliAISlandkayak.com or go to their facebook page.

achandler@fbnewsleader.com



William “Billy” Bartram talks to the audience during the Interpretive Talk held Saturday at Egans Creek Park.



**A PROCLAMATION OF THE NASSAU COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, PROCLAIMING APRIL 2024
AS WILLIAM BARTRAM MONTH IN NASSAU COUNTY,
FLORIDA.**

WHEREAS, William Bartram was America's first native born naturalist, an explorer, artist, and author whose illustrations and descriptions of nature provide a look back at the relatively pristine environment of the new Florida territory in the 18th Century; and

WHEREAS, in 1773 William Bartram began a four-year journey for the purpose of collecting plants as he explored the territory of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, and documented over 300 plants and many animals then unknown to science; and

WHEREAS, in April 1774, William Bartram first landed on Amelia Island, which he described as "a fertile island...particularly favorable to the culture of indigo and cotton,"; and

WHEREAS, William Bartram was offered hospitality by Stephen Egan, the agent of the Egmont estate, and observed that Amelia Island consisted of "excellent hummocky land" where corn, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables were cultivated; and


WHEREAS, an account of William Bartram's travels was published in 1791 and became an American classic and a success in Europe, inspiring the works of the romantic poets, informing 18th Century scientists about the plants and animals of the New World, and entertaining the armchair travelers on the Continent; and

WHEREAS, the name of William Bartram is memorialized in plant and animal nomenclature, numerous places, and sites, including the Bartram Trail, identified by a marker on the Fernandina Beach waterfront.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED this 8th day of April 2024, that the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County, Florida, hereby proclaim the month of April, 2024 be known as “William Bartram Month” in acknowledgement of the 250th Anniversary of William Bartram’s travels in Nassau County, Florida.

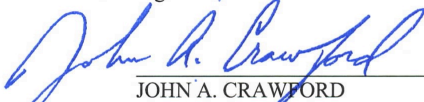


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA



JOHN F. MARTIN
Its: Chairman

Attest as to Chairman’s
Signature:



JOHN A. CRAWFORD
Its: Ex-Officio Clerk

Approved as to form by the
Nassau County Attorney:



DENISE C. MAY

The proclamation ceremony as appeared in the Nassau County *County Insider*
April 12, 2024

William Bartram Trail Month

4/12/2024

[0 Comments](#)



4/12/24 @ 3:15 p.m. - At the Monday, April 8, 2024 meeting, the Board approved [Proclamation No. 2024-016](#), proclaiming April 2024 as "William Bartram Trail Month" in Nassau County, Florida.

William Bartram was American's first native born naturalist, an explorer, artist and author whose illustrations and descriptions of nature provide a look back at a relatively pristine environment of the new Florida territory in the 18th Century. In 1733, William Bartram began a 4-year journey for the purpose of collecting plants as he explored the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, and documented over 300 plants and many animals that were unknown to science.

In April 1774, William Bartram landed on Amelia Island which he described as "a fertile island... particularly favorable to the culture of indigo and cotton." An account of his travels was published in 1791 and became an American classic and a success in Europe, inspiring the works of the romantic poets, informing 18th

Century scientists about the plants and animals of the New World, and entertaining the armchair travelers on the Continent. The name William Bartram is memorialized in plant and animal nomenclature, numerous places, and sites, including the Bartram Trail, identified by a marker in Fernandina Beach.

The month of April 2024 marks the 250th anniversary of William Bartram's travels in Nassau County, Florida. As such, the month of April 2024 is proclaimed as "William Bartram Month" to acknowledge and celebrate Mr. Bartram's visit to Nassau County and his contributions in identifying its unique plants and wildlife.

-Sabrina Robertson
Public Information Officer

The proclamation as appeared on the The Chamber website in April 2024.



[About Us](#) [Members](#) [Events & News](#) [Business Directories](#) [Resources](#) [Advocacy & Strategic Initiatives](#) 

William Bartram Trail Month

At the Monday, April 8, 2024 meeting, the [Board](#) approved [Proclamation No. 2024-016](#), proclaiming April 2024 as "William Bartram Trail Month" in Nassau County, Florida.

William Bartram was America's first native born naturalist, an explorer, artist and author whose illustrations and descriptions of nature provide a look back at a relatively pristine environment of the new Florida territory in the 18th Century. In 1733, William Bartram began a 4-year journey for the purpose of collecting plants as he explored the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, and documented over 300 plants and many animals that were unknown to science.

In April 1774, William Bartram landed on Amelia Island which he described as "a fertile island... particularly favorable to the culture of indigo and cotton." An account of his travels was published in 1791 and became an American classic and a success in Europe, inspiring the works of the romantic poets, informing 18th Century scientists about the plants and animals of the New World, and entertaining the armchair travelers on the Continent. The name William Bartram is memorialized in plant and animal nomenclature, numerous places, and sites, including the Bartram Trail, identified by a marker in Fernandina Beach.

The month of April 2024 marks the 250th anniversary of William Bartram's travels in Nassau County, Florida. As such, the month of April 2024 is proclaimed as "William Bartram Month" to acknowledge and celebrate Mr. Bartram's visit to Nassau County and his contributions in identifying its unique plants and wildlife.