

APPENDIX II

*Journeys of John Bartram in Virginia,
1737-1762*

"It must be borne in mind that well established and comfortable roads in his time were to be found mainly near large centers of population and ran out from these into sparsely settled, remoter regions. These roads frequently amounted to little more than well-marked trails, in many cases following those used by the Indians. When these roads ceased, the traveler was obliged either to continue along less marked Indian trails or to enter the untracked wilderness. To the botanist, the object sought was not primarily a route of travel from one place to another but rather access to regions in which rare or interesting plants might be found. Accordingly, in trying to make clear to friend Peter Collinson some of the problems of the collector, he says that his route led him usually into regions in which travel was difficult and often dangerous. He writes in the same vein to Alexander Catcot in 1742, 'thee may suppose that I am often exposed to solitary and difficult travelling, beyond our inhabitants, and often under dangerous circumstances, in passing over rivers, climbing over mountains and precipices amongst the rattlesnakes, and often obliged to follow the track or path of wild beasts for my guide through these desolate and gloomy thickets.'" R. H. True: *Bartonia*, special issue, supplement to No. 12, 1931, pp. 13, 14.

"Some of the difficulty of corresponding in those times of uncertain travel and of wars in progress on sea and on land is realized when John complains that he prepared and sent three copies of the journal of one journey before one reached England. The two earlier copies went in boats picked up by French privateers." *Ibid.*, p. 18.

JOURNEY TO EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

1737

The Eastern Shore trip by Bartram, 1737, is well proved by the following references in *Darlington*; they are presented here from letters of Collinson to Bartram because some students have not differentiated this trip from that of the fall of 1738, of eleven hundred miles through Virginia. March 14, 1737, "he Lord Petre thinks with me, that to make

a turn through your three lower counties [present Delaware] and then along the sea coasts of the Eastern Shore to the capes [Northampton County, Virginia], and then return around the bay home, leaving the Western Shore of Maryland and Virginia for another time" (p. 91); March 22, 1737, "two letters for thee, and two more to gentlemen, my particular friends, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland . . . James Holliday on Chester River and George Robins on Choptank River . . ." (p. 94); May 20, 1737, "I presume thee continues thy resolution for thy intended progress through the lower counties to the Capes, and then around the Eastern Shore of Maryland home" (p. 97); Aug. 12, 1737, "Pray does thou take a trip to the Eastern Shore in the fall" (p. 100); Jan. 27, 1738, "I had the pleasure of thine from Maryland. I am glad my friends were kind to thee" (p. 110); April 6, 1738, "I am glad that thee met with such civil treatment in thy expedition through the Eastern Shore; and that thee found such variety of plants" (p. 117); Feb. 17, 1737 [should be 1738], "I a little wonder that the eastern seashore, nor the island, afforded no shells" (p. 89).

JOURNEY THROUGH VIRGINIA
via Fredericksburg, Dragon Swamp, Claytons,
Williamsburg, Dungeness, Vale of Virginia

1738

There has been some perplexity as to this journey owing to the incorrect dating of a letter of Collinson to Bartram, in *Darlington*, and to the arrangement out of its chronological order of an undated letter of Collinson to Bartram, also in *Darlington*. The letter of February 17, 1737, should be February 17, 1738; the writer says "as thee designs for Virginia in the fall, I have sent circular letters to all my friends . . . proceed along the Western Shore of Maryland first, and so to Williamsburg; and then up into the country, and so back as thou proposed"; a proof that this is 1738 and not 1737 is the following in the same letter "I a little wonder that the eastern seashore, nor the island, afforded no shells"; the trip to the Eastern Shore down to the Capes was made in the fall of 1737 (*Darlington*, p. 89, also pp. 94, 97, 100, 110, 117). In the letter as printed of February, 1737 [1738], Collinson followed the old style, instead of 1737/38, and *Darlington* did not change it. The letter from Collinson to Bartram, without a date, *Darlington* has placed on

page 112, between a letter of January 27, 1738, and one of April 6, 1738; it should be in chronological order, after the letter of February 7, 1739 (*Darlington*, p. 126), for in that letter he says, "I long for next ship to hear of thy Virginia expedition," that is to receive the journal; he had already in his letter of January 26, 1739, said he was pleased with Bartram's letter telling of his arrival home from the Virginia expedition. In the undated letter (*Darlington*, p. 112) he says: "I now come to take notice of thy journal. I wish thee had been more particular . . . it was very agreeable to me to hear that my friends were kind to thee . . . but I should have been glad to have had thy particular observations on them and their families, and their dwellings, and their tastes in life."

Collinson always distinguished between a letter from Bartram announcing his arrival home and a journal, which reached him sometime later. Accompanying the journal of the Virginia trip Bartram sent a map, for Collinson says (*Darlington*, p. 113), "Thy map was very informing, and gave a pretty idea of thy journey." What a treasure this journal with the map would be today, giving the account of a botanist's observations through a primitive wilderness from Dungeness to the head of the Rappahannock, as he says, but probably the head of the Rapidan, then over the Blue Ridge into and north through the Valley back to his Pennsylvania home. We know that Collinson passed the letters and journals of Bartram around to his friends and patrons, Lord Petre, Dr. Fothergill, Dr. Solander, and others; this particular Virginia journal has never been found, but it may sometime be discovered in English family archives or in the collections deposited in universities and learned societies. Without the journal we can only conjecture the details of the trip because the letters about it that survive are brief. Following the main travelled road from his home near Philadelphia around the western shore of the Chesapeake, he certainly went into Anne Arundel County, where the Gover family lived, and to whom he refers, and then on down to Port Tobacco on the Potomac, and from there to the nearest ferry, Cedar Point opposite Hooe's Ferry, in King George County, Virginia, and from there to Fredericksburg, where we know he was from his own statement; or instead of heading toward Cedar Point he might have taken the only other main road, which led to Frazier's Point or Addison's in Maryland, opposite Hunting Creek Warehouse, near modern Alexandria, and taking the ferry there, gone over the road to Dumfries, Falmouth, to Fredericksburg, then down the south shore of the Rappahannock to a point below the present Tappahannock, but not so far

down as Urbanna, because he missed Dr. John Mitchell who was there, and whom he would have met had he gone to Urbanna; turning to the southeast over the old bridge at Dragon Swamp, then to John Clayton's house, Windsor, in Gloucester County at that time, and near the Piankatank River, and from there to Gloucester Town opposite Yorktown, and then on to Williamsburg. After visiting John Custis he probably took the road to Barrett's Ferry, crossed the Chickahominy and then to Westover to see William Byrd II. From Westover up to the site of Richmond, and beyond about thirty miles to Dungeness estate on the banks of the James River, the home of Isham Randolph. From there with a servant guide, Cornelius, furnished by Randolph, he made for the head of the Rappahannock or Rapidan, and from that point to the nearest gap in the Blue Ridge, and so into the Great Vale, following the Shenandoah to the Potomac and crossing into Maryland, keeping between the North and South Mountains on into Pennsylvania, a journey of eleven hundred miles in five weeks.

Although the journal is missing, we are fortunate in having the short letter of Bartram, about the trip, to Collinson December, 1738, in *Darlington*, pp. 120-2, and the letter of Bartram to Dr. John Mitchell of June 3, 1744, in *Darlington*, pp. 363, 364.

JOURNEY THROUGH VIRGINIA

to North and South Carolina, and Return the Same Route

1760

The only evidence we have that Bartram made a trip through tide-water Virginia in 1760 is the mention of his visit to John Clayton, in Clayton's letter to Bartram of July 23, 1760 (*Darlington*, p. 407): "When I had the pleasure of your agreeable company here"; and again in Clayton's letter to Bartram, February 23, 1761: "glad to hear that you are perfectly well recovered of your troublesome cough and fever. I assure you I was under a great deal of concern for your going away with such a disorder upon you" (*Darlington*, p. 429). We know that Bartram was in Charleston, S. C. in March, 1760, from letters of Alexander Garden to Ellis on March 21, and March 25, 1760, saying that Bartram was there (*Darlington*, p. 41). Just how he travelled from Philadelphia to Charleston and back we do not know for certain, because the letters in *Darlington* do not mention the method of travelling. He kept a journal of the trip and sent it to Collinson who praised it (*Darlington*, p. 234). The

journal is not extant. What a valuable addition to our early travel literature it would be. The fact that he was at John Clayton's home in Gloucester, now Mathews, County, Virginia, early in the summer of 1760, would indicate that he stopped there on his return trip from Carolina. He may have gone down over the same route. A good reason for believing that he made this whole trip, both ways, by horseback is Collinson's suggestion when Bartram was planning his trip south, to South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida in 1765, "whether it will not be better to go by sea to Carolina, taking thy son or a servant with thee and there hire horses for the expedition, than taking so long a journey by land, over and over again, without meeting with anything new, this must be submitted to thy better judgment and experience to determine" (*Darlington*, p. 269). This suggestion of going by sea to Charleston, which was followed by Bartram, strengthens the argument that he had not gone that way before, and that the journey to Charleston in 1760 was by land both ways.

On this trip to Charleston, S. C., 1760, Bartram would have followed, both going and returning, somewhat the same route so far as Williamsburg as in 1738, when he visited John Custis. On the 1738 trip, however, he did not go south of Williamsburg. The main highway from Philadelphia to Charleston avoided the Piedmont as much as practicable, approximating the coast line, and using a number of ferries. Bartram's visit to John Clayton would have taken him on a side trip of thirty to fifty miles. The post road was in general identical with this highway. The following is the outline of this main highway taken from the *Virginia Almanac of 1759*.

Philadelphia	Annapolis
Derby	London Town Ferry
Chester	Queen Anne's
Naaman's Creek	Upper Marlborough
Brandy-Wine Ferry	Charles-Town in Maryland com-
Christeen Ferry	monly called Port Tobacco
Newcastle	Hooe's Ferry in Virginia
Elk River	Southern's Ferry
North-East	Temple's Ferry
Principio Iron Works	Claiborne's Ferry
Susquehanna Ferry	Chiswell's Ordinary
Gun Powder Ferry	Williamsburg
Patapsco Ferry	Hog Island Ferry on James River

Isle of Wight Court House	Lockwood's Folly
Nansemond Court House	Shallot River
Bennet's Creek Bridge	Eastermost end of Long Bay
Edenton	Westermost end of Long Bay
Bell's Ferry on Chowan Sound	Lewis John's on Winea
Bath-Town on Pamlico River	Jenderson's on Santee
Graves' Ferry on News River	Cooper River Ferry
Whittock River	Goose Creek Bridge
New-River Ferry	Charles-Town
New Town on Cape Fear River	

JOURNEY TO NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA
and Return Through the Western Parts of Those Colonies,
Southwestern Virginia and the Valley of Virginia

1762

Bartram was not content until he had explored western South and North Carolina, and what we now call southwestern Virginia. In a letter to his half brother, William Bartram, Sr., who was living at Cape Fear, N. C., December 27, 1761, he says, "I have a great mind to drink next fall out of the springs at the head of Cape Fear River and Pedee" (*Darlington*, p. 420). He undertook the trip in the fall of 1762, and covered a wide range, exploring territory that no scientific observer had been in before. In a letter November 9, 1762, to his sons, Moses and William, who were then at Cape Fear, he says, "I am now returned home in good health"; the remainder of the letter describing the journey in Georgia, central South Carolina, and then to the Moravian settlement at Salem in North Carolina, to the head of Yadkin, head of New River; and then on to the mine [lead mine], to Fort Chesel [Chiswell] near present Wytheville, Virginia "towards Holston's River; then to the Ferry, thirty miles, where it was three hundred yards broad. It was quite dark before we got to the house. The next day we travelled till dark, and went supperless to bed, on the ground, by the east branch of New River. Set out early and by noon my guide parted with me, and I set forward alone; being obliged to my guide, and very thankful to Providence, being now on the branches of Staunton [or Roanoke River] and amongst the inhabitants" (*Darlington*, p. 423). From this point somewhere in the region of the present city of Roanoke he journeyed

through the Great Vale, which he loved, back home to Philadelphia. On May 10, 1763, Collinson acknowledges the receipt of Bartram's letter of October 31, 1762, "with the rare plants in Eden [those obtained from the Carolina and western Virginia trip] I acknowledge thy piece of natural history of the countries thou passed through; and the map annexed is both entertaining and informing" (*Darlington*, p. 249). This journey was a fruitful one. Collinson adds "with what amazement and delight, I, with Doctor Solander, surveyed the quire of specemins. He thinks near half are new genera" (*ibid.*). It was not until August 19, 1764 (*Darlington*, p. 265), that Bartram sent the journal of his Carolina and New River journey to Collinson; he asks Collinson to allow Solander to peruse it. There is no mention of the receipt of the journal by Collinson, and no comment about it by anyone, in *Darlington*. It may be that it was destroyed, or perhaps buried in some collection of papers waiting to be discovered; covering so vast a territory, at such an early period, the journal if found would rank as one of the memorable original narratives of American history and travel, fully equal in significance to the journal of 1765, and to William Bartram's journal of 1773-1774.

OTHER JOURNEYS OF BARTRAM IN VIRGINIA

Bartram made several journeys to the Great Vale. He was in the Shenandoah Valley in 1738, also in the spring of 1762, on his return from the Carolinas by way of the Moravian settlement, New River and head of Staunton River. The letter of Collinson, February 10, 1756, would indicate a trip in the fall of 1755 (*Darlington*, 203). There were others. A horseback ride through Southern Pennsylvania, Central Maryland into Northern Virginia would not be as hazardous or as inconvenient as the long rides through unsettled regions, and was undertaken occasionally.

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