

Friday, 18 October, 9:15-10:45 AM — *Four Mid-Atlantic Plantations?*

“Slavery and Freedom at Bartram’s Garden”¹

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African Americans have been part of the community in Kingsessing Township (modern Southwest Philadelphia) from the early period of European colonization along the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. African slaves were present in small numbers in the early Swedish and Dutch colonial settlements of the Lower Schuylkill and Delaware by the middle of the 17th century. English colonists who followed under the government of the Duke of York after 1664, and then under William Penn in the 1680s also imported African slaves. Enslaved labor was brought from the established plantation colonies in the Caribbean and the South and transported directly from Africa. Quakers and non-Quakers alike in Pennsylvania owned slaves.

This paper will discuss current evidence and the potential of enslaved and free Black labor at the Bartram family farms or plantations in Darby and Kingessing townships — concentrating primarily on the third and fourth generations of the Bartram family in Pennsylvania. John Bartram (1699-1777), the botanist and founder of Bartram’s Garden can be considered the focus of this paper, but his close descendants and extended family will also be considered.³

Determining if enslaved or free Black individuals were present on a mid-Atlantic farm is not entirely a straight-forward and simple process. Even determining which members of an extended family were resident on a farm in any given year can be difficult. Tax records that detailed slave or servant labor are generally not available until the last half of the 18th century for the rural townships around Philadelphia, and even then, those records are incomplete and very irregular. Probate records, court records, church or Friends meeting records, and family papers, letters, diaries and even ledgers can also be useful when available. But almost all those

¹ This paper grew out of an essay of the same title, written by this author in 2017 for a booklet documenting research by Sharece Blakney, *Stories We Know: Recording the Black History of Bartram’s Garden and Southwest Philadelphia*. edited by Aislinn Pentecost-Farren. Published by the John Bartram Association and Mural Arts, Philadelphia, 2017. This research is a work in progress, and Sharece Blakney has continued research over the past three years into the Black community in the vicinity of Bartram’s Garden.

³ Very recent research on the Marshall family has discovered that John Bartram’s first cousin, Humphry Marshall (1772-1801) owned a slave, Abraham Johnson, at least during the period 1762-1767. The Marshalls were close relatives of the Bartrams in Darby and Kingsessing, and settled at the Forks of the Brandywine in what became West Bradford Township, Chester County. Humphry Marshall’s was taxed for one slave in assessments for 1765, 1767, and a court case in the Chester County “Negro Court” May 28, 1762 — records “Negro Abraham Johnson the Slave of Humphry Marshall” was tried for murder and acquitted. I thank Torben Jenk for this new information.

sources are either silent or unavailable for the Bartram family (although a large collection of personal letters from John Bartram and his son William are preserved and have been published in modern editions). Currently there is no primary evidence for Bartram family use of slave labor on their farms in Kingessing or Darby, Pennsylvania, and as will be seen, John Bartram has sometimes been held up as an early proponent of emancipation and an opponent of slavery.⁴

It has long been the story from early biographies of John Bartram that he “gave freedom to an excellent young African whom he had brought up, and who continued gratefully in his service while he lived.” This individual, presumably male remains in the shadows of the history of Bartram’s Garden. He was mentioned in several short, early biographies of John Bartram and eventually in 1860 was he connected with a name, “Harvey”. When the last Bartram heirs left the historic garden site in 1850, the grave of this individual was marked in the southeast corner of the garden, near the river. “Harvey’s Grave” remained marked for at least a century more and was generally included among the tourist attractions at Bartram’s Garden, even before the garden became a public park in 1891.⁵

But the same John Bartram who gave freedom to “an excellent young African,” had a half-brother who ran a large rice plantation, Ashwood, on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina with enslaved labor.⁶ And the same John Bartram, with moral objections, purchased six slaves

⁴ The primary editions of the Bartram correspondence are: *The Correspondence of John Bartram 1734-1777*. edited by Edmund Berkeley, and Dorothy Smith Berkeley. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1992; and *William Bartram, The Search for Nature’s Design: Selected Art, Letters, and Unpublished Writings*. edited by Thomas Hallock and Nancy E. Hoffmann, University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 2010.

The most detailed history and analysis of the site of Bartram’s Garden and the Bartram House can be found in the research reports and plans produced by the National Park Service in 2002-2004, as part of an Historic American Landscape Survey. The Bartram’s Garden documentation was coded HALS PA-1, HALS PA-1A and HALS PA-1B and available from the Library of Congress. “John Bartram House and Garden”—documentation includes 12 sheets of measured drawings HALS PA-1-A “John Bartram House”; 1 sheet of drawings HALS PA-1-B “John Bartram Greenhouse (Seed House)”; documentation by: Mary Ellen Strain, Kathryn Falwell, and Kelton Villavicencio, with assistance from James Jacobs; 5 sheets of drawings HALS PA-1 “John Bartram Garden”; documentation by: David Calderon, with field assistance from Kirsten Bell, Paul Davidson, Kathryn Falwell, James Jacobs, Catherine Lavoie, and Jason McNatt; with history reports on “John Bartram House” by James Jacobs and “John Bartram Garden” by Joel T. Fry; and record photography by Joseph Elliott. Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), Division of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 2001-2004.

⁵ William Bartram’ anonymous account of his father, “BARTRAM, (JOHN),” in *Supplement to the Encyclopædia, or Dictionary of Art, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*. vol. 1, Printed by Budd and Bartram for Thomas Dobson, Philadelphia 1800, p. 91-92. While only a single burial was every noted at the site, it is possible a small group or family plot for burials was located there? Late-19th c. photos of the site show a single marked burial.

⁶ John Bartram only reconnected in 1760 with his half-brother William Bartram (1711-1770) and family of Ashwood plantation on the Cape Fear River in NC, after a long period of no contact. In 1761 the two half-brothers John and William exchanged sons (both also named William) for education and experience. William Bartram of Philadelphia went south to live with his uncle on the Cape Fear and

in Charleston in Spring 1766, so that his son William Bartram (1739-1823) could patent a plantation in the new British colony of East Florida. Son William's plantation effort seems to have failed by the end of summer 1766 and there is no documentation for what happened to his enslaved labor force. And of course, almost all the beneficiaries of the Euro-American economy of the 18th and early 19th c. might be considered silently complicit in the world-wide trade in enslaved labor and the commodities produced through slavery.

Plantations in Pennsylvania

The word "plantation" has lost some of its varied meanings in modern US English, with the common colloquial definition now focused down to large-scale agriculture (or industry) with enslaved labor, often implying ante-bellum Southern US plantations. "Plantation" in English derives from action words in Latin or French meaning "to plant" or "a planting" [of crops, trees, even people]. An example of its early 18th century meaning can be gathered from Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia* of 1728:

PLANTATION, in the Colonies, a Spot of Ground which some Planter or Person arrived in a new Colony, pitches on to cultivate and till for his own Use. See COLONY.

COLONY, a *Plantation*, or Company of People, of all Sexes and Conditions, transported into a remote Province, in order to cultivate and inhabit it. See PLANTATION.⁷

In the *Cyclopaedia* definition, a plantation is essentially part of and similar to a colony. Chambers' definition of "Colony" is expanded out with three forms of colonies: "The first to ease or discharge the Inhabitants of a Country where the People are become too numerous...; the second are those establish'd by victorious Princes and People, in the middle of vanquish'd Nations... to keep 'em in awe and obedience. The third may be call'd Colonies of Commerce..." All three of these forms of colony seem to also be found in the efforts of plantations in North America.⁸

William Bartram (d. 1770) of Ashwood, NC came north to study medicine and the apothecary business in Philadelphia.

⁷ Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia, or, An universal dictionary of arts and sciences: containing the definitions of the terms, and accounts of the things signify'd thereby, in the several arts...* 2 vols. London: Printed for J. and J. Knapton... (1728). "Plantation" vol.2, p. 832; "Colony" vol. 1, p. 257. Chambers ended his long article on Colonies with this: "Originally, the Word Colony signify'd no more than a Farm: i.e. the Habitation of a Peasant, with the Quantity of Land sufficient for the Support of his Family."

⁸ Since graduate student days in Philadelphia I have heard that "plantation" was a metrical term in the mid-Atlantic for a farm of larger acreage. The current entry on "Plantations," in the web-based "Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia", <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/plantations/> uses that exact hierarchy of acreage:

"In the eighteenth century the word simply meant a property containing between one hundred and one thousand acres. In general, colonials referred to land with fewer than one hundred acres as a farm, and greater than one thousand acres as a manor. The average property in southeastern Pennsylvania in 1700 was six hundred acres, making most early tracts plantation-sized; by 1765 the average holding was still 135 acres."

While the terms "farm", "plantation" and "manor" do appear in early descriptions of property and land transactions in the Pennsylvania, I've seen nothing to indicate that "plantation" referred to this precise

By the mid-18th century John Bartram owned three adjacent farms in Kingessing totaling close to 300 acres, and he retained the ancestral farm in Darby which was around 140 acres. From limited data, Bartram operated all these tracts as individual farms, pursuing typical mixed agriculture of the rural areas around Philadelphia— mixing dairying, and small number of sheep and horses with wheat and a mix of other small grains and field crops in rotation.⁹ The Kingessing farms were eventually combined into two farms of around 140 acres with Bartram himself managing one, and an older son James Bartram was given control of one farm at his marriage in 1753. The original Darby farm was likely leased or run by a tenant. The mixed farms or plantations of Kingessing could be operated within the scope of family labor with occasional hired help, indentured labor, and rarely with limited enslaved labor.¹⁰

John Bartram and his European correspondents, and particularly his London correspondent Peter Collinson (1694–1768) only occasionally used the word “plantation” and then with a several meanings. The Londoner, Peter Collinson mainly used “plantation” to mean large agricultural or forestry plantings, generally in Europe, but he also on occasion used it to describe the Virginia plantations where he had acquaintances.¹¹

John Bartram only very occasionally referred to his farm in Kingessing as a plantation and used farm much more regularly. “Plantation” tends to be used with a vaguely historical sense, referring to when Bartram first settled in Kingessing:

... the first I observed sloe trees was at a plantation whose owner came two years into this country before A house was builded in Philadelphia I brought some from there when I settled on my plantation¹²

And notably, John Bartram, retired in 1772, wrote to his son William, then on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina: “I have thrown of all plantation business to John & we live with him”¹³

range of size or scale. “Manor” had a special meaning in purchases from the Proprietor, usually reserved for Penn family relations or extraordinary conditions, and it sometimes conveyed quasi-feudal rights. Plantation seems largely synonymous with farm or perhaps “colonial farm” in early Pennsylvania.

⁹ Marsh lands and drained marsh meadows for grazing were also perhaps the most valuable part of the farms along both sides of the lower Schuylkill. From the 17th century, considerable community effort was put into building banks and ditches and sluices to drain the marshlands.

¹⁰ There were a very small number of farms or plantations with a somewhat larger force of slave labor in Kingessing, possibly raising tobacco in the Chesapeake fashion with hand labor. Tobacco cultivation had been begun during under the Swedish colony on the Delaware and Schuylkill, following the model of Maryland and Virginia, in part as the Swedish crown granted the colony a monopoly on tobacco in Sweden. But tobacco was apparently never a widespread crop in New Sweden.

¹¹ Peter Collinson to John Bartram, March 14, 1737; *The Correspondence of John Bartram 1734–1777*, edited by Edmund Berkeley, and Dorothy Smith Berkeley. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1992, p. 41; PC to JB, September 1, 1741; *Correspondence of JB*: p. 167; PC to JB, ca. March 10, 1744, *Correspondence of JB*: p. 235.

¹² JB to PC, May 1738; *Correspondence of JB*: p. 89.

¹³ JB to WB, July 15, 1772, *Correspondence of JB*: p. p. 749.

In biographical accounts long following the death of John Bartram, his son William Bartram uses “plantation” with some more frequency to describe all his father’s botanical plantings in and around the family farm and garden at Kingessing. The term appears in the several published versions of William Bartram’s biography of his father that first appeared anonymously in the Philadelphia edition of the *Supplement to the Encyclopaedia* 1800 and were reprinted little changed in the *Cyclopaedia* printed in Philadelphia in 1807. William Bartram also published a longer biographical essay on his father in 1804 and included similar biography in the “Preface” to the 1807 *Catalogue* of the plants at Bartram’s Garden. In each of these biographical pieces, William Bartram uses “plantation” to include both North American plantings at his father’s farm and garden, as well as European plantings of American plants in gardens by the customers of the Bartrams.

... a plantation in a delightful situation on the banks of the Schuylkill, about five miles from Philadelphia, where he laid out, with his own hands a large garden.

And John Bartram’s work was:

collecting whatever was new and curious to furnish and ornament the European gardens and plantations with the productions of the New World.

By the early 19th century date of these filial biographies it may seem William Bartram was using plantation as an intentionally nostalgic look at the old colonial world. These same biographical accounts of John Bartram by his son are also the major source of evidence that John Bartram freed a slave.¹⁴

The Bartram Family and Slavery

There is no known primary evidence that the early Bartram family in Pennsylvania owned any slaves. The Bartram family migration to Pennsylvania took place ca. 1683, from Ashbourne in

¹⁴ William Bartram, both anonymously and credited penned several short biographies for his father, the first printed in 1800 was the biographical entry, “BARTRAM, (JOHN),” that appeared *Supplement to the Encyclopædia*, vol. 1, Printed by Budd and Bartram for Thomas Dobson, Philadelphia 1800, p. 91-92 [The printers, Budd and Bartram were closely connected with the family of John Bartram – Archibald Bartram (1774-1808) was a son of Moses Bartram, so a nephew of William Bartram, and Henry Budd was an in-law of Moses Bartram]; reprinted I 1807 as “Bartram, John,” in *The Cyclopaedia, or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, vol. 4, Philadelphia: 1807, with minor additions by Alexander Wilson, ed. This short biography of John Bartram was still being reprinted in horticultural magazines in the US in the 1830s and 1840s. William Bartram also wrote a biographical article under his name for B. S. Barton’s medical journal in Philadelphia in 1804. “Some Account of the late Mr. John Bartram, of Pennsylvania.” *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal*, vol. 1, part 1 (1804), p. 115-124; this account was edited by Barton, and the original William Bartram MS version is at the APS. And finally the preface to the 1807 Bartram catalogue contains a different version of William Bartram’s biography of his father: [William Bartram], *A Catalogue of Trees, Shrubs, and Herbaceous Plants, Indigenous to the United States of America; Cultivated and Disposed of By John Bartram & Son, At their Botanical Garden, Kingsess, near Philadelphia*. Bartram and Reynolds, Philadelphia: 1807, p. 5-7. This entire catalogue was reprinted in 1814 and 1819 so the preface and biography remained in print for over a decade.

Derbyshire, England. The Quaker family of John Bartram (1650-1697) and Elizabeth Bartram (d. 1723), were founders of the new town of Darby in Chester County, Pennsylvania and founders of the Darby Friends Meeting. Slaves do not appear in wills or inventories of the early generations of Bartrams in Darby, Pennsylvania.

Less is known about the maternal grandparents of John Bartram the botanist — James Hunt (ca. 1643-1717) of Bearstead, Kent and Elizah Chambers Hunt (ca. 1654-ca. 1682) were married in 1676 in Kent, and Elizah probably died in Kent before the migration to Pennsylvania. The Hunt and Chambers families were Quakers from wealthy merchant families in Kent, England, and both these families were close to the Penn family and the political and economic organizers of the Pennsylvania colony. James Hunt acquired a farm in Kingessing township that had been the site of the colonial Swedish trading fort, long active in the trade with the, Susquehannock, Lenape and Iroquois.¹⁵ From their class and status in the early colony, the Hunt or Chambers families could have owned slaves, but no slaves seem to appear in wills or inventories of the Pennsylvania families.

John Bartram's own parents were second generation Quakers — William Bartram (1674-1711) and Elizah Hunt (ca. 1676-1701) and were married at Darby Meeting in Pennsylvania in 1696. In the next year, William Bartram inherited a third of his father's original farm in Darby, PA and shortly added more land. His wife Elizah died young, in 1701 following the birth of a second son, James Bartram (1701-1771). Over the course of the next decade, father William Bartram remarried and fell out of unity with Darby Meeting. He planned to move south to new Quaker settlements in coastal North Carolina, and in 1709 acquired land on Bogue Sound, White Oak River, Carteret County, NC. In the fall of 1710, father William and his second wife and new family move to NC. The two sons from the first marriage, John and James Bartram were left in Darby to be raised by Bartram relatives and grandfather James Hunt of Kingessing. September 22, 1711 father William Bartram was killed in the Tuscarora War, and stepmother and two young children were taken hostage, later rescued and returned to Philadelphia in late 1712. It is probably that father William Bartram intended to establish a rice plantation in

¹⁵ Elizah Chambers Hunt, grandmother of John Bartram, was the daughter of John Chambers, the younger brother of Benjamin Chambers (d. 1715 in Philadelphia). Benjamin Chambers was an important member of the Society of Free Traders and a large landholder in the early Pennsylvania colony. [Some early histories of Pennsylvania place Benjamin Chambers as a probable passenger on the *Welcome* with William Penn in 1682 — Chambers came to own large tracts of land on the west bank of the lower Schuylkill in Philadelphia including The Woodlands, the Lower Ferry, and lands at Gibson Point, just south of the future site of Bartram's Garden. Following the deaths of both of John Bartram's parents — Elizah Hunt (died in 1701) and William Bartram (died in 1711), Benjamin Chambers and James Hunt served as the executors of the estate, and legal guardians for the Bartram brothers, John and James. Modern biographies of John Bartram have not examined the Hunt and Chambers family connections in any detail. A younger sister of Elizah Hunt, Mary Hunt married Abraham Marshall in Darby in March 1703. Mary and Abraham Marshall were John Bartram's closest living relatives through most of his adult life. They moved west to Chester County, to the Forks of the Brandywine founding the Bradford Friends Meeting. Presumably John Bartram traveled via their house during his many explorations west and south. Bartram later trained one of their youngest sons, Humphry Marshall (1722-1801) in botany and the international plant business and in the 1760s Marshall took up some of Bartram's business and client list. As noted above, in the 1760s Humphry Marshall owned a slave named Abraham Johnson. [See Note 2.]

North Carolina with enslaved labor, but there is currently no evidence how far his plans had progressed at his death in 1711.

There is limited historic inference and family tradition that John Bartram, founder of Bartram's Garden acquired and freed a single slave. The first printed biographical account of Bartram appeared in London in 1782 and mentioned "Negroes" and implied Bartram once owned "slaves" that had been freed. But there are reasons to doubt many of the early biographies and the only tax records available from the period of John Bartram's life — the 1767, 1769 and the 1774 assessments do not demonstrate any slaves at the Bartram farms (then in operation by John Bartram or his sons James Bartram and John Bartram, Jr.). A single "servant" was taxed for both John Bartram and James Bartram in 1767 and a single "servant" again for John Bartram in 1769.¹⁶

Later generations of the Bartram family repeated and elaborated the story of a single free Black individual, and as late as 1860 he was first given a name — "Harvey" based on family history or legend. So far it has been impossible to prove if that name "Harvey" is historically accurate, and only a few ambiguous 18th century documents provide support for a Black individual, servant or free in the Bartram household during the life of John Bartram. But there is physical evidence of a grave at Bartram's Garden, attributed to this free Black individual, "Harvey". That grave site was marked with a small marble head and footstone in the late 19th century, and it remained marked in the early history of the city park at Bartram's Garden, perhaps with some marker into the mid-20th century.¹⁷

The earliest biographical account of John Bartram was written by the French author and traveler, Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur [usually named J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur in English].¹⁸ Crèvecoeur's biography of Bartram was a dramatized, partially fictionalized account of a visit to John Bartram, but was based on an actual visit of several days

¹⁶ Tenth 18 d provincial tax (1767); twelfth 18d provincial tax (1769), and seventeenth 18d provincial tax (1774).

In 1767, George Gray who owned the Lower Ferry property just north of the Bartram farms was taxed for "1 Servant" and "6 Negroes" and his father-in-law James Coultas of Whitby Hall in Kingsessing owned "4 Negros" and "2 Servants".

¹⁷ The name "Harvey" first appeared in an eight-page newspaper printed for a fundraising event at the St. James Kingsessing church in 1860, on a list of "Garden Relics and Reminiscences" at the end of the paper. There were Bartram descendants (4th or 5th generation from John Bartram) in the neighborhood, but there is no evidence who provided the name. *The Bartram Tribute*. Published as an Auxiliary Aid to the purposes of the festival given by the Ladies of St. James Episcopal Church, "Bartram Garden," Kingessing, June 13 & 14, 1860. Philadelphia.

¹⁸ Crèvecoeur, Michel-Guillaume Jean de, "Letter XI, From Mr. Iw—n Al—z, a Russian Gentleman; Describing the Visit He Paid at My Request to Mr. John Bertram, The Celebrated Pennsylvanian Botanist," *Letters from an American Farmer*. . . Printed for Thomas Davies, London: 1782 [Reprint: Penguin Books, NY: 1981, p. 187-199.] There are considerable differences in the text of Crèvecoeur's *Letters* between the London: 1782 and Paris: 1784 editions. The Paris version was enlarged and is not just a simple translation of the London version. A greatly enlarged French second edition was published in Paris in 1787. There is considerable modern scholarship in English and French on Crèvecoeur's work. The modern consensus is the literary structure of the Bartram visit is contrived, but many of the details on John Bartram and the farm and garden in Kingessing seem authentic.

he made to Bartram's Garden, around 1766-1770. The account was published as "Letter XI, From Mr. Iw—n Al—z, a Russian Gentleman; Describing the Visit He Paid at My Request to Mr. John Bertram, The Celebrated Pennsylvanian Botanist," in *Letters from an American Farmer*. . . first published in English in London in 1782, and then enlarged and reprinted in French in Paris in 1784. Crèvecoeur described a large family meal at the Bartram house:

We entered into a large hall, where there was a long table full of victuals; at the lowest part sat his Negroes, his hired men were next, then the family and myself; and at the head, the venerable father and his wife presided. . .

There is good reason to suspect Crèvecoeur combined visits with several Philadelphia area Quakers into his portrait of John Bartram, and from the setting of his tale of a meal at the Bartram House, he likely confused the labor force he saw. Crèvecoeur mentions "Negroes" and implied Bartram owned "slaves", while what he saw was a large community gathering from many farms with both free and enslaved labor, building banks and drainage works for the tidal meadows of Kingsessing. Crèvecoeur's book *Letters*, was in part intended as a literary and political argument against slavery in America, and he arranged facts and accounts to suit his argument. Still a speech he places in John Bartram's mouth may be a good presentation of white Quaker attitudes to slavery in the 1760s in the neighborhood of Philadelphia:

"By what means," said I, "Mr. Bertram, do you rule your slaves so well, that they seem to do their work with the cheerfulness of white men?" "Though our erroneous prejudices and opinions once induced us to look upon them as fit only for slavery, though ancient custom had very unfortunately taught us to keep them in bondage, yet of late, in consequence of the remonstrances of several Friends and of the good books they have published on that subject, our society treat them very differently. With us they are now free. I give those whom thee didst see at my table, eighteen pounds a year, with victuals and clothes, and all other privileges which white men enjoy.

. . . We gave them freedom, and yet few have quitted their ancient masters. The women breed in our families, and we become attached to one another. I taught mine to read and to write; they love God and fear His judgements. The oldest person among them transacts my business in Philadelphia, with a punctuality, from which he has never deviated. . . ."

"The oldest person among them" who transacted Bartram's business in Philadelphia was in later years interpreted to be the freed "Harvey", but with little further evidence for that. Crèvecoeur's visit to Bartram's Garden came after John Bartram's final trip to Georgia and Florida 1765-1766 and it was as recently as Spring 1766 that John Bartram purchased 6 slaves in Charleston for his son William in Florida. In 1758 Bartram had been disowned by the Quakers of Darby Meeting for his deist or unitarian views. None of that factual history appeared in Crèvecoeur's "Letters".¹⁹

¹⁹ [Henry Joel Cadbury], "The Disownment of John Bartram." *Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association*, vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 1928), p. 16-22.

Early in his botanic career John Bartram made collecting trips to southern colonies where slave-based agriculture was well established. In southern exploration trips, funded by his early subscribers and orchestrated by Peter Collinson, who had business and scientific correspondents in the South, Bartram went down the Atlantic coast of the Delmarva Peninsula and up the Chesapeake side of the Eastern Shore in 1737. Then in 1738 he made a long inland trip to Williamsburg and then traveled west up the James River to the mountains and the Shenandoah valley, returning north via the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania. On several later trips Bartram returned to Virginia, generally to the western piedmont and mountains. From 1760 onward Bartram traveled father south to the Carolinas and finally to Georgia and Florida in 1765-1766. His trips to Cape Fear region of North Carolina and Charleston in South Carolina came about in part from his personal connections with his brother Col. William Bartram at Ashwood on the Cape Fear, and Dr. Alexander Garden in Charleston. These trips to the Carolinas set up a longstanding business relationship with Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia and plant nurseries in Charleston, with annual shipments of southern plants to Philadelphia for transshipment to Europe from Bartram's Garden. The yearly bulk shipments of Carolina plants to Philadelphia continued into the 1830s.

A Bartram draft of notes from the Fall 1738 trip through Maryland and Virginia to the Mountains, was sent to Peter Collinson in summer 1739. This draft letter by Bartram is preserved as a fragment and portions are missing or illegible. It seems to be notes by Bartram to Collinson, elaborating on Collinson's criticism of the journal for the 1738 trip that had already been sent (probably sent at the end of 1738):

...thee seems to think [illegible] my account of Maryland & virginia but indeed there is little in the lower parts but ould worn out fields without fences — naked fields of indian corn & tobacco which impoverishes the land miserable poor houses ready to tumble down & the country in general short of grass of sufficient food for Cattle yet notwithstanding there is some [good] livers in both provinces which hath large tracts of land with a many slaves that maintains their masters in an exceeding [illegible] & luxuriant [illegible] but thair gardens is poorly furnished with Curiosities...²⁰

Here, early in his travels, Bartram connected the poor conditions of housing and agriculture in Virginia with institution of slave labor and a society based on master-slave relations. This was probably already a common view of many Philadelphia Quakers. In organizing the trip and providing letters of introduction in early 1738 Collinson had warned Bartram to expect a different society in Virginia:

...these Virginians are a very gentle, Well Dress'd people, & look phaps More at a Man's Outside than his Inside, for these and other Reasons pray go very Clean, neat & handsomely Dressed to Virginia Never Mind thy Clothes I will send thee more another year²¹

²⁰ JB to PC, Fall 1738, *Correspondence of JB*: 101-104; JB to PC, July 18, [1739], *Correspondence of JB*: 121-122.

²¹ PC to JB, February 17, 1738, *Correspondence of JB*: p. 84.

Most of Bartram's yearly journals and specimens were routinely sent to Collinson and are now lost. Only the journal for the final, long exploration 1765-1766 through the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida with son William is preserved as an MS and in print.²² Even with limited detail available, John Bartram in his later years seems less critical or perhaps numbed to the ubiquity of slavery in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida.

John Bartram visited his brother, Col. William Bartram's plantation, Ashwood several times in the 1760s, as did several of his sons. The families exchanged letters, gifts, and visits frequently from 1760 onward. Beginning in the spring of 1761 son William Bartram from Philadelphia went to Ashwood to live for five years. William Bartram was the most famous Bartram offspring, and followed his father as a significant botanist, traveler, and artist, eventually publishing a scientific and literary account of own Southern explorations as *Travels...* in 1791.²³

The four years spent by young William Bartram at Ashwood likely had a significant effect as he grew to an adult. But in mid-1765, William left North Carolina and the mercantile business he had started to travel south with his father John, to the newly acquired British colony of East Florida.²⁴ The long trip through the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida continued through mid-1766. At the end, William Bartram convinced his father to allow him to commence a rice plantation at a 500-acre tract on the St. Johns River in Florida. British land policy in East Florida required the importation of slaves into Florida to patent and settle land in the new

²² An autograph copy of a large portion of John Bartram's 1765-1766 "Journal" is part of the Bartram Papers collection at the HSP. Francis Harper published an edited transcription: "Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, from July 1, 1765 to April 10, 1766." edited by Francis Harper. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. vol. 33, part 1 (Dec. 1942), p. 1-122. An early selection from the Savannah River portion to Augusta, GA in September 1765 was sent to Collinson and printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* [mistakenly under William Bartram's name as author] — "An Extract of Mr. *Wm. Bartram's* Observations in a Journey up the River Savannah in *Georgia*, with his Son, on Discoveries," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 37 (April), p. 166-169. And a long section of the journal to Florida was sent to London and published beginning in 1767: "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. Johns." in William Stork, *An Account of East-Florida, with a journal kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia...* 2nd edition, London: 1767; 3rd ed. 1769; 4th ed. 1774.

²³ There is not a definitive biography of son William Bartram, but much material is available in *William Bartram, The Search for Nature's Design: Selected Art, Letters, and Unpublished Writings*. edited by Thomas Hallock and Nancy E. Hoffmann, University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 2010; *William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians*. edited and annotated by Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE., 1995; and Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Natures of John and William Bartram*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1996. And there is also much biographical detail in Francis Harper's various annotated transcriptions of William Bartram's works.

²⁴ In Spring 1765 John Bartram was granted a pension of £50 per year from the crown after lobbying by Peter Collinson and Benjamin Franklin. PC to JB, April 9, 1765, *Correspondence of JB*: 644-645. Following the royal preferment, John Bartram was sometime titled "King's Botanist" or King's Botanist for North America". Collinson initially used the wording that the King "appointed thee His Botanist..." but later denied that that title was correct. There is a considerable gap in surviving the Bartram-Collinson correspondence between June 1764 and April 1765 so details leading up to the royal pension are missing.

colony. Son William persuaded his father, much against his will, to purchase six slaves in Charleston, South Carolina to be transported to Florida. Letters during the spring of 1766 by John Bartram record much detail on this purchase, and John Bartram's strong believe that it was a mistake. The father was correct, as William Bartram's plantation effort failed in a single summer, by fall of 1766. There is no historic record what happened to the enslaved Africans brought to Florida by the Bartrams — possibly they fled to freedom.²⁵

In letters to his son from Charleston, April 5th and 9th 1766 reporting the slave purchases, John Bartram included strong advice from family friends in Charleston against the plantation adventure: “all thy friends here laments thy resolute choice to live at St Johns & leave off drawing or writeing they say the negros will run away or murther thee”. With no experience, John Bartram wrote he depended on “the daily assistance & choice” of his Charleston friends — Dr. Alexander Garden, John Moultrie, Henry Laurens, and others. Bartram sent “6 likely negros” to William Bartram via St. Augustine. Two of the enslaved Africans were purchased via Laurens and were “new guiney negros” — a couple named Jack and Siby. Bartram on advice purchased four additional slaves — Jacob, Sam, and Flora a “cromantee” who had been in Charleston for some time with a young son of three or four, Bachus. Together these two letters contain detail on tools, crop seeds, food, cloth, staples and supplies to outfit a plantation with suggestions on how to clear and plant the new plantation on the St. Johns. From both long letters it is also clear that Henry Laurens was a major source of advice and assistance, obtaining plantation supplies and arranging shipment of the slave and supplies from Charleston to Florida.

The April 9th letter was written as John Bartram was preparing to sail the next day to return to Philadelphia. This second letter made it clear that John Bartram was retaining the bills of sale for the enslaved labor and would not turn the bills over to his son until after he had altered his will to reflect the value given to William:

I have not sent the Bills of Sail for the negroes: I am advised to the contrary until I have settled the affair at home in alltering my Will. & as thee hath the full use of them as much as if thee had them never so firm as to thair labour it can be no detriment to thee; to forbear makeing them thy own property until I can settle my affairs at home for I intend no other then thay & thair issue to be made firm to thee...

²⁵ Most of the documentation for John Bartram's slave purchases and William Bartram's plantation appear in a small number of letters from 1766: JB to WB, Charleston, April 5, 1766; JB to WB, Charleston, April 9, 1766; JB to WB, Philadelphia, July 3, 1766; Henry Laurens to JB, Charleston, August 9, 1766; Henry Laurens to WB, Charleston, September 17, 1766; *WB: Search for Nature's Design*, p. 54-64. William Bartram was at St. Augustine in the spring of 1767, and back in Philadelphia by the second half of 1767. Florida historian Daniel L. Schafer wrote much about Bartram's plantation: “The forlorn state of poor Billy Bartram: Locating the St. Johns River Plantation of William Bartram,” *El Escribano: The St. Augustine Journal of History*, vol. 32, p. 1-11; and his book: *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2010 provides a great deal of background on WB's plantation and the success and failure of British colonial plantations in East Florida. Most of the successful Florida plantations in that period were very large, much larger than Bartram's attempt on 500 acres, and most were owned by absentee landlords.

There is no further trace of these bills of sale, and no mention of the 6 slaves appears in latter Bartram letters or family papers. In John Bartram's final will, dated January 17, 1772, he left his son William £200 which was similar to the bequests for his other children. But most of the other Bartram siblings also received farm tracts or city real estate, while William did not. William Bartram quit his St. John plantation sometime toward the end of 1766. Without the bills of sale in his possession in Florida, presumably William Bartram could not legally sell the six slaves his father had purchased. But in the frontier world of British East Florida the lack of proper bills may not have hindered the sale of enslaved labor.²⁶

The best account of "poor Billy Bartram" at his plantation in Florida comes in a long letter Henry Laurens sent from Charleston to John Bartram in Philadelphia, August 9, 1766. Laurens had spent nearly five weeks in East Florida in summer 1766 and visited many of the new British plantation endeavors. Laurens had visited a much-depressed William Bartram twice, and was concerned about whether Bartram would survive for much longer at the site. The letter was in part written by Laurens to John Bartram at the request of his son, and a letter of William Bartram from Florida in July 1766 was enclosed by Laurens, but that letter is now missing. Laurens may have been exaggerating the plight of William Bartram and his poorly situated plantation site, but Laurens may also have felt some guilt for his role in the plantation.

His situation on the River is the least agreeable of all the places that I have seen... he assured me that he had but two among the Six Negroes that you gave him that could handle an Axe tolerably & one of those two had been exceedingly insolent...

Six Negroes rather plagues than aid to him — of whom one so insolent as to threaten his Life — one a useless expence — one a helpless child in arms — one a pregnant Woman without prospect of any female help — distant 30 long Miles from the Metropolis

And although he had been John Bartram's prime advisor in the purchase of slaves at Charleston in April, just four months later Henry Laurens suggested that the enslaved labor chosen for the St. Johns plantation were the problem and should be replaced:

...After this account of your Son's circumstances, I might add that a list of several necessary articles besides exchange of good Negroes in place of almost useless ones

Laurens wrote a more upbeat letter of encouragement to William Bartram in mid-September 1766, forwarding supplies and a few luxuries he thought Bartram needed, and offering to continue to supply Bartram during his experiment with rice at the plantation.

Your Father writes that he thinks it "better for you to come home it being as he says intolerable to maintain you & the Negroes without hopes of better times" — if he writes The same to you & you do not follow his advice you can't reasonably expect his further aid...

²⁶ As mentioned above [note 15], available provincial tax assessments for the Bartram farms in Kingessing for 1767, 1769, and 1774 do not record any slaves.

pray let me hear from you & I shall be glad to learn that you are better reconciled to St. Johns River... I do think that Money may be made on that River by Lumber & Shingles of Cypress & my expectations of Rice are very sanguine but the success of Mr Kinloch Mr Gray & your self will confirm or blast them.²⁷

William Bartram's connection with owning enslaved labor did not end with the failure of his Florida plantation in 1766. After his return to Philadelphia in late 1767, William Bartram contracted further debts and in summer 1770 fled back to Ashwood in North Carolina. In the decade of the 1770s, there is a bill of sale document connecting William Bartram with the ownership and transfer of a slave. And William Bartram seems to have transported that slave from Wilmington, NC to Philadelphia. On March 20, 1773, the same day he sailed from Philadelphia for Charleston, South Carolina to begin his long southern botanic trip funded by the London Quaker Dr. John Fothergill, William Bartram assigned a slave deed to his brother-in-law George Bartram (1735-1777).²⁸

The transaction was documented on a small scrap of paper written in several hands and recording prior transfers. The first transaction for £100 "Proclamation money" sold the title of one slave, a "Negro Woman Named Jenny" in February 20, 1772 from a North Carolina planter to Thomas Robeson (1740-1785). Robeson was married to William Bartram's cousin, Mary Bartram Robeson (1747-1799), and Thomas and Mary Robeson had inherited most of the Ashwood plantation in North Carolina.

The same date in 1772 at Wilmington, North Carolina, Robeson transferred Jenny to William Bartram, "for Value Received of him." This exchange probably relates to a recovered debt or payments owed to William Bartram running back to his days operating a store at Ashwood plantation, 1761-1765. Jenny was in Bartram's possession for a little over a year, but where she

²⁷ Laurens visited East Florida in summer 1766 to consider the wisdom of investment there, and it isn't hard to see he saw William Bartram's plantation attempt as an experiment. Never-the-less William Bartram remained friendly with Henry Laurens in later years.

²⁸ "Negro Woman, Jenny", bill of sale, 1772-1773, Mss.B.C6921 – Collinson-Bartram Papers, 1732-1773, American Philosophical Society.

George Bartram (1735-1777) was a Scots born merchant, not a Quaker and not related to the Pennsylvania Bartrams. He and his brother Alexander Bartram came to Philadelphia ca. 1757. George Bartram was long partnered with James Dundas as a dry goods merchant on South Second Street. George Bartram became friendly with the Bartram family at Bartram's Garden and married one of the daughters, Ann Bartram (1741-1824) at the Swedish Lutheran church, St James Kingsessing in January 1764. George Bartram died in Lancaster in April 1777. His widow Ann Bartram inherited substantial property and a major business in Philadelphia. She long lived at 68 South Second Street, the site of George Bartram's shop, at the sign of the "Golden Fleece's Head" Her son, George Bartram (1767-1840), graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, long served as a city alderman in the early 19th century and was an officer in the city militia.

Widow Ann Bartram may have been the last member of the extended Bartram family to manumit slaves. A manumission deed dated November 26, 1792 in the Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers at the HSP records Ann Bartram manumitted "my negro woman," Mary Clark (b. ca. 1754) for the sum of £54. The rear of the same deed records partial payment on the same date for the manumission of Grace Clark, £12,,13,,5 paid as part of £30 balance to be paid in 30 days. Deed and notes on this manumission in Blakney, *Stories We Know*, 2017, p. 40-45.

was or what work she did is unknown. William was back in Philadelphia in early 1773, and March 20, 1773 transferred all title to this slave to his brother-in-law George Bartram, witnessed by William's older brother Moses Bartram. It is uncertain but probable that the slave Jenny was transported from NC to Philadelphia by William Bartram.²⁹

William Bartram's writings during and after his explorations of the South, 1773-1776 contained much detail on enslaved labor and the plantation economy. Bartram frequently traveled with enslaved guides or boatmen during his travels, loaned from planters. There are several narrative vignettes in his book about enslaved Africans. His writings also include detailed descriptions of the indigenous peoples of the South, and particularly towns of the Creek and Seminole, and Cherokee. His main account of the trip, *Travels* first published in Philadelphia in 1791 was written after William Bartram changed his view of slavery and became an active supporter of abolition.³⁰ Due to the brevity of this paper materials from Bartram's *Travels* will not be considered here.

During and after the American Revolution, the Bartram family in Philadelphia including William Bartram gradually moved to a public antislavery position. There is little currently available to document this change in attitude toward antislavery among the Bartram family. They may have been part of the general movement in Pennsylvania following the war, and following Quaker actions banning slaveholding amongst Friends. The Pennsylvania Assembly passed an act for the gradual abolition of slavery, March 1, 1780. Sometime in 1780 several members of the Bartram family signed a petition to the state assembly calling for a halt to the outfitting of ships for the slave trade in Pennsylvania. The sons of the first John Bartram — James Bartram, John Bartram, Jr. and William Bartram, and a cousin James B. Bonsall all living in Kingsessing signed this petition, and they potentially signed or supported other antislavery

²⁹ William Bartram was probably in Charleston, SC for part of the summer of 1772 and could have transported Jenny there as well? George Bartram later mentioned the fate of the slave Jenny in a letter to William Bartram dated Sept. 27, 1773, sent via the Lamboll family in Charleston. Hallock & Hoffmann, *William Bartram, The Search for Nature's Design*, p. 97: "y^r Negro wench Jean turn'd out to be a vile Hussey & was obliged to sell her to Captain Masson viry Low for Little more than £60 — he Carried her to Charlestown I hope that you will not think that I've done or acted in this affair any otherways than if it had been my own I consultd Bro Moses who Judged it best to send her away." The same letter informed William that near £90 of further debts in North Carolina had been collected for him.

³⁰ William Bartram's extensive travels 1773-1776 in the South is well documented by manuscript and published materials. William Bartram, "Travels in Georgia and Florida, 1773-74. A Report to Dr. John Fothergill." edited by Francis Harper. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n. s. vol. 33, part 2 (November 1943), p. 121-242; WB, *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws; Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of those Regions; Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians*. Printed by James & Johnson, Philadelphia, 1791 [and many editions and translations follow]; WB, *The Travels of William Bartram: Naturalist's Edition*. edited by Frances Harper. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1958.

efforts. Others connected with the Bartram family by marriage including Dr. Benjamin Say and Thomas Say, Sr. also signed.³¹

John Bartram, Jr., son of the first John Bartram joined the Pennsylvania Abolition Society in July 1786, and in the period from the founding of the Pennsylvania Society through 1791 two sons of another Bartram brother, Moses Bartram, also joined — Dr. Moses Bartram, Jr. and Thomas Say Bartram, and several Bartram in-laws including John Kaighn, Joseph Budd, and Dr. Benjamin Say. Dr. Say sometimes served as an officer in the Pennsylvania Society and a delegate to early Abolition Conventions held by the society. Associates of the Bartram family and particularly associates of William Bartram were also members including Joseph James, the publisher of Bartram's *Travels* in 1791, James Trenchard, Bartram's engraver.³²

William Bartram, once a slaveholder and small-time dealer in slaves, composed a strident antislavery address in the mid-1780s that is preserved in his handwriting, written out as a draft on the back of a copy of the Bartram family broadside plant catalogue of 1783. The text is in the form of a passionate public address, perhaps intended for the Congress, under the Articles of Confederation. There is no confirmation if this draft antislavery address was ever submitted or read in any public way, either by William Bartram or others. Bartram quoted the Declaration of Independence and biblical law and predicted divine and political calamity to the young United States if slavery was not ended. "Consider God is no Respector of Persons, & that the Black White Red & Yellow People are equally dear to him & under his protection & favour." Bartram used many arguments against slavery from the bible, from William Lay, John Woolman, and Anthony Benezet, and others common in Philadelphia by the 1780s. Bartram's draft ends with dire predictions:

The Day will arrive when those afflicted people will not only have full satisfaction for their oppressions, but dreadful irrevocable irresistible wrath, When they will be Masters & either inslave or exterminate their Masters & oppressor, unless thee speedily take measures to do them justice by giving them liberty, freedom thus natural & political Right equal to our Own Maxims &c solem Acts & promises in face of Heaven ³³

³¹ APS petition: No 6. To the Penna. Assembly, "The Representation and Petition of the Subscribers, Citizens of Penna." ca. 1780, broadside with 124 signatures on recto and verso. Paine 73 P38t, Colonel Richard Gimbel Collection of Thomas Paine Papers, Mss.B.P165, American Philosophical Society. The Bartram family at Bartram's Garden continued to hold one or more indentured servants at least through 1778. John Bartram Jr. advertised in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Jan. 15 and 17, 1778, for a runaway servant Ann Powell, who was likely white. Sue Huesken and Karen Mullian, "Had on and Took With Her," *Clothing in Female Runaway Servant Advertisements... 1775-1784*. Palmyra, NJ: SK Shortgown Research, 1995, 19-20. Merrill D. Smith, "The Bartram Women: Farm Wives, Artist, Botanists, and Entrepreneurs," *Bartram Broadside*, (Winter 2001), p. 1.

³² *Centennial Anniversary of the Pennsylvania Society, for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, The Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage: and for Improving the Condition of the African Race*. Grant, Faires & Rodgers, Printers, Philadelphia: 1875, p. 41-57. There is no evidence William Bartram himself became a member of the abolition society.

³³ This draft address is on the rear of a copy of the 1783 broadside *Catalogue* of Bartram's Garden. Bartram Papers 1:86, HSP / Broadside Ab nd. 251. And transcribed with introduction and notes: Kerry Walters, "'All Equally Dear to God' William Bartram's Antislavery Manuscript." in *William Bartram*,

Around the time he wrote out this antislavery address, William Bartram long resident at the garden in Kingessing, wrote to his “Worthy Couzⁿ.” Mary Bartram Robeson at Ashwood in North Carolina. William ended this Fall 1788 letter with a short recognition or perhaps apology to the Black families at Ashwood:

...please present my Regard to all the Families of the Black People; They were kind & very serviceble to me; I wish it were in my power to Reward their fidelity & benevolence to me. I often Remember them; These acknowledgment at least, are due from me to them, altho they are Negroes & Slaves.—³⁴

William Bartram’s attitudes toward slavery changed as he aged, and it seems he came to support abolition. At the same time the Kingessing community around the Bartram family farms and garden also changed. In 1790 a small number of Free Black residents were recorded in Kingessing in the first U.S. census returns. Also, at the end of the 18th century there is the first clear demographic evidence for Free Black residents at Bartram’s Garden. In the early U.S. census records for 1790, 1800, and 1810 there is a single Free Black individual recorded with the Bartram family at Bartram’s Garden, and a single Free Black individual also at the household of James Bartram, son of the first John Bartram, who owned the farm north of Bartram’s Garden extending to Gray’s Ferry.

From 1810 through 1850, a third generation of the Bartram family, Ann Bartram Carr (1779–1858) and Robert Carr (1778–1866) operated the Bartram Botanic Garden.³⁵ Census returns for 1820, 1830, and 1840 record a small family of free African Americans living at the garden — an adult male and female and children. These Free Black individuals were enumerated with the Bartram family, presumably residents of the Bartram house. In early census records prior to 1850 no personal names are given except for the single male (or rarely female) head of household, so names cannot be connected with the Free Black residents of the garden. The

The Search for Nature’s Design: Selected Art, Letters, and Unpublished Writings. Thomas Hallock and Nancy E. Hoffmann, eds., University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, p. 372–380. Walter’s dated the draft address sometime after 1787 as it recalls “the fundamental Principle, the first articles of the Constitution of the United States... that All Men are on free, & have an equal inalienable Right, to Life, Liberty & property, &c.” But the phrase more probably suggests the government under the Articles of Confederation.

³⁴ William Bartram to Mary Bartram Robeson, September 7, 1788, *WB: Search for Nature’s Design*, p. 141.

³⁵ Ann Bartram Carr (generally named “Nancy”) was the third child of John Bartram, Jr. who had inherited the botanic garden and farm from the first John Bartram. Nancy Bartram and her siblings were educated by their uncle William Bartram and learned botany and art. March 4, 1809 she married Robert Carr, born in County Down, Ireland and immigrated with his family to Philadelphia in the 1780s. Carr was apprenticed as a printer at Franklin Court, to Benjamin Franklin Bache, and became foreman printer for Bache’s *Aurora* newspaper in the later 1790s. In the early 19th he became a printer on his own, specializing in scientific and literary books. He met his future wife, Ann Bartram during the publication of Alexander Wilson’s multi-volume *American Ornithology* in 1808. William Bartram and Nancy Bartram had trained Wilson in illustration and ornithology. Robert Carr was also active in the Philadelphia militia and became a colonel in the U.S. regular army during the War of 1812. Following the war, he was long the justice of the peace for Kingessing.

1850 census was the first to give names for all individuals resident in a household, but by then Andrew M. Eastwick (1811–1879) had replaced Ann and Robert Carr as owner of Bartram’s Garden, and no African Americans were recorded among the Eastwick family and staff at the old Bartram family garden. But by 1850 there was a growing community of free African Americans living in Kingessing, along the Darby Road and at farms and households in the township.³⁶

Within a decade of the departure of the last Bartram heirs from Bartram’s Garden, Ann and Robert Carr, the story of the “excellent young African” freed by John Bartram or “Harvey” became one of the essential 5 or 6 historical facts repeated about the site and the first John Bartram. Bartram’s Garden had seen nostalgic or “heritage” tourism from the decade of the 1830s during the third Bartram generation. Occasional published pieces and travelers’ letters about the garden in Philadelphia newspapers and national and international press repeated simple facts about John Bartram, his family, and their botanic garden. But at least so far, none of this early nostalgic history of the garden mentions the name “Harvey” or his gravesite at the garden. The limited published sources for the history of the Bartram family and Bartram’s Garden in the 19th and early 20th c. engendered a loop of close repetitions and elaborations of the few available sources.³⁷

As noted above, the name “Harvey” first appears in *The Bartram Tribute* of 1860, an anonymous small local history tabloid printed as part of a local Kingessing church fundraiser. The story of Harvey becomes an even more popular theme in descriptions of the garden after the Civil War and emancipation.

Following the death of Andrew M. Eastwick in February 1879, his widow and younger children abandoned the old Bartram site in Kingessing. There was immediate concern about the future of the historic garden. In Summer 1879 local artist Howard Pyle spent some time at Bartram’s Garden taking notes and making sketches. These were turned into an illustrated article in a national magazine, “Bartram and His Garden” published in *Harper’s New Monthly*

³⁶ Andrew M. Eastwick a Philadelphia-born mechanic and engineer with partner Joseph Harrison developed a significantly improved freight locomotive in the 1835-1840. In the 1840s the pair were hired by the Czar of Russia along with William Winans of Baltimore to manufacture the engines and rolling stock for the Moscow to St. Petersburg Railroad. The trio spent nearly a decade in St. Petersburg, building a factory complex and training workers in industrial production. Eastwick returned to Philadelphia in 1850 and acquired Bartram’s Garden (negotiating the foreclosure of several mortgages of Robert Carr). Eastwick also recombined several adjacent parcels from Bartram family farms to form a large estate on the west bank of the Schuylkill in Kingessing. Blakney, *Stories We Know*, particularly in the section “Directory” cites a number of Free Black individuals in Kingessing, living largely on the Darby Road. Information comes from the returns of the Friends Philadelphia African American Census 1847, Swarthmore College, Friends Historical Library.

³⁷ The major 19th century source for the biography of John and William Bartram and history of Bartram’s Garden was William Darlington’s *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall*, Philadelphia: 1849. Darlington edited a selection of the letters of the Bartrams and Marshall and included a “Biographical Sketch of John Bartram” which largely quoted from and enlarged William Bartram’s 1804 account of his father, including the mention of John Bartram freeing a slave. Darlington also reprinted the text of the full text of Crèvecoeur’s 1782 “Letter IX, From Iwan Alexiowitz...,” *Letters from an American Farmer*.

Magazine in February 1880.³⁸ Pyle used large quotes from the 1782 Crèvecoeur account of Bartram for his text combined with biographical material from Darlington's *Memorials* of 1849.

Not far from the old cider mill stands a stone marking the grave of one of John Bartram's servants, an aged black, one time a slave, for even the Pennsylvania Quakers had slaves in those days. At the time of the old negro's death, however, he was a freeman, and had been for years, for Bartram was one of the earliest emancipators of slaves in the colony...

At the death of the old servitor referred to above, he implored "Mars' John" not even then to remove him from the beloved grounds he had so often tilled, nor from among the trees he had seen growing so lustily beneath his hands; so Mars' John, laid him to rest beneath the ground where-on he had wrought for so many years, there to sleep his last sleep in peace.³⁹

Pyle's used Crèvecoeur's fictional dialogue for John Bartram combined with his own fictionalized personification of the one-time slave, who in this case might have stepped out of the pages of Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Pyle does not include a name for this individual, and may not have known the name "Harvey," but he does include an image of the person in his illustration "Departure for New York", at the far left holding an axe.⁴⁰ Pyle's illustration is the first of many images of Bartram's freed slave, created for the media and for advertising in the 20th century.

Beginning around 1880 a campaign to preserve the Bartram house and garden was organized with several supporting groups. Thomas Meehan (1826-1901), who had worked as head gardener for Andrew Eastwick at Bartram's Garden, 1850-1852, went on to a very successful career as a nurseryman and writer on horticulture and botany in Philadelphia. He was interested in the history of Philadelphia gardens, and frequently included bits of Bartram history in the periodicals he edited — *The Gardener's Monthly* and later *Meehan's Monthly*. Meehan had also frequently brought local and national visitors to the garden. Beginning in 1881 Meehan and Charles S. Sargent, Professor of Arboriculture at Harvard and Director of the Arnold Arboretum organized a group of Philadelphians to purchase the botanic garden from the Eastwick estate by subscription. But the executors of the Eastwick estate withdrew from negotiations and Meehan turned to a political effort to preserve Bartram's Garden. Meehan entered Philadelphia politics and was elected to the Common Council in 1883, in part with the goal to preserve Bartram's Garden under city ownership and establish other small parks throughout Philadelphia. By a series of gradual steps from 1880-1891 Meehan

³⁸ Howard Pyle, "Bartram and His Garden." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 60, no. 357 (Feb. 1880), p. 321-330. This was one of Pyle's first nationally distributed pieces and Pyle used himself as the model for John Bartram in his drawings.

³⁹ Pyle, p. 326.

⁴⁰ Pyle, p. 329. There is a dark face with a kerchief in the center rear of this illustration as well, which could be taken for a stereotyped "mammy" character as well, although not mentioned in any of Pyle's text. The fact that Pyle mentions the marked grave site, but no name, suggests there was no name or the name was illegible on the small marble headstone and footstone at the grave site.

succeeded in passing ordinances that allowed the city to take property for parks, and Bartram's was one of the first parks protected. There was considerable coverage of the political fight to allow for these new city parks and the Philadelphia newspapers of the 1880s and early 1890s are full of articles for and against. The opening of the Bartram Park to the public in March 1891 saw many long, illustrated articles on the new park. Sargent in the pages of his weekly periodical *Garden and Forest*, a trade paper published in New York dedicated to the business of horticulture and forestry, and environmental preservation also covered the efforts to protect the old Bartram garden in the 1880s and early 1890s.

As with the 1860 "Bartram Tribute," the story of the faithful freed slave became one of the standard historic facts recited at the garden. There was little or no public interpretation at the house or garden for the first decade of the city park, and the Bartram house was initially closed to the public. It was only opened to the public for a short while ca. 1899-1905, only to be close again until 1926. The physical grave site at the riverfront was something to see in the early park. The initial 11-acre park, preserved at Bartram's Garden in 1891 did not actually include the grave site, which sat in the proposed roadbed location of 54th Street on the city plan. At the end of 1896, following a fire that damaged the Eastwick mansion, the city acquired an additional 16 acres which encompassed all the historic botanic garden and the grave site. Early 20th century maps of the city-owned park at Bartram's Garden plot a rectangle as the location of "Harvey's Grave" at the southeast corner of the historic botanic garden. The plotted location appears in maps from the Bureau of Surveys and from the Fairmount Park Commission into the middle of the 20th c.

The earliest printed guides of Bartram's Garden, issued by the John Bartram Association were published in three slightly different editions in 1904, 1907, and 1915. Two different sketch maps with numbered locations were printed — first a simple plan in 1904 largely confined to the area of the 1891 park with 26 numbered trees or locations. Then a much larger map in 1907 with 48 numbered locations was issued and reprinted in 1915. All three of these early guides uses similar and familiar text to recount John Bartram freeing his slaves, paraphrasing Crèvecoeur:

Like a true Quaker, he 'set his negroes free, paid them eighteen pounds a year wages, taught them to read and write, sat with them at table, and took them with him to Quaker meeting; one of his negroes was his steward and man of business, who went to market, sold the produce, and transacted all the business of the farm and family in Philadelphia.' This faithful servant's grave is where it should be, — in his master's Garden.

And the maps in all three versions list "Harvey's Grave." at a marked location at the southeast corner of the plan of the garden.⁴¹ Two later updated version of the guide to the garden by Emily Cheston in 1938 and 1953 included no plan, but mention the grave site as an item of interest near the river. "The grave of Harvey — the negro steward to whom Bartram entrusted

⁴¹ Elisabeth O. Abbot, *Bartram's Garden, Philadelphia, Pa. John Bartram*. The John Bartram Association, Philadelphia: (March 1904); Re-issued with New Plan (August 1907); Third edition (1915).

much of his business, marked by a wooden sign.” was included in 1938 and in 1953 the mention of a marker was removed.⁴²

Aside from maps, plans and guides to the early park at Bartram’s Garden, fanciful images of faithful slave “Harvey” appeared in newspapers, advertisements, and even a calendar from the 1920s to 1950s.

Media images of “Harvey” included a radio play in 1937, part of the DuPont Cavalcade of America, on the CBS radio network. The third Season, Nov. 10, 1937 included the radio drama, “No. 108: John Bartram’s Garden.” Voice actors and an orchestra recreated John and his wife Ann Bartram, and a particularly horrible racist caricature of “Harvey.” The script for this play relied heavily on Crèvecoeur’s dialogue for Bartram from the 1782 Letters of an American Farmer.⁴³

It remains difficult to pull apart fact from fiction in the account of the “excellent young African” and the Bartram family’s relations with slavery. But the limited concrete documents, mainly tax records and census records do record a real, if limited Free Black presence at Bartram’s Garden by the end of the 18th c. That single Black individual recorded in the 1790 census might be “Harvey”, but “Harvey” might also be something of a myth? But again the facts of the U.S. census from 1820-1840 do indicate what looks like a small Free Black family living in the Bartram household with the Bartram family. Continued research and local genealogy may someday track down some names for those individuals. “Harvey’s Grave” has not been marked now for almost 70 years, and perhaps should be. While there is no proof the name or the grave site is accurate, if not mythical, it is a plausible story. And it is a physical place to commemorate the early Black history of Kingessing.

⁴² Emily Read Cheston, *John Bartram, 1699-1777, His Garden and House William Bartram 1739-1823*. The John Bartram Association, Philadelphia: 1938; 2nd edition, revised 1953. The last wooden marker for the grave site seems to have vanished in the 1940s.

⁴³ The Nov. 10, 1937 radio play has been digitized and is available at this link: https://archive.org/details/OTRR_Cavalcade_of_America_Singles/CALV_371110_108_John_Bartrams_Garden.mp3