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***William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida***  
**by Daniel L. Schafer**

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is that Florida has always been a place of dreams, including conflicting dreams, such as those of real Florida and those of a made-over Florida. Belleville's important book is in itself a part of salvaging the real Florida.

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*William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida.* By Daniel L. Schafer. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. ix, 152 pp. List of figures, introduction, illustrations, maps, B&W photographs, epilogue, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index \$24.95 cloth.)

*William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida* offers, as its title suggests, an economic history of the St. Johns River valley through the lens of the pioneering naturalist. Daniel L. Schafer enlists decades of research, notably from British land records, to recover the comings, goings, profits, and losses of planters and absentee speculators from the mid-1760s to 1783. Bartram would seem to be the ideal source: he journeyed up the St. Johns in 1765–66 and again in 1774; failed as a planter there himself in 1766; and his 1791 *Travels* includes memorable scenes of alligator battles and a botanic sublime. But as Schafer notes, Bartram remained largely silent about property holdings. This point comes as no surprise to attentive readers of *Travels*. Experts on Bartram would even call the point obvious, and in its failure to bridge impressive (though narrowly focused) explorations of the archive with ongoing scholarly conversations, *Ghost Plantations* falls short.

Chapter 1 recounts Bartram's first journey up the north-flowing St. Johns, made with his botanizing father, John, after the cession of Florida from Spain. Schafer reviews the written record of the tour (mostly John's "Diary"), notes important landmarks such as Fort Picolata and the colossal failure that was Rollestown, and spools up a running commentary on places—"there then, here now"—that lasts through the book. After a short chapter on William's disastrous stint as a planter, Schafer launches into Bartram's "Second St. Johns River Expedition." (That Bartram actually made two trips up the St. Johns, in spring 1774 and again the following fall, is noted only in passing—a key point sacrificed to Schafer's approach.) A case against the naturalist's famously uneven memory builds: patrons "not mentioned" (45), key details "forgotten" (47), and so on. But what were Bartram's reasons for writing *Travels*? Schafer seems to assume that the book's sole purpose was to provide a record for the ex post facto historian.

The next two chapters, on "ghost plantations," move up the east and west side of the St. Johns respectively, drawing from impressive research on land holdings to offer an intriguing composite portrait of the region. After the Seven Years' War, East

Florida saw an influx of planters, many of whom were just speculating but others who developed their property with houses, wharves, cleared land, and outbuildings. During the Revolution, the local economy benefited from a demand for naval stores. After the war, planters migrated to the Caribbean. These chapters draw from Shafer's own outstanding website, *New World in a State of Nature*, which may actually serve as the better venue for this material. In *Ghost Plantations*, the same information is mired by a lack of thematic focus or narrative drive, and in lieu of a compelling argument, Schafer relies upon geographic markers to push his discussion along—"Beyond the Cowford" (111), "After passing Cowford" (111), "Beyond Trout River" (112), "Beyond Dames Point" (113).

A short epilogue defines what seems to be a major conflict in the book's approach, how Bartram's overly active literary imagination cast a "fog" over real history (120), but the epilogue's brevity only underscores a fundamental problem in Schafer's book: that a simplistic thesis remained (unlike East Florida) undeveloped. Those interested in the history of the St. Johns River will find prompts for further study in *William Bartram and the Ghost Plantations of British East Florida*. Scholars and fans of the naturalist will wonder why Schafer cast such a narrow net for his research. Still others may wish for a broader sense of relevance. In this slim volume, William Bartram serves as a premise, a "companion" if you will, who carries Schafer up and down the river. But a premise is not a point, and in the absence of the latter, *Ghost Plantations* is much less a book than it should have been.

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*Cypress Gardens, America's Tropical Wonderland: How Dick Pope Invented Florida*. By Lu Vickers. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. 358 pp. Color and B&W photographs and illustrations, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95, cloth.)

Lu Vickers's *Cypress Gardens, America's Tropical Wonderland: How Dick Pope Invented Florida* offers a breezy history of the pioneering attraction that long graced the shores of Winter Haven's Lake Eloise. Although probably more at home on the coffee table than the scholar's shelf, it is nevertheless an interesting account of the Gardens as both physical creation and romantic ideal.

From tin-can tourists to the hyper-real mega-parks that now ring Orlando, the history of modern Florida's primary industry is much chronicled. Whether filtered through the prism of social history in Gary R. Mormino's *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, or deconstructed in Stephen Fjellman's *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America*, tourists and their dollars stand at the center of the state's twentieth-