

## **A Trail of Trees to Georgia's History**

### **Rick Barnes**

1-6 I love trails! Will backpack until I can't do it any longer!

7 This is the story of my trail to Georgia's History. I really did not know where it would lead or if it would be interesting. It was! I hope this may inspire you to embark on your own trail.

8 I guess I have really been a simialr trail all my life. *Beaucarnia recurvata*.

9 A much younger version of my wife, Nancy- Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. A somewhat younger version of me at the same trees, 30 years later.

10-11 I have seen some strange forests and strange trees...

12-18 I love the way trees...  
...respond to the forces of nature.  
...hold on tenaciously to life.  
...seem to defy all odds.  
...set a mood.  
...define a place.

19 This is my Grand-Dog Ludo. Trees and Dogs: they are very expressive- BUT THEY DON'T TALK BACK!

20-24 Don't worry- we are going to talk about Georgia Trees and History! I'm just taking you on little side trip to warm you up.

*Pinus aristata* – Bristlecone Pine.

*Pinus longaeva* – Western Bristlccone- the real old ones (Methusila Tree)  
Long life- high resin- slow decaying- living and dead tree rings have allowed dating back almost 8000 years- calibrated the carbon-dating method!

25-28 Western Pine Beetle

29-30 We have our own problems in the South (Balsam Woolly Adelgid. "Life finds a way!")

31-36 Reeling it back in to Georgia History: this is a Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) Tree- in Tucker, Georgia! Planted 1995

35-37 Much of the history of our trees lies simply in how we use them- Air Conditioning with shade at an old Georgia homestead.

Tree used for everything from FENCE RAILS TO FURNITURE TO FINIALS TO FOOD TO FUEL!!!

38 Trees Steeped in Georgia's History

39-45 The Constitution Tree (Gwinnett County)  
So many of our historic trees have gone down this road.  
Victimized partially by urbanization.

46-51 Wormsloe.

- Noble Jones
- 1736- just following the settlement of Savannah
- Strategic location in the Intracoastal Waterway approach to the new settlement.
- The name probably derived from old family ancestry in England, but humorously associated with the Silkworms that Jones attempted to raise on the 500 acre plantation
- Jones tabby home was actually a frontier fort from which he helped defend Savannah and could watch movement of hostiles toward the town
- The Oak Avenue / over 400 Live Oak Trees / planted late 1800's by decendents of Jones, who still hold part of the property.

52            The Sydney Lanier Live Oak

This one may not be around anymore. Lanier wrote "The Marshes of Glynn" under this tree, and says of it:

Glooms of the live-oak, beautiful braided and woven  
With intricate shades of vines that myriad cloven  
Chamber the fork of the multiform boughs-  
Emerald twilights,-  
Virginal shy lights,  
Wrought of the leaves to allure to whisper of vows...

53-57        The Tree that Owns Itself (Athens)

- The land was deeded to the tree by William Jackson in 1820
- The tree owns itself and all land within 8 feet on all sides of itself
- The original tree died in 1942, and a seedling from an acorn of the parent was planted in its place
- This therefore is the "only tree in the world that inherited the land on which its forbear stood."

58            Legendary People / Legendary Trees

If you know who this person is- DON'T SAY IT! We will all find out in a minute!

59-64        James Edward Oglethorpe

- An English member of Parliament, he started a colony for England's debtors to start a new life
- Received by Indians (Chief Tomo-chi-chi) with open arms, helped him site his city of "Squares"
- Little did he know that the economic premise would fail!
- Silk! *Morus alba* from China.

65-68 Juliette Gordon Low

- Often associated with Magnolia Trees planted in her honor
- Born in Savannah
- Started "Girl Guides" in England in 1911 with the sister of Lord Robert Baden-Powell, who started the Boy Scouts in 1907
- Girl Scouts brought to Savannah in 1912
- The Magnolias are planted to honor all of the women founders of the Girl Scouts.
- By the Way: we just spoke of the exotic White Mulberry. If there are native plant purists in the audience- Southern Magnolia is not a real native above the Fall Line!

69-75 John Muir

- The man we know of who waxed poetic about Yosemite and Alaska actually walked from one end of Georgia to the other (1867-1868).
- This is what he said of it: "Strange plants crowding about me now, scarce a familiar face among all the flowers of a day's walk." "Known flower companions were leaving me now, not one by one as in Kentucky and Tennessee, but in whole tribes and genera, and companies of shining strangers came trooping upon me in countless ranks... Now I began to feel myself 'a stranger in a strange land."
- He marveled at the impenetrable cypress swamps.
- He crossed the Chattahoochee
- With no money- he spent night after night in Bonaventure Cemetery and day after day went to the Savannah Post Office, hoping his brother would mail him some money. He lived there for nearly a week, under a canopy of Live Oak Trees, on a bed of Spanish Moss!

76-86 Frederick Law Olmsted

- Father of American Landscape Architecture
- Projects include design of Central Park in NYC, Cornelius Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate in Asheville, which later gave rise to the Cradle of Forestry
- In Atlanta, the Linear Parks Development along Ponce De Leon Avenue.
- Deep Dene Park, one of the most in its native state, is home to a White Oak Tree cored by researchers from the Fernbank Museum and Kennesaw State. It was determined to be 240 years old- living through both the Civil War and the Revolutionary War.

87-88 FDR

- Part-time resident of Warm Springs
- In his Georgia wanderings, he noticed that harvested stands of Pine were not being re-planted
- In, 1929-1930, he ordered the planting of a stand of 5000 Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) on a portion of his farm near Warm Springs as a demonstration of reforestation.
- A 1954 tornado destroyed about half of the stand

89-90 The Wonderful Nuns of OLPH

- State Champion Cherrybark Oak (*Quercus falcata*)
- The Hospice was built with the preservation of the tree in mind. I was able to help them with the development of an outdoor deck to allow their patients outside to enjoy the Tree and Garden.
- This tree surely stood as the Atlanta burned around it.

91            Trees of War

92-96            The Thomasville Oak and the Tall Warships

- Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) utilized in the building of the great war ships such as the USS Constitution due to the great strength of the tree
- Drawings show how various parts of the tree were utilized in ship building
- The first forest lands set aside in America were Live Oak forest lands, specifically for the building of the tall ships.

98-108        The Civil War

- No wartime came closer to the trees and history of Georgia than the Civil War
- Oakland Cemetery Magnolia
- Largest Magnolia Tree in Atlanta
- Planted by the brother of Lucian Weakley to honor the soldier, who died in the battle of Chickamauga. Weakley's damaged tombstone still leans right up against the trunk of the tree.
- Tanyard Park White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*) was surely surrounded by the fighting of the Battle of Peachtree Creek
- Battle of Decatur White Ash (Agnes Scott College). A declining tree represents a last minute battle victory in a war that was soon to be lost. Tree dates back to 1854- 35 years before the founding of the college and 10 years before the war made its way to Decatur.

109            **Trees of War also represent Trees of Sports!** White Ash used for Baseball Bats, but not likely made here in Georgia.

## **110-116 Atlanta Crackers Stadium Magnolia-The Old Sears Building**

- From 1907-1966 the Magnolia was a living part of Ponce De Leon Ballpark
- Home of the Atlanta Crackers and Atlanta Black Crackers
- The Magnolia was allegedly a part of Right Field, and literally a part of the field! If the ball was hit into the tree, it was still considered in play.
- This is the only record in baseball history of a tree being a part of the field!
- Babe Ruth and Eddie Mathews both hit home runs through the branches of this tree, likely with a bat made of Ash!
- The ashes of Crackers owner Earl Mann were scattered beneath the tree in 1990.
- The concrete, home-plate shaped pedestal and the tree are all that remain of the memorial to the Park's history.

## 117 Trees of Science, Mystery, and Medicine

### 118-124 The North Avenue Trade School White Oak

- The tree graces the tower of the Georgia Tech Campus
- Seen in historical photos of the University
- Tower to the left of the one that still exists was the shop building that later burned (probably set afire by overzealous Tech Freshmen!).
- Researchers have calculated that the tree has a carbon storage capacity of 11,177 pounds, and sequesters an additional 217 pounds of Carbon per year.
- However, fungal conks at the base of the tree remind us all that Carbon sinks are all destined to become Carbon sources.
- Surprise! Douglas Fir appears in 1984 photo and on my visit!

125 UGA

- America's oldest historic Land-Grant University
- Home to many beautiful and historic trees
- Campus Arboretum boasts over 100 species of trees!

126-127 The Agnes Scott Mystery Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*)

- Native of the Pacific Northwest
- Planted at least 160 years ago- WHY?
- Front yard curiosity?
- Pencil manufacturers test planting? (this species popular for pencils)
- Foreign influence?
- No one knows

128-129 Toothache Tree

- A tip of the hat to all of the useful medicinal plants that I don't have time to talk about today
- The name comes from the numbness created when the leaves or bark are rubbed on the gums
- State Champion Tree in Glynn County, and native range of the plant shown

130 Trees Lost to the Ages (Almost)

131-134 Petrified Trees of Yellowstone

- Victims of the pyroclastic activity of the Yellowstone caldera
- Amazingly whole and still standing! Unlike many petrified trees seen elsewhere



135-137 American Chestnut (*Castanea americana*)

- Every 20<sup>th</sup> tree in this photo
- Classic historical photos show the tremendous size and massiveness of these trees
- Remnant population on Scaley Mountain, NC

138-140 American Elm

- Central Park, NYC
- Our beloved Norcross Elm

141-145 Stinking Cedar (*Torreya taxifolia*)

- Columbus, Georgia- a crossroad teaming with Georgia History
- State Champion *Torreya taxifolia* likely transported up the Appalachian and Chattahoochee Rivers to its present home in Columbus- within 200 yards of the river itself
- Tree is rare and endangered, believed to be the victim of a poorly understood fungal blight.
- This stop on my trail led to many discoveries about the history of Columbus- from manufacturing of Confederate uniforms to Nehi Soda and RC Cola!

## 147-160 **Today's Trail Nears Its End!**

- I leave you today with a centuries- old mystery
- Dates back to the 1700's and the Bartrams
- 1765- John Bartram, a plantsman who had started a nursery decades earlier, was appointed the Royal Botanist by George III of England.
- That same year, he and his son, William went on a plant exploration trip to the South
- As they canoed up the Altamaha River, they came upon a most unusual plant.
- They collected the plant and brought it back to Kingsessing, John's nursery.
- William was enthralled with the plants of the south, particularly the transition from temperate to tropical as one proceeds into Florida, so he planned another trip there.
- William's exploration went from 1773-1777.
- He returned to the Altamaha, and once again collected the mysterious plant.
- He later named the genus *Franklinia*, after family friend Benjamin Franklin, and the specific epithet *altamaha*, after the river on which the plant was found.
- The plant was never again seen in the wild after 1803.
- The only plants in existence are asexually propagated
- The pictures here were taken at Bartram's Garden and Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, and (**A final Surprise!**) on the Agnes Scott College campus
- Outdoor Guide to Bartram's Travels

**This ends my journey for now- where will yours take you?**

Partial listing of resource information:

- Nature's Beloved Son by Gisel and Joseph (Heyday Books, 2008)
- An Outdoor Guide to Bartram's Travels by Spornick, Cattier, and Greene (University of Georgia Press, 2003)
- Native Trees of Georgia by Bishop, Georgia Forestry Commission
- UGA Campus Arboretum Walking Tour of Trees by the Campus Arboretum Committee
- Famous and Historic Trees by Randall and Clepper (American Forestry Association, 1976)
- Whatever Became of Atlanta by Shavin (Capricorn Corporation, 1984)
- Ancient Trees by Parker and Lewington (Batsford, UK, 2012)
- Knowing Your Trees by Collingwood and Brush (American Forestry Association, 1984)

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[20 Atlanta trees you should know - MyAJC.com](https://www.myajc.com/news/news/local/20-atlanta-trees-you-should-know/nrCyY/)

<https://www.myajc.com/news/news/local/20-atlanta-trees-you-should-know/nrCyY/>

[Landmark & Historic Tree Register | Georgia Urban Forest Council](http://www.gufc.org/programs/landmark-and-historic-tree/)

[www.gufc.org/programs/landmark-and-historic-tree/](http://www.gufc.org/programs/landmark-and-historic-tree/)