



William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier

Edward J. Cashin

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William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier Edward J. Cashin In Travels, the celebrated 1791 account of the "Old Southwest," William Bartram recorded the natural world he saw around him but, rather incredibly, omitted any reference to the epochal events of the American Revolution. Edward J. Cashin places Bartram in the context of his times and explains his conspicuous avoidance of people, places, and events embroiled in revolutionary fervor. Cashin suggests that while Bartram documented the natural world for plant collector John Fothergill, he wrote Travels for an entirely different audience. Convinced that Providence directed events for the betterment of mankind and that the Constitutional Convention would produce a political model for the rest of the world, Bartram offered Travels as a means of shaping the new country. Cashin illuminates the convictions that motivated Bartram-that if Americans lived in communion with nature, heeded the moral law, and treated the people of the interior with respect, then America would be blessed with greatness.



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