



Volume #16

Summer 2023

Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Newsletter

Visiting and Programming

The historic site is open Tuesday-Sunday with the tour of the historic house beginning on the hour. If you have any questions about visiting, please call the office staff at 912-264-7333. This park is maintained by the state of Georgia. Bill Giles, Site Manager, can be reached at bill.giles@dnr.ga.gov.

Plein Air Art Show will be on display:

May - Horton Gallery, Southeast Georgia Healthcare Brunswick Campus

June and July - McIntosh Art Museum

August - St. Simons Island Welcome Center

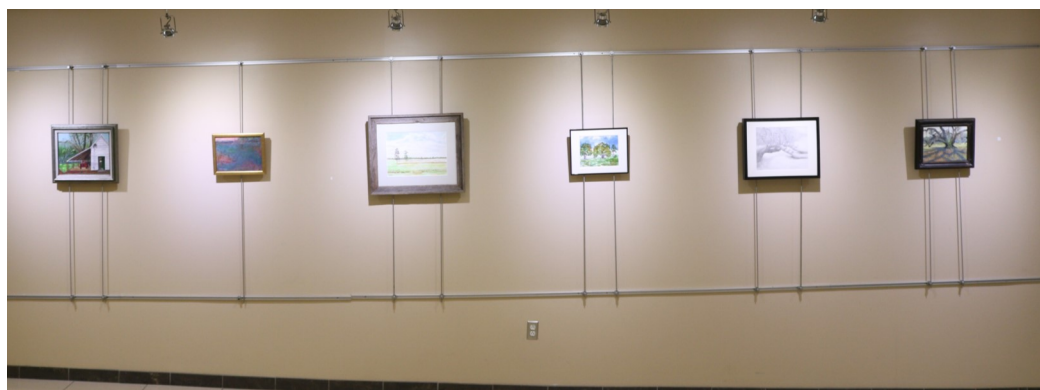
September- Hofwyl -Broadfield Auditorium

Junior Ranger Camp, June 26-29 for ages 6-12. The camp will be hosted by Interpretive Ranger Allie Ellis. For more information, call the office at the number above and ask for Ranger Ellis.

The Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation thank the fine artists that participated in Plein Air Event this year. They produced the beautiful works for our traveling art exhibit currently at the Horton Gallery at Southeast Georgia Healthcare, Brunswick Campus. See previous page for complete list of venues and dates.



The Horton Gallery



The artists participating in Plein Air this year are: Eileen Berta, Lynda Bisher, Ken Bleakly, Charles Bleau, Jennifer Broadus, Michael Byrd, Sharon Cacase, Martin Carriker, Bronwen Chandler, Gerald Cowart, Terry Craig, Kay Deuben, Suzy Dmetruk, Linda Dotter, Mercedes Dotter, Chris Dougherty, Lou Ann Dunkinson, Stephen Dunn, Joanna Hill, Louise Hooper, Linda Humphries, Betty Hunter, James Hunter, Deborah Jinkins, Douglas Johnson, Karen Keene, Connie Keller, Linda Lanter, Jenny London, Libby Matthews, Peggy McBride, Susan Newman, Glenna Pfeiffer, Randy Pitts, Richard Poole, Aurora Pope, Cheryl Simeone, Leigh Slayden, Larry Stewart, Lori Sweet, Allison Tucker, Shani Voyer, Ollie Wadsworth, and Johnny Warren.

Interview with Bill Giles, Site Manager

There was a lot of activity at Hofwyl-Broadfield this spring. One of the projects the state is working on is the Slave Cemetery on the park property across Hwy 17. Can you describe the work that was done this spring?

The cemetery has been grown up for many years. We paid a contractor to clear out the brush and other over growth. Everything had to be done by hand because of the sensitive nature of the area. After that was done, New South Associates (a private archeological firm) came in and surveyed the cemetery to determine the extent of where the graves are. Shortly we will have a tall chain link fence put up around it to protect it. After this is done New South will return and do a more extensive study. They will map and catalog all of the graves.

The Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt was a success in every way especially bringing young families out to the park. Please share the statistics:

We had 527 participants this year. Keep in mind that this is just the children doing the actual hunt. Each child had at least one parent with them. Most had both parents and some had parents and grandparents. So that would put the actual number at around 1,000. Everyone really seemed to enjoy it. All seem to prefer it far better than the old one day Easter Egg Hunt. This event is more leisurely. Parents like that their kids aren't competing with other kids and that they are getting exercise and are learning something. The kids enjoy the "adventure" of it and hopefully it gets them interested in history and nature.

The plantation house on the site is the 2nd residence on the property. Can you give some insight into the original 1806 house that was here at what was then called the Broadfield plantation.

All that we know of the former house is by description. It is described as "a wide spreading two storied house with great chimneys at either end, hand hewn timbers above, tabby walls below. A carriage drive led through the center of the first story to a courtyard in the rear. Giant trees surrounded the grounds..." This is from Georgia's Land of the Golden Isles by Burnette Vanstory and was almost certainly told to the author by Ophelia Dent.

Continued Interview with Bill Giles:

Ophelia described the Broadfield house to another friend thusly, “The partially tabby, two story house was built around a courtyard. Carriages could drive through a gate at the front, under the second story, to enter the courtyard.”

Tell us about the person that visited the park office this Spring and donated some items for safe keeping.

Actually, the visitor was Arthur Cleveland III, who goes by “Casey”. He is the son of Arabella Clark Cleveland who was one of Ophelia’s best friends. Ophelia had given Arabella quite a lot of things before her passing and Casey donated many of these items back. There were numerous letters dating back as far as 1802, around 40 photographs (dating from the early 1900’s), a book written by Thomas Jefferson published in 1794 and some legal documents. Most of the documents were from the Cohen, Gratz side of the family and many originate from Philadelphia. Arabella was probably interested in these because she lived near Philadelphia. She and her family lived on what is now the Brandywine Battlefield Park. The house they lived in was taken from them by Eminent Domain as supposedly having been Lafayette’s Headquarters.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

We sent in the specifications for the new bathroom that is being constructed to replace the bathroom in the Servant Quarters building. We should receive it sometime in the fall. The museum design team that we have been working with for the past year or so is about to present their plan to DNR leadership. At that time we will find out if there is funding to proceed with the plan (either whole or partial). We are also working with Kennesaw State University on a new brochure design. We got the proof for it a few weeks ago and made corrections. We should get the final product fairly soon.

The Corsair: Isaac Moses

By

S.T. Lanter

U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section. 8.

The Congress shall have Power... To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations; To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water...



Figure 1 Isaacs Moses 1742-1818. Portrait attributed to John Wesley Jarvis. Courtesy of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.

The tour moved into the dining room on a warm, somnolent Georgia afternoon. The ten or twelve adults listened attentively as I explained the various antique furnishings in the room. But a young lad, obviously bored, clutching a plastic cutlas, squirmed and fidgeted as I droned on.

“Say, young man,” I asked, “what do you have there?”

“A pirate sword,” he replied timorously as he retreated to the safety of Mom’s protection.

“A pirate sword,” I replied. “So, tell me, what does a pirate look like?”

“He has a peg leg, a hook, a green parrot on his shoulder an’ says ‘Rrrrrrr’ a lot,” the lad replied after a slight hesitation.

“No,” I replied pointing to the portrait of Isaac Moses, “a pirate could look like this man, for he was a pirate, a corsair, a lawful high seas raider and an American patriot!”

The young boy didn’t reply but the puzzled expression on his face said, “no way!” His eyes questioning how could the kindly, silver haired, grandfatherly gentleman with the old fashioned bushy sideburns in the portrait be a blood thirsty buccaneer?

Isaac Moses was born in 1742. One source has the place of his birth as Giessen, Germany, the only child of Rischa Moses and David Moses. Another account states that he was born in Passaic, N.J. Both agree that Isaac died in New York City in 1818. From *“the humble profession of cord-waining [sic], shoemaking, [Isaac] Moses arose to the position of a wealthy and respected merchant, a friend of Robert Morris and other American patriots.”*

That Isaac was ambitious is a great understatement, eschewing the skilled trade of ‘cordwaining’ the young man began working for his uncle Hayman Levy’s Bayard Street export/import mercantile firm in the booming fur trade in 1764. Isaac sold deerskins, bearskins, Indian blankets, spermaceti (whale) oil, and logwood (a fabric dye; it yields red to purple to blue orchid colors to cloth) to European merchants, as he imported English woolens, Irish linens, French wines, and West Indian rum for the domestic markets.

Isaac worked hard, learned the trade, and prospered. On 8 August 1770 Moses married his cousin, Reyna Levy, the daughter of Sloe and Hayman Levy. The couple had ten children.

In 1775, along with partners Samuel Myers and Moses Myers (not related to each other) he established the mercantile firm of Isaac Moses & Company. The American Revolution began in April. Moses, to his detriment sided with the rebels. With his partners concurrence, he gave the Continental Congress \$20,000 (approximately (\$572,000 today) in specie (silver coins, hard currency) for an equivalent amount in Continental paper dollars to finance the abortive expedition to Quebec. The British seized New York City in late August 1776. Isaac could have stayed in the city and prospered by doing business with the British, who paid with gold and silver, but Moses left with his family for Philadelphia the unoccupied hotbed of revolution instead where he remained until the end of hostilities.

In Philadelphia Isaac continued to run his own 'triangular trade route.' Sending flour, grain, furs, indigo, lumber and hardware to Amsterdam and St. Eustatius, a Dutch possession in the Caribbean. Where they were traded for guns, ammunition, military uniforms, and blankets which he then sold to the Continental government. He again prospered, by 1780 he was the 5th wealthiest man in radical Philadelphia—worth £115,200 (£16,270,000 or \$20,174,800 today).

Isaac brought in needed supplies and prospered but he wanted to help the war effort more directly. Along with his partners he bought a small ship, the *Chance* carrying six guns, in 1779 and equipped with 'Letters of Marque and Reprisal' from the Continental Congress entered the war as a financier of privateers.

Privateering or legal piracy was a form of nautical guerrilla warfare enabling a weaker opponent to fight a stronger one. Privateering was heavily regulated, operating under strict protocols. Prizes captured by these legal Corsairs were heavily taxed. Owners/Captains of these vessels were required to post substantial bonds with the President of the Continental Congress. For vessels of less than 100 tons \$5,000 (\$143,000 in 2021), for raiders over this amount \$10,000 (\$286,000 in 2021). Amended to \$20,000 (\$572,000 in 2021) after May 1780. In all, 800 American privateers put to sea capturing or destroying 600 British ships valued at \$18,000,000 (\$551,000,000 in 2021).

Ultimately the *Chance* was unsuccessful, attacking British shipping in the Caribbean but taking no prizes. Moses was undeterred. The following year, 1781, with Robert Morris, Isaac purchased and outfitted two more ships as privateers, the *Havannah*, a schooner mounting six guns and the *Black Prince*, a brigantine with twelve guns. These two raiders were successful capturing a number of prizes near Delaware Bay. In August Isaac purchased a third vessel, the *Fox* with ten guns to carry his firms goods to and from Philadelphia.

In 1780 he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Militia as a private in Captain Andrew Burkhardt's Company of Colonel William Will's 3rd Philadelphia Battalion. The participation of Moses in this company was minimal.

Isaac Moses engaged in other important activities during the decade of the 1780's. Purchasing stock valued at \$400 in the Bank of North America, a bank formed by Robert Morris, to help shore up and reduce the debts created by the War Of Independence and to restore confidence in the national treasury. In August 1783 Moses, with the profits from his European currency transactions, bought from the superintendent of finance fifty thousand Dutch guilders and ten thousand French livres worth of debt.

Admiral Sir George Rodney captured St. Eustatius in early 1783, Moses, who also owned shares in four other ships, was unable to trade with his agents on this island and thus experienced a sharp decline in profits. By 1786 he had suffered such reverses that he retained the legal services of Alexander Hamilton to convince his creditors that he (Moses) was worth £98,000 (\$16,727,600) and hold them at bay. The effort failed; Moses declared bankruptcy later that same year.

Moses didn't give up! Returning to his mercantile roots selling prints, paintings, and antique furniture, establishing Isaac Moses & Sons, an international trading company importing textiles, jewelry, wines, and China from Asia and Europe, while exporting furs, cotton, and foods he recouped his fortune. By 1815 Moses was a major stockholder in the Bank of New York. He also held prime New York City real estate. Moses, along with Robert Morris and others was one of the founders of the American financial system.

"Modest, retiring, unselfish, Moses never thrust himself forward but was content to do his duty to his country." Isaac Moses died from cancer April 16, 1818 in New York City. He was interred in the cemetery of the Shearith Israel synagogue.

Samuel Eliot Morrison, a speech delivered 1943.

The 2021 currency values presented are only estimates.

Robert Morris, signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and Constitution. He was given command of the fledgling Continental Navy in 1781, a post he held until 1784. He is widely regarded as one of the founders of the American financial system.



Welcome to the park.

View our magnificent Live Oaks!

Two of them are named: Ophelia and Miriam after the last two members of the Dent family to live at this rice plantation turned dairy farm. Think of the things these trees have seen. If the trees could speak, they would tell us about the lives of enslaved people working in the rice fields, many hurricanes through the years, cannon fire ranging over the marsh preparing the artillery for war, and the years of dairy cows roaming peacefully at their feet. Tour the house and think back to the days that Rudolph Capers was chief cook, butler, and friend to the Dent sisters. At the end of the family line, Ophelia Dent's vision to leave the house, this land, and these trees to the state of Georgia came to pass with the help of her friend and attorney Albert Fendig Sr. Because of Ophelia's will and Albert's work writing her will and trust, people in the 21st century can still enjoy the trees just like she did.