

The Mission of the Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Historic Site is to be an advocate for and to support the historical significance, dignity and tradition of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation.

Friends of Hofwyl–Broadfield Plantation Newsletter

Volume #18

Winter 2023–24

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.

January 28, 2024 A presentation on Camellias in our Southern Gardens will begin at 2:00 p.m. by Linda Hlozansky, a Friend of Howfyl– Broadfield

February 11, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. The McIntosh Ring Shouters will demonstrate the songs and dance of the Gullah Geechee culture

February 11, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Slave Families Genealogies

March 1st– April 7th 2024 Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt available daily when the park is open.

April 6, 2024 Plein Air Art Event

Camellias in our Southern Gardens

Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

**Fee: \$8.75 for Adults, \$6.50 for Seniors, and \$5.50 for Youth
includes house and garden tour**

Linda Hlozansky will discuss the Camellias at Hofwyl- Broadfield plantation and those in your landscape. Topics to be discussed will include pruning, diseases, insect pests, and bud drop. Tips for prevention and treatment of these problems will be explained. Photos of favorite cultivars will be shown. We will tour the plantation house and garden. Come dressed for a walk in the garden to see the Camellias at the Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation.



Photography by Troup Nightengale



I AM HOFWYL

THE LAND -THE PEOPLE- THE ANCESTORS

In February 2020, the Friends of Hofwyl introduced a program called “I am Hofwyl”. It was, however, more than program. It was the beginning of a very special project.

The project began with a faded 19th century list.

Inventory of Appraisement of Property Owned by Dr. James Troup upon his death in 1849



The list was an inventory appraisal of property owned by Dr. James Troup at the time of his death in 1849. Scattered among the list of cattle, sheep, furniture, and furnishings were 357 names--the enslaved workers of Hofwyl Broadfield Plantation. Valued only for their utility rather than their humanity, it is the earliest known list identifying that largely forgotten enslaved population who built and maintained one of the wealthiest rice plantations on the Georgia coast... and it is the genesis of the **I AM HOFWYL** project.

I AM HOFWYL seeks to not only identify the 357 barely legible names on that faded list, but to, where possible, replace the de-humanizing dollar value scribbled next to their names with faces and families.

The 1st program presented in 2020 identified over 25 probable African American family surnames associated with Hofwyl and 3 DNA linked local African American families still living in Glynn and McIntosh Counties. The 2020 presentation drew other African American families from as far away as Tampa and North Carolina. Unfortunately, COVID interrupted further program activities.

So, at 2:00 P.M on February 11th, 2024, at Hofwyl Broadfield Plantation, the Friends of Hofwyl will be re-activating the **I AM HOFWYL** project with a very special program.

Plan to join us as we discuss The Land – The People – and The Descendants that built Hofwyl.



**Super Museum Sunday
All State Parks Are Open Free Of Charge
February 11, 2024**

**The Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield State Park
Are pleased to Welcome the
Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters**

**At
3:00 p.m.**





**Friends of the Hofwyl-Broadfield
Plantation invite you to attend our
next meeting.**

**Second Tuesday of each month
at 5:00 p.m.**

in the

Auditorium at the park office

**Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt
at Hofwyl-Broadfield Historic Site
March 1st through April 7th, 2024
Daily when the park is open!**



Fun for the Whole Family



Fun in the Park!
Come join us for an
Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt
at Hofwyl-Broadfield Historic Site
March 1st through April 7th, 2024
Daily when the park is open!
Follow the Map! Find the Clues!
Get Prizes Too!

Save the Date for the Plein Air Art Event



Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation are happy to invite all artists to register and join us Saturday April 6, 2024.

For information or to register contact George Netherton

By phone at 678-778-8889 or by email at gnetherton@me.com



Reading Between the Lines:

James and Miriam

By

S.T. Lanter



James Troup Dent, ca. 1880 and Miriam 'Mamie' Cohen Dent, ca. 1865. Courtesy of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.

Ophelia Troup Dent, realizing her days were numbered, and to keep Hofwyl from eager developers decided to bequeath the remaining 1,268 acres to the People and State of Georgia. The decision made, she had to decide what items to turn over to the state. She deemed a cache of over 300 letters written by her parents to each other during their lifetimes were too personal and private, of no historic value—she burned them.

What was in those letters? What light would they have shone on James and Miriam Cohen Dent's relationship? We will never know! Just when and how James Dent met Miriam 'Mamie' Gratz Cohen, his future wife is unknown. And therein lies a tale of love and endurance!

Spring 1865, the war was over, 17 year old James Dent, young combat veteran—having 'seen the elephant,' surrendered with "Co D [32nd Georgia Infantry] Reg., Harrison's Brigade Marshalls Division, Stewarts Corps. Army of Genl Joseph Johnston ... & [was] paroled at Greensboro N.C."

James, like untold thousands of former Confederate soldiers received a formal parole document and orders to go home and as long as he abided by the terms of his parole he “...is permitted to return to his home, not to be disturbed by the United States authorities so long as he observes this obligation and obey[s] the laws in force where he may reside.” Meaning that he must remain in his home county, register with the military Provost Marshall and report to the Provost every seven days.

James likely walked most of the 317 miles from Greensboro, North Carolina to Savannah. He did not return home to Hofwyl, 60 miles away, for Sherman’s Order #15 was still in force.

The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.

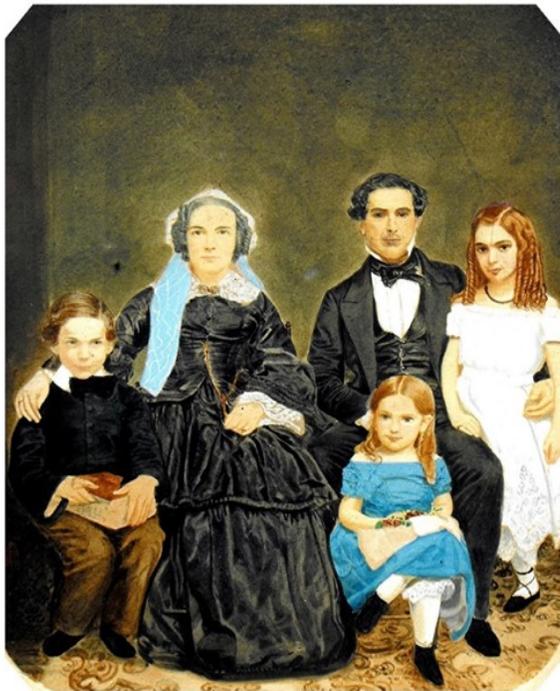
For he, like his parents, had great doubts as to whether the family still owned the plantation. Also, at 17 he was still a minor under law, and could not legally own/manage the property. James stayed in Savannah, as he says in his later writings that:

After the war [I] was employed on Mobile & Ohio R.R. as bookkeeper then in Savannah & in 1871 returned to ... [my] forever home [my emphasis] & planted rice at Hofwyl Glynn Co. GA.

It is possible that James knew the Cohens before the war from family business dealings. James served in the same brigade as Mamie’s brother Gratz and there is a high probability, given the small size of all Confederate units late in the war, that he was acquainted with and present when Gratz was killed at Bentonville, NC.

Undoubtedly, James presented himself at the Cohen residence on Liberty Street, Savannah to pay his respects to the family of his late comrade in arms. Perhaps his relationship with Mamie grew from this visit.

Miriam ‘Mamie’ Gratz Cohen was 15 that Spring when James made his visit. She was the youngest of Solomon and Miriam Gratz Moses Cohen’s three children.



The Solomon Cohen Family, ca. 1854. L-R Gratz, Miriam Gratz Moses, Mamie, Solomon, and Isabelle "Belle" Cohen. Courtesy Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.

The Cohen's were observant Jews, devoutly religious; Solomon helped establish Savannah's synagogue—Mikvah Israel and was well assimilated in the top tier of ante bellum Savannah society. A shrewd, intelligent man he made his fortune in Savannah as an entrepreneur and attorney. He was a successful merchant, publisher, real estate investor, District Attorney, the first Jewish Georgia State Senator and was elected in the autumn of 1865 to the US House of Representatives but denied his seat in the US Congress by the Radical Republicans.

Mamie, like her siblings Gratz and Belle, were the children of privilege. Brother Gratz, as the only son, received a first class education. Mamie and Belle likewise received above average exposure to the classics, as the Cohen home had an extensive library which both sisters would have had access to. Unlike many of her contemporaries Mamie was well travelled—making a Grand Tour of Europe in the aftermath of the war. The war turned Solomon Cohen's world topsy-turvy. In 1865 his elder daughter Belle married Francis 'Frank' O'Driscoll. Solomon was a devout Jew who usually looked askance at 'mixed' marriages.

Writing to his 'sister' Emma Levy Hamilton he explained his reasons for approving the match:

Belle's engagement was sanctioned under peculiar circumstances. I am as much opposed to intermarriages as any one I ever knew. The death of my dear & noble son changed the whole current of my life...My son was gone. Frank had been his friend, & companion from infancy. Had been with him on the weary march—in battle—in danger, & Frank had been with him in death & had at great personal risk laid him in his mother earth. These things alone decided the question.

The family never came to terms with Gratz' death at Bentonville. Solomon and Miriam had Gratz' remains disinterred from the battlefield and reburied in the Cohen plot at Laurel Grove Cemetery North in February 1866. As Solomon wrote Emma Hamilton in March 1866:

[I am] fearfully sad [on the anniversary of Gratz's death] What are your plans for the summer—mine are entirely unsettled, but as soon as I have decided where I shall go (& go somewhere I must for Miriam requires a change)....

Solomon with wife Miriam, daughters Mamie, Belle, son-in-law Frank O'Driscoll, and niece Georgina Cohen departed on the Cunard SS Malta from New York City in May 1867. The extended family traveled '1st Cabin' at a cost of \$135 each to England. Later making the grand tour of France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. The family returned to the US on July 20, 1867.

On November 30, 1880 James Troup Dent married Miriam 'Mamie' Gratz Cohen at her mother's home in Savannah. Solomon had died in 1875. Miriam Gratz Wise Cohen, like her late husband, was still deeply grieving for her late son Gratz, writing to James shortly after the wedding:

My Dear "Troup" I know that I shall learn to love you as I did my dear Frank O'Driscoll. ...[but] I can never give the name of son to any[one], it is sacred to the memory of my son [my] precious noble son & died upon my lips when he died.

Miriam, like her late husband, was devoutly Jewish. But both Mamie and Belle married outside their faith. In both instances Miriam's new sons-in-law had served in the army with her beloved son Gratz. The marriage ceremony and reception in the Cohen home at 164 Liberty Street in Savannah was a civil, non-denominational service, conducted by Judge

William Dearing Harden of the City Court of Savannah, Ga.

Both Mamie and James were atypical of their era. If their courtship began in 1865, then James was very persistent, and courted her for 15 years. The newlyweds were both in their 30's when they married, James was 32 and Mamie 30. Proofs of affection came at short intervals Gratz, 1881, James Jr., 1882, Miriam, 1883 and Ophelia, 1886.

Mamie demonstrated, throughout her life, that she, like her father, was intelligent, shrewd and a thinker. In their lifelong partnership she and James were a formidable team in tough times. She was Chief Executive Officer and he the Chief Operating Officer. The era of reconstruction provided a real test for both of them. James brought his bride and a much needed dowry back to Hofwyl. She learned to love her husband's plantation as her own. She and James did all they could to preserve the land. Mamie pioneered the survival strategy of negotiating each year with different banks for loans to pay off the previous year's loan—while hoping for a bountiful rice harvest.

Though their letters are reduced to ashes and scattered to the four winds much can be inferred regarding their long loving relationship. It is said that actions often speak as loud as words. James and Mamie toiled together, working harder than they should have had to, holding on with grim determination to Hofwyl. With success sometimes, other times not so much. Neither ever gave up! Their struggles brought them close. James died in October 1913. Initially he was buried in the Dent plot in Oak Grove Cemetery, Brunswick. Mamie later had his body exhumed and removed for reburial in the Cohen plot at Laurel Grove Cemetery North in Savannah. Mamie passed away in May 1931 and was laid to rest next to her husband.

On a rainy afternoon, after a lengthy search I located plot #1381, the Cohen Family plot. The sad forlorn spot, long neglected, belying the weathered 'perpetual care' stone marker under the ruined, rusted gate the surrounding wrought iron fence looted by scavengers long ago is the final resting place for this remarkable family. On the rain slickened limestone slab over the grave of Miriam 'Mamie' Gratz Cohen, resting in perpetuity next to her beloved husband, were inscribed these words: Miriam Gratz Cohen...wife of James Troup Dent. I think that says it all!