



Volume #21

Fall 2024

Friends of Hofwyl–Broadfield Plantation Newsletter

**Located at 5556 US Hwy 17N
Near the intersection of US17 and GA99 Phone 912-264-7333**

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.

September 2024 Plein Air Art Exhibit returns to Hofwyl-Broadfield State Park in the auditorium

September 20, 2024 Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day

September 28, 2024 Your State Park Day

October 19, 2024 Classic Car Show 9a.m.-2p.m.

Ghost Tours will be every Friday evening in October at 6:30-8 p.m.

Fall Scavenger Hunt October 1-31 every day the park is open.

Christmas at Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Dec 6th and 7th from 6-8 p.m.

Meet Sally Edwards

I had a good time growing up in Atlanta, playing tennis and getting a scholarship to Georgia State University.

I married my high school sweetheart and moved to Brunswick where he opened Domino's Pizza, and I coached the tennis team at Brunswick Junior College. I moved here, then my

sister moved here, and then my parents moved here, so we all escaped the Atlanta traffic. I had three children, and went back to Armstrong Atlantic State to get my teaching degree. Then I taught school for a few years, and I was offered a job at the Jekyll Museum. Now going on 6 years I have been at the Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Historic Site. I love the beauty of the grounds, the history, and my wonderful co-workers. I have 5 grandchildren here in Brunswick who keep me busy. I like to play tennis and Pickle Ball. My favorite places are garden centers. God is good.



.Ghost Tours at Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation



You can take an eerie journey back in time at coastal Georgia's most haunted rice plantation. As you walk beneath centuries old Live Oaks, explore the out-buildings on the plantation and a lantern tour of the main house, you will hear tales of recent ghostly encounters, plantation folklore, and the rich but tragic history of the Low Country rice fields.

The tours will be each Friday evening in October at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required for the tour. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early to make sure you have time to get to the tour. The cost is \$20 per person.

The trip will be approximately one mile in length and last for one and a half hours. It is suggested that visitors wear shoes comfortable for walking. Don't forget your bug-spray.

Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site is located at **5556** US Highway 17N, Brunswick, at intersection of US 17 and GA 99, one mile east of I-95, exit 42.

For reservations and information, contact the staff or Bill Giles, Site Manager at 912-264-7333 or bill.giles@dnr.ga.gov.

The Fall Scavenger Hunt



This year our Fall Scavenger Hunt will have both literary and historical appeal. We will be featuring some characters from Washington Irving's works. His most famous character Ichabod Crane from the Legend of Sleepy Hollow might be in the park. Also be looking for a guy snoozing and snoring, because Rip Van Winkle may be asleep under any of the Live Oaks.

Our Dent family has a real connection with Washington Irving, the famous author. Family ancestor, John Herbert Dent, was commander of the *USS Nautilus*. The Nautilus put into port in Messina, Italy on January 5, 1806. Also in port there, was Washington Irving on board the *Matilda*. The ships were held in port due to a yellow fever epidemic. Dent was one of Irving's primary companions.

Washington Irving was also a friend of the Gratz family of Philadelphia. In particular he was impressed with Rebecca Gratz, pictured in the ladies parlor in the house. Irving mentioned Rebecca's beauty and philanthropy to his friend and fellow author, Sir Walter Scott. Family lore says that the character Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* is modeled after her. Some say it is just a legend, but it seems to be pretty well documented.

Come on out to the park Oct 1-31 on any day the park is open from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and get a map at the office. Go to the locations marked on the map to find the clues that help solve the puzzle. There are prizes and fun for all ages.



11th Annual Ophelia's Classic Car Challenge



Saturday, October 19 9AM - 2 PM

***Admission: Adults \$8.75, Youth
\$5.50, 5 and under free***

Entry Fee \$20 per car

***For more information call
912-996-0461***

Join Us for Christmas At Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation



December 6th and 7th from 6:00 p.m. until 8 p.m. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth, 6-17, and children 5 and under are free.

Visitors walk through centuries old live oaks tour the 1850's plantation house decorated for Christmas. Several period dressed interpreters will share stories of the plantation's past. History buffs will enjoy Company A, 26th Georgia Volunteer Infantry and other units as they re-enact a pre-Civil War muster of the Glynn County Guards and the Brunswick Rifles Militia Units. There will be cannon and musket firings as well as demonstrations of camp life. After touring the house, enjoy our refreshments and visit Santa with the children.

spiced Christmas punch) prepared over an open fire in an au-

Come away with me, Lucille, In my merry Oldsmobile - Ophelia's Last Ride

By
S.T. Lanter

The day was sunny in the late 1950's. Ophelia was well past 70 as she cruised with the top down in her blue Chevrolet convertible. Enjoying the day, the fresh air, the wind in her snow-white hair, the sun shining brightly on her and through some strange alchemy turning her white hair to gold making it appear platinum blonde. As she tooled down Route 17, balancing her left elbow casually on the car's doorframe, her right hand cavalierly high on the steering wheel she was the epitome of a carefree wanderer enjoying a drive in the country. A carload of teenage boys came up behind her and thinking her a beautiful young woman sought to gain her notice. They hooted, whistled, and blew their car's horn soliciting her attention. She led them on for a few moments deeply enjoying the encounter. Finally, the young driver swung into the oncoming lane to overtake the car and impress the pretty young woman driver.

“In the mirror she could see in their faces the excitement and expectation of getting a beautiful woman's attention. Knowing what would happen, she slowly turned and waved to them. They saw the face of an old woman and their own faces turned...crimson red. Hitting the accelerator full force they flew down the highway in humiliation. Ophelia chuckled with laughter, immensely pleased that the mixture of her looks and style had created such an image, even if for a few moments. She savored the humor of this situation ... [she was] a legend.”

Ophelia Troup Dent, like most Americans, was deeply in love with the automobile and the open road. When Ophelia learned to drive is unknown, possibly upon her return to Hofwyl in 1912—if not before in Connecticut. In an undated letter, from 1915 or 1916, reading between the lines, she indicated that she was quite experienced behind the wheel, writing:

“We had the surprise of our lives last Saturday when Gratz went to town in a Ford & returned in a Chevrolet!!!! You could have knocked us over with a powder-puff!!! It seems that when he got into town a man offered him \$225 cash for the Ford and that was such a fine offer after 2 years & 2 months use out of it that Gratz accepted right off, & went to get another Ford. Well my dear, he couldn't get one in Brunswick, Jacksonville, or Savannah under 3 weeks & not certain then, so he just had to get another make, & chose the Chevrolet. It took me a day to learn to run it

as the gears and everything are so entirely different & I just felt lost at first.... Now I'm crazy about it and if it does the work that the Ford did, I can't ask for anything better! It [the Ford] ran 28,000 miles between here & Brunswick: just think of that!"

Driving an automobile in 1912 was an adventure and not for the 'faint-hearted!' Mechanical reliability was more of a hope than reality. Tires wore out quickly. Maps were unavailable or erroneous. Roads were mere tracks of mud, and all but nonexistent in many places. US Route 17 in Glynn County did not really exist until the 1920's. And even then it wasn't much of a road.

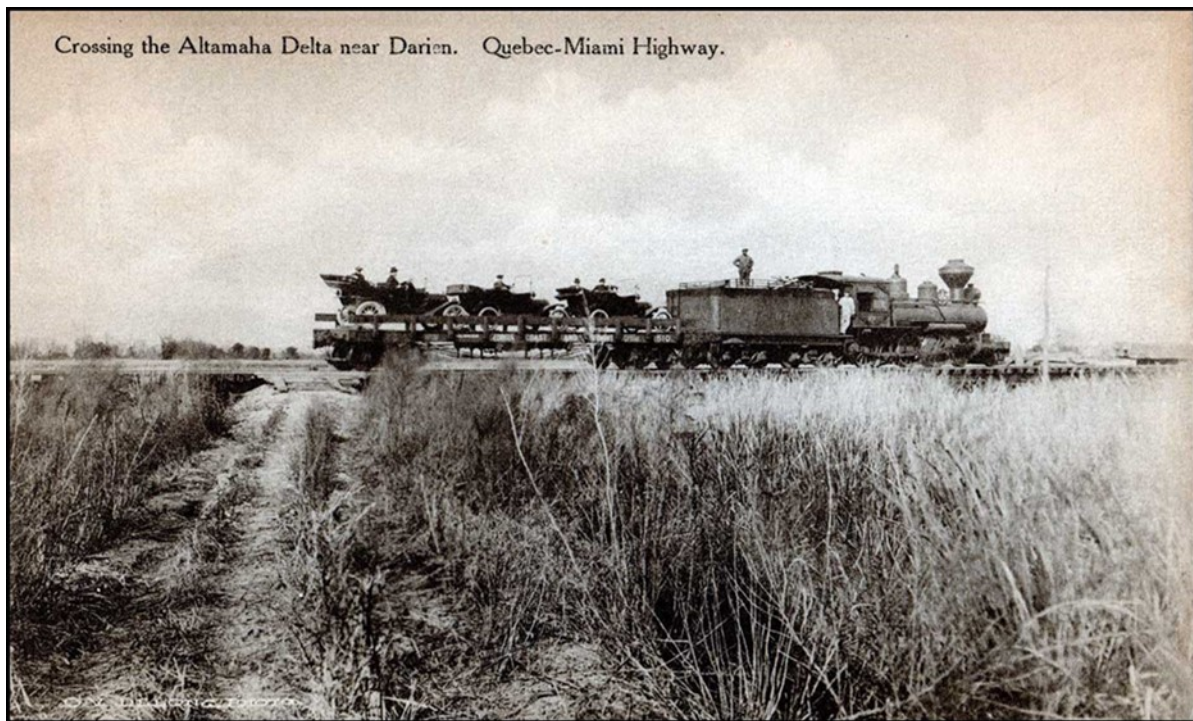


Car on a muddy road, Glynn County, GA., ca. 1912. Courtesy of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.

Present day US 17 follows the old right-of-way for the Georgia Coast and Piedmont Railroad (GCP) Railway. Which wasn't completed into Brunswick until 1914. The old railway ended in Darien at the Darien River. Ophelia out for a Sunday drive to Darien would have had to take the ferry across the Darien River as in the photo pictured below. And after the railroad bridge was constructed in 1914, and the line terminated in Brunswick, Ophelia would have to load her car onto GCP flatcars to go to Darien. The GCP went bankrupt in 1919.



The car ferry at Darien ca. 1912. Courtesy Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.



Darien/Brunswick Car Ferry Train, ca 1914. Courtesy of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site.

Brunswick businessmen purchased the right-of-way and converted it to a 'shell road' in the early 1920's. The roadbed being nothing but crushed shells instead of gravel. US 17 was paved with asphalt in the early 1930's.

Long distance travel was more comfortable, safer, and reliable by train. However, Ophelia liked to travel "*by machine*" 4 if possible, for the adventure and independence of the open road was too alluring to pass up.

"we start [Friday] at 5 A.M. & motor up to Asheville 330 miles, up hill all the way & we are going to do it in one day!! Now don't you wish you were along!! She has a brand new Marmon & we made from Darien here over vile roads in 2 hrs. & 7 min. & barring all accidents we will get to Asheville in a day."

She was mad about cars and driving her letters peppered with references to automobiles.

"Audrey has a stunning Stutz with tremendous power, and I have learned to run it, and now I know the joy of having a powerful machine to control. I'll never be able to enjoy the Chevrolet again, when I go to deliver milk!!"

Hofwyl was a dairy operation that required a steady hand at its helm and reliable transportation to deliver the product. Miriam, wearing her customary black sweater and Ophelia awoke at 4:30 to supervise and help with milking the herd, though as Ophelia immodestly phrases it, she was better at milking than Miriam. The two hired men, Jerry Rutledge, and Pat Wilson "*came in at 3 A.M. in the mornin*" 7 to begin the day's two milking sessions. Rutledge lived in Petersville and Wilson "*lived in a little house [on Broadfield] where the visitor center is now.*" Joe Polite came in at 7:00 A.M. to help with the cleanup. Rutledge and Wilson left after the cleanup but returned at 2:00 P.M. for the days second milking. Between 6:30 and 7:00 A.M. processing of the milk commenced. The fresh milk slowly chilled in an icebox, then bottled, capped, and loaded for delivery. Ophelia went on her way to satisfy her customer's demands for milk—Monday through Saturday, Miriam made the delivery on Sunday. Each sister taking a sabbath as the day of rest.

But the freedom of the open road ...*driving a Dodge milk wagon in Georgia*
brought dangers from the twin perils of road hazards and other drivers.

"Well, my dear, I came fairly near being killed last week, as near as I ever want to be, anyway. I was coming into town with 67 gallons of milk & sailing smoothly along ... and I suddenly looked up to see a huge truck laden with gasoline bearing down on top of me absolutely on my side of the road! I was so amazed I couldn't believe my eyes and after one feeble squeak of the horn I made for the ditch. Well when the man did wake up he was so near me that altho' [sic] he swerved out with his front wheels, his back wheels caught me amid ships wrenched off the box with the 10 gal milk can on it, turned the entire 10 gals, on top of me, crushed in my back fender to kindling wood, knocked me into 2 mail boxes which completely tore off my running board on that side, & pretty well demolished that fender, too!!! Well my dear if you ever saw one frightened man, that was one!! He came back white-as-a sheet and trembling all over, for the last he had seen of me was being drowned in milk. He said he just simply couldn't account for it that he was miles away, and had seen and heard absolutely nothing. He was awfully sorry and awfully worried over it, and that always makes you feel better' so I

told him I would fix it up with the United Supply Co. and not to think anything more about it, which I did, & they were equally nice, & told me to go right ahead & have everything fixed which I did, & so tomorrow I get new fenders, running board & top, & the little Dodge won't know itself! ! Except for my milk bath I was absolutely untouched but I notice now I instinctively give every car coming a mighty wide berth.

One day in late May 1934 Ophelia drove north from Brunswick towards Hofwyl on Route 17 when a speeding logging truck overtook her:

I had meant to write ages ago, but then I'm a hero now, and heros can be pardoned! Well it is just like this; Coming from town Monday A.M. a great logging truck attempted to pass me on the curve by the Parsonage when a shrimp truck was coming in the opposite direction. His front wheels [logging truck] got by, but his rear gave me a frightful side swipe and sent me flying off the road on 2 wheels when I hit a telegraph pole which righted me pm 4 wheels & I ploughed on about 30 ft. until a stump stopped me. Both Muffet & I were absolutely untouched but the whole back of the car was demolished, fenders off, top off, side off, and 26 whole bottles left inside! The devils never stopped, and finally I caught a ride in another truck and got up with them between New Hope and us. There were 4 men (2 drunk) and they swore they never touched me. By that time I was fighting mad, sent the truck on to tell M.D. [Miriam] & proceed to Darien for the police, whipped out my pistol and held them up, first taking the key out of their car. Well to make a long story short, they finally got over their bravado and looked sheepish and the police arrived from Brunswick & we got back to the car & by that time the Chevrolet men had come upon the scene & M.D. went to town with the policemen, and my car, and the logging truck & the 4 men, & I came home at 11.30 all this having happened at 8.15 Then I was written up in the papers and have had editorials written and gotten letters from all sides.

Ophelia, a woman of small stature, she stood 5'2" and weighed no more than 110 pounds, but as was said of her, "She had the spirit of '76, if challenged she was ready to defend her homestead." The drunken loggers would have heartedly agreed!

It is said the automobile brought the doctor to bring us into the world and the undertaker to remove us. And so, it was with a beloved pet as a poignant 1936 letter to Arabella makes clear.

The Dent sisters had grown up around animals. The entire family had always cared for animals, cattle helped establish the dairy and enabled them to hold on to the property. But it was dogs that the sisters loved. Each dog was unique and lived out their lives loved and adored by the sisters. But Ophelia was especially fond of one dog named "Black Boy." Black Boy was a large German Shepard that accompanied Ophelia on her rounds.

"My coming back would have been less sad if George [Smith] had not met me to say that darling old Black Boy was dying and we were to hurry home. ... Evidently he had been bitten by a stray little dog who had come in, for he developed rabies Tuesday night. There was of course nothing to be done, but as he was so magnificently strong and healthy, they kept him so I could be with him at the last. The dear old boy was pathetically glad to see me as always, and as far as I could see except for his poor locked jaws was as beautiful as ever. He spent his last evening in front of the fire as usual and had his head on my foot most of the time, and I just couldn't believe it was going to be the last time. Next A.M. he was the first in the car and went to town with me, sitting up as he always did &

crowding me off the seat & getting out at his usual places & giving his pay and doing everything the same way. Dr. Ellis was kind and gentle, & the old darling sat in the car with his head in my hand and never knew!! It was a most wonderful way to go out I have ever known, and I couldn't have imagined it. We miss him terribly as you know, and poor little Muffet goes around looking for him every way. What a dog he was, and what a loyal grand friend all these years! ... Aren't they wonderful! There was Rags first, then Mint, then little Julep, and now darling old Black Boy!

Ophelia loved to drive—fast! During an oral history interview a friend commented that Ophelia would leave Hofwyl with only twenty minutes to get to St. Simons for an appointment, a trip normally requiring thirty to thirty-five minutes, and get there on time!

Ophelia drove until cataracts blurred her vision 'til she had to lose her mobility, her independence. As her sight deteriorated she began to experience difficulty in finding the driveway entrance at Hofwyl. The highway department erected a large post by the driveway to guide her home. Her sight got bad enough that she reluctantly decided to go to the hospital and have the cataracts removed. Rudolph Capers became her chauffeur. But one day as Rudolph was bringing her home to Hofwyl from an in-town appointment her old self reappeared. "Rudolph," she said. "Pull over. I want to drive!"