



Volume # 25

Fall 2025

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.

| Date | Program | Time |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|
| September 2025 | Plein Air Paintings to Hofwyl for exhibit | |
| September 27, 2025 | State Parks Day | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. |
| October 2025 | Fall Scavenger Hunt –Every day the park is open. | |
| October 3,10,17, and 24 | Legends and Ghost Tours | at 6:30 |
| October 18, 2025 | Ophelia’s Classic Car Show | 9 am –2 pm |
| December 5 &6, 20225 | Christmas at Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation | |

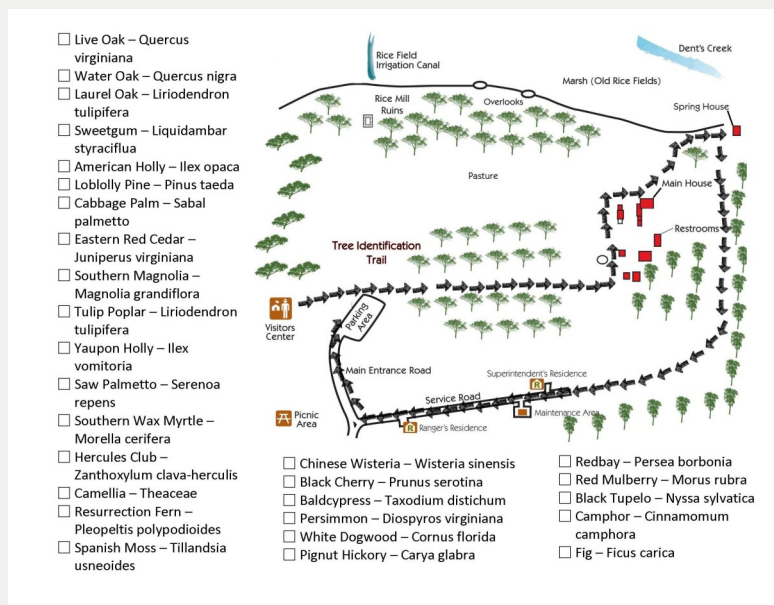


Turn Over A New Leaf

Get Outside

Take A Hike At Our State Historic Site

We even have a tree hike! The office will give you information about hiking. If you want to take the tree hike the staff will give you a map like the one in the illustration below.





GHOST and LEGENDS TOUR
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.

Reservations are required for the following scheduled tours: October 3, October 10, October 17, and October 24 at 6:30 p.m. 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: Bill Giles, site manager or the staff at Hofwyl-Broadfield Historic Site, 912-264-7333, bill.giles@dnr.ga.gov.

Visit the website: www.gastateparks.org/hofwylbroadfieldplantation

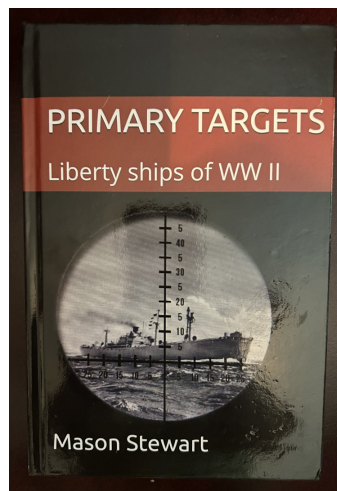
A Fun Family Activity Is



Coming for the Whole Month of October

A Fall Scavenger Hunt for all ages

It is easy, just come out to the Hofwyl-Broadfield office to register and get your map and clues to help you find the locations on the property with sights to see and fun things to try. When you finish, turn in your map to get a prize. The scavenger hunt is available anytime the park is open during the month of October 2025. We are looking forward to seeing you!



Mason Stewart is a past president of our Hofwyl-Broadfield Friends Chapter. We are very proud of his new book, recently published, focusing on WWII and the role that Brunswick, Georgia played in the production of Liberty Ships.

PRIMARY TARGETS is the true story of a proud but almost forgotten American ship of war. She was not one of the famous heavily armed capital ships of World War II fame, whose familiar names are immortalized in U.S. Naval combat history. Instead, she was a lightly armed merchant vessel with no identifying name or number painted on her dull grey hull. Rarely staying long in any port, she made repeated ocean crossings through dangerous waters delivering critical war supplies to waiting allied troops on foreign shores. Managing to survive just 339 days, she spent most of her brief life being hunted day and night by prowling wolf-packs of German U-boats. She was the United States liberty ship, *SS William B. Woods*.

Though this book details one ship's war time journeys through dangerous seas, it is also the story of the patriotic workers in the small Georgia town who built her, the brave crew who sailed her, and the grim determination of those who eventually sank her.

However, in a larger sense, this book is also the story of over 3,000 similar sister ships and the unheralded valor of their largely nameless crews; crews who bravely sailed in heavily loaded ships with paper thin hulls that could barely stop small arms fire; crews who participated in the longest and, in terms of human life, one of the costliest military campaigns of the Second World War.

This ship's story begins on the bright sunlit morning of April 7th, 1943, with the crash of a bottle of champagne smashed against her bunting-draped bow. A huge crowd cheered as the *SS William B. Woods* slowly slid--stern first--into gleaming waters of Oglethorpe Bay in Brunswick, Georgia. It ends in the fading light of the afternoon of March 10th, 1944, with the crash of a torpedo slamming into her port side. Her 426 survivors stared in silent horror as the *SS William B. Woods* slowly sank--stern first--into the dark waters of the Palermo Basin off the coast of Sicily.



Article by Patty Mallicote

Photo by Ron Hlozansky

The Franklin Camellia, or *Franklinia alatamaha**, distinctive cultivar of *Camellia japonica*, is a floral gem with deep roots in southern horticultural history. Naturalist William Bartram named this species to honor Benjamin Franklin, a good friend of his father, the early American botanist John Bartram.

In 1765 John Bartram discovered the flower on the banks of the Altamaha River. The species has never again been seen in the wild and all existing plants are descended from the cutting collected by William Bartram. This camellia reflects both natural beauty and cultural heritage. Renowned for its large cream-colored blossoms and golden yellow stamens, its petals stand out beautifully against dark green, glossy foliage. The Franklin Camellia flourishes in the filtered light of mature live oaks. Blooming in late summer, its symmetrical petals and glossy evergreen foliage make it a prized ornamental in Southern gardens. The leaves turn scarlet and crimson for fall color. The plant's resilience to coastal conditions—heat, humidity, and periodic salt exposure—further enhances its value to landscape designers and collectors in coastal areas.

While the plantation is most noted for its rice-growing past, its camellia collection, cultivated by multiple generations, reveals a quieter legacy of botanical stewardship. Independent and strong-willed Miriam Dent, one of the fifth generation of Hofwyl-Broadfield Dents, loved and nurtured camellias having 70 trees on the property.

Today, the Franklin Camellia can be found in homes and arboretums around the country. Locally there is one in downtown Brunswick at the UGA Marine Extension Office on Bay Street. Plant enthusiasts continue to be interested in heirloom varieties as their enduring presence connects past and present. With its graceful form and historical roots, the Franklin Camellia is more than a garden favorite—it is a legacy in bloom.

*Spelling from *The Franklin Tree*, Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University.

References:

Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites — Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation
American Camellia Society (americancamellias.com)
The Franklin Tree, Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University,

13th ANNUAL OPHELLIA's CLASSIC CAR CHALLENGE

The 13th Annual “Ophelia’s Classic Car Challenge” is presented by the Friends of Hofwyl-Broadfield, and the Classic Coasters at the plantation’s historic site. Come out on Saturday, October 18, from 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Classic cars from all over southeast Georgia will be vying for the championship in Hofwyl’s annual car show. Come view the cars and vote for your favorite. Awards will be presented to the: Most Original, People’s Choice, and 1st-5th Places. All types of vehicles are welcomed. Vehicle entry fee is \$20 which includes park fee and lunch. General Admission tickets are: adults \$8, students \$5. This particular car challenge showcases the preserved 1970 Oldsmobile Cutlass, owned by Ophelia Dent, the former owner of Hofwyl-Broadfield.



Photo by Troup Nightingale

Birding Bootcamp

by Andrea Deck

Birding Bootcamp was offered by The Department of Natural Resources, these bootcamps were held in several different regions. I had the opportunity to join in on the coastal birding bootcamp that was held on May 8th and 9th 2025; led by Todd Schneider a wildlife biologist with wildlife resources division of the DNR. There were 11 attendees of the training, most of which worked for DNR as well. This was a fun and educational experience.

During the two-day bootcamp we went to 4 different locations, all of which were great for birding and beautiful. The first day we started at 7am at Altamaha Wild Life Management just down the road from Hofwyl. This site is a wetland habitat and is used as a waterfowl management area where many birds rest, eat and nest. We spotted the first bird from the parking area right off highway 17, this bird was an Osprey, and she was nesting on one of several nesting platforms erected for this species at the site. Ospreys are a common species seen along the coast and around pretty much any body of water in this region. They are a raptor species and feed mostly on fish. As we stood and watched the momma Osprey at her nest we spotted another circling, the male! Her mate! He was bringing a fish for her to eat and feed their young, this was exciting to see. We set out to find more birds on the site and immediately saw several Black-Bellied Whistling Ducks fly over, calling with their high-pitched whistling call. We saw these adorable ducks all over this site.

One bird that we spotted that I'd never seen before was the American Purple Gallinule. Gallinules are a Rail species that reside in freshwater habitats where they eat aquatic vegetation, insects, amphibians, fish and even eggs from other birds. These beautifully colored birds can be found in the Southeast U.S., Mexico, central and south America, Caribbean and have been seen as far as Iceland, Switzerland, the Galapagos islands, and south Africa!



The next stop was Goulds Inlet on St. Simons Island, there we saw your typical shore birds such as Brown Pelicans, gulls, terns, skimmers, Ruddy Turnstones and sanderlings. All of which were out on the sand bar far away from beach goers. We were able to view them using a scope, very handy. A family of birds that stood out to me was the Plovers; we spotted three species of plover on the beach, the killdeer, Piping plover and Wilsons plover. The Wilsons plover stood out the most to me because of the previous work I did on Jekyll Island, I saw the threats this species endures firsthand. Plover species are a ground nesting species, typically nesting in sand dunes or rocky areas; this puts their eggs in great risk unfortunately. Their biggest threat is humans, tourists going into dunes and other typically protected habitats and/or allowing dogs to go into these habitats, beachfront development, shrinking shorelines, loss and degradation of habitats, all causing nest failures. These birds are listed as threatened in Georgia and as threatened or endangered in many other states with only 22,000 estimated global breeding populations.



Next stop was Buffalo Swamp tract WMA; this was a forested area mostly but there was a beautiful swamp as well. We saw and heard a lot of songbirds here such as Northern Parula (warbler), Summer Tanager, Brown Headed Nuthatch, Red Eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse and Kentucky Warbler. Woodpeckers were prominent here as well; we saw both the Pileated Woodpecker and the Downey Woodpecker. We had a really cool experience with a few Barred owls in the swampy area at this location, Todd has seen one the evening before in that spot so he figured he'd give it a

shot and see if he could call one using a recording of their calls. Boy did it work! It took a few tries, but we could hear them responding in the distance then we had a large barred owl rush in and land on a limb right above us, the owl was very curious of us and watched us for about 10 minutes. At that point all the calls had attracted several other owls all around us, and a little bit later another Barred Owl came in to see what all the fuss was about, this one stayed, watching us for much longer than the first owl. It was a really cool experience, especially for the Raptor lovers like me. Barred Owls are territorial birds and they don't like when a new bird comes in, they thought the call Todd was playing was a new bird. They recognize the calls of the neighboring Owls near their territory. Their call sounds like "who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?" Very common to hear day and night in this area, as they are a diurnal species, meaning they will come out during the day. These birds were originally only in the east half of the United States but they have made their way west, and north. Now they can be seen in Canada, the Pacific Northwest and California.



[Adult Barred Owl]

The last stop on our birding boot camp journey was Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Townsend, Ga. This was a beautiful location where many bird species nest, known as a rookery. Here we saw hundreds of Wood Storks nesting in the trees above the lake, the birds mates continuously flew in with more nesting material. There were also nesting Anhinga, Double Crested Cormorant, Rosette Spoonbills and several different species of Heron. Lurking below in the water was a 7 foot female American Alligator, likely waiting for a bird to fall into the water, she had several babies in a nursery near the edge of the lake, typically only leaving them for a short time to hunt for herself, then she will go back and watch over her babies. We were lucky enough to be able to watch an anhinga fishing, Anhinga are a diving fishing bird, they dive under water and spear fish with their beak, these birds do not have an uropygial gland (oil gland) to preen their feathers to water proof them, this allows them to be able to dive under the water and stay under for long periods of time, they then have to perch and spread their wings to dry off to be able to fly.





Join us for Christmas at Howfyl-Broadfield Plantation

December 5th and 6th 6:00 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth, 6-17, Children 5 and under free

Visitors will walk through centuries old live oaks and be invited to tour the 1850's plantation house specially 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 hot Wassail (a spiced Christmas punch). Join us for a Historic Holiday at Howfyl-Broadfield.