

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

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Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel B. Heimovics, *Managing Editor*

Eric L. Goldstein, *Book Review Editor*

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A Prussian-born Jewish Woman on the  
Florida Frontier: Excerpts from the  
Memoir of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski

by

Canter Brown, Jr.

On July 10, 1944, Bertha Zadek Dzialynski relaxed on the sun porch of her cottage in Neptune Beach, Florida, during a birthday celebration. So engaged, she pondered a serious personal question: "What does one do at eighty, I ask myself, one who has led an active life, who is still active?" Bertha added, "The thought troubles me." Nearby, daughter Ruth Hope Leon heard the question spoken aloud and responded: "Do? Why, Mamma, one writes a book." Bertha recorded what then occurred. "I laugh, but a friend interrupts eagerly," she wrote. "You must write a book. It is said that one book is possible to every person and your experiences would make several. Today you must begin."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately for those interested in the history of southern Jewry, of the experiences of women, or of the saga of rugged frontier Florida in the late nineteenth century, Bertha Dzialynski (pronounced, Duh-LIN-ski) eagerly accepted the challenge. Eventually she produced a typed, double-spaced manuscript of nearly two hundred pages that related the details of a truly fascinating life; one lived in the face of tragedies of disastrous proportions as well as one sparkling with happiness, delight, and satisfaction. She recreated, as well, word pictures of times and places otherwise remote from our attention. Yet, in their telling, they resonate to the present day with insight and enduring meaning.

The product of Bertha Zadek Dzialynski's efforts in 1944 thus comes to us as an achievement of large proportions. The historian

Mark I. Greenberg, among others, has touched on the difficulties involved in opening up such a life and in understanding the impact of southern Jewish women generally during the nineteenth century. "Despite cultural obstacles in both Jewish and southern culture to their full equality, women empowered themselves by working within and at times stretching the boundaries of accepted gender roles," Greenberg observed. "By negotiating their dual identities as Jews and women, they sought to overcome limitations in Jewish and southern culture and to find avenues for advancement," he continued. As Greenberg discerned from his examination of Savannah, Georgia, "The history of . . . Jewish women speaks to the boundaries southern and Jewish culture set on gender norms, to women's ability to draw from past experience and present circumstance in order to alter these roles, and to the importance ethnic heritage played in women's evolving private and public lives."<sup>2</sup>

Bertha Dzialynski's written voice speaks vividly to the complexities inherent in determining those boundaries, assessing those abilities, and finding strength in that ethnic heritage. Here is a human example of an individual struggling to survive and thrive in a new and foreign culture, an example that puts flesh and blood on the skeleton of statistics and generalizations that often is all that is provided. She and those around her deal by the handful with cultural, religious, ethnic, and otherwise personal quandaries without clear solution and do so in the more-or-less practical and understandable ways that permitted life to proceed, sometimes sadly and sometimes happily, on a day-to-day basis. Oversimplification goes by the board. As a woman Bertha might boldly confront the men in her life one moment, while docilely and meekly accommodating them the next. On occasion she simply preferred escape. Always the same individual, she still finds words to express the multiple aspects of a life filled with boundaries but also with contradiction and uncertainty.

A note of caution should be sounded regarding Bertha's voice in relating these details of and insights about her life. Having lived eight decades by the 1940s, she necessarily wrote within the context of recent years even if she intended to tell the story of

*Bertha Zadek Dzialynski seated with her daughters  
At the time of this picture, Ida Clare, on the left,  
was married to William Coleman, and  
Ruth Hope was married to David A. Leon.  
(Photo courtesy of Carol Coleman Weil)*

earlier times. Society had changed markedly during that period, with women's roles especially coming in for revision and expansion. Might she intentionally or otherwise have written to fulfill the image of herself that she held in 1944, as opposed to the reality of the 1880s? The answer to that question remains unclear and, in any event, almost certainly ranges somewhere between yes and no. As the reader will discover, the facts as she recalled them generally proved to be so accurate as to suggest that she wrote with the benefit of a contemporary journal and, possibly, a collection of newspaper clippings. The tone, however, came from within her.

Whatever cultures circumscribed women's lives, nineteenth-century reminiscences from individuals of modest means remain hard to find, especially so for Florida. "The physical and social challenges of nineteenth-century Florida exacted a heavy toll on many pioneers," historians Raymond Arsenault and Gary R. Mormino recently noted in an introduction to a collection of one woman's letters. They then observed of the work's subject, "Florida emboldened her." Yet, in good part our understanding of the reality of such a life eludes us from lack of first-hand insight and description. Bertha Dzialynski's memoir, without doubt, will aid in filling that void.<sup>3</sup>

The void appears even greater regarding Florida's Jewish pioneers. The history of Jewish involvement in the state may run rich and deep, but, for the most part, it has not been set down in print. Several excellent works do help to lay a foundation for understanding, but they are few. Henry Alan Green and Marcia Kerstein Zerivitz's *Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida*, for instance, offers the only general overview of the subject. An excellent work, it nonetheless aims only to provide contextual material for appreciation of a broadly conceived and popular museum exhibit. A reminiscence by Max White, a mobile businessman, covers four years of the nineteenth century at Tampa and Key West.<sup>4</sup>

Given that so little material on Florida's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish residents can be accessed easily, if at all, the Dzialynski memoir offers the promise of a meaningful step forward. It permits us, as was alluded to earlier, to immerse ourselves in the rarely glimpsed reality of a Jewish



woman's personal and private life within a still mostly rural and southern state at a time when the foundations of modern society had begun to settle. It details the hows and whys of day-to-day acceptance of a generally Protestant Christian world by a woman and a family deeply connected to Jewish roots. It, therefore, speaks to acculturation and to the preservation and appreciation of heritage and religious devotion. Life's complexities distilled to human experiences are laid bare, as witnessed and filtered by an articulate Jewish woman of intelligence and education.

Note should be taken that, when cross-connections possible between acculturation and deep commitment to Jewish faith and heritage are considered, the Dzialynski family stood out. Bertha's father-in-law, Philip, prided himself as a Hebrew scholar and attempted to bring Jewish culture and religious practice to those around him wherever he lived. He had helped to lead Savannah's Congregation B'nai B'rith Jacob and to organize the city's Hebrew Collegiate Institute.<sup>5</sup> His brother, Morris, played a similar role in the affairs of Jacksonville's Ahavath Chesed synagogue. Philip missed its dedication in 1882 due to pressing business affairs but made his way there as soon as possible thereafter. He also traveled the state of Florida time and again to conduct observances, such as for Yom Kippur. Still, Philip and his relations relished Christmas celebrations and thought nothing of contributing to the construction of a local Methodist church.<sup>6</sup>

#### *About Bertha Zadek Dzialynski*

Bertha Zadek's life began in Newstadt, in what was about to become Germany, on July 10, 1864. She remembered the place as "a village in the section which once belonged to Poland but which in one of the partitions of that unhappy country in the late eighteenth century had fallen to Prussia." Concerning the town she added, "It was about four hours by train from Posen." Her parents, David Zadek and Caroline Braun Zadek, died when she was a child, and she came under the care of her aunt, Ernestine Braun, who saw to her education. The young woman eventually graduated from Marinen Seminary, by which time Ernestine and other family members had arranged for Bertha to join another aunt,

Pauline Braun (Bertha always called her “Tante”),<sup>7</sup> and her family in Gainesville, Florida. She undertook the journey in 1880.<sup>8</sup>

In Florida, Bertha found a warm family welcome and, very quickly, love and marriage. In Gainesville, her Aunt Pauline’s husband, Tobias Brown (formerly Braun), prospered, and the couple made a happy home for their children, Benjamin, Max, Bertha, Tillie, and Joseph, as well as their newly arrived relation from Germany.<sup>9</sup> They also welcomed friends and, in October 1880, included young Jennie Dzialynski Herzog<sup>10</sup> and her daughter, Ida, within the household. The Dzialynskis ranked as one of the state’s premier Jewish families, with Jennie’s uncle, Morris Dzialynski,<sup>11</sup> a Duval County Democratic party leader, on the verge of election as Jacksonville’s mayor. Jennie’s father, Philip Dzialynski,<sup>12</sup> and his family then lived deep in the peninsula at Fort Meade. He, too, had earned respect for civic, business, and political accomplishments. Jennie understandably praised her brother George<sup>13</sup> to Bertha. “He was,” Bertha recalled, “perhaps the greatest catch in south Florida.” Although the young woman shied away from commitment at so young an age, on May 7, 1882, the couple wed in Gainesville. Following a brief honeymoon, they set up house-keeping in Fort Meade and remained there for most of the next decade.<sup>14</sup>

### *Historical Setting*

The excerpts that follow, constituting about one-fifth of Bertha’s memoir, survey the lives of Bertha and George Dzialynski and their friends and loved ones at Fort Meade, Florida, from 1882 to 1890. This period marked a time of remarkable change for peninsular Florida. Still remote and sparsely populated in 1880, the region was transformed at mid-decade, thanks to railroads built by mogul Henry Bradley Plant. The population of Polk County, in which Fort Meade lay, accordingly jumped from 3,181 in 1880 to 6,575 in 1885, 7,905 by 1890, and 12,472 by century’s end.<sup>15</sup>

Fort Meade likewise saw change, albeit not necessarily typical of neighboring towns. What one man in the 1870s called “an old settled place,” it sat on the western bank of the Peace River about fifty miles east-southeast of Tampa. Fort Meade traced its

*Fort Meade's Main Street business district in the early 1890s  
(From the collection of George McClelland,  
photo courtesy of Canter Brown, Jr.)*

origins to the 1849 establishment of a United States Army post at the river's principal crossing, one anchoring a military road that ran from Tampa on the Gulf to Fort Pierce on the Atlantic. Destroyed for the most part by locally raised Union forces during the Civil War, the town revived in the postwar years to emerge as the center of Florida's cattle kingdom and an important site for citrus cultivation. It existed thereafter almost as a well-to-do oasis on the frontier, offering excellent business prospects to merchants and entrepreneurs such as Philip and George Dzialynski. Beginning in the mid-1880s those prospects grew when numerous affluent English families adopted the town as their winter home. Fox hunts, cricket matches, jockey club races, and lawn tennis eventually competed with cattle drives, hunting, fishing, and boating for local attention.<sup>16</sup>

The Dzialynski family's involvement with Fort Meade and the southwest Florida frontier extended well over a decade when Bertha arrived in 1882. A cattle business boom growing in intensity by the late 1860s had drawn several merchants to the vicinity,

including the county seat of Bartow, ten miles to the north. Cattleman Julius C. Rockner<sup>17</sup> had been a partner in several stores with Philip Dzialynski's brother-in-law Jacob R. Cohen,<sup>18</sup> a merchant formerly of Savannah and operating at Palatka on the St. Johns River in northeast Florida. Philip took charge of the Bartow outlet. He and his family remained at that village until 1874, when they relocated to Orlando. After that community's economy stagnated in 1876, he retraced his steps to Polk, where he purchased Rockner's Fort Meade store. Other than a brief sojourn in Tampa during 1880-1881, the Dzialynskis stayed in Fort Meade, where they remained when son George brought his new wife Bertha to live with them.<sup>19</sup>

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*Bertha Zadek Dzialynski's Memoir  
Fort Meade, 1882-1890*<sup>20</sup>

Our stay in Jacksonville having ended we started to our Ft. Meade home by way of the St. Johns River and Gainesville. Those who have not taken the boat trip from Jacksonville to Sanford have missed a great deal. The beautiful St. Johns, broadening out from time to time in a series of seemingly endless lakes, then narrowing down so that the large trees and tangled undergrowth on the banks, with their hundreds of mockingbirds, seem almost to close and unite their forces across the river channel, keeps one in a continuous state of surprise and expectancy. I have seen the Rhine of song and story, but except for the history associated with it and its ruined castles and interesting terraced banks, it does not compare in beauty with the St. Johns, that long winding stream the source of which is so difficult to locate and which on a map seems to be flowing up-hill.

We spent a day each at Palatka and Sanford and drove through the citrus groves, all in full bloom with some of the previous year's fruit peeping out beneath blossom and leaf. I had never before seen a grove and I was enchanted. And to think that my new home at Ft. Meade was set in the midst of such beauty! I could scarcely wait to get there.

*George Dzialynski*

*(From Perry Coleman, Jacksonville, photo courtesy of Canter Brown, Jr.)*

We left the river at Palatka and traveled by rail to Gainesville where I packed my clothes and said goodbye. Tante cried and so did I. Our boat at Cedar Keys was in charge of Captain McKay<sup>21</sup> whom George had known for a number of years. Learning that we were bride and groom he invited us to be his guests and occupy his stateroom. Unfortunately I was seasick all the way. In Tampa we spent the night at the Collins House, the only hotel in town, where Ben, George's faithful negro man, was waiting us with a

comfortable carriage. We drove through Plant city,<sup>22</sup> stopped at Lakeland<sup>23</sup> for luncheon, arrived at Ft. Meade about sundown, and went straight to our cottage. Father's family had not yet returned from their visit to New York.

The sight of our home in its rural setting, so thrilled me that I forgot the fatigue and discomforts of the trip. It was a low, rambling house with a wing on each side, surrounded with orange, grapefruit, and lemon trees, all in full bloom. I had never seen anything so wonderfully beautiful! The private road to the house was nicely kept and in front of the house was the large garden of flowers which George had tended so carefully, now in full bloom. Beyond the house, in the rear, was a field of growing corn. Those who have not seen south Florida homes in their semi-tropical settings cannot picture what it was like. It was so attractive, so restful, so idyllic, that I almost wept. Here at last was home, my and George's home! I was a long ways from relatives in Germany. I was really a long ways from my relatives in Gainesville, considering the difficulty of travel between the two places, but I was satisfied, happy.

The next day Charlie Wilson,<sup>24</sup> George's best friend, came bearing a huge wedding cake and a bottle of wine. Ben prepared an excellent dinner which we invited Charlie to share. After dinner many of George's friends called and we served as refreshments Charlie's cake and wine, to which we added the few bottles of champagne left over from the case sent to us for our wedding. One bottle I saved for sentimental reasons but it was broken when our house burned in Jacksonville in 1901.<sup>25</sup>

George and I settled down to the quiet routine of life in a citrus grove and each of us loved it. He worked in the flower garden each morning while Ben and I prepared breakfast, and then with his lunch, which he carried from home, while his father's family was away, he left for his business in Ft. Meade.<sup>26</sup>

Mrs. Roberson<sup>27</sup> proved to be all George had assured me she would be. From her I learned much in the matter of housekeeping and from her I purchased my vegetables and poultry, going over to her house daily to select the vegetables that they might always be fresh. Ben knew what dishes George liked best and our meals

were nice and appetizing. Ben kept the house in perfect order and I filled the vases each day with fresh flowers. Minnie Roberson<sup>28</sup> lived with her brother<sup>29</sup> and his wife<sup>30</sup> and spent much of her time with me, so that with my household duties and Minnie as a frequent companion I was never lonely as I might otherwise have been during those first months in my new home.

In the autumn my father-in-law's family returned bringing George and me numerous gifts from New York. I now had the opportunity really to become acquainted with them. Fannie<sup>31</sup> was three years younger than I, but we became warm friends and she spent much of her time with me. I loved George's father very dearly and felt very happy to know that he was held in high esteem in the community. Many of the natives named their children for him and he was godfather to them and many others. Whenever anyone stood in need of advice or financial assistance he appealed to "Uncle Philip" and was never refused.

In the period in which Philip grew up it was fashionable for young men to write love sonnets to their lady-loves and the man who could not do this acceptably was considered beyond the pale. For years one of our most treasured possessions was the love sonnets which Philip had written to George's mother before they were married and which George had bound into a beautiful volume. It was destroyed in the great fire in Jacksonville.

Philip loved company and his home in Ft. Meade often resembled a hotel.<sup>32</sup> There were always several guests to midday dinner or for the weekend. Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise, for in addition to Philip's open-handed hospitality and love of people, he was the political boss of that end of Polk County.<sup>33</sup> Among his guests were William D. Bloxham,<sup>34</sup> who was at the time Governor of Florida, the first Democrat to be elected after Reconstruction<sup>35</sup>; H. L. Mitchell, who was later elected to that office<sup>36</sup>; Father Peterman<sup>37</sup> of Tampa; Mr. Henderson of Tampa, his former partner<sup>38</sup>; and Ziba King,<sup>39</sup> the "cattle king" of south Florida. Philip provided his guests with saddle horses for day-time pleasure and in the evening they played cards or talked. Governor Bloxham was an especially good judge and lover of horses and when he was inaugurated on January 4, 1881, George

*Philip Dzialynski*

*(Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach)*

rode a splendid horse to Tallahassee for the event and presented it to him, with its handsome saddle and bridle.

My mother-in-law was an excellent hostess in a quiet, dignified way, and with her large, comfortable home and staff of well trained servants, entertainment was more or less easy for her. She was a brilliant and cultured woman and a student of national and international affairs, but I was always somewhat afraid of her austerity.

Ft. Meade was as I have said a frontier town. It is on Peace River [ten] miles south of Bartow and had been established as a military post in the Second Seminole War and named for the general of Gettysburg fame.<sup>40</sup> In 1851 Stonewall Jackson was for a time stationed there.<sup>41</sup> The Dzialynski development made it boom and it became an important trading post. Alligator skins



were one of the articles of commerce and in 1881 a trapper of the community contracted to supply 5000 skins to a Paris leather firm.<sup>42</sup>

At the time I went there to live the houses were widely scattered and only Main Street was named. The town had previously had a great deal of lawlessness. Philip Dzialynski's friends delighted to tell the story of why in their judgment he moved to this town. One day Captain John T. Leslie,<sup>43</sup> an ex-Confederate soldier and political boss of Hillsborough County, got into a quarrel over politics with a customer in Philip's store in Tampa and shot him dead. Leslie was freed by a jury whereupon, the story went, Philip said that Tampa, with its lawlessness, was no place for him, so he moved to Ft. Meade where there was no law at all!<sup>44</sup> However, except for trouble with cattle rustlers, Ft. Meade was a quiet and orderly place when we lived there and no one ever locked his doors. Cattle rustlers were dealt with very promptly by enraged citizens. One day, right in front of our home, Mr. Rockner and Ben Willoughby had some trouble over cattle and Rockner was shot dead from his horse. Willoughby, however, was punished, being sent to the penitentiary for life.<sup>45</sup>

Some of our neighbors in and around Ft. Meade were Frank Clark,<sup>46</sup> afterwards a Congressman; Dallas Tillis, sheriff<sup>47</sup>; Mr. Schnediker,<sup>48</sup> a retired Chicago capitalist; Cab Langford,<sup>49</sup> citrus grower and cattleman; Mr. Evans, who married Dr. Weems' widow<sup>50</sup>; Charlie Wilson and his brother Tom,<sup>51</sup> lawyers, and their several brothers.

There were two churches in the town, Methodist and Episcopal. The latter had a large congregation because of the many English families in the community. Camp meetings were frequently held near by. . . .

One day George sent word from town for me to get Minnie Roberson to help me bake a nice cake as he was coming home to luncheon and bringing company. I was quite excited, feeling that the company might be some of my Gainesville relatives. We prepared a nice meal and at noon George came in with six Indians, three braves and three squaws.<sup>52</sup> I had never seen an Indian before and I was frightened. George was amused and assured me that

they were civilized and harmless. I brought in the cake and passed it, but, as was their custom, they refused to eat until George and I had taken some, lest it be poisoned. They ate the whole cake and when they left presented me with a string of beads.

Indians were good customers at the store. They usually came in once a month when the moon was full and brought alligator skins to be shipped to France and made into traveling bags, belts, slippers, and pocketbooks. In exchange for skins they received groceries and dry goods. Sometimes they asked for credit and the debt was always paid at the time they promised.

*The Dzialynski Family Expands*

George and I were very happy when we learned that we were to have a baby. He told me to make a list of everything I would need and he would place an order with those for the store. Mrs. Roberson offered to order patterns for the baby clothes for of course it was impossible at that time to buy them ready made. My mother-in-law was most kind and asked to come frequently to her home to spend the day so that I need not be alone so much. I spent many happy hours at her home.

When the orders at the store had been filled George brought home a large package containing yards and yards of dainty handkerchief linen, beautiful embroidery, and laces. At that time babies were dressed in long petticoats and somewhat shorter dresses, with rows and rows of tucks, insertion, and edge of each garment, the shorter top dress making it possible for the trimming on the petticoat to be displayed. Mrs. Roberson and I set to work. She did the stitching, I the handwork, for by this time I had learned to embroider, do beautiful drawn work, and crochet. Soon we had stacks of dainty garments.

This was perhaps the happiest period of my life. I had had lessons in painting in Germany but had not cared very much for it. Now I took lessons from an English woman and painted several landscapes, flowers, etc., but my pictures were destroyed in the Jacksonville fire. I painted also china, plaques, lambrquins,<sup>53</sup> and scarfs, which was at the time the popular thing for women of leisure to do.

I became very proud of my needlework, drawn work, and lace making, and resolved that if I should ever have any daughters some of my handwork should go into their trousseaus. It did. . . .

One day at Fort Meade at an unexpected hour George came in with Charlie Wilson. George had told him we were expecting a baby and Charlie insisted upon coming at once to offer his congratulations and himself as godfather. I told him I was planning to go to my aunt in Gainesville for confinement as I did not trust the young doctor in Fort Meade.<sup>54</sup> Charlie tried to dissuade me, saying that it would be perfectly safe to remain in Ft. Meade. He laughingly said that no one died in Ft. Meade and repeated the tall tale that a few years previously his grandfather had given a few acres of land to the town for a cemetery but as no one died they had to kill a man to get the cemetery started.<sup>55</sup> Charlie remarked that a few of the local women had a popular midwife, whom he mentioned, to attend them in confinement. I was horrified at the thought and became quite upset over Charlie's insistence that I not go to Gainesville. Charlie then said that he was only teasing, and George assured me that I should go to my aunt if I preferred to do so.

George and I wanted to be together at this the first Christmas in our own home and the anniversary of our engagement so I put off my visit to my aunt until after the holidays. My going to Gainesville for my confinement was entirely my own plan, for although George had complete confidence in the Ft. Meade doctor, he wanted me to do as I liked.

We decorated our little home for the holidays and it looked very festive. George's family was having an all-day party the day before Christmas and a tree in the evening and wanted us there. At first I hesitated about going where there were to be so many guests, but they insisted. We had a jolly time. When the gifts were distributed the servants came into the parlor for theirs along with the others. The next night George was Santa Claus at the church. We had a very happy Christmas.

Charlie Wilson tried once more in a teasing, jovial manner, but which I now believe was serious, to persuade me to remain in

Ft. Meade for my confinement. When I again grew upset over the matter Charlie switched to a string of jokes to divert me. I have often wondered whether George had not asked Charlie to dissuade me from my plan and I have wished many times that he had succeeded.

It is strange how one remembers after so many years trivial events or jokes. I recall that on this occasion Charlie said George grew his finest fruit on an Indian cemetery! I appealed to George who said it was true. The cemetery had been plowed over and all traces of the graves lost before George purchased the land and it was now partly in the town. Nevertheless I told George never to bring me any fruit from that particular grove.

Charlie also teased George about a piece of land George had planted with trees and spent large sums of money on without any returns, since the soil was evidently not suited to growing citrus fruits. Charlie called the tract "Hard Bargain". . . . Years afterwards I visited Ft. Meade and asked Cab Langford to show me the old grove, "Hard Bargain". To my surprise the depot was in the center of it and the city had spread over the tract in all directions.

It was arranged that George should stay at his father's home while I was in Gainesville, but at the last minute he changed his mind and decided to sleep and have his breakfast in our home. He would eat dinner and supper at his father's home.

George went with me to Gainesville. We took the same route in reverse over which we had come to our home to begin life together: Overland to Tampa, by boat to Cedar Keys, by rail to Gainesville.<sup>56</sup> Our life together had been happy. Adjustments had not been difficult and time had passed all too fast. But now we were looking to a still happier life together, to the arrival of our first born, to fulfillment. George had been all that a bride could wish. No husband could have been more affectionate and considerate, and when he knew that a baby was expected his consideration and affection for me were intensified.

Tante was happy to see me and I took my place again in the family as though I had never been away. George could stay only a week, as he had to return to Ft. Meade to get his business in order that he might come back and be with me in my confinement. He

accompanied me to Dr. N. D. Phillips'<sup>57</sup> office where we were assured that my condition was in every way normal. George remained with me a day longer than he had planned in order to be present at the party at which my cousin Bertha announced her engagement.

Parting with George was much more difficult than I had anticipated and I was tempted to return home with him. Had he stayed another day I feel sure I would have done so. When his first letter came telling me how he missed me and showing his anxiety for me, I was completely upset and told Tante that I felt I had made a mistake in leaving my home. She comforted me as best she could by assuring me that I had chosen the safest course and that she and Dr. Phillips could give me better attention than I would have received in my home. My relatives were cheerful and affectionate and did everything possible to divert me.

My baby was expected February 27, 1883, but George came earlier and it was lucky for the baby arrived on the 17th, a handsome, healthy boy, weighing eight pounds. George was so proud of him and kept repeating fondly, "And to think, Dearest, that he is ours, yours and mine! I can scarcely wait to show him off in Ft. Meade!" We named the baby Douglas.

Unfortunately I could not nurse my baby and none of the formulas agreed with him. In that day doctors did not know how to prescribe for bottle-fed babies and he cried all the time, from sheer hunger. And then a terrible thing happened—he took whooping cough! My poor, half-starved baby lay in his crib with a burning fever, his little body wracked with pain. The days and nights were a nightmare to George and me, as we sat beside our first-born and watched his life ebb away. On April 5th he died. We buried him in Gainesville.

I blamed myself bitterly for having come to Gainesville, feeling that in our own home my baby would not have been exposed to the epidemic. Our return was very sad. George's father met us in Tampa and insisted upon my resting there a day before completing the journey. The family had a room ready for us in their home where they insisted on our staying, so that I should not be

left alone with my sorrow. We never returned to our cottage to live.

*Building a Home*

To divert me George hurried up plans for building our new home, which was to be across the street from his father's and more convenient to George's work than was our cottage in the citrus grove. The family was very kind to me and Fanny became my constant companion, giving up practically all her social engagements to cheer me up. She read to me or insisted upon my reading to her and devised new patterns in needlework which she urged upon me for making articles to be used in our new home. I shall never forget the kindness of this lovable family to me in my sorrow, nor George's tenderness and understanding.

George and I remained in his father's home until our house was completed, for when summer approached and plans were being made for the family's annual visit to South Carolina and New York I offered to assume the responsibility of the home and keep the children. Mr. Scott and Miss Jones, the teachers, would of course go away for their vacations not to return until September 1. Father and Mother Dzialynski were well pleased with the plan and so was George, since it enabled him to be in town all the time and oversee the building of our house.

Fanny and I planned picnics for the younger children and went fishing with them in Peace River. Every morning the children rode their ponies out in the country with Ben as a companion. In the evening we played games or they invited their friends in to dance for which George played the piano. The children thoroughly enjoyed the summer and had no regrets that they had missed the visit north.

Just before Father and Mother returned I had the fall cleaning done. All the curtains were cleaned and everything put in order. On the evening of their arrival I had fresh flowers in every room and a sumptuous supper prepared. The house looked very inviting and they were very grateful, Mother in particular since she so much disliked the semi-annual house cleanings. The next morning packages were opened and gifts distributed. It was very exciting.

*Advertisement for "The Dzialynski House" in Fort Meade  
from the 1883 book, Polk County, Florida: Its Lands and Products,  
by George W. Hendry, published by Ashmead Brothers, Jacksonville, 1883  
(Photo courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection,  
Florida State Library and Archives, Tallahassee)*

Shortly afterwards the teachers returned and school began. A few years later Miss Jones left us, having married Mr. Adams of Cincinnati, who was a traveling man selling buggies and surreys. Father's family provided her with trousseau and gave her a big wedding in their home.

Horseback riding was very popular in and around Ft. Meade and "catching rings" from a saddle was a popular sport. . . . All day "sings" were also popular. I never learned to ride horseback, so George bought me a phaeton, but one day when I was driving

alone the horse became frightened at a white and red silk embroidered shawl with long fringe which I was wearing and ran away with me. I was not hurt but I would never again drive alone.

George and I frequently took long drives in the country, which was very beautiful at all seasons of the year. Growing in the hammocks were large hardwood and pine trees and along the roads were masses of pink tar flowers. In the swampy places long, graceful cattails reared their heads above banks of feathery ferns. At that time the lovely blue iris and other water plants which today are such nuisances because they choke the drainage ditches had not made their appearance.

But again I have wandered from my subject.

Our house was now completed. Its setting was ideal, being in the center of a large square which was still an orange grove. Several trees had to be moved to make room for our flower garden. Our drugstore [eventually stood] on one corner of the square and in it Dr. Louis Oppenheimer had for several years an office while his brother served as prescription clerk. Dr. Oppenheimer [later] married a schoolteacher in the community and about this time moved to a larger practice in Tampa.<sup>58</sup>

Long before the house was completed I had engaged an English cook and gardener. I considered myself very fortunate for hired help was very scarce. Negroes did not come to Ft. Meade both because of their fear of the Indians and because the settlement was largely English and did not like colored help.<sup>59</sup> In emergencies, so scarce were servants, friends and neighbors helped each other out.

I recall an amusing incident which occurred when once I was without help. The negro woman I had brought from Gainesville had left and I attempted to scrub the kitchen floor. Knowing little about such work I threw buckets of water on the floor and was then unable to get it off or out. I looked up to find Mr. Roberson looking on and nearly doubled up with laughter at my efforts.<sup>60</sup> "Let me do it," he said, and rolling up his trousers he stepped in and scrubbed the floor nicely.



In 1882 the population of Ft. Meade was about 1200, probably three-fourths of them English.<sup>61</sup> During 1882 and 1883 there was great excitement about a railroad's coming to our town. Henry S. Plant was buying the various independent lines in the central peninsula and on the west coast and consolidating them into the Plant System. We could hardly wait for our little town to have rail connection with the outside world. And then, on February 13, 1884, the first train rolled into Tampa, the line being the narrow-gauge South Florida connecting Tampa with St. Johns River's passenger and freight traffic at Sanford. Two years later Ft. Meade, too, was on a railroad. I could thus visit my relatives rather easily by going by rail to Sanford, by boat to Palatka, and then by rail to Gainesville.

By 1885 or the following year the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad reached from Jacksonville to Sanford and the narrow-gauge from Sanford to Tampa was broadened. The line began at Savannah and was a part of the Plant System. . . . Plant purchased the Florida Southern connecting Fitzgerald and Bartow, and built from Bartow to Ft. Meade and Punta Gorda. He also built from Gainesville to Fitzgerald and so made a continuous road now known as the Atlantic Coast Line. . . .

The problem of furniture for our new home was fortunately very easily solved. Father was called to Jacksonville on business and there heard that Ike Solomon,<sup>62</sup> whose wife had just died, was anxious to dispose of his furniture which had been shipped from New York and never uncrated. Father saw the furniture, was pleased with it, and purchased it subject to our approval. It was really too nice for a country home, but we liked it. The living room suite was mahogany upholstered in rose brocade; the dining room suite was also in mahogany; the bedrooms were in walnut.

We were very proud of our home and to our first meal in it we invited Father's family and the three Robersons. Each one brought a gift for our new home. Father's gift was a large family Bible in leather binding with brass trimmings. In was inscribed in Father's beautiful writing, "To George and Bertha." It always lay on our living room table until the great fire in Jacksonville. At that time our little twelve-year old daughter Ruth carried this Bible

*Bertha Zadek Dzialynski*  
(Photo courtesy of Carol Coleman Weil)

out. It was the only thing saved from our Fort Meade home and is now in Ruth's proud possession.

It was during this season that I witnessed a unique form of mass entertainment. It was the custom of the Dzialynski groves when the shipping season was over to have a big celebration with a sugar boiling and "stir off" and refreshments free to all who came. People came from miles around. The cane was ground with a machine with a long pole to which was hitched a blindfolded horse. As the horse walked round and round it supplied the power which turned the wheels of the grinding machine. Each man from the groves received a large jug of syrup to take home.

During the month of December there were numerous heavy rains which kept George indoors. He spent much of his time at the piano while I sat near fashioning little garments for the baby we expected in the spring.

As Christmas approached—my second as a wife—I felt very sad. I recalled the previous Christmas when we were all at Father’s for the day and so jolly and care-free, and especially George and I, for we were expecting our first-born. I felt that I could not possibly take part in the festivities this year, remembering our dear little baby Douglas who had, in my mind, been sacrificed because of my bad judgment in going to Gainesville for my confinement. George thought to cheer me up and take my mind off such sad thoughts by giving me an interest—that of entertaining the folks in our home at Christmas instead of going to Father’s home. My English cook had already departed and it was for the time impossible to obtain another, but Minnie Roberson was staying with me and she attended to all the preparations, even making the fruit cakes and dressing two large turkeys. Such was the friendship among the people of that little town. Mrs. Wilson<sup>63</sup> sent the largest mince pie I have ever seen. George and Minnie trimmed the Christmas tree. The dinner was a great success and we felt very important to have entertained so many guests in our own little home.

The next evening Mother entertained in her home for her mother and brother from South Carolina. Lotto was a game very much in vogue and I recall we played until a very late hour.

#### *A Fearful Birth*

After the holidays George and I settled down to a quiet, everyday life. He worked in the garden in his spare time and soon it was lovely with a hedge around it and flowers everywhere. People walking along the street would often stop to admire it.

I was made very happy at this time by the news from Gainesville that my cousin Bertha and her husband, Herman Glogowski, were moving to Tampa.<sup>64</sup> At last some of my relatives would be near me, or at least much nearer than they were in Gainesville.

My baby was born on April 8, 1884, in our home in Ft. Meade. Dr. Oppenheimer had moved to Tampa and Dr. F. F. Thomas<sup>65</sup> attended me. We named her Ida Clare, Ida having been

the name of George's mother, and Clare, or Clara, the name of my own mother.

I was frightened when I saw the baby, fearing that I would never be able to rear her. She was merely skin and bones, weighed only five pounds, and her long, black hair made her look even more weird and pitiful. Today such a baby would be put into an incubator. Then we simply put her on a pillow. I was not able to nurse her and as with my first baby the formula given me by the doctor—melted milk and corn meal gruel—did not agree with her. She did not grow and she cried all the time. When the baby was two months old my cousin Bertha came to visit us and upon seeing the baby for the first time laughingly exclaimed, "What a rat!" I was deeply offended.

Two months later I took my undernourished baby with me for a visit to Bertha and Herman in Tampa where I consulted Dr. John P. Wall.<sup>66</sup> He could prescribe nothing more than that I massage her with cocoa butter. I carried out his instructions faithfully every day without any perceptible results.

Bertha was expecting her first baby and was on the point of leaving for Gainesville to be with her mother during her confinement. I decided to go with her and see whether Dr. Phillips could do anything for Clare. George was more than willing for we were all worried about the baby. We went by boat to Cedar Keys and by rail from that point. I was so seasick that Bertha had the entire care of the baby.

Shortly after we reached Gainesville Bertha's baby was born—a ten-pound boy, strong and lusty—and larger than my two-months-old Clare. When Herman saw his son he remarked that he looked like a prize-fighter. I wanted to get even with Bertha for having called Clare a rat, so I laughingly told her that her baby was ugly and entirely too large. They named him Nathaniel, but we called him "Natty" during his boyhood, and "Nat" after he grew up.

Clare did not improve under Dr. Phillips' treatment and I felt that she was slowly dying of starvation. Then Bertha's nurse had an inspiration. Bertha had more milk than her own baby needed and the nurse suggested that Clare be given a share. We doubted

that she would take the breast at her age, but we were mistaken. She nursed greedily and with the most evident satisfaction, after which she would smile up into Bertha's face as though to say, "At last I have found real food. Thank you for a good dinner." I was positively jealous of Bertha! For the first time since her birth Clare slept at night and I at last could relax and get some needed rest.

My baby grew rapidly and as her stomach became stronger she could digest the food I gave her. Nevertheless we stayed several weeks with Bertha that Clare might continue at the breast. I felt that Bertha really saved my baby's life. We had of course thought of a wet nurse for the baby, but it had been impossible to find one in Ft. Meade, just like it had been impossible to find a wet nurse in Gainesville for my baby Douglass.

I was a proud and happy mother when at last I started back to Ft. Meade. George met me in Tampa and his delight over the transformation of our baby was very gratifying. He loved the child devotedly and spoiled her badly. It was good to be home again and to be free of anxiety about the baby. She grew rapidly and became strikingly beautiful.

#### *Young Motherhood*

George continued to work in our garden. Near the dining room window he built a grape arbor and he screened the chicken yard from view by planting roses along its fence which soon became a mass of gorgeous color.

The town had no garbage service and we had to bury our left-overs. A neighbor suggested that we get a pig. We acted upon the suggestion at once and had the pen ready when it arrived. Our garbage problem was solved and the pig grew fat. In fact, it grew to such proportions that I was worried and asked Ben to look at it to see whether it was healthy. He laughed a great deal and then talked it over with George and Father. They agreed not to enlighten me. A few days later I found in the pen a litter of five small pigs. Everyone teased me about the increase in my pig family and about my naivete. One pig was enough, six decidedly too many, so we sold them and went into the garbage business again until we could find a male pig.

There were of course many inconveniences in living in our small town. The lack of ice was one of them. We had to send [ten] miles to Bartow for our ice and we never seemed to have enough for our purposes. But necessity is the mother of invention and we soon hit upon the plan of using a well in our yard to chill a half dozen watermelons at a time. Our drinking water came from a cistern. It was difficult also to get fresh meat, but we really did not miss it. We depended in large part on poultry and on the birds, wild ducks, turkeys and venison which George brought home from his frequent hunting trips.

Preserves and jellies could not be bought in stores and each family put up its own. Every Saturday during berry time Miss Jones took her pupils for a picnic in the woods where they gathered berries which Mother and I made into jam and jelly or put into sealed jars for pies.

Mother's mother had been quite an addition to our little circle during the several months of her visit at this time, but she was now returning to South Carolina and taking Fanny with her. There was a young German jeweler in Buford whom she admired very much and she had her heart set upon a match between him and Fanny. The old lady's plans materialized and the engagement of Fanny to Mr. [Myer] Greenfield was soon announced.<sup>67</sup>

Clare grew more beautiful all the time and more spoiled. Her father and grandfather in particular gratified her every wish. Even strangers walking or driving along the street and seeing her would exclaim on her beauty. She was petted and coddled by every one who came near her and she heard again and again remarks upon her beauty, her cuteness, her attractive clothes, her bright sayings. If I corrected her, George or Father sympathized with her and so destroyed whatever effect the discipline might otherwise have had. If she was denied anything, she wept and wailed and the coveted object was hers. As soon as she learned to talk she let us know emphatically what she did or did not want, what she would or would not do. I realized that this was a bad way in which to bring up a child, but I was powerless.

When she was two years old we were badly frightened by an accident which happened to her. She was sitting on the front

porch when my brother-in-law, Abe Dzialynski,<sup>68</sup> came along with a pet cat which he was teaching to perform tricks. To amuse Clare he had the cat jump through a hoop. The animal evidently became tired of the game and cross and it suddenly lighted on Clare's head, scratching and biting her badly. The child's screams and bloody head almost paralyzed me when at last I reached her. Abe was equally frightened. Fortunately the scratches healed and left no scars.

At four years of age Clare was the pride and joy of the household—and its tyrant as well. Just one month before her fourth birthday [March 1888] my second daughter was born, a big, strong, lovely baby, weighing eight pounds, and very good natured. We named her Ruth Hope, Ruth for my father-in-law's mother, and Hope for Hope Glenn, an opera singer whom George admired.

We naturally supposed that Clare would be delighted with a baby sister, but we were sadly mistaken. She resented the baby, refused even to look at it, and was impervious to the coaxing of her adored and adoring father. "I don't want that baby in the house," she told me, "and you must send it back." With that ultimatum she walked out of the house.

For two days I did not see her and then in reply to my inquiries the nurse told me that Clare had taken her clothes and toys and moved over to her grandfather's home, announcing that she did not intend to return as long as the baby remained. I was distressed by the situation, but George thought that if left to herself Clare would become homesick and return.

When I was able to be up I had her brought home. I shall never forget the look of determination on her face as she walked in. I took her on my lap and tried to make her understand what a little sister should mean to her. She maintained a stubborn silence until I finished and then she stated in her most arrogant manner just what she had previously maintained—that the baby had to go. I was exasperated and gave her a good spanking, with many more to follow, but neither spanking nor coaxing had the least effect. One day when my back was turned she tried to kill the baby with one of her toys.

We were reaping the harvest of our careless sowing in the matter of her upbringing. Told over and over that she was the most adorable and beautiful child in the world, given her own way about everything as her whims dictated, she felt herself mistress of a kingdom which she saw no reason to share with a sister. Her resentment and jealousy, which continued through the childhood of the two girls, changed after a while to indifference, which was almost equally distressing. Perhaps George and I were to blame in not preparing her more carefully for the baby's coming. Her attitude was a great trial and grief to me, and it made both herself and her little sister unhappy.

*Frozen Fortunes and Yellow Death*

Ft. Meade was happy and prosperous and Father Dzialynski spent money freely not only on lavish and, to my mind, indiscriminate hospitality but also in good deeds. He contributed generously to the unfortunate and gave financial aid to those who needed a new start in business undertakings. He did a large credit business, carrying numerous families through the year and receiving payment when the citrus crops or cattle were marketed. I was young and inexperienced, but I frequently spoke to George about the danger inherent in the situation. Once I timidly voiced my fears to Father. He patted me on the head and told me not to worry, saying that the groves were prosperous and new ones were coming on, the people were hardworking and honest, and Ft. Meade already an important citrus and cattle center. I was made ashamed of my childish fears.

Our section of the country was jubilant over the election of Grover Cleveland [as President of the United States] in November, 1884, and Ft. Meade and other small towns joined with Tampa for a big celebration on March 4th [1885] to mark the inauguration.<sup>69</sup> But with the festivities came a calamity to the whole of south Florida.<sup>70</sup> The weather turned cold, snow fell, and the thermometer dropped to 14. The unprecedented cold lasted three or four days, with disastrous results to citrus fruits. There were no storage facilities then as are now and thousands of bushels of fruit froze on the trees. Nor was that all, for the young trees,



of which the Dzialynski groves had many, were killed. There would be no crop next year.

What the freeze did to the Dzialynski interests may easily be imagined. Aside from the direct loss of their fruit and young trees, those to whom they had extended credit were either ruined or their accounts would have to be carried over another year. The stores of course lost customers and the livery stable business declined. It became necessary for George and Father to borrow money at ruinous interest rates. At first bewildered, Father soon rallied and looked forward hopefully to the future. Now trees were planted and our little town adjusted itself as best it could to the changed conditions.

The loss of two fruit crops was a terrible disaster, but the people could have weathered it had not another calamity come upon them for two successive years. In 1887 a yellow fever epidemic hit south Florida and although it did not touch Ft. Meade, its economic effects upon the town as upon south Florida as a whole were almost as bad as the freeze. The outside world quarantined against Florida exports and also against its refugees. Citrus fruits rotted on the ground and business came to a standstill. The next year the epidemic reappeared with similar results.<sup>71</sup>

Our once prosperous little town was ruined. All who could get away did so, both because of the fear of the epidemic and for financial reasons. Hundreds of families in south Florida were bankrupt, the Dzialynski interests among the others, although with dogged determination George and Father tried to hold on and persistently refused to avail themselves of the bankrupt law.

Tampa received the full force of the epidemic. In the first one my cousin Bertha with her little sons and the Maas family<sup>72</sup> came to Ft. Meade as refugees, but the inhabitants of our town were excited and demanded that they be moved out of the city limits. George found an old shack in the woods, far from other habitation, which we made as comfortable for them as possible. It was a terrible place but the best that could be found. After a few weeks they were allowed to leave. Bertha went to her father's house in Gainesville, the Maas family to Cincinnati.<sup>73</sup>

My cousin Ben Brown was also a refugee from Tampa. He went to a distant orange grove for a time and after passing inspection at the county line came to us in Ft. Meade. He was in love with Ricka Maas<sup>74</sup> whom he afterwards married and no doubt he came in order to be near her in the sylvan retreat. The next year Ben was less fortunate. He was stricken with yellow fever in Tampa but was successfully treated by Dr. Weedon.<sup>75</sup>

In 1888 the epidemic spread to Gainesville and Jacksonville. Bertha and her little son succeeded in getting to Greenville, South Carolina, and then to Atlanta. Her husband, Herman Glogowski, was Mayor of Tampa and remained at his post of duty.<sup>76</sup> . . .

It was in the midst of these trying circumstances that my baby Ruth Hope was born. Several months later I was taken very ill and Dr. Thomas diagnosed my case as gall bladder for which he recommended an operation. There was no surgeon or facilities in Ft. Meade for such an operation and Tante wrote for me to come to Gainesville to consult Dr. Phillips.

George and Mother begged me to leave the children at home but I could not bear to do so and with them and Katy, their nurse, I made the trip. I was utterly exhausted upon reaching Gainesville and Tante immediately put me to bed and summoned Dr. Phillips. He favored an operation but said that I would not be in condition until I had rested and regained some of my strength.

Just one week later Tante came to my bed in great excitement saying that yellow fever was in Gainesville and we must flee. The town was in a panic. Uncle Brown, Tante, Tillie, Max, Bertha and her two little sons, my two children, their nurse, and I boarded the train, already crowded with refugees, and started to Savannah. When we reached DuPont, Georgia, I was too ill to go further. A consultation was held and it was decided that Bertha and her sons should go to Greenville, South Carolina, while my uncle and his family remained with me.

Leaving us at the station Uncle and Tante went out in the town to find a place for us to stay. The small hotel and every rooming house were crowded with refugees. After hours of search they heard that Dr. DuPont<sup>77</sup> who lived outside the town had opened his home to refugees. His home was filled, but he

generously arranged for us to have a cottage. It had four rooms and a bath though we were eight in number we were very comfortable.

Dr. DuPont came at once to see me and in a little while relieved me of the terrible pain from which I was suffering. He, too, recommended an operation. I was in bed ten days. George was in Ft. Meade and frantic to reach us, but Georgia had now quarantined against Floridians. My relatives watched over me carefully and dear little Tillie Brown aided the nurse in taking care of my babies.

After I was able to sit up it was decided that Uncle Brown and Tante with Tillie in charge of Clare should go on to Savannah and make arrangements for a place for us to stay. Max, the nurse, and Ruth were left with me to follow when I was stronger. After a week I felt able to travel. When we were nearing Blackshear, Georgia, the conductor told me that a man from Savannah had reported us as yellow fever refugees and that we would have to get off the train and remain for a period before proceeding to Savannah. Max was dreadfully upset, but I told him we would go to a hotel and make ourselves comfortable. There was only one hotel, the Brown House, and there we found rooms. That evening a Mr. Cohen,<sup>78</sup> a merchant of the town, seeing the name Dzialynski on the register called on us explaining that he was my mother-in-law's uncle and invited us to be his guests. He insisted with such evident sincerity that we accepted his invitation and spent three weeks in his home.

When we reached Savannah Uncle Brown and Tante were at the station to meet us. . . . For a few days I relaxed, feeling that my troubles were over. I soon found out otherwise. Ruth was taken ill and Dr. T. J. Charlton,<sup>79</sup> the best physician in Savannah, pronounced it typhoid and sent a nurse to care for the child. "Dear God," I prayed, "will my troubles never end!"

Night after night I sat by my baby praying for her recovery and never taking off my clothes. George, at home, was beside himself with anxiety. Tillie came every afternoon and wrote him a letter for me. When finally my baby's fever abated and I felt that I could trust her with the two nurses I went to bed and slept ten

hours. When I awoke and went in to see my baby I was horror stricken. She had turned yellow! The nurse quickly reassured me, saying that the doctor had come while I slept and pronounced it a case of jaundice. He prescribed a few drops every four hours of a well beaten egg, water, and a pinch of salt. In a few days the jaundice had disappeared. . . .

Tillie and Tante had of course kept Clare away while Ruth was ill and I naturally supposed it was because of the typhoid. In fact, however, Clare had also been ill and under the doctor's care. She had picked up a germ from the sand which made her very uncomfortable for a time. It was good of my relatives to keep the knowledge from me. I think I could not have borne the anxiety had I known that both my children were ill.

One ray of brightness came to me at this time. Dr. Charlton diagnosed my case, put me on a diet, and declared emphatically that an operation was not necessary. He was right and I never had a recurrence of the trouble. . . .

In July of the next year (1889) I received a telegram from Gainesville which greatly shocked and grieved me. It told of the tragic death of Tillie Brown, the circumstances of which I have already related.<sup>80</sup> Dear Tillie, who had been so helpful and patient in the trying days of our flight from the yellow fever and who had been so pleased with my little gift to her in Savannah. Even today, after the lapse of more than fifty years, it saddens me to think of that lovely girl's untimely death.

Letters from home were far from reassuring. Overwhelmed with financial worries Father was ill and unable to look after his business. The groves were loaded with fruit but northern people were afraid to buy from yellow-fever-ridden Florida. George and Father were short of money. Under such circumstances I was restless and unhappy and begged to be allowed to come home. Not until December 20th did George think it safe for us to return.

*Goodbye to Fort Meade*

It was good to be back home where my children could play in the warm, winter sunshine. Ruth was learning to walk and talk

and adored her older sister. Clare, however, was four years older and considered the baby too young to play with her.

Father's family was in the midst of preparations for the marriage of Fanny to Mr. Greenfield of South Carolina. I thought a big wedding was very foolish under the circumstances and remarked to George that I did not understand how they could afford the expense of entertaining so many guests. He had already protested to his parents but they had seemed hurt, declaring that they could not deny to their daughter the satisfaction of the kind of wedding she had always expected to have.

Fanny's was the first Jewish wedding in Ft. Meade.<sup>81</sup> Father rented the large Masonic Hall and invited all relatives, friends, and all the Florida "crackers" in the neighborhood. It was indeed a beautiful wedding.<sup>82</sup> Fanny and Mr. Greenfield had two sons and two lovely daughters who, when they grew up, worked in the Treasury Department in Washington. One of them was appointed by the President to go to Europe in the interest of immigration. The other was sent to Miami on government business. Fanny today is a widow and lives in Miami.

After the excitement of the wedding was over George seemed to think that business conditions were improving. I could not see it that way. Every few days Father would come to me with papers to sign. In reply to my inquiry on one such occasion as to what I was signing he explained that since he and George were in business together it was necessary to have my signature.<sup>83</sup> He told me that in the last few years they had seen their life savings slip from them through no fault of their own and that while they had a small fortune on their books it was owed by friends who were unable to pay and he would not press them. He ended by saying that he was trying to save something from the wreck and that he was hopeful of better times. This was the only time I ever inquired about his business affairs.

In my judgment the financial condition of the Dzialynskis was growing worse and I urged George to get a position with some business concern. Father was now much improved in health and could look after affairs at Ft. Meade. I had first talked it over with Father, knowing how opposed he had always been to his

sons' working for other people and knowing, too, how dependent George was on his father's opinion in such matters. Father sadly admitted that he thought such a step might be wise and expressed regret that he had taught his boys that they should work only in their own business concerns.

About this time I saw in a Tampa newspaper an advertisement . . . for a wholesale grocery salesman and upon my urging him George applied for the position. . . . [After getting the job,] he decided we should move to Tampa which being more central for his territory would enable him to spend the week-ends at home. He began work in November, 1889. We rented a house in Tampa which Bertha found for us across the street from her own, and the owner, Mrs. Parslow,<sup>84</sup> promised to vacate it early in January.

Father was very much hurt to see his son go to work for strangers though he admitted that it was the best thing to do. . . .

It humiliated Father greatly to ask me for our Ft. Meade home as he was compelled to do, since he was selling his own for the benefit of his creditors.<sup>85</sup> I gave it to him gladly. It made me so sad to see such a grand and noble old man so broken in health and spirit.

As I have said, Father refused to avail himself of the bankrupt law, although many others did so and fared better. "I would rather have my good name than riches," he would reply when urged to save himself in that manner. Instead, he sold his stores and other businesses, his home, his silver and jewelry, and paid 100 cents on the dollar, having only some land left for which there was no market. . . .

Our Ft. Meade friends were sorry to have us leave and came to the house bringing us all kinds of nice parting gifts. I recall that Mrs. Roberson and Minnie gave us two beautiful patchwork quilts and that Mrs. Cab Langford<sup>86</sup> brought us a whole case of preserves.

It was arranged that we should have our last Christmas celebration with Father's family, in their home. George returned for the occasion and the children were happy, but it was sad for the rest of us. I found that leaving our home, my in-laws whom I had

*Bertha Zadek Dzialynski*

*(Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach)*

learned to love so much, and our many warm friends was very difficult.

On January 1, 1890, we went to our new home in Tampa.

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*Epilogue*

When George and Bertha Dzialynski departed Fort Meade for Tampa as the 1890s commenced, more than half a century remained to her. The couple fared well in Tampa, then a bustling railroad, resort, and cigar town. As the nineteenth century's final decade drew to its close, however, they decided to relocate. On January 1, 1900, the couple purchased a home in Florida's largest and most vital city, Jacksonville. There they remained.

Their experiences ranged across a broad spectrum, as Bertha's memoir described at length, but they certainly included family. As Bertha recounted, a son Douglas died in infancy while daughters Ida Clare and Ruth Hope lived well into the twentieth century. Ruth ultimately wed David A. Leon. Clare married William Coleman; from their descendant, Perry Coleman, this writer first learned of Bertha's manuscript. For better or worse the Dzialynski marriage did not end in bliss. Bertha resided with Ruth, and George lived alone and apart for "as long as [granddaughter Carol Coleman Weil] can remember." George I. P. Dzialynski died in Jacksonville September 28, 1938. Bertha Zadek Dzialynski followed on May 4, 1947. They are buried in the Ahavath Chesed section of Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville.<sup>87</sup>

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Bertha Zadek Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 1-2 (typescript, 1944). This manuscript currently resides in the collection of the Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach, thanks to the generosity of the late Perry Coleman and his family. Excerpts are reproduced here with the permission of the Jewish Museum of Florida, and the author expresses his appreciation to the museum and to the Coleman family for the opportunity to present them in this form. Readers should note that original spelling and punctuation have been retained throughout the excerpts.

<sup>2</sup> Mark I. Greenberg, "Savannah's Jewish Women and the Shaping of Ethnic and Gender Identity, 1830-1900," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (winter, 1998): 774. See also Jacob R. Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980* (New York, 1981); Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman, and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York, 1981); Jacob R. Marcus, ed., *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York, 1981); June Sochen, *Consecrate Every Day: The Public Lives of American Jewish Women, 1880-1980* (Albany, NY, 1981); Mark K. Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women and Their Social Service Organizations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22 (spring 2003): 34-78.



<sup>3</sup> Julia Winifred Moseley and Betty Powers Crislip, eds., *"Come to My Sunland": Letters of Julia Daniels Moseley from the Florida Frontier, 1882-1886* (Gainesville, 1998), xii-xiii. For works based upon the correspondence of pioneer Florida women, see Kathryn Carlisle Schwartz, *Baptist Faith in Action: The Private Writings of Maria Baker Taylor, 1813-1895* (Columbia, SC, 2003); James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt, *Echoes from a Distant Frontier: The Brown Sisters' Correspondence from Antebellum Florida* (Columbia, SC, 2004). See also Canter Brown, Jr., *Women on the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa, 1997); and James M. Denham, "Cracker Women and Their Families in Nineteenth-Century Florida," 15-28, in *Florida's Heritage of Diversity: Essays in Honor of Samuel Proctor*, ed. Mark I. Greenberg, William Warren Rogers, and Canter Brown, Jr., (Tallahassee, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Henry Alan Green and Marcia Kerstein Zerivitz, *Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida, A Documentary Exhibit From 1763 to the Present* (Coral Gables, 1991); Richard E. Sapon-White, "A Polish Jew on the Florida Frontier and in Occupied Tennessee: Excerpts from the Memoirs of Max White," *Southern Jewish History* 4 (2001): 92-122; Samuel Proctor, "Pioneer Jewish Settlement in Florida, 1764-1900, 116-131, in *Proceedings of the Conference on the Writing of Regional History in the South* (New York, 1956); Canter Brown, Jr., *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa, 1999); Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski, Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South," *American Jewish Archives* 44 (fall/winter 1992): 517-539.

<sup>5</sup> Saul Jacob Rubin, *Third to None: The Saga of Savannah Jewry 1733-1983* (Savannah, 1983), 148-149, 159.

<sup>6</sup> See Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski."

<sup>7</sup> Pauline Braun was born c. 1837 in Prussia and died on March 1, 1908, in Tampa, Florida. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Alachua County, Florida (population schedule); Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 61.

<sup>8</sup> Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 4-49; Ruth Hope Leon, "The History of the Dzialynski Family," 1 (typescript, 1954), Jacksonville Historical Society, Jacksonville, Florida.

<sup>9</sup> Tobias Brown was born in 1824 in Prussia and died August 18, 1895, in Gainesville, Florida. At the time of Bertha's arrival in Gainesville, the Brown children were aged as follows: Benjamin, nineteen; Max, seventeen; Bertha, fourteen; Tillie, twelve; and Joseph, nine. 1880 Census, Alachua County; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 61.

<sup>10</sup> Regina ("Jennie") Dzialynski Herzog, the daughter of Philip Dzialynski and Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski, was born in 1859 in Florida. She married Louis Herzog in Fort Meade, Florida, on October 31, 1877. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Madison County, Florida (population schedule); *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, May 18, 1882; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 67.

<sup>11</sup> Morris Dzialynski, son of Abraham Samuel and Rachin Dzialynski, was born July 14, 1841, in Posen, Prussia. He died May 7, 1907, in Jacksonville, Florida. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 4-5; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 518-519, 532-533.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Dzialynski, son of Abraham Samuel and Rachin Dzialynski, was born June 15, 1833, in Posen, Prussia, and died January 16, 1896, in Jacksonville, Florida. Philip married twice. He wed first wife, Ida Ehrlich, on August 11, 1856, and they subsequently had two sons and a daughter: George, Regina ("Jennie"), and Rudolph. Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski, was

born March 15, 1834, in Neustadt, Prussia. She died August 11, 1856, in Suwannee Shoals, Florida. Following Ida's death, Philip married Mary Cohen on May 28, 1865. They had at least six girls and a son: Esther, Frances ("Fannie"), Helena, Miriam ("Minnie"), Gertrude, Abraham Samuel, and Etta. Mary Cohen Dzialynski was born c. 1848 in Prussian Poland. She died in Tallahassee in 1935. A child's grave with the name "Little Eva" lies next to Mary's Jacksonville grave and may be that of another of her children. Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 1-2; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 518-519, 532-533, 539.

<sup>13</sup> George I. P. Dzialynski was born June 8, 1857, in Jacksonville, Florida, to Philip and Ida Ehrlich Dzialynski. George I. P. Dzialynski biographical form, Dzialynski family file, State and Local History Collection, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville, Florida; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 196-197.

<sup>14</sup> Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 49-77; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, May 18, 1882; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 517-530; George I. P. Dzialynski biographical form.

<sup>15</sup> James W. Covington, *The Story of Southwestern Florida: Family and Personal History I* (New York, 1957), 171-185; Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 272-291; W. A. McRae, *The Fourth Census of the State of Florida Taken in the Year 1915* (Tallahassee, 1915), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Canter Brown, Jr., *Fort Meade, 1849-1900* (Tuscaloosa, 1995), 1-132.

<sup>17</sup> Julius C. Rockner was born December 26, 1839, in what became Germany and died from gunshot wounds on July 23, 1877, near Fort Meade, Florida. Kyle S. VanLandingham, "John Irving Hooker 1822-1862," *South Florida Pioneers* 15/16 (January/April 1978), 8; Brown, *Fort Meade*, 66-67.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob R. Cohen was born in 1844 in Prussia and died November 5, 1901, in Tallahassee, Florida. A man of many business interests in Florida and the Southeast, he also served as an original incorporator of the city of Orlando. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Putnam County, Florida (population schedule); *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union and Citizen*, November 6, 1901; Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History* (Chuluota, FL, 1975), 59.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier*, 34-36, 53-58; Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 524-528.

<sup>20</sup> Chapter divisions contained in Bertha's manuscript have been deleted and headers added to facilitate the narrative's flow. Otherwise, the editor of this adaptation has attempted to minimize disruptions to the manuscript's integrity save for the deletion of material, as noted, where the narrative strayed from a tight focus on the Dzialynskis' lives while residents of Fort Meade.

<sup>21</sup> James McKay, Jr., son of James and Matilda Call McKay, born November 27, 1842, in Mobile, Alabama, and died September 5, 1925, in Tampa, Florida. Donald B. McKay, *Pioneer Florida III* (Tampa, 1959), 27.

<sup>22</sup> A development resulting from Henry B. Plant's construction of the South Florida Railroad from Kissimmee to Tampa during 1883-1884; Plant City did not exist when Bertha

first journeyed from Tampa to Fort Meade. Quintilla Geer Bruton and David E. Bailey, Jr., *Plant City: Its Origins and History* (Winston-Salem, NC, 1984), 71–86.

<sup>23</sup> Similarly, at the time of her first journey from Tampa to Fort Meade, Bertha could not have lunched at Lakeland since the town did not exist until railroad developments several years later prompted its creation. Nearby, on the principal road from Tampa to Fort Meade lay the much older rural community of Medulla, and the Dzialynskis likely took their meal with a family there. Canter Brown, Jr., *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living: Polk County, Florida, to 1940* (Tallahassee, 2001), 35, 48, 60, 136–138, 152.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Cooper Wilson, son of James T. and Adeline Hendry Wilson, was born in Manatee County, Florida, on December 28, 1858, and died November 30, 1907, at San Francisco, California. The scion of one of southwest Florida's major cattle grazing families, C. C. Wilson emerged as one of the area's leading attorneys in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Makers of America: Florida Edition I* (Atlanta, 1909), 390–391.

<sup>25</sup> On several occasions Bertha's memoir laments the destruction of prized personal possessions by Jacksonville's great fire of May 3, 1901. This unprecedented blaze in the state's principal city devastated 146 city blocks embracing 466 acres. Damages ran to \$15 million in value as of the time of the fire. "It was the largest fire, both in area and property loss," the city's historian declared, "ever experienced by any Southern city of the United States, to 1924." T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (1924; reprinted Jacksonville, 1990), 219–227.

<sup>26</sup> At Fort Meade during the 1880s, the Dzialynskis first ran a dry goods store and then a drug store. The family business carried the name, "New York and Fort Meade Mercantile Company" at the time Bertha arrived in town. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 525–528, 532; George W. Hendry, *Polk County, Florida, Its Lands and Products* (Jacksonville, 1883), 50.

<sup>27</sup> Sarah Ann Evans Robeson, wife of Samuel Henry Robeson, was born September 24, 1825, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died April 30, 1896, in Bartow, Florida. Spessard Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," *Polk County Historical Quarterly* 23 (December 1996): 2; *Polk County, Florida, Cemeteries II* (Lakeland, 2002), 48.

<sup>28</sup> Minnie Lee Robeson, daughter of Samuel Henry and Sarah Evans Robeson. Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," 2.

<sup>29</sup> Minnie Robeson's brother was John Evans Robeson, born May 6, 1847, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died April 13, 1898, in Fort Meade, Florida. *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> John E. Robeson's wife was Fernandina D. Roberts, daughter of Sherod E. and Keziah Knight Roberts. She was born November 28, 1858, in Clinch County, Georgia, and died September 10, 1923, in Lakeland, Florida. Spessard Stone, "Profile of Sherod E. Roberts," *Polk County Historical Quarterly* 17 (December 1990): 6. Robeson family genealogical materials, collection of Elizabeth Springer, Phoenix, Arizona.

<sup>31</sup> Frances ("Fannie") Dzialynski, daughter of Philip and Mary Cohen Dzialynski, was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1868. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 539.

<sup>32</sup> As of October 1, 1883, the Philip Dzialynski home at Fort Meade literally operated as a hotel, "The Dzialynski House." Philip served as general manager. Mary presided as "

proprietary," a not unusual situation in a region noted for economic ups and downs and for wives helping their husbands avoid the downs. Their advertisement boasted "first class accommodations guaranteed." It continued, "Terms for board and lodging per day \$2.00" and concluded: "A livery stable will be run in connection with the house. Patronage solicited." *Bartow Informant*, October 6, 1883. Mary's experience in running a hotel provided valuable background for later endeavors. After her husband's death in 1896, she moved to Gainesville where she managed the Commercial Hotel from 1896 to 1902. Rachel B. Heimovics and Marcia K. Zerivitz, *The Florida Jewish Heritage Trail* (Tallahassee 2000), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Although Philip Dzialynski did not hold power as "the political boss of that end of Polk County" in the 1880s, he nonetheless stood out as a man of serious influence. From 1872 to 1874 he had served as a Polk County commissioner. In the two years following Fort Meade's 1885 incorporation, he also held the position of alderman. Brown, *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier*, 34–36; Brown, *Fort Meade*, 166–167.

<sup>34</sup> William Dunnington Bloxham, the son of William and Martha Williams Bloxham, was born on July 9, 1835, in Leon County, Florida, and died March 15, 1911, in Tallahassee. He served as Florida's governor 1881–1885 and 1897–1901. Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1991–1992* (Tallahassee, 1991), 330–331.

<sup>35</sup> Bloxham's immediate predecessor as governor, George Franklin Drew, who served from 1877 to 1881, was the first post-Reconstruction Democrat to preside over the state. This "redemption," as southerners called it, was made possible by the removal of the last Federal troops. *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Laurens Mitchell, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Starns Mitchell, was born September 3, 1831, in Jefferson County, Alabama, and died October 14, 1903, in Tampa, Florida. He served as Florida's governor from 1893 to 1897. See George B. Church, Jr., *The Life of Henry Laurens Mitchell, Florida's 16th Governor* (Tampa, 1989).

<sup>37</sup> Father Charles Peterman served as pastor of Tampa's St. Louis Parish of the Roman Catholic Church beginning in 1883. Michael J. McNally, *Catholic Parish Life on Florida's West Coast, 1860–1968* (n.p., 1996), 32.

<sup>38</sup> William Benton Henderson, son of Andrew Hamilton and Margaret Collins Henderson, was born September 17, 1839, in Jackson County, Georgia, and died May 7, 1909, in Tampa, Florida. Among his business interests were a series of mercantile and hardware establishments, including the one he shared with the Dzialynskis. Charles E. Harrison, *Genealogical Records of the Pioneers of Tampa and of Some Who Came After Them* (Tampa, 1915), 31–32.

<sup>39</sup> Ziba King was born in Ware County, Georgia, on March 12, 1838, and died on March 7, 1901, in DeSoto County, Florida. A "cattle king" such as Ziba King typically owned tens of thousands of cattle. Spessard Stone, "Profile of Ziba King," *Wauchula (FL) Herald-Advocate*, November 10, 1998; Covington, *Story of Southwestern Florida*, II, 20–21.

<sup>40</sup> Fort Meade's creation came in December 1849, rather than during the Second Seminole War of 1835–1842. It lay, however, on ground that once had constituted the Seminole/Creek town of Talakchopko, destroyed in the war's opening months. Fort Meade was named for George Gordon Meade because he recommended the site for placement of

the military post to General David Twiggs. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 6, 14, 36–46; Brown, *Fort Meade, 1849–1900* (Tuscaloosa, 1995), 1–8. General Twiggs, incidentally, also named Fort Myers, Florida, for his future son-in-law, Abraham C. Myers, then chief quartermaster for Florida troops during the Second Seminole War. Myers was a great-grandson of Moses Cohen, who served as the first religious leader of Charleston, South Carolina's K. K. Beth Elohim. Heimovics and Zerivitz, *The Florida Jewish Heritage Trail*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson indeed served at Fort Meade during 1850–1851. Due to problems arising there, the fort became his last active duty post as an officer of the United States Army. James I. Robertson, Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, and The Legend* (New York, 1997), 94–110

<sup>42</sup> George I. P. Dzialynski numbered among those who pursued the alligators in the vicinity of the Caloosahatchee River from May to July 1881. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, July 16, 1881.

<sup>43</sup> John Thomas Lesley, the son of Leroy G. and Indiana Childs Livingston Lesley, was born May 12, 1835, in Madison County, Florida, and died July 13, 1913, in Tampa, Florida. Donald J. Ivey, "John T. Lesley: Tampa's Pioneer Renaissance Man," *Sunland Tribune* 21 (November 1995): 3–20.

<sup>44</sup> John T. Lesley killed Dr. J. S. Hackney at Philip Dzialynski's Tampa store on June 8, 1880. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, June 10, 1880.

<sup>45</sup> Cattleman William W. Willingham ambushed merchant and cattleman Julius C. Rockner just outside Fort Meade on July 23, 1877. The shots barely missed Philip Dzialynski, who was riding beside Rockner. Brown, *Fort Meade*, 66–67.

<sup>46</sup> Frank Clark, the son of John N. Clark, was born March 28, 1860, in Eufaula, Alabama, and died April 14, 1936, in Washington, D.C. He served as a United States Congressman from Florida from 1905 to 1925. *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, May 5, 1889, April 15, 1936.

<sup>47</sup> James Dallas Tillis, the son of Willoughby and Penny Smiley Tillis, was born August 22, 1849, in Columbia County, Florida, and died June 4, 1939, in Bartow, Florida. He served as Polk County sheriff from 1896 to 1904. Richard E. Livingston, "Willoughby Tillis 1808–1895," *South Florida Pioneers* 39/40 (January/April 1984): 4–7; *Bartow Polk County Democrat*, August 26, 1938; Tillis family historical materials, collection of John E. Brown, Fort Meade, Florida.

<sup>48</sup> Possibly Godfrey Snyderacker, a pioneer Jew of Chicago. Born in Westphalia in 1826, he came to Chicago in 1853 where in 1859 he helped found the United Hebrew Relief Association, Chicago's first unified agency for Jewish social services. A few years later he served as president of Chicago Sinai Temple. Snyderacker died in 1892. H. L. Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago* (Chicago, 1924), 78.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Cabel Langford was born March 22, 1848, in Bradford County, Florida, and died March 14, 1922, in Fort Meade, Florida. *Fort Meade Leader*, March 16, 1922.

<sup>50</sup> Dr. William Loch Weems, born August 12, 1835, in Baltimore, Maryland, and died March 15, 1900, in Fort Meade, Florida, married Elizabeth Cochran in Missouri. She was born about 1845 in Missouri and remarried to William A. Evans in Fort Meade on

June 11, 1903. Weems family historical materials, collection of John E. Brown, Fort Meade; *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union*, March 20, 1900; June 14, 1903.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Lee Wilson, brother of Charles Cooper Wilson, was born January 30, 1863, in Polk County, Florida, and died October 17, 1927, in Bartow, Florida. Spessard Stone, *John and William, Sons of Robert Hendry* (Wauchula, FL, 1988), 167.

<sup>52</sup> Creek, Seminole, and Mikasuki Indians often visited the Fort Meade vicinity. A small village of Creeks remained about thirty miles northeast from the town until the late 1880s. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 118–119.

<sup>53</sup> Lambrequins are short, decorative draperies for shelf edges or window valances.

<sup>54</sup> Seemingly a reference to Dr. M. O. Arnold, recently arrived from Iowa to take up the practice of Dr. Charles Lucian Mitchell, brother of Philip Dzialynski's friend and guest, Henry L. Mitchell, who had retired from medicine to pursue other interests. *Bartow Informant*, July 29, 1882, February 3, 1883; *Tampa Tribune* March 16, 1900; *Tampa Times*, September 5, 1935; E. Ashby Hammond, *The Medical Profession in 19th Century Florida: A Biographical Register* (Gainesville, 1996), 432–433.

<sup>55</sup> Sherod E. Roberts donated the land for Fort Meade's beautiful Evergreen Cemetery. Charles C. Wilson's point about killing men to fill the cemetery echoed sentiments expressed by a Fort Meade man to a Tampa newspaper in 1877. "Six men in the last six years have gone to the land of the dead in Polk County, Florida, killed by their fellow men," he declared. "Some would say jocularly," he continued, "when the unparalleled health of our country is spoken of, and the very few who died naturally; 'We have to kill men to recruit our grave yards.'" Brown, *Fort Meade*, 64; *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, September 5, 1877.

<sup>56</sup> The railroad from Cedar Key to Gainesville and on to Fernandina had been constructed from Fernandina in 1856 to Cedar Key in 1861 by David Levy Yulee as the Florida Railroad. It offered Florida its first connection between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Yulee represented Florida in the United States Senate during 1845–1851 and 1855–1861, the first Jew to sit in that body. See Leon Huhner, "David L. Yulee, Florida's First Senator" in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge, 1973); Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000), 55–85.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Newton D. Phillips, the son of James T. and Lydia Seale Phillips, was born May 30, 1835, in Hinds County, Mississippi. *Biographical Souvenir of the States of Georgia and Florida* (Chicago, 1889), 655.

<sup>58</sup> Dr. Louis Sims Oppenheimer was born January 24, 1854, in Louisville, Kentucky, and died June 12, 1939, in Tampa, Florida. In 1888 he married one-time Macon, Georgia, school-teacher Alberta Dozier, then a resident of Polk County, Florida. The couple relocated from Bartow, Florida, to Tampa in 1896. James M. Ingram, "Dr. Louis Sims Oppenheimer, Culture Among the Sandspurs," *Sunland Tribune* 3 (November 1977): 18–23.

<sup>59</sup> No information is available to suggest that African Americans living in Florida during the 1880s feared Indians or an Indian threat any more than did whites, although Bertha may have known some individual who did. Florida had stood out since at least the late 1600s as a refuge for runaway slaves, and hundreds of "maroons" or "Black Seminoles" had lived and fought cooperatively with Florida Seminoles and other Indian peoples.

Sampson Forrester, who lived at his Hillsborough County plantation only thirty miles or so from Fort Meade until his death in 1888, often welcomed visiting Indians to his home and afforded them his hospitality. If Fort Meade's English settlers expressed a preference for white over black servants, they likely did so mostly from that fact that so few blacks lived in the town. Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville, 1996); Canter Brown, Jr., and Barbara Gray Brown, *Family Records of the African American Pioneers of Tampa and Hillsborough County* (Tampa, 2003), 86–88.

<sup>60</sup> Samuel Henry Robeson, son of Peter Lord and Mary P. Spencer Robeson, was born March 14, 1822, in Chesterfield, South Carolina, and died November 21, 1884, in Fort Meade, Florida. Stone, "Profile of John Evans Robeson," 4.

<sup>61</sup> The influx of English "remittance men" and their families to Fort Meade began about 1885–1886, rather than 1882–1883 as remembered by Bertha Dzialynski. These individuals generally were younger sons of well-to-do families whose patriarchs preferred that they not enter business and, so, supported them by remittances. In their wake, numerous other English men and women settled at what became a fashionable, if rustic, winter resort locale. Brown, *Fort Meade*, 107–119.

<sup>62</sup> Isaac Solomon, who operated a millinery store at Jacksonville, was born 1854 in New York. 1880 Census, Duval County, Florida.

<sup>63</sup> Adeline Hendry Wilson, daughter of James Edward and Lydia Carlton Hendry and wife of James Thomas Wilson, was born February 4, 1832, in Thomas County, Georgia, and died November 8, 1895, in Homeland, Florida. Stone, *John and William, Sons of Robert Hendry*, 152, 155, 161–167.

<sup>64</sup> Herman Glogowski was born April 29, 1854, in the German town of Wilhelmsbruck. Arriving in the United States at age fifteen, he settled in Gainesville, Florida, by the late 1870s. There, during summer 1883, he married Bertha Brown, daughter of Tobias and Pauline Brown. Herman Glogowski died in Tampa, Florida, December 3, 1909, having served that community in numerous capacities including mayor. Mark I. Greenberg, "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski: Jewish Leadership in Gilded Age Florida," in *Florida's Heritage of Diversity*, ed. Greenberg, Rogers, and Brown, 55–58.

<sup>65</sup> Bertha likely meant Dr. James C. Thompson when she referred to Dr. F. F. Thomas. Thompson, then aged forty-three, arrived in Fort Meade from Montana in 1884 "for the climate and health." *Bartow Advance Courier*, March 14, 1888.

<sup>66</sup> Dr. John P. Wall, son of Perry G. and Nancy H. Wall, was born September 17, 1836, in Hamilton County, Florida, and died April 19, 1885, in Gainesville, Florida. Larry O. Rivers, "'They . . . exalt humbug at the expense of science and truth': Dr. John P. Wall and the Fight Against Yellow Fever in Late-Nineteenth Century Florida," *Sunland Tribune* 25 (1999): 9–18; Hammond, *Medical Profession*, 651–664.

<sup>67</sup> Celebrating Christmas did not mean that Philip was indifferent about his children marrying non-Jews. On the contrary, he appears to have worked hard to find eligible Jewish husbands for his daughters, doubtlessly utilizing his broad network of family, friends, and commercial contacts in the process. As mentioned earlier for the match of George and Bertha, Philip could count on his own children (in that case Jennie) for assistance.

<sup>68</sup> Abraham Samuel Dzialynski, son of Philip and Mary Cohen Dzialynski, was born during 1877 in Fort Meade, Florida. Brown, "Philip and Morris Dzialynski," 539.

<sup>69</sup> Grover Cleveland's 1884 election to the presidency marked the first time since before the Civil War that a Democrat had held the office. Southern Democrats accordingly took to the streets in celebration. Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York, 1992), 47.

<sup>70</sup> Bertha's memory mistakenly attributed the disastrous freeze of January 1886 to March 1885. Brown, *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living*, 158-162.

<sup>71</sup> On the yellow fever outbreaks of 1887-1888, see Eirlys Barker, "'A Sneaky, Cowardly Enemy': Tampa's Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1887-88," *Tampa Bay History* 8 (fall/winter 1986): 4-22.

<sup>72</sup> Abe Maas, born in what would become Germany, on May 29, 1855, relocated to Tampa in 1886 from Cochran, Georgia, to open a "Dry Goods Palace." With him were his wife, Bena, son, Sol, and daughter, Frederica. When Abe's brother Isaac, born October 14, 1861, in a German state joined him from Ocala, Florida, in 1887, the establishment of the famed Maas Brothers Department Store ensued. In 1895 Abe Maas served as the first president of Tampa's Congregation Schaarai Zedek, and remained in that capacity until 1927. He died in Tampa on June 7, 1941. Isaac passed away on March 8, 1935. *Tampa Guardian*, December 1, 1886; *Tampa Journal*, June 23, 1887; *Tampa Tribune*, September 22, 1887; Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 344-345; Elaine Fantle Shimberg, comp., *Congregation Schaarai Zedek: 1894-1994, 5655-5755* (Tampa, 1994), 11.

<sup>73</sup> The reliability of Bertha's recollection of the 1887 yellow fever outbreak and the subsequent visit of the Maas family to Fort Meade may have suffered from the passage of time. Persons coming from Tampa into Polk County endured quarantine until a December freeze ended fears, a fact that probably furnished the need for George Dzialynski to find the Maases "an old shack in the woods." As one local man put it, "Quarantine stations are as thick in South Florida as new county lines." By January 1888, though, the Maas family either lived in town or else visited frequently from Tampa. A surviving account of a "Leap Year Ball," for example, noted the presence of Miss Frederica Maas, [dressed in] white embroidered muslin, pale blue sash, with Mr. [Max] Reif." Frederica's mother chose to wear "ecru embroidered muslin," while Fannie and Minnie Dzialynski selected white embroidered muslin. *Bartow Advance Courier*, January 18, 1888; Brown, *In the Midst of All That Makes Life Worth Living*, 162-163.

<sup>74</sup> Frederica Maas, daughter of Abe and Bena Maas.

<sup>75</sup> Dr. Leslie Washington Weedon, the son of W. H. and Anna Augusta Renfroe Weedon, was born April 27, 1860, in Sandersville, Georgia, and died November 12, 1937, in Tampa. On February 14, 1889, he married L. Blanche Henderson, daughter of Philip Dzialynski's one-time business partner William B. Henderson. Dr. Weedon earned national recognition for his yellow fever research. *Tampa Journal*, January 3, February 21, 1889; Grismer, *Tampa*, 342-343.

<sup>76</sup> Greenberg, "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski," 62-63.



<sup>77</sup> Bertha may be referring to John Peter Augustus DuPont, Jr., son of J. P. A. and Eliza G. Nichols DuPont. He was born September 17, 1856, in Savannah, Georgia, and died February 27, 1913, in the same city. Folks Huxford, *History of Clinch County, Georgia* (Macon, GA, 1916), 246–247.

<sup>78</sup> Blackshear, Georgia, merchant Morris M. Cohen was born in 1833 in Prussia. 1880 Census, Pierce County, Georgia.

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Thomas J. Charlton was born in 1833 in Georgia. 1880 Census, Chatham County, Georgia.

<sup>80</sup> "It was during one of Bertha [Brown]'s visits home to Gainesville that her sister, Tillie, now grown to a lovely young lady, met with tragic death. One Sunday afternoon she went buggy riding with a young man, their destination being a lake near Gainesville where there was to be a sailboat race. . . . One of the contestants in the boat race was Albert Endel, who had long been in love with Tillie and who urged her to sail in his boat for good luck. Others on the boat were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Burkheim, their baby Roy, and little daughter, Ida. The boat capsized, the clothes of the women became entangled in it, and Tillie, Mrs. Burkeim, and the baby were drowned." Dzialynski, "Within My Heart," 59–60. The Endels were among the pioneer Jews of Gainesville. Moses Endel, the patriarch, came to Gainesville in 1865 with the Torah that is still used in B'nai Israel Congregation. Albert Endel, born in 1867, in Charleston, South Carolina, was the eldest child of Moses and his second wife, Matilda Philips Endel. Albert died in Jacksonville in 1908. Biographical information from Sheri J. Lagin, email messages to Rachel Heimovics, June 20 and June 21, 1999.

<sup>81</sup> Actually, the marriage of Fannie Dzialynski's sister Jennie to Louis Herzog of Baltimore, Maryland, took honors as Fort Meade's first Jewish wedding. The event occurred October 31, 1877, at the Dzialynski home. According to reports, "Mr. P. Dzialynski . . . performed the Jewish part of the ceremony" while Justice of the Peace Benjamin F. Blount fulfilled civil requirements. Since no rabbi lived in central or south Florida at the time, Philip made do as best he could, ensuring the marriage's legality by the justice of the peace's participation. *Tampa Sunland Tribune*, November 24, 1877.

<sup>82</sup> The marriage of Fannie Dzialynski and Myer Greenfield took place at Fort Meade's "opera house hall" on Wednesday, May 23, 1888. Mayor William Thompson assisted Fannie's father Philip in performing the ceremony. Bertha's daughter Clare served as a flower girl. Governor Edward A. Perry and former governor William D. Bloxham sent words of congratulation. *Bartow Advance Courier*, May 30, 1888.

<sup>83</sup> Pursuant to Florida's Married Woman's Property Act, a husband could not alienate any property in which his wife held an interest without her written consent properly executed. Walter W. Manley II, Canter Brown, Jr., and Eric W. Rise, *The Supreme Court of Florida and its Predecessor Courts, 1821–1917* (Gainesville, 1997), 104.

<sup>84</sup> Josephine Ghira Parslow, wife of architect Alfred H. Parslow. Grismer, *Tampa*, 336–337.

<sup>85</sup> It was not unusual for a wife to hold title to her home, thus protecting it from her husband's debts, thanks to the protections of the Florida Married Woman's Property Act, as mentioned above.

<sup>86</sup> Meddie Elizabeth Lightsey Langford, daughter of Cornelius B. and Sarah Carter Lightsey and wife of Richard Cabel Langford, was born November 2, 1860, in Lowndes County, Georgia, and died August 9, 1911, in Tampa, Florida. For the story of her marriage at age fourteen, see Canter Brown, Jr., ed., *Reminiscences of Judge Charles E. Harrison: Pictures from the Past, 1867-1893* (Tampa, 1997), 58-59.

<sup>87</sup> Telephone interview of Carol Coleman Weil conducted by Mark K. Bauman, June 11, 2004; Dzialynski, "Within My Heart"; Leon, "History of the Dzialynski Family," 3.