

Jews in the Civil War Period: Some Background Information

I. Jewish Confederates by Robert N. Rosen (2000)

"Now we of the South," Solomon Cohen of Savannah wrote his aunt in Philadelphia, "seeing that public opinion, the law of the land in the North, is against all that we hold valuable ... and that the government is about to pass into the hands of those who hate us and our institutions, feel that prudence and self-defense demand that we should protect ourselves..."

Samuel Yates Levy, also from Savannah, joined the City Light Guard and was stationed on Tybee Island. His nephew, seventeen-year-old Octavus Cohen, volunteered for the Savannah Artillery...

Isaac Hermann, a French immigrant, had arrived at Castle Garden in New York in 1859 and settled in Sandersville, Georgia. He joined the Washington Rifles, 1st (Ramsey's) Georgia Infantry in June."

II. Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South 1789-1865 by Bertram Wallace Korn (2014)

"One of the few lady planters was Abigail Minis, who had a small plantation near Savannah on which she employed seventeen slaves.

III. Cohen and Phillips family papers

This collection contains papers relating to Octavus Cohen (1814-1876); his wife, Henrietta Yates Levy Cohen (c.1819- 1915); and his son-in-law, Clavius Phillips (b.1838), who was married to Georgina Bryant Cohen. Octavus Cohen, a Savannah businessman, was the brother of Solomon Cohen. He was in the auction and commission business and a steamship agent, forming a partnership with Benjamin W. Fosdick. In 1854, after the death of Fosdick, he formed Octavus Cohen and Company, in which his son-in-law Clavius Phillips became a partner.

The papers in this collection include deeds; a bond; a bill of sale for a slave; appointment by John Tyler of Octavus Cohen as Navy Agent for the port of Savannah. Also included are an appointment by John C. Breckinridge of Clavius Phillips as lieutenant in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States and Phillip's acceptance and oath of loyalty to the Confederate States; letter of introduction written by General W.B. Hazen presenting Octavus Cohen to Post Commandant, Savannah, 1865; presidential pardons given to Octavus and Henrietta Cohen and an acceptance of the pardon; and correspondence to Henrietta Cohen from Varina Howell Davis, wife of Jefferson Davis.