

REDCLIFFE PLANTATION  
181 REDCLIFFE RD  
BEECH ISLAND, SC 29842  
(803) 827-1473

# Redcliffe Southern Times

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FEBRUARY 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS  
AT REDCLIFFE

SCANDALS &

*Gossip*

Saturday, Feb 13 at 4:30

\$10.00/person

Not suitable for children.

Reservations required.

For more information on these programs please contact the park.

## Park Staff

**Park Manager**  
Joy Raintree

**Park Interpreter**  
Elizabeth Laney

**Park Technician**  
Doug Kratz

**Asst. Park Ranger**  
Theresa Hips

## Interesting Fact

In the 19th century, the way a woman held a fan could provide all sorts of information for a man interested in her. Do you know what it means when the tip of a closed fan touches the lips? Come to our program and find out!



## New Names, New Lives

The story of Ezekiel Johnson Myers and of Austin Clark Romeo

Ezekiel Johnson and Austin Clark were born just four years apart to two different families enslaved at Silver Bluff Plantation in the 1850's. They probably played with each other as children before graduating to different duties as they got older. They were just 11 and 7, respectively, when emancipation came. Following emancipation and the end of the Civil War the two teenagers continued living with their families for a number of years... **and then they disappeared.**

The first clue our Redcliffe staff found as to what had happened to Austin Clark was a phone call from a woman who was researching an Austin Nathan Romeo, whose ancestors, she believed, had been enslaved at Silver Bluff Plantation. Austin N. Romeo's delayed birth certificate showed his father to be an "Austin Romeo" and the 1870 US Census in which Austin Clark was listed showed *his* father to be named **Nathan** Clark. The final clue however was finding an Austin Romeo, of the right age to be Austin Clark, living in the vicinity of Silver Bluff Plantation in the 1880 US Census. It all led to one conclusion—between 1870 and 1880 Austin Clark had **changed his name** to Austin Romeo.

Clark Nathan	21	M	B
Betsy	29	F	B
Nathan	18	M	B
Austin	12	M	B
Roma Astor	B	M	20

A similar story can be told regarding Ezekiel Johnson, but it took Redcliffe staff many more years to uncover. There was a great deal of information about Ezekiel in the plantation records but nothing could be found of him after 1871. During this same time period Redcliffe staff were documenting the genealogy of a man named Ezekiel Myers who first appeared in the 1880 census and married into the Watkins family who lived near Redcliffe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Because each Ezekiel was connected to a different family (the Johnsons and the Myers-Watkins respectively) there was no reason to suspect a connection - until, that is, Ezekiel Myer's death certificate

Johnson Sarah	30	F	M
Ezekiel	15	M	M
Sarah	13	F	M
Myer Ezekiel	M	M	25
Salome	B	F	18
William	B	M	32

was discovered in early 2016 revealing him to be the son of a Sallie [Sarah] Johnson of Kathwood, SC. The death certificate matched up to the 1870 census showing Ezekiel Johnson living with his mother Sallie. Sometime after 1871 he **changed his name** from Johnson to Myers.

We may never know why either man decided to change his name but, in both cases, the change was accompanied by marriage and a move away from the plantation where they had grown up. Under the name of Romeo (no longer a Clark) Austin married a woman named Della Watkins. Incredibly Ezekiel Myers (formerly Johnson) married Della's first cousin Salome Watkins, making the two men in-laws. Austin Romeo moved to Augusta, Georgia where he and Della divorced around 1901 before he passed away at age 45 in 1903. Descendants of his seven children with Della live throughout the US in Georgia, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

Ezekiel Myers moved to Hephzibah, GA where he worked as a school janitor. He and his family attended the First Ebenezer Baptist Church where he is buried today along with his grandson and great-grandson were both named Ezekiel Myers.

**\$10 per person.**

Reserve your spot now by calling 803-827-1473 or emailing [redcliffe@scprt.com](mailto:redcliffe@scprt.com). Great for friends and couples. **Not suitable for children.**

SCANDALS

*Gossip*

Saturday, February 13th @ 4:30

*Intimate stories. Scandalous secrets. Love affairs. Gossip.* Learn all of these plus the language of fans and fun with mustaches! Light refreshments.

# Gossiping about Gussie

Augusta "Gussie" Brooks was a cook at Redcliffe in the 1890's. She married William Brooks, referred to as "Brooks," and they had three children. Her husband died after 1900 and Gussie moved her family to Augusta, GA. Correspondence from the Hammond family in the 1890's includes a lot of gossip about Gussie & Brooks including this episode from February of 1898:

"We have had an exciting time with Gussy and Brooks. She announced her intention of quitting at once, leaving Brooks and Francis and the three children to shift for themselves, *and making her way to new fields and pastures green among the kitchens of the Sand Hills*. Her grounds for doing this were that Brooks had appropriated her wages (making none himself) for the two months past, that he had been driving around with other ladies in the cart she had helped to buy, and that [he] threatened to beat her and never opened his mouth to her without "cussing of her." I tried to explain these charges to Brooks who only met them with hilarity, until I was forced to tell him that if Gussy went, the horse would come back into my stable and he and his might seek their fortunes elsewhere. It took a full half hour's silent and solitary reflection for Brooks to appreciate the gravity of the affair, when he did the excitement with him and old Francis became very intense. *There was a proposition to appeal to the law in the person of John Dunbar to restrain Gussy from upsetting the family, and its agricultural hopes*. On further consideration this idea was abandoned, and the alternative of paying court to Gussy adopted; he is to cut wood and tote water for her, to stop cussing her, and ride no other lady with the horse and cart which is and is to be joint property, and we hope that in this was there will be evolved a modus Vivendi for them and for us."



Gussie Brooks, her daughter Eugenia and John Shaw Billings around 1899.

## Document of the Month

**STATE OF GEORGIA.**  
RICHMOND COUNTY.  
To any Minister of the Gospel, Judge, Justice of the Inferior Court, or Justice of the Peace  
or any Person authorised to celebrate:

These are to authorise and permit you to join in the Honorable State of  
Matrimony, Harry Hammond of the one part,  
and Emily H. Cumming of the other part,  
according to the Rites of your Church: Provided, there be no lawful cause to obstruct  
the same, and this shall be your authority for so doing.

Given under my hand, as Ordinary, for the County aforesaid, this  
twenty second day of November, 1857.

Foster Blodget, Jr., Ordinary.

I Herewith Certify, That Harry Hammond  
and Emily H. Cumming were joined together in the  
Holy Vans of Matrimony, by me, on the 22<sup>d</sup> day of November, 1857.  
Edu. E. Ford, Rector of  
St. Paul's Church, Augusta.

## Marriage Record

*Harry Hammond & Emily Cumming*

Harry Hammond married Augusta native Emily Cumming on November 22, 1859 at St. Paul's Church. Theirs is one of many Augusta, GA marriage records that have been uncovered for Redcliffe families.

In 1909 Harry & Emily held a huge party to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. You can hear about this exciting wedding anniversary and more during Redcliffe's *Scandals & Gossip* program on February 13th.