

## HISTORIC SITE TOURS

Thursday - Monday  
11am, 1pm, & 3pm  
\$10 for adults, \$6 for  
seniors, \$5 for children  
6-16. Children five and  
under are free.

For more information on  
programs and group tours,  
please contact the park.

### PARK STAFF

PARK MANAGER  
Chelsea Stutz

PARK INTERPRETER  
Ashley Rust

CURATOR  
Jordan Stenger

ASSISTANT PARK RANGERS  
Lauren Jackson  
Matthew Morrow  
Nora Phillips  
Deslaun Scott

### PARK UPDATE

Please plan your trip with regard to  
the weather forecast. Our structures  
do not have climate control, so if it's  
warm outside it's warm in our  
buildings! If you visit, please dress  
for the weather as there is also a  
portion of the tour outside.

If you have questions about our tours  
or would like to schedule a large  
group, please give us a call!

**REDCLIFFE PLANTATION**  
**181 REDCLIFFE ROAD**  
**BEECH ISLAND, SC 29842**  
**(803) 827 1473**

# REDCLIFFE

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## SOUTHERN TIMES

## Disability Pride Month

July was designated Disability Pride Month in 1990, so this month we want to share a little about Katharine Hammond Billings' life and historic features in the mansion that were once used to assist moving people between floors.

Katharine Hammond was James Henry's granddaughter, and the youngest daughter of Harry and Emily Hammond. In 1897 she married John Sedgwick Billings – their son John Shaw Billings III would become the last owner of Redcliffe.

In 1907 Katharine was diagnosed with what was once called "Graves Disease." The illness is now known to be an autoimmune disorder that is caused by an overactive thyroid. Because thyroid hormones regulate the way the body uses energy, the disease affected nearly all of her organs, including her heart. Shortly after her diagnoses, Katharine learned of her husband's affair with one of his patients – although shocked and deeply upset by the affair, Katharine chose to remain married for the sake of their sons and to avoid the scrutiny associated with divorce in the early twentieth century.



Katharine Hammond Billings and Miss Revell  
in front of the steps at the Billings new home in  
West Hill, NY in 1910.

“My heart is a little worse, I am a little more swollen and my nights are hideous,” wrote Katharine to her mother Emily in 1910. She believed her ill health was worsened by John Sedgwick's extramarital affair. Despite the early onset of the disease, Katharine lived until 1925 when she ultimately died of a heart attack at her home in Woodstock, NY. She was brought to the Hammond Cemetery where she, as her son described, “rests quietly out there at the edge of the pine thicket.”

Because of her illness, we have photos of Katharine in a wheelchair in the later years of her life. Though, it doesn't look like a wheelchair you may be familiar with. As far as we can tell from the photos, the one she is using is called a Wicker Boardwalk Chair. There were many different kinds of mobility chairs created between the 1700s and early 1900s – the Boardwalk Chair gets its name from tourists and boardwalkers in Atlantic City, NJ. In the late 1800s and early 1900s people would go to the boardwalk in Atlantic City and be pushed around on wicker chairs to enjoy the views. According to the Atlantic City website, “The rolling chair was introduced in the 1880s and was the only vehicle permitted on the Boardwalk at the time. It was once a sign of luxury for vacationers to ride in a rolling chair. A ride in a rolling chair on the Boardwalk is a great way to get to a particular destination or to relax and enjoy a scenic tour.” They still offer chair rides today.



Above: John Sedgwick Billings on a boardwalk in Atlantic City, 1907.



Left: Katharine Hammond Billings on the porch of their home at West Hill, NY in 1910.

All images from the John Shaw Billings Online Photograph Album Collection. Courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

## INCLINATOR CHAIR LIFT

One of the most commented on features in the Redcliffe mansion is this Inclinator chair lift seen on the stairway between the first and second floors. Although no longer operable, this was used by John Shaw and Frederica when they lived in the home. We don't have an exact date for when it was installed, but we have videos of John and Frederica riding on it from the 1950s, so we think it was installed just before the video was made.



The Inclinator was designed by a mechanical engineer in 1924, and the company still makes chair lifts today! To learn more about its development, [visit the company here.](#)

This home video made by John Shaw Billings III [shows him and Frederica riding the Inclinator beginning at time 06:44.](#)



# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

REDCLIFFE PLANTATION STATE HISTORIC SITE

## BEHIND THE SCENES

FRIDAY, JULY 21 AT 6PM

Ever wondered about all the rooms your Redcliffe guide wouldn't let you see on your tour? Behind the Scenes at Redcliffe Plantation is a special opportunity to go behind closed doors in the mansion and other historic structures! We'll check out the attic, basement, rooftop (weather permitting), and portions of outbuildings typically closed off!

\$15 per person  
Tour Limited to 15 People

Program occurs outside and in the mansion, there are stairs to these structures, some walking uphill, and there is no air conditioning. Online registration required.

[Click here to register for Behind the Scenes!](#)

REDCLIFFE PLANTATION STATE HISTORIC SITE

## ROOFTOP MOON VIEWING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1 AT 8:00PM

Join a ranger to walk the magnolia lane, terraces, and visit the mansion rooftop at Redcliffe Plantation for a great view of the full "sturgeon moon." We will provide a telescope on the rooftop, please feel free to bring your own camera. Space on the rooftop is very limited, online registration is required.

Register before Monday, July 31. \$15 per person, family friendly but it will be dark out.

Please bring a flashlight or headlamp and walking shoes. This program is weather dependent and there are four flights of stairs to the rooftop.

[Click here to register for the Rooftop Moon Viewing!](#)