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

Redcliffe Southern Times

VOLUME 15, ISSUE6 DECEMBER 2020

Historic House Tours

Limited access to historic structures now available.

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

Park Staff

Park Manager
Chelsea Stutz

Park Interpreter
—

Park Technician
Jay Markiewicz

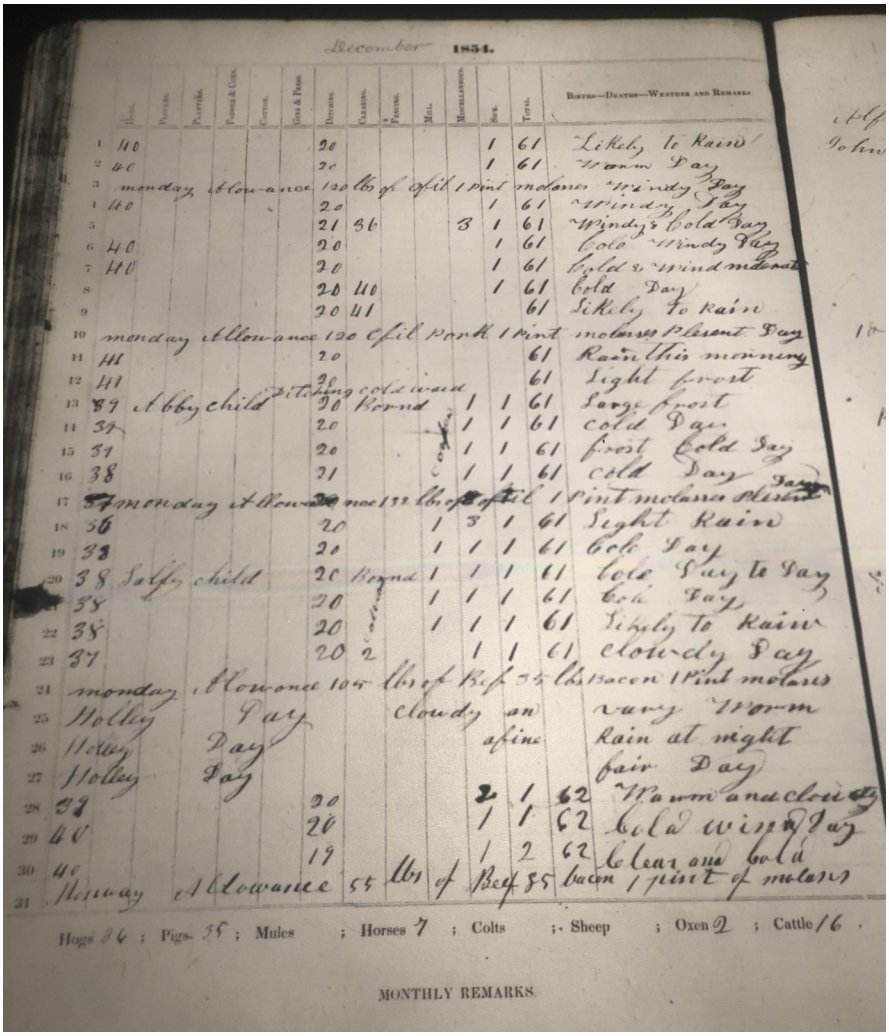
Asst. Park Rangers
Jordan Stenger

Redcliffe Update

Redcliffe staff will be providing limited access to the slave quarters and mansion. These "open houses" will be offered Thursday-Sunday at 11 am. The capacity will be 9 visitors with a fee of $5/person. Check-in will be at the Visitor Center before 11 am. Due to Covid-19 safety concerns, face masks are required upon entering any of the structures. Self-guided exploration of the grounds is free. Please call the park for any questions. There will not be an open house on December 24 or 25, but the grounds will of course be open regular hours.

"Very Warm, Abby Child, Sally Child, Monday Allowance 105 lbs of Beef…" Some New(ly Read) Documents from the Library of Congress

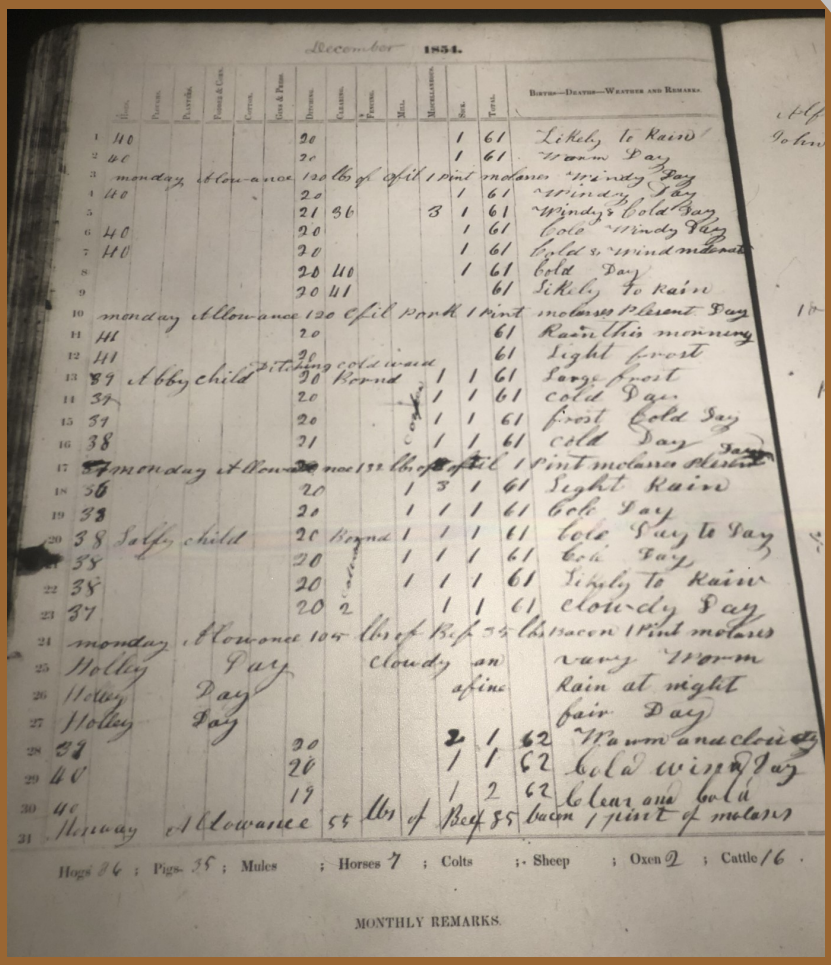
A series of documents that can be found in the Library of Congress' *James Henry Hammond Papers* (more of which we've been able to access thanks to our microfilm reader) are monthly work-calendars, if you will, where Hammond would have tracked and noted many day-to-day details about his various plantations. The page pictured here is believed to be regarding Silver Bluff, but may actually come from Cowden, for the month of December in 1854 (the year before Hammond purchased Redcliffe). Along the left hand side are listed the days in the respective month and across the top are various categories, such as, "Ploughs, Fodder & Corn, Cotton, Clearing, Fencing, Miscellaneous, Sick" and the last column is labeled, "Births–Deaths–Weather And Remarks." These categories appear to account for the work specific enslaved laborers were completing or their condition. For example, on December 1, 40 enslaved workers were hoeing, 20 were ditching, and 1 was sick. On the 5th, however, none were hoeing, but instead 21 were ditching, 36 were clearing the land, 3 are listed as "Miscellaneous" and 1 individual was sick. Along the right hand column, at the end of each row, the day's weather is listed. Christmas is described as "very warm" but earlier in the month several days are listed as having had a frost.



Document from the *James Henry Hammond Papers* at the Library of Congress.

Every Monday the food allowance is listed, which most often includes pork and molasses, but the amount allotted sometimes changes from week to week. The last food allowance in December has the addition of beef, along with pork and molasses. On December 25, 26, and 27, we also see the note "Holley Day." Hammond sometimes gave the enslaved workers a few days off from working in the fields for the Christmas holiday. Some work, of course, never ceased, such as cooking the meals for the Hammond family and tending to other domestic duties the enslaved were responsible for.

Throughout the calendar there are also various events noted. For example, on December 13th and 20th, two enslaved women gave birth, Abby and Sally respectively. Fortunately, there are other extant documents from Hammond to confirm these births and give us further insight into these individuals. Hammond's birth & death registers also list Abby and Sally having children on these dates, but we also learn that Abby's child was a boy, named Julius, and Julius' father was Alonzo. Sally also gave birth to a son that December of 1854, named Ezekiel, and [Mat] was listed as his father (but the transcription is not certain here, and this is Sally Johnson, whom James Henry Hammond admittedly had children by). Many of the children born into slavery under Hammond's ownership died from sickness and disease. Ezekiel and Julius are not listed on Hammond's death registers and both lived through Emancipation to gain their freedom in 1865 when they would've been ten, about to turn eleven years old.


December 1854.

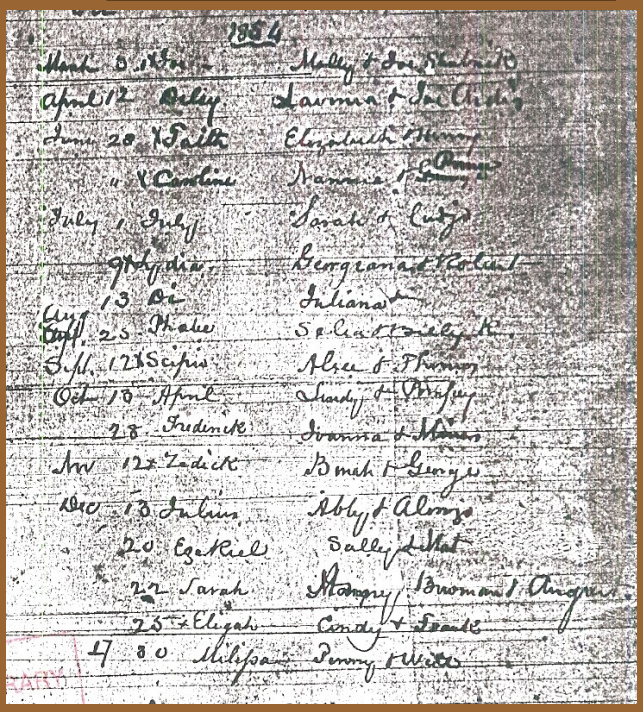
Births—Deaths—Weather and Remarks.

Hogs 84 ; Pigs 35 ; Mules ; Horses 7 ; Colts ; Sheep ; Oxen 2 ; Cattle 16 .

MONTHLY REMARKS.

Document from the *James Henry Hammond Papers* at the Library of Congress.

Documents such as these are significant resources in helping to understand what day-to-day life on an antebellum plantation was like. It is important to keep in mind that antebellum sources at Redcliffe and from Hammond's other plantations are, of course, from the enslaver's and land owner's perspective. It was illegal to teach enslaved people to read or write. So while these documents obviously represent Hammond's perspective, as he wrote them, one can still use these primary sources to attempt to understand what life was like for the enslaved. We know that Hammond's diary entries in the weeks leading up to this time provide a personal perspective and detail feelings of desperation and hopelessness. Yet this document gives the reader a look at his business as it relates to his plantations. According to Hammond, December 13, 1854, was a cold day with a "Large Frost" in which he had 20 enslaved workers "ditching" and 39 "hoeing," and he also gained one more piece of property with the birth of Abby's child, Julius. But what did December 13, 1854 mean to Abby? This day brought the birth of her second child that we know of, and second child with Alonzo. Did she think about whether or not Julius would ever spend a Christmas in true freedom? Could she have imagined that in just under eleven years, emancipation would come for her and the five children she would have by 1865? Did she feel like she could keep her newborn warm enough on this day that brought a "Large Frost?" We cannot answer these questions, but we can continue to use these sources as a window into the lives of those who weren't given a voice for so long.


1854

Birth Register. Document from the *James Henry Hammond Papers* at the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina

Finds in the Attic

This past week, Rangers Chelsea and Jordan were filming a social media video for the South Carolina State Park's *Tidbit Tuesday* segment. This post will be available on the SC State Parks Facebook page on Tuesday the 15th, and will feature some behind-the-scenes views of the attic. While filming, Ranger Jordan discovered a "new" piece of writing under one of the shelves in the attic. Previously, we knew that liquor was at one time stored in this area of the house, due to writings on the shelves, like the ones pictured here that say "Rum, Gin, Scotch Whiskey." We did not know until filming that many more spots on, under, and around the shelves contain writing. Jordan made a specific discovery that we won't give away here, but be sure to tune in on Tuesday to find out what we found.

Artifact of the Month

This month's artifact highlight is of Redcliffe's Tiffany & Co. sterling silver goblets. These goblets are modeled after goblets crafted by a London silversmith, Robert Salmon, in 1791. The photo of the stamp found under the base of the goblet, shows how Tiffany and Co. credited Robert Salmon for the design and style of this goblet. Other silver pieces designed by Robert Salmon can be found on the market today. The six goblets have a monogram engraved into the side of the cup that reads "FWB." That monogram refers to Frederica Wade Billings, the wife of John Shaw Billings who was the final owner of Redcliffe. While Redcliffe is unsure if these pieces have any specific ties to the holidays this month, perhaps they were used to give a toast with friends at Christmas dinner or to ring in the New Year.

SIX GOBLETS

Marked "FWB". Bought
Tiffany & Co NY.
Sept. 10, 1935.
Cost $186 ($31 each)