**40TH ANNIVERSARY DEATH OF JOHN SHAW BILLINGS**

It is easy to forget that someone was still living in the mansion at Redcliffe just forty years ago. In 1975 the estate was home to John & Elise Billings, who entertained friends and family in the 116-year-old mansion. Just a few years before, in 1973, John had donated the property to the state of South Carolina asking only that he be allowed to continue living in the home until his death. On August 25, 1975, John Shaw Billings passed away after being admitted to University Hospital in Augusta, GA earlier in the month.

One of four original photographers contributing to LIFE magazine, Alfred Eisenstaedt became one of the magazine’s most well-known photographers. He photographed more than 2,500 stories in his 36-year career (1936-1972) and had more than 90 photos grace the cover of LIFE.

Eisenstaedt’s most well-known photograph is the iconic image of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square, New York on V-J Day (August 14, 1945) following the end of hostilities with Japan. The photograph was taken with a Leica IIIa camera and appeared a week later in LIFE magazine.

Redcliffe owner John Shaw Billings was managing editor of Time-LIFE when the picture was first published.

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Bad Jokes are Timeless

Call it a joke, a pun, or an anecdote. But, sometimes, good humor might be in bad taste...

After visiting Beech Island during the summer of 1862 a reporter for Charleston’s The Courier published the following in the July 6th issue of the paper:

“At the meeting yesterday [of the Beech Island Agricultural Club], I had the pleasure of meeting and greeting my esteemed friend, the gallant Col. Thomas G Lamar, the laureled hero and victor of the Battle of Secessionville [June 16, 1862], one of the hardest and best fought battles of our glorious war of independence. He looked well, although his wounds are far from being cicatrized, or even healed, as yet. A minnie ball passed through his neck and the nether part of his left ear, scooping or indenting it. In complimentary allusion to Col. L.’s wound in the ear, my friend Aldrich perpetrated a conundrum –

Query – What trophy has Col. Lamar won in battle to transmit to his posterity?

Answer – An heir [ear] loom.”

Sadly, Col. Thomas Lamar died from malaria just months later in October of 1862, at the age of 35.

Document of the Month

Eisenstaedt’s Redcliffe Photographs

“July 1939 On a vacation in the South, Alfred Eisenstaedt, LIFE’s crack photographer, went by Redcliffe and took the following pictures.” This note was recorded in the scrapbooks of John Shaw Billings, managing editor of LIFE and owner of Redcliffe in 1939. This series of photographs show landscapes, interior shots and images of the people who lived and worked at Redcliffe in 1939. Eisenstaedt’s portrait of Patience Crawford (bottom right) was done more than a decade before his iconic portraits of Albert Einstein and Marilyn Monroe. To see all of Eisenstaedt’s 1939 photographs of Redcliffe visit http://library.sc.edu/digital/collections/jsb.html, choose “Entire Volume 1” from the drop down box and view pages 130 - 139.