The World Turned Upside Down

“To me it seems as if I had been in two worlds, and two existences, the old and the new, and to those knowing only the latter, the old will appear almost like mythology and romance, so thorough has been the upheaval and obliteration of the methods and surroundings of the past.”  ~ E. Spann Hammond

RECONSTRUCTION.  
Not just the rebuilding of the South but a time of adjustment where communities dealt with the social, economic and political changes wrought by the Civil War. It must have felt to many, upper class planters and newly emancipated freedmen alike, as if the world had turned upside down.

Three Views on Reconstruction:
E. Spann Hammond, a son of Redcliffe’s James Henry Hammond, was thirty-one years old when the war ended. He had lived half his life in a position of wealth and privilege but found himself struggling to make a living at his father’s Cowden Plantation after the war. In a letter to a friend around 1900 Hammond wrote of the difference between his life before the war and after the war as “two worlds, and two existences, the old and the new…” The changes wrought by the Civil War and Reconstruction were so thorough that he referred to them as “the upheaval and obliteration of the methods and surroundings of the past.”

Violet Guntharpe was just eleven when she was emancipated from the plantation where she had been enslaved in Fairfield County, SC in 1865. Violet expressed the fear that many freed men and women experienced at their abrupt change in circumstances when she declared in 1937, “Honey us wasn’t ready for the big change that come!”

Catherine F. Hammond, widow of James Henry Hammond, wrote in 1865 that she could “scarcely restrain a burst of complaint at my change in circumstances—but as I compare my lot with many others, I see only cause for thankfulness.”

“Honey, us wasn’t ready for the big change that come! Us had no education, no land, no mule, no cow, not a pig, nor a chicken, to set up housekeeping. The birds had nests in the air, the foxes had holes in the ground, and the fishes had beds under the great falls, but us colored folks was left without any place to lay our heads.”  ~ Violet Guntharpe, Former Slave from Fairfield, SC

The EDUCATION of Miss Betty Hammond

Elizabeth “Betty” Hammond was the apple of her father’s eye. The youngest of eight children born to Catherine and James Hammond of Redcliffe, Betty was a young woman who grew up surrounded by wealth, power, and privilege. The education deemed necessary for a young lady of the time gave Betty a broad variety of experiences and lessons through travel, home schooling, formal schooling and tutors. Her earliest lessons came from her mother. Later in life Betty recalled that her mother had taught her to read (con’t pg 2)
Revisiting the Dog Days of Summer

In our July 2016 issue of the Redcliffe Southern Times we presented the dog days of summer and although that issue was all about actual dogs we wanted to revisit the theme this month. While looking through some old issues of the Augusta Chronicle we found this amusing article about the origins of the “dog days of summer,” weather conditions in August of 1866 and, strangely enough, references to doomsday and a peculiar kind of safe. Our favorite line? “The 11th was hot—the 12th was hotter—the 13th hotter still…” Sounds like August of any year to us!

Some 19th Century Tidbits:

**Millerites** were adherents of Adventist preacher William Miller who predicted the world would end on April 23, 1844.

**Salamander Safes** were named for salamanders, creatures who, mythically, were thought to be impervious to fire. Thus “salamander” safes were fire proof.