In the summer of 1858 Britannia Peter Kennon rented her home, Tudor Place, to the Pendleton family and went to board in the neighborhood of Georgetown. Only once before had she lived away from the house built by her parents, Thomas and Martha Custis Peter. On her marriage to Commodore Beverley Kennon in 1842 Britannia joined her husband at the Washington Navy Yard; after his death two years later she returned to the shelter of her family and the familiar walls and grounds of her youth. Now financial difficulties prompted her action.

Britannia Kennon rented her home and property to the Pendleton family, but some mystery clings to which Pendleton family. In her Reminiscences Britannia describes Mrs. Pendleton only as a wealthy widow who had married a poor Virginian. The United States Census of 1860 notes that W.A. Pendleton resided at Tudor Place with his wife Mary, three young children and J.J. Pendleton, Sr. A Georgetown directory of 1860 confirms this fact, and lists William A. Pendleton, lawyer, residing north of Congress [31st] Street and Stoddard [Q] Streets.

However, a friend of Britannia’s, Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax, states in her diary that Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Pendleton called to invite her to dine with them at Tudor Place on New Year’s Eve. She adds, “Mrs. Pendleton is the daughter of one of my favorite relatives—Eliza Magruder—The clans of Magruder and Lindsay have ever been closely connected . . .”. While the directory and census hold strong weight, it seems odd that Lomax would mistake the name of the husband of the daughter of one of her favorite relatives. If Lomax is correct, then the Pendletons who lived at Tudor Place were John Lewis Pendleton and his wife Eliza Bankhead Magruder, the sister of General John Bankhead Magruder, C.S.A. Their son, however, was Eugene Beauharnais Pendleton. Eugene Pendleton is mentioned many times in Lomax’s diary when he visited the Lomax home in Washington. It is possible that Lomax confused the names of the father and son, or that an error was made in the transcription for publication of the diary.

Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax (1796-1867), widow of Major Mann Page Lomax of Fredericksburg, Virginia, proves an excellent source for information on the life of pre-war Washington and Georgetown. The diary begins in 1854 and ends in 1863, and her entries indicate social engagements with Britannia Kennon; they were more than casual acquaintances. Lomax wished to build a house in Washington, and like other prospective builders then and now, received unsolicited advice from her friends on where to locate: “Mrs. Davidge, Mrs. Prendergast and Mrs. Peter [Kennon] came in for tea and talked at length about the beauty and charm of Georgetown—endeavored to persuade me to build
in Georgetown”. Lomax notes, “Mrs. Kennon, Major and Mrs. Maynadier, Mrs.
Gordon, Mattie and Dick Poor came in for tea . . .”, and “Mrs. Kennon and Mrs.
Prendergast called this afternoon and remained for tea. We are dining with Mrs. Kennon
at Tudor Place on Saturday evening”. In May Britannia called on Lomax again, this time
accompanied by Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Wickham, and invited Lomax to dine with her the
following Tuesday evening. Lomax willingly accepted: “I love to go there. Tudor Place is
delightfully situated on the Heights of Georgetown with a beautiful view of the Potomac
and the hills of Virginia”. Britannia Kennon visited Lomax in January of 1859 and came
to tea again in February of that year. After this point Britannia’s visits fall off.

Despite the coming threat of war, the Pendleton family led an active social life and fit
easily into Georgetown and Washington society. Lomax’s diary gives a vivid account of
the Pendleton’s activities: “Lizzie Poor, Dick, Austin and Vic went to a party at Mrs.
Pendleton’s . . . said they had a most enjoyable time”; she records that in June Mrs.
Pendleton sent her own carriage to help Lomax move to her new house, and that they
dined together that evening. Soon afterwards Mrs. Pendleton called on her to take a drive
along the canal and two of Lomax’s daughters went to “Mrs. Pendleton’s soiree”. By
October of 1860, however, the climate began to change. Mr. and Mrs. Pendleton spent
the evening with Lomax: “We had some music, but were not very merry . . . the appalling
war cloud growing darker and darker each day . . .”.

While the Pendletons lived at Tudor Place, Britannia Kennon boarded at Mrs. Abbot’s
house at 3014 West [P] Street, at the southeast corner of West and Washington [30th]
Streets. Mrs. Abbot was the widow of schoolmaster William R. Abbot, and she began to
take in borders ca. 1853. Martha Custis Peter, Britannia’s mother, wrote to a
granddaughter: “I do not know if anyone has told you of Mr. Abbots death, he died in the
Fall. A clergyman by the name of Mansfield, has taken his school --& Mrs. A. boards
him, & some of the boys --for her support.” Britannia may not have boarded at Mrs.
Abbot’s permanently. She may have also stayed with her Uncle Robert Dick. Her
daughter, Martha Custis Kennon [Markie], was at school in the North. Markie wrote
several letters from school to her mother in 1858 and 1859 addressed to her in the care of
Robert Dick who lived on N Street.

When war finally broke out in 1861 Britannia Kennon briefly thought about going
North to safety, but quickly reconsidered. In April Britannia and Markie, her daughter,
packed their trunks and went to Staunton, Virginia, where they remained until mid-July.
According to Britannia, they boarded at a private home, later identified by her grandson,
Armistead Peter, Jr., as a family home of Britannia’s friend Elizabeth Lindsay
Lomax. Thus began a nomadic existence for the two women —and for many genteel
Southern women of their status in life. Due to reduced circumstances and often lacking
the protection of a husband or son, many women traveled from southern town to town
seeking cheap lodgings and safety.

Fearful that the “Yankeys” would come to Staunton after the defeat of Confederate
General Robert S. Garnett at Cheat Mountain in July 1861, Britannia and Markie hurried
to Richmond. They remained there until mid-November at Mrs. Dabney’s boarding
house, but soon removed to Petersburg, where they boarded one month at Mrs. Page’s.
To their dismay, they felt like refugees, “. . . and very poor.” They were unprepared for the onset of winter; a cousin gave Britannia Kennon one flannel skirt.

Before she left Tudor Place, Britannia had stored her furniture in the Seminary Building on N Street, where she thought it would be safe. While in Virginia Britannia learned that the federal government had confiscated the building where she had placed the furniture for a hospital and ordered it emptied. Dr. Joshua Riley, an old Georgetown neighbor and friend, kindly had Britannia’s furnishings “hauled pell-mell to Bridge [M] Street,” where they were stored in Mrs. John Abbot’s house between Jefferson [Jefferson] and Washington [30th] Streets. Fearing that the government might try to take Tudor Place for a hospital and its grounds for a cemetery, she decided to return to Georgetown and reclaim her ancestral home. Britannia had good reason to worry; this was to be the fate of her cousin Robert E. Lee’s home, Arlington. Britannia’s niece, Martha Custis Williams, wrote on March 22, 1862, “I read in the paper that my beloved home Arlington was to be taken as an (sic) hospital for the Soldiers. My heart has been aching all day.”

But this journey was not easily expedited. Britannia and Markie went to Norfolk and received permission to come up in the first flag of truce. In two days time they boarded a confederate boat and were met mid-water by the federal flag. They transferred to the federal ship and arrived at Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, but as they were known Confederates both were kept aboard. An officer inspected their baggage; he opened the trunk but looked only at one tray. The difficulties and inconveniences of such a journey south to the north were not unusual; Lomax described a similar endeavor from Norfolk to Baltimore in 1861.

The next morning Britannia and Markie arrived at Baltimore. They went at once to Britannia’s brother, George Washington Peter, who lived at Lynnwood in Ellicott Mills [Ellicott City], Maryland. Britannia remained there one week, but was determined to save her home. According to her records, she left her daughter Markie with her Uncle Washington, and arrived at Tudor Place on January 1, 1862.

Meanwhile the Pendleton family had gone to Virginia and left the house with a caretaker. Josiah Dent, a local lawyer, had a thriving wartime practice as the custodian of absentee property. Thus Britannia came home to an empty house. She found the garden in ruins: “. . . the flower knot was grown up in weeds, the box untrimmed and grown to such a size –In fact, the whole place was neglected and unkempt!” But Britannia took possession this time forever of her “dear old place.” What her feelings were about renting her house to strangers we can only guess, but Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax confirms our suspicions: “Mrs. Kennon of Tudor Place had tea with me this afternoon. She advised me strongly to hold on to my own house and not be induced to rent it . . .” Yet financial woes continued to plague Britannia, perhaps now more than ever. In the spring of 1862, Britannia firmly decided to take boarders. To save her house, grounds, and family history, she knew that despite her feelings to the contrary, she should take Yankee officers. When asked later by a cousin what her mother, Martha Custis Peter, would have said about this decision, Britannia answered, “She would have given me credit for doing what necessity required . . . “.
Britannia’s Rule: Britannia Rules

. . . I took possession of the dear old place again and that Spring concluded to take boarders. –I had people from nearly every state in the Union –and nearly all of them were “Yankeys”. . . I was always very fortunate for I never had any trouble with any of them. I always told them that I was aware of their sentiments and that they were aware of mine and that I should not intrude my feelings on them and should expect the same of them. Before me they never discussed the war and showed me every consideration.

--- Britannia’s Reminiscences, as recorded by her Grandson, Armistead Peter, Jr., February 26, 1897

While Britannia’s boarders respected her request not to talk about the war in her presence, as Yankees they could not have been happy about the way the war was going. By the end of 1862 the Union army was in disarray. General William S. Rosencrans advanced against Confederate General Braxton Bragg and fighting was fierce from December 30, 1862 - January 2, 1863 around Stone River, near Murphreesboro, Tennessee. Eventually the battle was won by Union forces, but Rosencrans’ men were shaken to the core and would take a long time to recover. General Ulysses S. Grant was at Vicksburg, planning to attack from the east, while General William Tecumsah Sherman went down the Mississippi River to hit Confederate defenses south of the Yazoo River just north of Vicksburg. Their plan was to catch Confederate General John C. Pemberton in their crossfire. But Confederate General Earl Van Dorn unexpectedly captured Grant’s supplies at Holly Springs, and Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest disrupted Grant’s line of communications. Grant was immobilized. Sherman reached the mouth of the Yazoo River and attacked, but Pemberton pushed him back. The campaign against Vicksburg was stymied. Thus the new year of 1863 began with weariness and discontent. The casualty lists were long and overwhelming. The future of the country depended on the recovery of the Federal force in the field.

In 1863 the Confederates won a spectacular victory at Chancellorsville on May 1; but it cost the life of General Thomas [Stonewall] Jackson, a talisman of the Confederacy, whose confidence in Jackson was unshakeable. But then the tide began to turn. It was the July 1-3 battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the biggest battle of the war, that shattered the Army of Northern Virginia, struck Southern morale to the core, and gave new hope to the Union’s cause. Grant’s grip on Vicksburg had strengthened, and he captured the city at last on July 4. Grant was named supreme commander in the West. On November 24 and 25, 1863 in the twin battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, Grant drove Confederate Braxton Bragg’s army back into Georgia and the Federal force now controlled Tennessee. By the end of the year a more confident Union Army gathered strength and greeted the New Year with open arms.

That winter the nation’s capital was quiet; military affairs were at a standstill. Washington society was now redefined. Those representatives of wealth and culture before the war receded quietly into the background. Some went south in defense of the Southern cause; older citizens remained under the cloak of neutrality, but nobody doubted that they observed more than they pretended to, and found the means to relay
information south. Washington society was now composed of strangers from the loyal states: republicans and their followers, military officers and their supportive families, new government officials, and ambitious contractors. This newly wrought society, “... was wanting in homogeneity, and the old-fashioned indolence and polish.” With time the old and the new societies each crystallized, but the opposing levels did not mesh. The new society centered on the White House, cabinet officers, and diplomats; the older generation was “... hospitable to well-introduced strangers, but silent on the events of the day... strong in their admiration of General Lee, and 'President Davis.'” These were the issues Britannia’s boarders could not and would not discuss before her, but were in the air.

**Will Britannia Kennon’s Boarders Please Stand Up?**

The evidence that Britannia Kennon decided to take boarders at Tudor Place is an account book in her hand for 1863, which notes the name of the boarder, the date of payment, and the amount of money paid. These names include only surnames: Dr. Brinton; Capt. Chapin; Mr. Dent; Mrs. Downing; Mr. Grant; Dr. Lee; Mrs. Letterman; Dr. Myers; Dr. [also noted as Mr.] McNairy; Gov. Randall; Mrs. Rice; Mr. Risley; Capt. Shull (sic); Mr. Steel (sic); Judge Stickney; Mr. Thompson (sic). A few of these names were readily identifiable; several were possibly identifiable; and some names were too common to identify at all. Britannia clung to her idea to board Yankees; many of her boarders were surgeons, and many enlisted from Pennsylvania.

Mary Digges Lee Letterman was the wife of Dr. Jonathan Letterman, and if she boarded at Tudor Place it is hard to believe that her husband did not ever visit her here. Dr. Letterman enlisted from Pennsylvania as an Assistant Surgeon on June 29, 1849. He served as the Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac December 1862-December 1863. He has been described as, “a small, slight taciturn man with the earnest face of a student... [but] with General McClellan’s backing, this quiet little man rehabilitated the service of the wounded in the Army of the Potomac.” Letterman established an ambulance corps, reorganized the hospitals and dressing stations, and developed a system to speed medical and surgical supplies to the front. His programs were so effective that they were adopted by all the Union armies and his field medical service has become the basis of the medical system employed by all modern armies. Surgeon Letterman asked to be relieved of his duties in December 1863 time and then served as Medical Inspector of Hospitals in the Department of the Susquehanna. He wrote his memoirs in 1866. The Lettermans were married at Old Needwood in Frederick County, Maryland, on October 15, 1863. Letterman’s payments to Britannia in November and December 1863 appear to corroborate this. The fact that Dr. Letterman left the area for his new duty in January also coincides with these payments.

Noted by Britannia Kennon only as Dr. Lee, there is a good chance that this was Charles Carroll Lee, Assistant Surgeon in the Regular Army. Lee enlisted on October 1, 1861 from Pennsylvania. He served at the Douglas Hospital in Washington. Lee was related to Mrs. Jonathan Letterman as either a brother or a cousin; Dr. Jonathan
Letterman met his future wife at Dr. Charles Carroll Lee’s home, Old Needwood, in Frederick County, Maryland, in the autumn of 1862. Britannia Kennon recorded the payments of Dr. John Hill Brinton and Capt. Gideon Shull (sic) together. John Hill Brinton enlisted in the Army from Pennsylvania as Brigade Surgeon and Surgeon of Volunteers in August 1861. A first cousin to George Brinton McClellan, he received orders to report to Washington, where he became immersed in the preparation of a medical and surgical history of the war and established the Army Medical Museum, where he is remembered today as its first curator. He wrote a valuable memoir of the war in 1891; it was published in 1914. Due to Britannia’s misspelling of Scull as “Shull” or “Skull”, he was harder to trace. Scull enlisted from Pennsylvania as Captain of the Subsistence Department in August 1861. He and Dr. Brinton were close friends; Brinton speaks highly of him in his memoirs.

The names of three women appear in the account book; we can only guess why they were at Tudor Place. These include Mrs. Downing, Mrs. Rice, and Mrs. Chapin. These women were possibly wives of soldiers, who traveled to Washington to be near their husbands. Mrs. Downing paid for the months of November and December 1863; she could have been the wife of Assistant Surgeon John C. Clark Downing. Downing enlisted in the Army in August 1861 and was a member of the Volunteer Medical Staff. Mrs. Rice could have been the wife of Lewis C. Rice, who enlisted as an Assistant Surgeon of the Volunteer Medical Staff from Pennsylvania in January 1863; this date could correspond to Mrs. Rice’s payments of March and April. The third woman to pay rent to Britannia Kennon was Mrs. Chapin, although her husband, Capt. Chapin, also made payments. This could have been Andrew Bliss Chapin who enlisted as an Assistant Surgeon from Michigan in September 1862. Surgeon Chapin had charge of the hospital at St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1863. Chapin’s home state of Michigan is an anomaly; but it is also possible that a fellow surgeon suggested Tudor Place as a good place for Chapin’s wife to board. The proximity to Annapolis is a favorable assumption.

Several of the boarders are noted as “Mr.” It is likely these men were civilians, or Britannia would probably have addressed them by rank, but she could have been in error. It is also possible that this was a way of avoiding the forbidden subject of war. These include Mr. Grant, Mr. Steel (sic) and Miss Steel, Mr. Thompson (sic), Mr. Risley, and Mr./Dr. McNairy, noted by both titles.

Britannia mentions in her Reminiscences “... a family of Grants from Maine and while here Mrs. Grant had a baby born in the (office) wing.” Britannia recorded this in 1897, and may be forgiven for misidentifying a Yankee state. She omits the year that the Grants boarded at Tudor Place, but this was probably General Lewis Addison Grant of Vermont, who enlisted in 1861. Grant fought bravely at the Battle of Gettysburg, where he commanded the First Vermont Brigade on Little Round Top on July 2 and 3, 1863. Grant led his command at the Battle of Salem Heights, Virginia, in May 1863, where he captured three battle flags and was wounded in the attack. In 1864 the Old Vermont Brigade answered a call from the President to defend the nation’s capital. This brigade was picked by General Philip Sheridan to follow Confederate General Jubal Early up the
Shenandoah Valley; Grant took part in the Battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia, in October 1864. Grant later served as Assistant Secretary of War from 1890-1893 under President Benjamin Harrison. This could not have been General Ulysses S. Grant; Britannia notes quite clearly, “Mr. Dent was very interested on having Mrs. Grant (wife of General Grant) take “the wing,” as they had a daughter they wanted to put at the Convent in Georgetown. –I told him I could not take them.” General Ulysses S. Grant was from Ohio.

Mr. Franklin Steele lived on the southeast corner of Frederick (34th) and Prospect Streets during the Civil War; but the question arises as to why he would board at Tudor Place if he had a house and family nearby in Georgetown. Franklin Steele had three daughters; there was a payment by a Miss Steele. Britannia’s niece, however, who lived at Tudor Place in 1862, notes the frequent presence of the Reverend Floridas Steel (sic) in March of that year, but it is not known if this is the same Mr. Steel of the 1863 account book. There is no information to identify Mr. Risley. One doctor, Dr. McNairy, could not be located; there was a surgeon named Robert B. McNairy of the 3rd Kentucky Cavalry, but this seems an unlikely choice for board at Tudor Place. A Dr. Myers paid $25 a month for September, October, and November, but there are at least five surgeons named Myers in the Union Army.

Britannia Kennon noted the presence of Mr. Thompson (sic), who paid rent in July and August. While the name as written is too common to identify, Dr. John Hill Brinton in his memoirs constantly refers to "my old friend," Dr. William Thomson. Assistant Surgeon William Thomson enlisted from Pennsylvania in August 1861. Thomson was at one time in charge of the Douglas Hospital in Washington. It is noteworthy that he was at Tudor Place in July 1863, the same month Dr. Brinton was present; his payment of $32 suggests that he may have only taken meals there. It is possible that Britannia mistakenly omitted "Dr." from his name, just as she confused McNairy.

However, one of Britannia’s civilian boarders was easily identified, Governor Alexander W. Randall (1819-1872). Randall was elected governor of Wisconsin on the Republican ticket in 1857 and again in 1859. He was appointed Assistant Postmaster General in 1863 by President Lincoln, the first Wisconsin resident appointed to the cabinet of a president. He later served as Postmaster General under President Andrew Johnson from 1866-1869; however, his political career ended with Johnson’s impeachment. His career as Assistant Postmaster corresponds in 1863 with his four payments to Britannia Kennon.

One civilian known only as Mr. Dent was probably the local agent who the Pendletons left in charge of the house. Mr. Dent made but one payment in March of $26; this small amount of money suggests he may have taken meals briefly at Tudor Place. Josiah Dent (1817-1899) was an attorney born in Charles County, Maryland, but eventually resided and practiced law in St. Louis, Missouri. When war broke out in 1861, Dent removed to Washington where he had a career as custodian of property. Most of his clientele were Confederates. Dent married the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Linthicum; their son, Edward Linthicum Dent, inherited the estate “The Oaks,” which we know today as Dumbarton Oaks. Dent Place in Georgetown is named for this family.

Judge Stickney was Judge John Buffington Stickney (1832-1882), born in Lynn, Massachusetts. He graduated from Yale University in 1856, read law in New York City.
and in his father's law office, and in 1857 was admitted to the Massachusetts bar. During the Civil War he raised a company of volunteers, and joined the army on August 1, 1862 as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 35th Massachusetts Regiment. He saw active service at Antietam, South Mountain, and Fredericksburg. He acted as Judge Advocate and Adjutant of the Regiment. His presence during 1863 at Tudor Place remains a mystery.

One last border’s name does not appear in this account book, but deserves mention. A note written by Armistead Peter, Jr., tells of a brief incident that sheds light on Britannia Kennon and the times in which she bravely defied the Union government and kept her house and property and family intact. The note concerns a Mrs. Horner and her son, who boarded at Tudor Place. No information on a surgeon named Horner could be found, but two surgeons named Hornor surfaced. Caleb Wright Hornor, an Assistant Surgeon of Volunteers, enlisted from Pennsylvania in November 1862; Samuel Henry Hornor, Assistant Surgeon, enlisted from Pennsylvania in April 1862. Mrs. Horner [Hornor] was possibly the wife of one of these men.

Britannia recalled:

During the war the feelings on both sides was (sic) intensely bitter. Even the little children entertained, indeed were taught to cherish, these feelings of hatred. When I returned from the South as you know I had to fill the house with boarders, all of whom were of course Northern sympathizers. –Fourteen were seated at my table every day . . . Among them were Mrs. Horner (sic) and her son “Little Mackie Horner” as he was called . . . the little fellow was here with his mother and the child seemed fond of me. [He said] “Mama, don’t you think if Mrs. Kennon died don’t you think she would go to heaven!”

Years later the boy, now a man, returned with his mother to visit Britannia. As they were leaving, Britannia told him what he had said that day long ago. According to Britannia, the man said, “Oh Mrs. Kennon, did I say that. I hope you will never think of it again.” Britannia replied, “Why, Mackie, I will never forget it as long as I live . . .”

Epilogue: Summer of 1863

This is all we know at present of the people who boarded at Tudor Place in 1863. But Dr. John Hill Brinton described the life there, his home-away-from-home one summer during those hard years:

I spent the entire summer of 1863 at Peter Place (sic) on Georgetown Heights . . . The place, beautiful as it was, with the remains of former grandeur, was essentially southern in its tone. The family to which it had belonged, were all in southern service, and its associations and surroundings were especially “Secesh.” My friend Scull, of the Subsistence Department, and I had rooms in an outlying building, which I rather think was intended for the domestics in bygone times. I will not say that we boarded at Peter Place (sic). “Boarder” is almost a vulgar word, not in consonance with the stateliness of the Mansion; we simply slept there in the aforesaid wing, and “took our meals” in the dining room with the big
folding windows down to the ground, looking out on the high portico; we ate quietly and demurely, not talking much, never alluding to the war or army, or battles or marches. Uniform was not worn; we were simply citizens, enjoying the cool air of Georgetown Heights. The compensation was managed by Scull, who prided himself on his delicacy, the exact amount of our indebtedness (in clean notes) being placed in a note envelope, with the compliments of Majors Scull and Brinton, and handed to the waiter. An equally refined acknowledgement of its receipt would reach us the next day by the black Mercury. With all its formality and absurdities, Peter Place (sic) was a delightful spot on these summer evenings, and I thoroughly enjoyed sitting under the trees, and smoke a pipe or cigar after dinner. The rides around Georgetown, too, were very pretty.32

Our legendary heroes of the Civil War have with good reason withdrawn from us; the confident welcome light of their youth grew cold and shrouded by the events they witnessed. And yet their light is still bright enough to illuminate people such as these, names unfamiliar who performed feats no longer recognized, lives tangential but not inconsequential, lives that burned brightly if briefly, now momentarily rescued from our common past.

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NOTES

1 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Britannia Peter Kennon Papers, MS 7, Box 69, F 24. Unless otherwise noted all further references to Britannia’s life during the Civil War are from Britannia’s Reminiscences [unpaginated]. Britannia Kennon dictated her memories to her grandson, Armistead Peter, Jr., who wrote them down. These memories, especially the Civil War events, were recorded many years after the events had occurred, and the passage of time inevitably altered details and dates. In his book Tudor Place, Armistead Peter 3rd, Britannia Kennon’s great grandson, notes, “She had leased the house, the only time it was ever leased in its history, to a Mr. Pendleton. I used to think, and my father thought, that he was a Representative from Virginia at that time, but subsequent information indicates that that was not true.” Unfortunately Peter does not reveal the subsequent information. Armistead Peter 3rd, Tudor Place. Georgetown: Privately Printed, 1969, p. 9.

2 Lindsay Lomax Wood, ed., Leaves from an Old Washington Diary 1854-1863 Written by Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., reprint 1943, p. 91 (December 27, 1858). The Virginia Historical Society holds the Lomax Family Papers of 1776-1960 and the manuscript of this diary. All further references to Lomax’s activities and observations are taken from this source.

3 Lomax, 59. Lomax mistakenly recorded “Mrs. Peter.” This could not have been Mrs. [Martha] Peter as Peter died in 1854. No doubt it was Britannia Kennon who recalled her mother’s name to Lomax (November 21, 1856).


5 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Martha Custis Williams, MS 6, Box 1, F 5, Martha Peter to Martha Custis Williams, January 17, 1853.

6 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Britannia Peter Kennon, MS 7, Box 1, F 11, Martha Custis Kennon to Britannia Peter Kennon, Letters of October 16, 1858, April 2, 1859, May 4, 1859, May 14, 1859, May 17, 1859.

7 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 69, F 23. Peter writes that his grandmother, “went to Staunton, Va., and boarded with the Lomax family.” It is not known if this was the home of Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax. Lomax herself was persuaded in 1861 to stay with her kinsman Judge John Tayloe Lomax in Fredericksburg at Menokin; possibly Britannia stayed at Menokin but Armistead Peter, Jr., had confused the cities. To add to this confusion, years later in 1870 Robert E. Lee, Britannia’s cousin by marriage, wrote in a letter to his wife, “I understand that Markie Peter and child are occupying her old quarters at the Lomaxes near Warrenton.” Captain Robert E. Lee, Recollections and Letters by General Robert E. Lee. New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1904, p.425, letter of August 14, 1870.

8 See Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax’s Leaves from an Old Washington Diary and Mary Chestnut’s A Diary from Dixie as further evidence of this peripatetic existence.

9 General Robert S. Garnett fell in battle at Cheat Mountain in western Virginia, the first Civil War general killed in battle. General George Brinton McClellan was the commander of the Northern forces here and this success began his march to command the Union army in the East.

10 Ecker, 155. One resident of Georgetown remembered: “I have often heard my mother tell of how the Southern girls would not walk under the Stars and Stripes hanging from the hospital in the Seminary. They would cross to the other side of the street, and when the Union officers passed, they held aside their skirts.”

11 Dr. Riley was the mentor of the man who was eventually to marry Markie Kennon in 1867, her cousin Dr. Armistead Peter, a son of Major George Peter. Mrs. John Abbot was the mother-in-law of Mrs. William Abbot, where Britannia had boarded.

12 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, MS 6, Box 4, F 5, Papers of Martha Custis Williams, Diary entry March 22, 1862. A wartime law required that property owners in areas occupied by Federal troops appear in person to pay their taxes. Mary Lee was not able to do this, and her estate was legally confiscated in 1864.


14 Ibid. p. 263.

15 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Britannia Peter Kennon, MS 7, Box 3, F 2.


18 This information was provided by Terry Reiner, Director of Research, National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Maryland. Ms Reiner adds that the witnesses to the marriage were Outerbridge Horsey, a relative who lived nearby, and Dr. Charles Carroll Lee (b.1801), a friend of Jonathan Letterman related to Mary Digges Lee (b.1800).

20 This information was provided by Terry Reimer, Director of Research, National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Maryland. The Needwood Mansion exists today in Derwood, Maryland.

21 This museum is known today as the National Museum of Health & Medicine.

22 Heitman, 245; Atkinson, 276; Brinton, 13.

23 Heitman, 871.

24 Ibid., 382.

25 Ibid., 827. Director of Research Terry Reimer of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine notes that there were at least twelve surgeons named Rice in the Union Army.

26 Heitman, 295.

27 Atkinson, 516.


29 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden, Papers of Martha Custis Williams, MS 6, Box 4, F 5, diary entries August 62, August 20, 1862, August 24, 1862, August 29, 1862. Williams’ spelling of this name varies from entry to entry.

30 This information was provided by Terry Reimer, Director of Research, National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Maryland.

31 John H. Brinton, 232; Heitman, 958.


33 Eckert, 303-304.

34 Yale University, Manuscripts and Archives, New Haven, Connecticut.

35 Heitman, 542-543.

36 Tudor Place Historic House and Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 77, F 2, note dated January 2, 1897.

37 Brinton, 247-248.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Terry Reimer, Director of Research, National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, Maryland; we also thank Waneta Gagne, Librarian/Archivist at The Maryland Room, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick County Public Library, Frederick, Maryland.