PROTECTING THE WITNESSES:
Tree Preservation at Tudor Place

"With all its formality and absurdities, Peter Place was a delightful spot on these summer evenings, and I thoroughly enjoyed sitting under the trees…” recalled Dr. John H. Brinton,1 a Brigade Surgeon and Surgeon of Volunteers Union Officer boarding at Tudor Place during the summer of 1863. Dr. Brinton admired the estate’s trees and landscape during his stay; “The place, beautiful as it was, with the remains of former grandeur, was essentially southern in its tone.” While the tree canopy has changed since Dr. Brinton enjoyed his summer evenings in the garden, a number of the trees first planted on the historic site would still be recognized by him. Through the efforts of four Peter family owners, the enslaved and free workers on the estate, and 25 years under the watchful eye of the Tudor Place Foundation, many of the stately old witness trees have been preserved for generations.

The oldest species in the landscape are native to the mid-Atlantic region and may well have been on the property at the time Martha and Thomas Peter purchased it. The three genera comprising the estate’s witness trees are: *Quercus* (Oak); *Liriodendron*, (Tulip Poplar); and *Ilex* (Holly). The American holly (*Ilex opaca*) residing in the center of what has become a holly grove at the foot of the South Lawn, is believed to have been planted by Thomas and Martha Peter (Figure 1) and can be seen in the earliest photos of the South Lawn. Over the ages, the holly tree has grown into a neighboring holly, now resembling a double trunked tree surrounded by offshoots that create a grove of hollies that school children today enjoy exploring.

The white oaks (*Quercus alba*) and tulip poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) found throughout the garden represent larger stately witnesses to the history of Georgetown and the growth of Washington, DC. These trees are a proud part of the Peter family legacy. The white oak found along the northeast border of the garden is the last remaining original oak tree on the site. Another white oak growing at the end of the Center Walk, succumbed to old age and gravity. The tree had to be removed due to heaving and the risk of falling. Both oak trees grew for over 200 years to form a shaded garden walk, establishing the northern border of Tudor Place following the sale of property just to the north in 1866.

The tulip poplars are found, not only in the wooded Dell but also along the southern garden border overlooking Q Street, formerly known as Stoddert Street,
and one grand tree with horizontal as well as vertical growth anchors the east side of the South Lawn. Tudor Place is still home to six of its original tulip poplars. Two are found on either side of the Circle Seat overlooking the wooded Dell and the Lower Walk, providing summer shade to garden visitors. It is not known if these trees were already on the estate when the Peters purchased the property in 1805 or if they were planted as part of a landscape design.

Mr. Peter not only wrote about protecting Tudor Place’s trees but also used his position in the Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown (PCAG) to campaign for the protection of trees in Georgetown and Washington, DC. The PCAG began in 1926 as a women’s organization because the Georgetown Citizens Association, founded in 1878, only admitted male members. Its mission was “To preserve the historic characteristics and develop the aesthetic values of Georgetown as a place in which the Nation’s Capital was planned.” Their activities led to the preservation of the Old Stone House and Georgetown’s tree canopy among other accomplishments. The Association’s persistence led to the replanting of many street trees and reined in the indiscriminate loss of local trees. They also drafted a “comprehensive plan for the planting, replanting, and care of our street trees,” which was submitted to the Commissioners Planning Advisory Council. The council was seeking input from local preservation groups to assist in constructing a program for improving tree care in Washington, DC and ultimately led to the Department of Highways and Traffic’s “Trees in Public Space Washington DC, released in February 1960.” Mr. Peter presided over the PCAG for three years, 1958 – 1960. His concern for the city’s trees came from his love of the trees at Tudor Place and lessons learned from his father, Armistead Peter, Jr (Figure 3).

Throughout its 178 year evolution, Tudor Place’s garden illustrates dramatic changes in horticultural practices and plant science. During the 19th century, plant care became an established profession that was growing quickly in the United States. With the dawn of the 20th century, professional tree care companies used new techniques to extend the lives of trees. Tree surgeons, predecessors to the modern arborist, installed chains to strengthen tree limbs, structurally prune tree canopies, and clean tree cavities before filling them with cement. Depending on the extent of the cavity, metal bracing were installed to strengthen the cement. This technique was used on several trees at Tudor Place, including the recently removed white oak on the center walk in 1919 (Figure 4). Armistead Peter, Jr., embracing the new tree preservation techniques, sought to prolong the lives of the garden’s oldest inhabitants. The large chains stabilizing the limbs of the north-eastern white oak still seen today and the cement in the lower walk’s tulip poplar, are examples of these techniques no longer in use.

Figure 2: South Lawn English Elm Tree, 1924. Tudor Place Archive D90

Over the years, the garden has lost a good number of the oldest trees recorded by the Peter Family in their extensive collection of writings. The last Tudor Place owner, Armistead Peter 3rd, wrote about the garden he created as an homage to the past and the present, and specifically its tree canopy. He recorded stories of many of the garden’s trees he knew as a boy, including two Copper Beech (Fagus sylvatica ‘Cuprea’) trees purchased by Britannia Kennon from an itinerant peddler and the South Lawn’s English Elm which reportedly could be seen from downtown Washington (Figure 2). While these trees are no longer in the landscape, Armistead Peter 3rd made sure future stewards of the estate were aware of how important it was to protect what was to preserve these witnesses of history.

Mr. Peter’s great-grandfather, Armistead Peter, Jr, was a leader in preserving the nation’s heritage. As president of the PCAG from 1958 to 1960, Peter worked to protect the city’s trees, including the recently removed white oak. He understood the importance of preserving history, and his efforts have left a lasting legacy on Tudor Place and the city of Washington, DC. His dedication to preserving trees and historical landmarks ensures that future generations can appreciate the beauty and significance of this remarkable property.

Figure 3: Armistead Peter 3rd sitting in a hammock under the trees, 1906. Tudor Place Archive A1.531
The Peters left a legacy of preservation that the Tudor Place Foundation still embraces. While tree preservation practices have changed over the years, efforts continue to protect the garden’s oldest “residents.” Stabilizing tension wires are installed to strengthen weak limbs, root diseases are treated to prolong a tree’s life, and lightening protection is kept up-to-date. Losses are inevitable when caring for living things and are always a sad occurrence, more so when one of the witness trees must come down as happened in May 2012 when the north garden lost one of the last two majestic white oaks. As trees disappear, new ones are planted to replace those that have been lost. Through community partnerships with Casey Trees and the National Cherry Blossom Festival, twenty-seven young trees have been planted throughout the garden in the last four years. As garden preservation efforts move forward, so does the public’s appreciation of the garden and its trees.

—Suzanne Bouchard, Director of Gardens and Grounds

Dear Member:

In our global world, we must ask ourselves what does it mean to be American? Without looking to our past and understanding that past, how do we shape our current identity and our actions? It is not only a recent phenomenon that we wonder whether Americans know enough about their collective past to make informed decisions about our shared future. Cornell University historian Michael Kammen, as his obituary in The Washington Post relates, “cited an opinion poll from World War II showing that 60 percent of Americans could not identify the Bill of Rights. In 1975, a quarter of the American people did not know what key historical events occurred in 1776.” These are sobering statistics.

This very topic has become a national discussion initiated by public historians, preservationists, educators, historic site managers, and museum leaders who are seeking to create a national, broad-based strategy to assert the relevance of history. “A Campaign to Make History Relevant to Americans” has led the group to make the initial observation that history plays an important role in: “forming identity; developing critical thinking skills; encouraging civic engagement; building leadership; and, creating a legacy.

Everything we do at Tudor Place, every day, supports this effort and makes history relevant. We recognize there are many avenues to engaging the public. It can happen through an examination of a Chinese export porcelain, a tour of the “witness trees” and changing landscape, the careful review of a letter from James Madison to George Washington Parke Custis on raising sheep. Each provides an avenue into a larger discussion on global trade, agriculture and land use, and economic concerns. In each instance, a new way of understanding history and the forces that shaped our current America emerges. And, we seek to connect people to their own stories, all of which are representative of the American story.

The beginning of a new year is a time for us all to step back and reflect — how is history relevant to your understanding of America and your world view. We’d love to hear your thoughts!

Sincerely,

Executive Director

Figure 4: White Oak Bracing, 1919. Tudor Place Archive A3.18

Notes:
5. Tree Plan for the City of Washington, Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown, undated. Tudor Place Archive, MS 21 Box 40.
7. Armistead Peter Jr, Diary, May 1913. Tudor Place Archive, MS 14 Box 72.
“To the Curious’: Endicott & Swett’s ca. 1832 Lithograph Brown’s Indian Queen Hotel”

The American lithographic print shop of the 1820s was a “cultural nexus,” a lively and cosmopolitan space in which both artisan and connoisseur, businessman and politician, student and instructor, designed, printed, perused or purchased all manner of works produced in this entrepreneurial art form. Knowledge of the revolutionary process of “chemical printing” developed by Alois Senefelder (1771 – 1834) in Munich in 1798 quickly spread to the prosperous American republic in the early 1810s, and several presses were established in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, and Boston in the early 1820s.

The four-year partnership of Moses Swett (1804 – 1838) and George Endicott (1802 – 1848) embodies the experimental spirit and commercial appetite of many early American lithographers – shifting from shop to shop, city to city – in a constant quest to find success and emerging markets. Decades later, Endicott’s apprentice Charles Hart fondly recalled his early years with the business, stating:

In the good old days the passport to success in lithography was a knowledge of the business, skillfulness, energy and a little capital of his own hard earnings. Borrowed capital seldom succeeds. Most of the early printers were personally known to the dealers in lithographic materials, and such as were skillful, honest, and industrious could always obtain a limited amount of credit.1

Trained as an ornamental painter, Moses Swett transitioned to lithography in January 1826, when he drew a picturesque vignette printed by the famous Pendleton brothers of Boston. Sally Pierce, curator of prints for the Boston Athenæum, dubbed him “the unsung hero of early American lithography,” given the range of his artistic talents; several of his prints from the late 1820s, are signed “M. Swett inv. and del.” for inventor of the subject matter and delineator (from the Latin delineavit meaning drew or drawn by).2 From 1828 – 30, Swett was the superintendent of the Senefelder Lithographic Company, a business he began with other former Pendleton employees.

Driven to find a new market further south, Swett settled in Baltimore and formed a new partnership with George Endicott, another Massachusetts-born ornamental painter turned lithographer who trained in New York in the late 1820s. From their business at Graphic Hall, they advertised both engravings and lithographs of their own design and others, sold from their picture room “furnished with the finest specimens of Lithographic Prints ever offered for sale in this city.”3 By December 1831, the pair returned to New York and operated three presses; an 1832 circular showcased the breadth of their stock to New York City readers, including “portraits, landscapes, views of public buildings and country seats, portraits of animals, anatomy, vignettes, title pages for books, diplomas, maps, plans, circulars, checks, notes of hand, bills of lading, bills of exchange, etc. etc.”4

Brown’s Indian Queen Hotel, is one example of the firm’s work from this period (Fig. 1). Built ca. 1805 and originally known as Davis’ Hotel, the stately Pennsylvania Avenue establishment stood at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 6th Street, NW, until it was demolished in 1935. The hotel achieved a national reputation after undergoing extensive renovations and improvements in 1828 under the management of Marylander Jesse Brown: “Having been for the best years of my life, engaged in the business of [hotel management], I flatter myself I shall be able to give general satisfaction. Of this the public may rest assured: that no pains shall be spared to accommodate customers, travelers, and others, nor any care or expense omitted in procuring the best viands, liquors, and forage with good beds and stabling.”5 Brown’s lengthy advertisement was circulated in newspapers far and wide, from the Boston Courier to the Nashville Republican.

It is possible Brown commissioned the ca. 1832 print to celebrate the hotel’s refurbishment. The descriptive imprint below notes “the proprietor recently pur-
chased this extensive Establishment and made many large additions consisting of a spacious Dining Room (equal if not superior to any in the U.S.) Parlors which front the Avenue and Chambers all of which are Elegantly furnished.” Clearly, Brown’s renovations attracted significant crowds; in the print, fine carriages overflow with new arrivals while fashionably-dressed women and men promenade on the paved sidewalk, all below the sign “JESSE BROWN”.

Hotel guests were privy to fantastic views of Washington City from the balustrade cat-walk atop the 4-story central block or theatrical spectacles such as a famous traveling ventriloquist. For the brave-hearted in Washington, the hotel hosted a pair of African lions in December 1816 (Fig. 2). The newly composed “Star-Spangled Banner” was sung publicly in Washington for the first time within its walls in December 1814. According to the memoirs of a Washington journalist, Brown always met his guests at the curb and greeted them when they entered the dining room. For public holidays like July 4th and Washington’s Birthday on February 22, “landlord Brown would concoct foaming eggnog (sic), in a mammoth punch-bowl once owned by Washington, and guests of the house were all invited to partake.”

—Erin Kuykendall, Curator of Collections

NOTES

2. Sally Pierce, Early American Lithography: Images to 1830 (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 1997), 15.
3. Advertisement, Baltimore Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser, Baltimore, Maryland, April 7, 1830.
4. Barnhill, 4-5.

TWO MONTHS ONLY!

A Visit with the Presidents

A tour you won’t want to miss: from February through March, Tudor Place celebrates our country’s leaders with special installations of rarely exhibited objects, books, and papers throughout the house. In an intimate setting, explore Martha and George Washington’s dining wares, examine invitations to the White House, and celebrate the peaceful transition of power over two centuries! Members and Landmark Society enjoy free passes.
WINTER/SPRING 2014
Education Programs

Advanced Reservations and Payment Required for All Programs. Register online at www.tudorplace.org or by phone, 202.965.0400 ext. 110 while spaces are available. Any program listed can be adapted for your private group. Invite your book club, moms’ group, antiques club or garden club today!

Junior Curator Workshop
Take Hold of History, as a Junior Curator at Tudor Place
MONDAY, JANUARY 20
9 A.M. – 3 P.M.
LOCATION: MAIN HOUSE & GARAGE
CLASSROOM
AGES 10 - 15
This popular program turns students into Junior Curators in a historic house museum. During the day, they work with artifacts from the educational collection to design and install a museum exhibit in the Tudor Place Visitor Center, including creating a special opening event and engaging in related hands-on art activities. The program concludes with an exhibit opening for family and friends.
MEMBERS: $25  NONMEMBERS: $30

Tudor Tots: Winter Wonderland
TUESDAYS, JANUARY 21 – FEBRUARY 25
10:00 – 10:45 A.M.
AGES 2 - 4
Tudor Place has enchanted young children for almost two centuries. Experience it yourself on Tuesday mornings as we meet to read, sing, and play. This family-friendly program offers a new theme each week, from “adventurous animals” to “winter wonders” and more. Children participate in an interactive read-aloud, songs and themed movements, all related to the week’s topic. Parent/caregiver must remain with child.
CHILD: $5 FOR 1 SESSION OR $30 FOR ALL 8 SESSIONS
ADULTS: FREE

Downton Abbey Tea
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1
1 – 3 P.M.
LOCATION: MEET AT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1670 31ST STREET
The enthralling “Downton Abbey” portrays the intertwined lives of Edwardian aristocrats and their servants during the early 1900s. Experience a traditional English Tea complete with scones, sandwiches and petit desserts. After the tea, take a guided tour through the historic mansion to learn about life “upstairs” and “downstairs” at Tudor Place.
MEMBERS: $25  NONMEMBERS: $30

Be My Valentine: Tour and Workshop for Children
AGES 5+
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8
10:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. OR 1:30 – 3:00 P.M.
LOCATION: MEET AT VISITOR CENTER
Children tour the historic mansion in search of Valentine’s Day cards from years past. After the tour, children design their own Valentine cards to take home. Historic Valentine’s Day cards from the Tudor Place archive serve as an inspiration for their creations.
MEMBER CHILDREN: $5
NONMEMBER CHILDREN: $10
ADULT CHAPERONES: FREE

Valentine’s Day Tea and Chocolate Tasting for Adults
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15
1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
LOCATION: MEET AT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1670 31ST STREET
A costumed interpreter presents an informative and engaging program on the history of tea and chocolate. A variety of 18th and 19th century teas and chocolates are highlighted. After the tea, a guided tour through the historic 1816 mansion features a special display of Valentine cards.
MEMBER: $25  NONMEMBER: $30

Vintage Valentine: An Evening with the Washingtons
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15
5:00 – 7:00
21+ ONLY PLEASE
Celebrate our country’s first presidential couple at Tudor Place and explore one of the largest public collections of Washington artifacts. Enjoy self-guided tours through the entertaining rooms of the historic mansion and a special display of objects owned by Martha and George Washington. For this evening only, George Washington’s 1775 letter to Martha Washington is on display. After touring, enjoy some of the Washington’s favorite drinks, savories, and sweets in Dower House.
INDIVIDUAL MEMBER: $10;
COUPLE MEMBER: $16;
INDIVIDUAL NONMEMBER: $15;
COUPLE NONMEMBER: $25

Washington’s Plateau and the Presidential Table
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17
12:00 P.M.
Join Curator Erin Kuykendall for an informative lecture on George Washington's Plateau and Presidential Table. The lecture explores a selection of fine French porcelain, English glassware, and a rare American-made mahogany plateau—or set of mirrored trays—that adorned the Washingtons’ dining rooms. Participants are invited to bring a bagged lunch or order a boxed lunch through Tudor Place.
MEMBER WITH LECTURE ONLY: $8
NONMEMBER WITH LECTURE ONLY: $10
MEMBER WITH LECTURE & LUNCH: $20
NONMEMBER WITH LECTURE & LUNCH: $25
Lunch options (please choose one when purchasing ticket):
Ham & Swiss, Turkey & Havarti, Tomato & Mozarella. (Lunches include chips, cookie, and a beverage)

Celebrate George Family Tour
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22
10:00 – 11:30
Families enjoy a scavenger hunt through the historic mansion to uncover treasures from the first President, George Washington. Tudor Place is the nation’s second largest public repository of George Washington artifacts. After the tour, children create a special period craft to take home.
MEMBER CHILDREN: $5
NONMEMBER CHILDREN: $7
ADULT CHAPERONES: $3
**A Presidential Tea for Adults**
**Saturday, February 22**
1:00 – 3:00
**Location: Meet at Administration Building, 1670 31st Street**
How better to honor George Washington’s 282nd birthday, than with a visit to an 1816 “temple” to Federalism and the democratic ideal he fought to establish in this country. The program begins in the Victorian Dower House a variety of historic teas paired with some of Washington’s favorite dishes and those of other presidents. Next, on a docent-led tour, visit heirloom-filled rooms that echo with voices of presidents, politicians, soldiers, and the six generations of Custis-Peters who received them as guests. The tour includes a special focus on Tudor Place’s noteworthy Washington Collection.
**Member: $25  Nonmember: $30**

**Dolly and Me Taking Tea!**
**Saturday, March 1**
1:00 – 2:30 PM
**Location: Meet at Administration Building, 1670 31st Street**
Bring your favorite doll to tea! Children and adults sample historic tea blends along with tasty desserts. Dolls have their own miniature tea sets to enjoy their own treats. After the tea, children make a special craft for their dolls and learn several early American dances.
**Member Children: $20  Nonmember Children: $25  Adults: $10**

**Driving the Economy: Tobacco Takes Hold**
**Tuesday, March 4**
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
College of William & Mary professor of History, Susan Kern, discusses how tobacco defined the economy and society of the Chesapeake during the colonial and early national periods. Its profits generated great wealth and opportunity while its labor demands established a system of racial slavery that outlasted tobacco’s economic eminence. Washington D.C. sits between two of tobacco’s great empires, Maryland and Virginia. This talk will contrast the different varieties of tobacco and agricultural practices that created Maryland and Virginia’s wealthiest families, as well as look at changes in the tobacco economy after the American Revolution. Susan Kern is the author of the award-winning *The Jeffersons at Shadwell* (Yale University Press 2010).

**Landmark Society Members: Free  Members: $15  Nonmembers: $20**

**Tudor Tots: Growing Gardeners**
**Tuesdays, March 4 – April 29**
10:00 – 10:45 A.M.
**Ages 2 - 4**
Tudor Place has enchanted young children for almost two centuries. Experience it yourself on Tuesday mornings as we meet to read, sing, and play in the picturesque gardens. This family-friendly program offers a new theme each week, from “adventurous animals” to “growing gardens” and more. Children participate in an interactive read-aloud, songs and themed movements, all related to the week’s topic. Parent/caregiver must remain with child.
**Child: $5 for 1 session or $30 for all 8 sessions. Adults: free**

**Container Garden Workshop**
**Friday, March 14 (Vegetable Garden)  Friday, April 11 (Herb Garden)  Friday, May 9 (Fruit Garden)**
10:30 A.M.
Suzanne Bouchard, Director of Gardens & Grounds, will lead an informative demonstration on creating your own sustainable container garden. Each month will focus on different edible plants to enhance your kitchen garden. Participants create their own container garden to take home. All materials provided.
**Members: $20; Nonmembers: $25 for each session  Members: $55; Nonmembers: $70 for all three sessions**

**Architecture Everywhere: Girl Scouts in Georgetown Day for Juniors and Cadettes**
**Saturday, March 22**
10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.
**Location: Meet at Visitor Center**
Scouts explore architectural styles from around the world while touring Tudor Place and the Georgetown neighborhood. After the tour, Scouts design their own building and landscape.
**Scouts and Tag-Along: $10  Adults: $3**

**Wild Toppers: Vintage Hat Tea for Adults**
**Saturday, March 22**
1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
**Location: Meet at Administration Building, 1670 31st Street**
Explore your wild side! Don vintage and contemporary hats while enjoying an afternoon tea featuring delicious sandwiches and desserts, as well as, specially selected tea brews. After the tea, guests enjoy a tour of the historic mansion.
**Members: $25  Nonmembers: $30**

**Tree Fest**
**Saturday, March 29**
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Celebrate the beginning of spring and the old growth trees at Tudor Place! Following the dedication of a new white oak that replaces a 200 plus year old tree, explore the objects made by woodworkers who skillfully crafted items from that tree, enjoy walking tours of the 5.5 acre garden, and learn about Washington’s unique tree canopy and how to decrease your environmental footprint. Families enjoy children’s crafts, games, and storytelling. An artisanal craft fair and food market complete the day long festivities.

**A guided garden tour... Historic & Growing: The Tudor Place Landscape**
**Every Tuesday, April 1 – October 28, 2014**
11:15 A.M. and 12:15 P.M.
Indulge in the history and horticulture of centuries-old trees, heirloom plants and flowers, and fragrant English boxwood on a lively guided walk across 5.5 acres and two centuries of landscape design. Learn how Tudor Place reflects both its Federal-period origins and changes in land use over time. See how orchards, stable and grazing land made way for lawns, roses, fountains and garden “rooms.”
**Call to reserve or walk in.**
**Members: Free  Nonmembers: $10**

**Japonisme: Inspiring Western Tastes**
**Thursday, April 3**
6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
In the 1870s, the interiors of American homes embraced the Japanese aesthetic. Japanese pottery and metalwork adorned mantels while paper fans and lanterns were attached to walls. Explore select objects in the Tudor Place collection dating from the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century that illustrate this stylistic trend inspired by the arts of Japan.
**Members and Landmark Society Members: Free  Non-Members: $20.00 per person**