
War of 1812

Friends and Family

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A State of Alarm Turns to War

Generations of men and women were raised on stories of the glory of the Revolutionary War. Tall tales, bright and shining, were told by evening firelights or overheard in taverns along the roadside. The horrors of war were forgotten in the triumph of victory as presented by the victors. But by 1812 young people considered the Revolution old-fashioned and covered with dust. The country had changed: fashions were different, transportation was improved, and new methods of warfare had been introduced. The time was ripe for adventure when tyranny reared its ugly head, and backlash from the Napoleonic Wars reached American shores.

France and Britain each set forth to prevent the United States, a neutral country, from trading with her enemy. If Americans sailed for an European port, the British navy attacked them; if they sailed for Britain, the French barred their way. But it was Britain, America's old foe, who was the worst offender. It was common knowledge that the British navy abused its sailors with inhuman shipboard conditions and flogging. Many British sailors deserted and freely boarded American vessels. The British government boldly claimed the right to halt American ships to impress deserters; in truth, however, they impressed both deserters and native-born Americans.

In 1807 the American naval frigate *Chesapeake* sailed from Norfolk. She encountered the British ship *Leopard*. The American commander refused the British order to search his ship, and the *Leopard* opened fire. The *Chesapeake* surrendered, and the *Leopard* seized four men. Americans went wild for revenge. President Jefferson instructed his minister in England, James Monroe, to demand the British government to



USS Chesapeake taken over by British frigate Shannon.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

renounce impressment. The British complied by denouncing the action of the *Leopard*, but would not renounce impressment.

In response to this, President Thomas Jefferson recommended commercial warfare; Congress passed the Embargo Act on December 21, 1807, which prohibited American ships from leaving the United States for a foreign port. American merchants succeeded in circumventing this law, but it still created a serious depression in the country, especially for ship owners and mercantile dealers in the northeast, many of whom were Federalists. Jefferson's Secretary of State, James Madison (1801-1809), believed that neutral countries should be able to trade with warring powers but had to support Jefferson's embargo. James Madison won the presidential election of 1808 for the Democrat-Republicans [later Democrats], although the Federalists who opposed him exhibited a strong showing. A few days before leaving office, Jefferson asked Congress to approve the Non-Intercourse Act on March 1, 1809, which allowed trade with all nations except Britain and France. Eventually President James Madison reopened trade with these two countries because of the economic depression.

This and other factors contributed to war with Britain. During these years, the country was in a continual state of alarm from reports of conflicts on the Canadian frontier and fear of British attack. At home, native tribes had historically turned to Britain for protection against western expansion. After the incident of the *Chesapeake*, British colonials in Canada expected an invasion by the Americans. In need of an ally, they renewed their friendship with the American "Indians." There was much bloodshed along our western border encouraged by British agents in Canada. The United States knew that the British must be driven out of Canada; our western population had long supported this goal, and even suggested annexing Canada.

Believing our troops ready for action, President Madison declared war on Britain on June 18, 1812, but an American invasion of Canada through Detroit ended in retreat. Other American invasion efforts failed, and in Chicago, Fort Dearborn fell in an attack by the Powatomi tribe. In October 1813, William Henry Harrison won a decisive victory with the death of Shawnee warrior Tecumseh, who served as a British brigadier general, but not until March 1814, when Andrew Jackson's men broke the resistance of Creek warriors in a frighteningly bloody battle, did that tribe retreat westward.

The British, familiar with the ravages of war, were not discouraged. No longer occupied with Napoleon, they were ready to invade enemy territory. By 1813 her navy had gathered its strength and imposed a blockade on the United States. Her armada sailed boldly up the Patuxent River from the Chesapeake Bay and her army marched to Bladensburg, where it easily scattered a poor force of American militiamen. On August 24, 1814, the British proudly entered Washington, and in retaliation for American troops burning the Canadian capital at York [Toronto], set fire to public buildings. Here history books with hindsight are left behind and we turn to letters of Martha Custis Peter (1777-1854), who reported these events first-hand as she saw or heard of them at her home in Georgetown, and wrote about them in letters to her friend Eliza Quincy in Boston, Massachusetts.

Friends

Eliza Susan Morton [Quincy] (1773/4-1850) was born in New York, the daughter of a merchant of Scottish descent.¹ When New York was occupied by the British during the Revolutionary War her family, staunch patriots, moved to New Jersey, where they always welcomed American officers.² As a young woman Eliza witnessed George Washington enter New York on April 23, 1789 on his way to his inauguration, and when Washington took the oath of office she stood on a rooftop on Broad Street to hear him speak.³ She never forgot these events. All the ladies of the city visited Mrs. Washington, including Eliza's mother Mrs. John Morton, and Mrs. Washington returned the visit as was the custom of the day.⁴

The Capital removed to Philadelphia. During a visit there Eliza Morton attended a reception given by Martha Washington, where she was introduced to Mrs. Peter of Georgetown, a granddaughter of Mrs. Washington, who had just arrived in Philadelphia as a bride.⁵ Thus their friendship began.

Eliza married Josiah Quincy (1772-1864) of Boston in 1797. Quincy was elected to Congress in 1804.⁶ A staunch Federalist, he opposed the Embargo Act and the war with England, but he did not go so far as to refuse to support the administration. His wife was often present with him in Washington, where she and Martha Peter renewed their acquaintance. Eliza Quincy described her friend Martha Peter as among her favorites: "Mrs. Peter is a woman of high-toned sentiment and principles. A staunch Federalist, she manifests the energy of her character by decided expressions of political opinions."⁷ Josiah Quincy shared his wife's view of Martha Peter; he later recalled,

Among the notable matrons whom I met in Washington, perhaps the first place must be accorded to Mrs. Peter, of Georgetown. She was a granddaughter of Mrs. Washington, an intelligent and ardent Federalist, and from the heights of Tudor Place looked down upon the democratic administrations of Jefferson and his successors in a spirit of scornful protest. She was accustomed to speak of them as 'our present rulers', much as a French Republican under the Second Empire might have spoken of the men who had seized his country .
..⁸

On February 22, 1810, Eliza Quincy attended a grand ball in Georgetown to celebrate George Washington's birthday, where the majority of citizens were Federalists of the old Washington school. She noted, "There was a grand ball given in this city, to which we had invitations; and also to another at Georgetown which we preferred. Our sympathies attracted us there, and we passed a very agreeable evening."⁹ Miss Phoebe P. Morris of



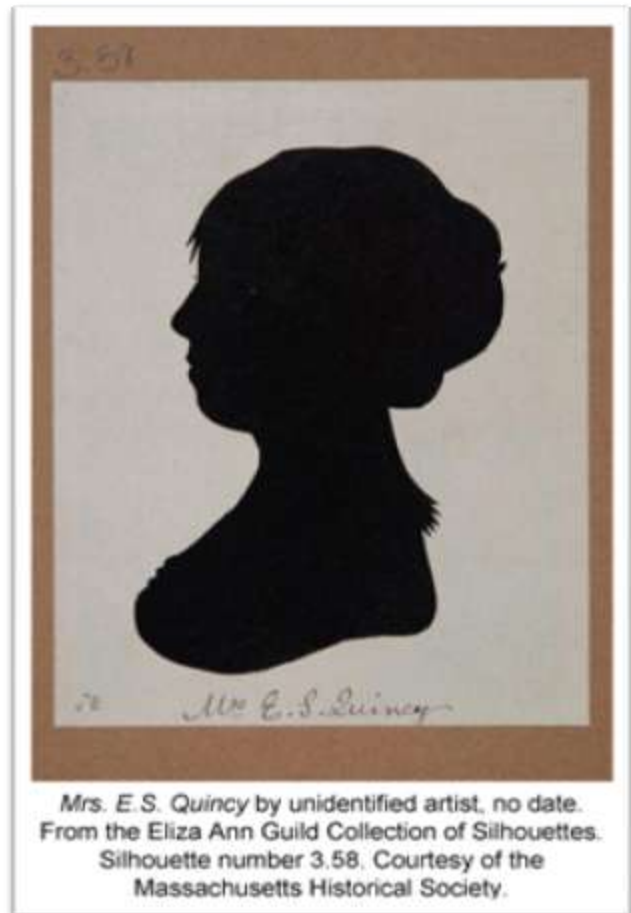
Dumbarton House in Georgetown described the birthnight ball to her sister Rebecca Morris, probably the very ball Eliza Quincy attended:

It was arranged by Mrs. Custis [Eliza Custis Law, Martha Custis Peter's sister], one of the nearest relations of Genl. Washington – she is certainly very eccentric . . . The walls were covered with musquets (sic), pistols—colors, etc., & and had more the appearance of a Tent than a Ballroom & at the feet of the Musicians was placed a Portrait though not a likeness of the poor General . . . Mrs. Custis was decorated with miniature pictures of her illustrious relative, some round her neck, & others round her arms –while her sister, Mrs. Peter, wore two as large as warming pans, one representing the General, which rested upon her bosom, & the other his Lady, which dangled below her waist.¹⁰

Tudor Place holds a locket with the hair of George and Martha Washington within it presented to Eliza Quincy from Martha Peter, dated February 22, 1810.¹¹

Their intimacy grew, and they wrote of family matters. Martha Peter told Eliza on August 19, 1810, of a recent visit to Mount Vernon where she had taken her children, some of whom had never seen Mount Vernon, although they had often heard of it, “. . . the place where I had spent the happiest years of my life.” Her daughter, either Columbia (born 1797) or America (born 1803), however, was disappointed as “. . . it did not answer her expectations . . .”¹² On a more solemn note of February 15, 1812 Martha Peter mentioned the death of her mother, Eleanor Calvert, at Tudor Place. Martha Peter admitted to her friend that she was devastated by this loss, which “. . . deprived me of a wish to go into company.”¹³

On July 27, 1812, the correspondence between the two women turned decidedly political. Martha Peter confessed, "It is delightful to us to meet with those who think and dare talk as we do. I am resolved to express my sentiments . . ."¹⁴ The Sedition Act of 1798 passed by John Adams allowed the government to prosecute a citizen who criticized the president, congress, or the government. In theory only libelous or treacherous activities were liable to prosecution, but as these activities were vaguely defined, the law was used in subsequent years to stifle opposition. The Sedition Act was protested by citizens who interpreted it as a violation of freedom of the press and freedom



of speech. In 1812 Martha Peter told her friend, “. . . in our little village, we have dared, in the very face of the President [Madison] and all the secretaries, to publish the ‘Federal Republican [and Commercial Gazette]’”, which was sent by express to Baltimore to be guarded by friends of the Federalist Party. Martha Peter explained, “It excited great consternation in the town, and threw everything into confusion . . . The house from which it was issued is strongly guarded . . .”¹⁵

In the midst of writing this letter, however, Martha Peter was informed that the office in Baltimore was attacked during the night, and that the mob was still rioting. She had not yet learned that this storming cost the life of a well-known citizen of Georgetown, General James Lingan (1752-1812), a Revolutionary War hero.¹⁶ The first Collector of the Port of Georgetown and a tobacco shipper, Lingan was a vocal advocate of freedom of speech and spoke against censorship. On July 17, 1812, the Baltimore office at Gay and Second Streets of Alexander Contee Hanson (1786-1819), editor of the *Federal Republican*, was besieged and burnt by an angry mob who resented the fact that Hanson was anti-war. Hanson then relocated to publish his paper on South Charles Street, but there another mob as described by Martha Peter was formed. General James Lingan, Alexander Hanson, and General Henry [Light Horse Harry] Lee III tried to quiet the outbreak, but were arrested and thrown into jail.¹⁷ All three were severely beaten and left for dead; Hanson and Lee survived, but Lingan was killed. On September 1, 1812, a funeral service was held for him at Montrose Park in Georgetown. George Washington Parke Custis, Martha Peter’s brother, gave the oration; her brother-in-law, Major George Peter, escorted the funeral cortege.¹⁸

In 1813 Martha Peter gave the Gorget of Washington to the Washington Benevolent Society in Boston. The Society had been formed in 1808 by the Federalist Party to promote the principles of Washington as declared in his Farewell Address and was active in the War of 1812. It offered aid to the distressed, labored on fortifications, and helped raise the morale of the population. The Society noted the receipt of the gift of “The Gorget of George Washington” from Martha Peter on April 13, 1813 in the minutes of their meeting; the President of the Society, and five vice-presidents of which Josiah Quincy was included, wrote her a formal letter of thanks.¹⁹ On July 13 Martha Peter asked her friend Eliza Quincy to tell her husband that she had received thanks from the Society, “. . . flattered by the approbation of so respectable a portion of your community. Mr. Quincy’s friendship for the giver has caused him to represent her in too favorable a light.”²⁰ She disparaged remarks in the *National Intelligencer* which had disapproved of her gift, and added sarcastically that she was sorry her conduct did not meet with their approval. She resented what the *Intelligencer* wrote, but not their freedom to do so.

Then she turned her attention to matters at hand. The Federal City had been alerted that British ships were in the river, and that the British were expected to land ashore at any moment. Suddenly, “The drums began to beat, the military to parade; and in a moment all was bustle and alarm.” Men were posted to Fort Warburton opposite Alexandria. They were soon joined by Secretary of War John Armstrong (1813-1814), and Secretary of the Navy William Jones (1813-1814), whose main concern, Martha Peter observed, was their own “dazzling appearance,” which they assumed would strike fear into the enemy’s heart.²¹ Martha Peter’s dismay with the current administration was apparent: “I am glad Mr. Peter has no fancy for a military life; as I should much regret to

have him hold a commission under our present rulers, or draw his sword in so unjust a cause . . . ²²

On Friday, August 26, 1814, Martha Peter described the state of affairs in the Federal City as she observed it. A state of apprehension and alarm existed throughout the country, including Georgetown. The citizens had been expecting the British at any moment, and went to John Armstrong, Secretary of War, and President Madison for protection. Martha Peter incredulously noted that Madison's reply was that everyone was begging him for protection and that the Federal City must take care of itself. Finally Secretary Armstrong announced that an invasion was imminent and assured the people that the large military force would easily defeat the British. The local banks loaned the Cabinet \$200,000 for defense. By Friday the troops were finally assembled and ordered to march the 45 miles from Washington to where the enemy was landing in larger numbers than expected: "Unfortunately we never shut the stable-door until the steed is stolen."²³ Our men marched but evidently were not enough to scare the British, so the American troops encamped to wait for reinforcements. Meanwhile the enemy landed, "refreshed themselves with the fat of the land," and marched with new energy to Upper Marlborough.

Martha Peter then gave Eliza Quincy a day-by-day account of what had happened. The British troops were in no hurry for a confrontation; they rested for the weekend and on Monday, August 22nd, began their march to Washington. The troops and the enemy had a slight skirmish, but the American generals decided to return to Washington and wait for the British there; they arrived in the city Monday night. The lucky ones who had families nearby took leave to visit, as they had not had food for forty-eight hours and were in no state to fight.

On Tuesday the 23rd American troops marched again to battle, this time accompanied by the President who thought he might inspire confidence just by appearing and at five o'clock that evening deigned to visit the encampment with two secretaries and a few interested friends. On his return to Washington that night he assured his distressed citizens that there was no danger, although all this time horses were waiting for Mrs. Madison's escape and two cannons were placed at his house and two placed opposite the Capitol.

By Wednesday the 24th the troops were assembled in battle array between Bladensburg and Washington, but according to Martha Peter, "From what I can learn, nothing was ever worse ordered."²⁴ The General in charge, William Henry Winder (1775-1824), could not be found.²⁵ The Cabinet ran away. The President, our commander in chief, stayed a short while, but then ". . . he fled so swiftly that he has not been heard of since." The citizens vowed they would hang Secretary of War Armstrong when and if he ever returned. The cavalry actually never drew a sword and the fighting that day was accomplished by the light artillery, marines, and Commodore Joshua Barney's men. American troops did not hesitate to retreat and did not stop running until they passed Georgetown, assuming the British would kill all of them and take the city. Martha Peter noted that the day was very hot, and "the roads ankle-deep in dust."²⁶ Many of the men fainted from the heat and some were trampled to death in the hurry of retreat. The officers, she continued, were so panic-stricken that they forgot to look behind them to see if the British were actually coming. For they were not! The British returned to

Bladensburg, ate dinner, and then decided to return and burn Washington City at their leisure. That very night they burned the Navy Yard, dynamited the magazine, set fire to the Capitol, the Treasury Office, and the President's House.

Years later Britannia Peter, Martha Peter's youngest child, recalled:

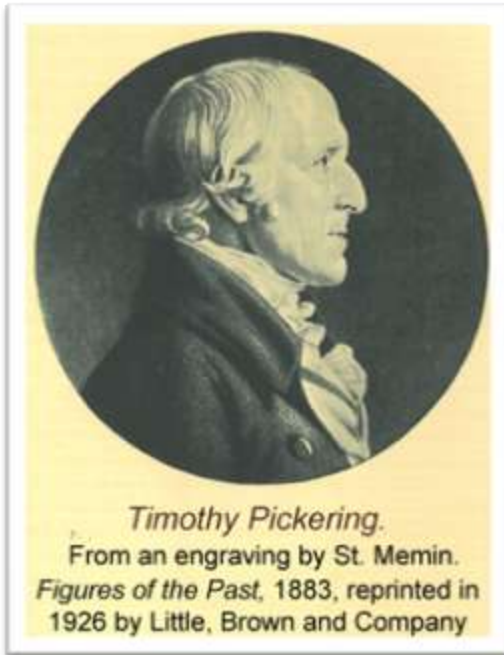
When the British captured Washington, in 1814, Father had the gout and Mother did not care about leaving home, so she sent brothers [George Washington Peter and John Parke Custis Peter] and Sister America over the ferry into Virginia. From the parlor window (it is now the dining-room, the main building of "Tudor" not being completed at that time), Mother saw the British burn the Capitol. Dr. and Mrs. Thornton, who were intimate friends of father and mother, were staying at 'Tudor' during those stirring times . . .²⁷

Anna Maria Thornton, wife of Dr. William Thornton who designed the first United States Capitol and Tudor Place, confirmed that she spent the night of the 24th at Tudor Place. She wrote in her diary: "Dr. T.[hornton] having gone round by Mr. peter's (sic) we did not know what step to take but decided to go to Mr. peter's (sic) . . . We staid (sic) all night at Mrs. peter's (sic) . . . and there witnessed the conflagration of our poor undefended and devoted city."²⁸

The War Office did not go up in flames until the next morning, Thursday, the 25th, as the British had overlooked it the previous night. Dr. Thornton begged them not to burn the Patent Office, pleading against the destruction of many important models; the British obliged but did not hesitate to burn two ropewalks in the city and to set fire to both ends of the Long Bridge over the Potomac. The mayor of Georgetown, John Peter, a nephew of Thomas Peter, bravely approached the British commander, Rear Admiral George Cockburn of the Royal Navy, and told him bluntly that Georgetowners would not make resistance and he hoped the city would be spared.²⁹ Martha Peter noted that Cockburn politely replied:

. . . as [the] President would not protect us, they would. They said it gave them pain to destroy our property; but as long as we supported Madison, we must expect it, as their nation was resolved never to make peace with a President who was so much under the influence of Bonaparte; that they had a force on our coast of one hundred and odd thousand men; and that, as we wished for war, they would give us enough of it.³⁰

The British left Washington on Saturday the 27th without desecrating Georgetown, and did no harm to its citizens. Martha Peter was astonished that although everyone knew the British would burn public buildings, there was no effort to save these buildings from destruction, nor were their contents protected. The mayor of Washington, James H. Blake (1813-1817), disappeared with the rest of the public officials, and vagabonds ravaged the remains. President Madison eventually returned from Frederick, Maryland, with a large escort of horses to a ruined city. But Martha Peter noted that in every instance private property was respected, and in this the British ". . . have proved themselves . . . to be a noble enemy."³¹



In a postscript Martha Peter added that she and Thomas Peter rode into Washington to observe firsthand the destruction. Rumors ran rife that the British had not set fire to the Navy Yard, but that it was burned by order of the President and Secretary of the Navy Jones because there were supplies there that the British could confiscate. Rumors also flew that it was Washington townspeople who set fire to the Long Bridge to impede transportation of the British. Martha Peter concluded, “I know not who burnt the Navy Yard; but the destruction of public property there is shameful . . . the fire began on Wednesday night, and has been burning ever since; and I still see the smoke.”³²

Martha Peter wrote one more letter on August 28, this time to an old family friend, Timothy Pickering.³³ She suffered the defeat of Washington,

and yet she understood and respected the attitude of the British, who had waged the war within the strict rules of military courtesy toward a President “under the influence of the Emperor of Elba.” But she had not been raised to understand or even contemplate the word retreat, and yet in the capital “the word of command was, retreat –the President and Secretaries led the way . . .” She added, “Every act that they [the British] have done proves, that their enmity is to our rulers & not to the People.”

Ever mindful of her family background, she told Pickering:

A Gentleman in the city asked [Rear Admiral George] Cockburn if they would have undertaken such an expedition had Washington been President. His answer was No –if Washington had been President he would have made a different provision for the City . . . the name of Washington preserved our City . . .³⁴

Eventually a peace treaty between the United States and Great Britain was signed on December 24, 1814, and ratified by James Madison on February 17, 1815. The correspondence between Eliza Quincy and Martha Peter ends here, but Eliza Quincy’s memoir has the last word on the subject of the war: “On the morning of the 14th [17th] of February 1815, when the bells began to ring, it was supposed to be an alarm of fire. That peace was the joyful intelligence they proclaimed, was at first doubted; but inquiry proved that the announcement was correct . . . It was a day never to be forgotten.”³⁵ Those who survived had a memory for life.

Family

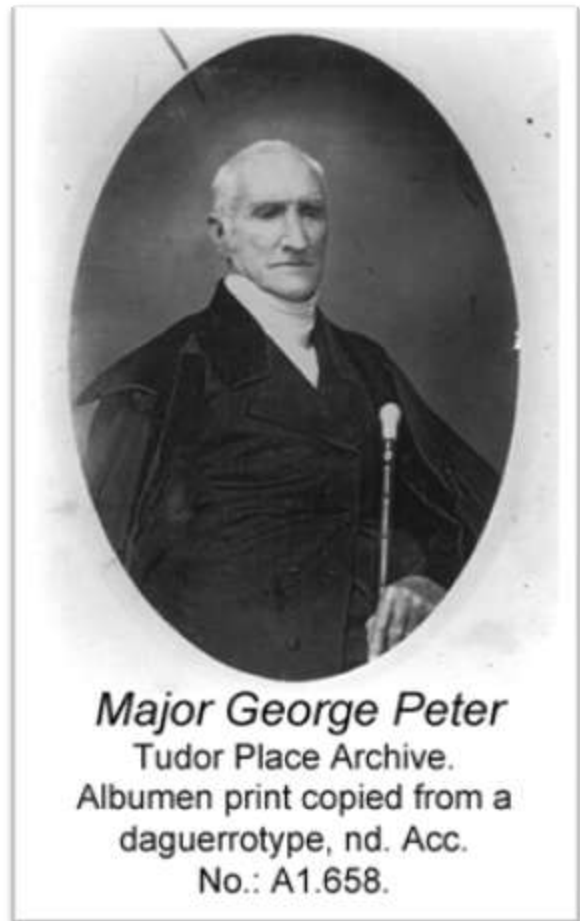
As his wife stated, Thomas Peter had no fancy for a military life, but his younger brother George Peter did! Born in Georgetown on September 28, 1779, George Peter was still a student at Georgetown College when he tried to join the Maryland troops ordered to put down the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794.³⁶ Because he was only fifteen years old George Washington sent him home. But this did not deter his enthusiasm, and through

the influence of his brother Thomas, George Peter obtained a commission in the army at Washington's request.³⁷ Peter was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Ninth United States Infantry on July 20, 1799 by President John Adams.³⁸ He was discharged in June 1800, but in 1801 reentered the army as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers; he was promoted to captain in 1807 and eventually assumed command of what is known today as the army's Fourth Battalion, Third Air Defense Artillery.³⁹ By Act of Congress on February 26, 1808 a light artillery regiment was authorized. In May 1808 Peter was transferred to the new Regiment of Light Artillery, the senior ranking captain with Winfield Scott next senior captain.⁴⁰

Before the War of 1812 only Peter's company of light artillery was mounted. This battery consisted of two 6-pounder guns, one ammunition wagon, and one light-horse wagon, which carried four cannoneers and one wagoner. Two battery officers and one sergeant were mounted, and sixteen horses were provided for the guns and wagons.⁴¹ For this new regiment, however, special state-of-the-art equipment was manufactured at Fort McHenry in Baltimore based on the French *Gribeauval* pattern, second to none of the European systems. The guns were supplied with fifty rounds of grape, canister, and round shot. In May of 1808 Peter and his men tested their equipment by marching from Baltimore to Washington at a speed of six miles per hour, a dazzling speed by the standards of the day! Peter's company proudly conducted a series of military demonstrations for Congress on July 4, 1808 in a parade so successful that the authorities decided to increase the battery's horses and guns.

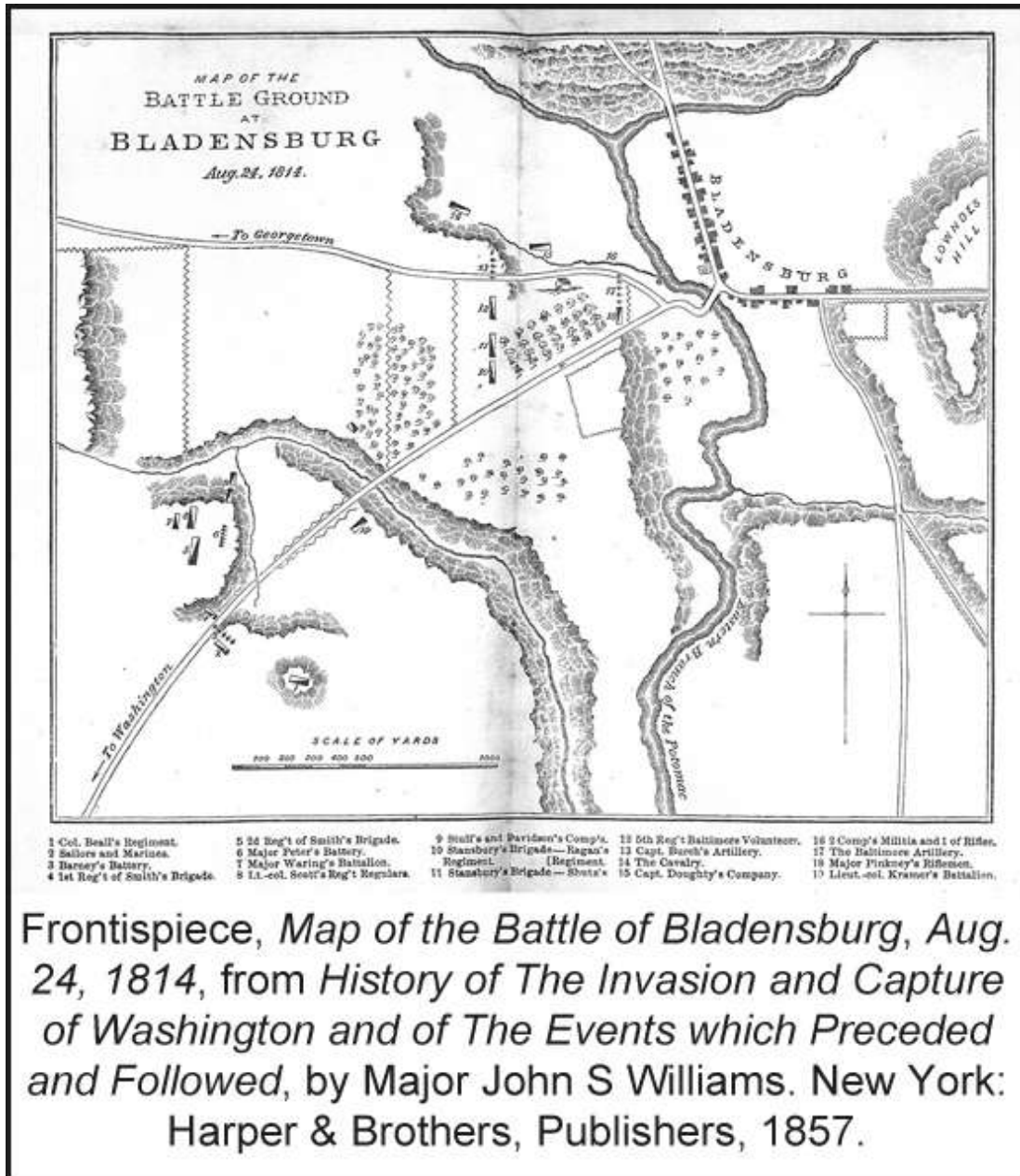
The company was "definitely a show-horse outfit."⁴² Secretary of War Henry Dearborn (1801-1809) specified that the light artillery uniform include the usual blue coat laced with red, with yellow buttons, but with skirts nine inches shorter.⁴³ The cocked hat was replaced with a leather cap with two wings, front and rear, and a small visor, and a red plume. Blue pantaloons with yellow buttons were authorized for winter wear. Dearborn especially requested that the buttons be stamped "L.A." [Light Artillery] but this proved difficult to obtain, so plain buttons were approved. These uniforms were completed in time for the July 4 parade, and created a military sensation. George Peter, who stood six feet tall and straight as an arrow, must have been a sight to behold!⁴⁴

In December 1808 Secretary of War Dearborn ordered Peter's company to march to New Orleans to test his equipment. Peter and his men traveled overland and by river flatboat and arrived in New Orleans in March 1809. But by then Dearborn had been



replaced by William Eustis (1809-1813), and Eustis ordered the company's horses sold as an unnecessary expense. On June 11, 1809 Peter resigned his commission in protest.

When the British attacked Washington in August 1814, Peter was a District of Columbia military major in command of a light company equipped with six pounders. His company of Georgetown Artillery was one of the few units to return fire at Bladensburg. On August 22nd he and his men were sent to Nottingham, Maryland, to harass the British. On August 23rd a force of 1300 men under Peter was sent to Upper Marlborough; they skirmished with the British advance guard but were driven back toward Old Fields, [Forestville], Maryland.



On August 24th Peter's men supported the troops in the defense line covering Turncliffe's Bridge. Peter was originally directed to a firing position by Francis Scott Key, a quartermaster lieutenant in his company. Peter saw he had no room to maneuver and ignored Key's instructions and situated his guns as he saw fit:

On my arrival on the ground which we occupied during the battle, a position was shown me by F.S. Key (acting aid to General Smith), difficult of access, being isolated by numerous and large ravines on one side and a stream on the other, as one of three positions I might occupy with my artillery. This being no position for light artillery, such as I commanded – for, if once placed there, it could not in any way be maneuvered so as to be of any service – I selected a commanding spot on the left side of Barney as the second best situation for artillery to command the road . . .⁴⁵

He covered the left flank of five naval eighteen-pounders under the command of Commodore Joshua Barney (1759-1818), and held the middle of the road to Washington.⁴⁶ The British troops tried to cross Turncliffe's Bridge, and were caught in terrible crossfire from Barney's and Peter's batteries, whose guns repulsed the British frontal attack.

However, General William Henry Winder arrived. He did not support Commodore Barney's effort and decided to halt the flight of our defense lines. He did not believe that Barney could hold his ground and saw that Peter struggled; he ordered retreat. Peter refused but eventually was forced to leave Barney's naval battery on the field. As a result Washington fell into the hands of the invaders. Bladensburg was an inglorious field where no luster fell on American arms. Descendants of men who had stood the shock of battle on the fields of the Revolution and pushed back the invader, were panic stricken. Formation after formation wavered, broke, and fled.

Throughout the war, however, Major George Peter had two lieutenants who served him so well, that he named two of his sons in their honor.⁴⁷ Lieutenant George Armistead of Virginia became the general in command of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, where he was brevetted Lt. Colonel for gallant conduct in defense of the fort; he died in 1818.⁴⁸ Lieutenant James Gibson of Maryland succeeded George Peter in command after Peter resigned his commission in 1809 in protest when Secretary of War Eustis sold the horses of his company. Gibson remained with the battery until it was absorbed by an Act of Congress in February 1812. He was ordered to the Niagara frontier; he was killed in action at Fort Erie in 1814.⁴⁹ These two names have become part of the heritage of the Peter family of Tudor Place.

But ultimately our troops were victorious. To this day Tudor Place holds a Visitors Book with a bold signature: Andrew Jackson, Washington City, January 8th 1837.⁵⁰ This was an anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, and a visit from the hero of that battle on such a day could not be accidental. Although the details of that visit are lost to us, the significance of the event is not. On what has been described as the horizon line of our history, the War of 1812 occupies a very small space.⁵¹ Its fate was to be overshadowed by the glory of the Revolutionary War and by the sorrow of the Civil War. Yet to slip through this small window of history we as a nation shed the burden of regional

differences, which fell as shackles behind us. Sectionalism was at least temporarily defeated. The North, East, and South joined hands, and all our eyes looked westward. Manifest Destiny beckoned. No longer would the land define us; we were ready at last to define the land.

NOTES

¹ Charles Dick and James E. Homans, eds., The Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Volume V (New York: The Press Association Compilers, Inc., 1915) up, see Eliza Susan Morton Quincy.

² Eliza Susan Quincy, ed., Memoir of the Life of Eliza S. M. Quincy (Boston, Massachusetts: J. Wilson and Son, 1861) reprint, nd, 24. Eliza Susan Morton Quincy states: "In compliance with the request of my children, I have written from memory . . . the following narrative of some events in the lives of my maternal ancestors and of my own early life. (Quincy, Massachusetts, July 12, 1821)," up. First editions of this book are held in the collections of the University of Wisconsin, Memorial Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Madison, Wisconsin, and Harvard University, Houghton Library, Special Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts [Inscribed to Mrs. Allston by Eliza Susan Quincy].

³ Quincy, 51.

⁴ Ibid., 53.

⁵ Ibid., 58. Thomas and Martha Peter were married on January 6, 1795.

⁶ Dick and Homans, Volume V, up, see Josiah Quincy.

⁷ Quincy, 131.

⁸ Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company, 1926), 230.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Phoebe P. Morris to her sister Rebecca Morris, February 28, 1812. Excerpt printed courtesy of Dumbarton House/ The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America, Washington, D.C. Gift of Mrs. Charles J. Nourse (1991.002.484). We thank Deputy Director and Curator Scott Scholtz for permission to quote from this letter.

¹¹ Collection of Tudor Place Historic House & Garden. This locket is inscribed: Obverse, "Hair of General Washington/From Mrs. Peter to Mrs. E. S. Quincy Feb. 22, 1810."; reverse, "Hair of Mrs. Washington/From her grand daughter (sic) Mrs. Peter to Mrs. E. S. Quincy Washtn. City Feb 22 1810 (sic)" Museum Purchase, 1995, accession no. 95.7019.

¹² Quincy, 139.

¹³ Ibid., 145.

¹⁴ Ibid., 165.

¹⁵ Ibid. The Federal Republican and Commercial Gazette began publication on July 4, 1808 in Baltimore. Publication was suspended on June 22, 1812, for the reasons described by Martha Peter. Publication resumed in Georgetown July 27, 1812. It was

published twice weekly until 1813; see guide to Maryland Newspapers, Maryland State Archives, Guide to Special Collections.

¹⁶ Dick and Homans, Volume III, up, see James Maccubin Lingan.

¹⁷ Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army. Volume I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 624. See Henry Lee; Dick and Homans, Volume III, up, see Alexander Contee Hanson.

¹⁸ Grace Dunlop Ecker, A Portrait of Old George Town (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1951), 90-92, 306.

¹⁹ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Thomas and Martha Peter, MS 2, Box 1, F 3: "At a quarterly Meeting of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts, at Boston, on Tuesday Evening, April 13th 1813. - The Hon. Mr. Quincy delivered to the President The Gorget of George Washington being a part of his uniform, when, as a Colonel in the service of the State of Virginia, he served under General Braddock, in the War of 1756; having the Arms of that State engraven thereon." Signed, William Cochran, Secretary. A letter of thanks accompanies this notice of presentation signed by Arnold Welles, President and Wm. Sullivan, Josiah Quincy, Daniel Messinger, John C. Warren, Benjn Russell, Vice Presidents, to Mrs. Martha Peter, April 30, 1813. Today the Gorget is in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Rm. 401, Acc. No.: Washingtonia 0224.01-03.

²⁰ Quincy, 174.

²¹ Quincy, Ibid.; Heitman, 170, see John Armstrong.

²² Quincy, 175.

²³ Ibid., 175-176.

²⁴ Ibid., 176.

²⁵ Heitman, 1049, see John Henry Winder.

²⁶ Quincy, 177.

²⁷ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 69, F 24. *Britannia's Reminiscences*, up.

²⁸ W.B. Bryan, ed., "Diary of Mrs. William Thornton. Capture of Washington by the British." Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Volume 19 (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historical Society, 1916), 175. The Diary of Anna Maria Thornton is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

²⁹ John Peter (1783-1838) was a clerk at the Bank of Columbia and was mayor of Georgetown 1813-1818; eventually he removed to Jefferson County, Va.

³⁰ Quincy, 178.

³¹ Ibid., 179.

³² Ibid., 180.

³³ This letter courtesy the Massachusetts Historical Society: Martha Peter to Timothy Pickering, August 28, 1814, Timothy Pickering Papers, MS 30:288. Dick and Homans, Volume V, up, see Timothy Pickering. Pickering was Secretary of State (1795-1800) under George Washington; after Washington's death he sent Martha Washington a copy of an Act of Congress extending the privilege of franking letters and packages. Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Martha Washington, MS 2, Box 2, F 23, Timothy Pickering to Martha Washington, April 7, 1800.

³⁴ Ibid.

- ³⁵ Quincy, 181-182.
- ³⁶ Coleman Nevils, Miniatures of Georgetown 1634-1934: Tercentennial Causeries (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1934), 6. George Peter and his brother David Peter were students at Georgetown University.
- ³⁷ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 69, F 20. Heitman, 786, see George Peter.
- ³⁸ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Major George Peter, MS 4, Commission Box, Presentation Letter, Secretary of War James McHenry to Mr. George Peter, July 20, 1799.
- ³⁹ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Major George Peter, MS 4, Commission Box, Presentation Letter, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to Captain George Peter, Fort McHenry, May 4, 1808; Commission as Captain signed by Secretary of War Henry Dearborn and President Thomas Jefferson, to take rank November 3, 1807, dated February 23, 1808.
- ⁴⁰ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., Encyclopedia of the War of 1812 (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 414. This and much of the following information on George Peter was forwarded to us from Fort McHenry National Monument, Baltimore, MD, by Scott S. Sheads, Historian, National Park Service Weapons Officer. We thank Mr. Sheads for his thorough reply to our inquiry. Heitman, 870, see Winfield Scott.
- ⁴¹ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 58, F 10, excerpt from *The Journal Military Service Institution* (March-April 1905, Vol. XXXVI, No. 134), 316.
- ⁴² John R. Elting, Col, U.S. Army, ed., Military Uniforms in America. Volume II: Years of Growth 1796-1851 (San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1997), 4.
- ⁴³ Heitman, 363, see Henry Dearborn.
- ⁴⁴ Ecker, 151.
- ⁴⁵ John S. Williams, History of the Invasion and Capture of Washington and of The Events Which Preceded and Followed (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1857), 363. Williams wrote an apologia for the American troops who were defeated when Washington fell to the British. He believed that the information issued by the Congressional investigation of the defeat was not true, and that the Committee protected politicians who “will not hesitate to sacrifice or jeopard (sic) the interests and honor of their country in order to advance themselves or ruin a rival.” (ix) Williams wrote a strong defense to remove the blame cast by officials and officers on our own militia, who were almost entirely without previous military experience as opposed to the British. It is important to note that at Williams’ request a letter from Major George Peter of May 24, 1854 is included as an appendix. Peter confirms Williams’ theory. See Williams, 357-367.
- ⁴⁶ Dick and Homas, Volume I, up, see Joshua Barney.
- ⁴⁷ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter, Jr., MS 14, Box 69, F 20. Note in hand of Armistead Peter, Jr., August 26, 1929.
- ⁴⁸ Heitman, 169, see George Armistead.
- ⁴⁹ Heitman, 454, see James Gibson. Tudor Place Archive, MS 14, Box 58, F 10, J. P. Farley, Brig. Gen. U.S.A., “Types and Traditions of the Old Army,” *The Journal Military Service Institution*, (Vol. XXVI, No. 134, March-April, 1905), 315-317.

⁵⁰ Tudor Place Archive, Papers of Thomas and Martha Peter, MS 2, Box 1, F 27.
Inscribed: Andrew Jackson/ Washington City/ January 8th 1837.

⁵¹ Andrew Sarris, late film critic of *The Village Voice*, first described “the horizon line of history.”

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Massachusetts

Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America, Dumbarton House, Archive,
Washington, District of Columbia

Tudor Place Historic House & Garden, Tudor Place Archive, Washington, District of
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