

Tudor Place Manuscript Collection
Colonel Beverley Kennon II Papers
MS-9

Introduction

Colonel Beverley Kennon II (1830-1890) followed his father, Commodore Beverley Kennon, in a career in the United States Navy, but resigned and joined the Confederate Navy when the Civil War began. In the Confederate Navy he became an expert on torpedoes and participated in the mining of the James River in 1864. After the Civil War, Colonel Beverley Kennon II went into the service of the Khedive of Egypt. Upon his return to the United States he wrote detailed drafts of his war experiences, and published an article about his command of the *Governor Moore* in *The Century Illustrated Magazine*. He petitioned the United States government for compensation for inventing the disappearing cannon for land fortification.

This collection includes correspondence, literary productions, drafts, legal documents, financial documents, and printed material.

These papers were a part of the estate Armistead Peter placed under the auspices of the Carostead Foundation, Incorporated, in 1966; the name of the foundation was changed to Tudor Place Foundation, Incorporated, in 1987. Use and rights of the papers are controlled by the Foundation. The collection was processed and the register prepared by James Kaser, a project archivist hired through a National Historical Records and Publications grant in 1992. This document was reformatted by Emily Rusch and revised by Tudor Place archivist Wendy Kail in 2020.

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Biographical Sketch

Colonel Beverley Kennon II (1830-1890) was born in Norfolk, Virginia, on April 1, 1830 to Commodore Beverley Kennon (1793-1844) and Elizabeth Dandridge Claiborne (1808-1832). His father was killed on board the *U.S.S. Princeton* by an exploding cannon in 1844, but Colonel Beverley Kennon II still followed in his father's footsteps in the United States Navy. He declined an appointment to West Point in 1844 and passed for admission to the "Naval School" at Annapolis in October 1846. He graduated as a midshipman on June 8, 1852. He married Genevieve Maida Griswold (1855-1929).

Colonel Beverley Kennon II was commissioned Master in 1855 and promoted to Lieutenant that same year. When the Civil War broke out, as a Virginian his sympathy lay with the Confederate States of America, and he resigned from the United States Navy on April 23, 1861. During the Civil War he earned a reputation for bravery and daring during battle; he commanded the Louisiana State Steamer *Governor Moore* in 1862 and engaged with Federal vessels at the passes of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, Louisiana, the site of battle between Confederate and Union forces April 16-28, 1862. Years later he published a detailed report of that enterprise as Commander of the *Governor Moore* in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* in July 1886 entitled, "Fighting Farragut Below New Orleans." He was taken prisoner of war at Fort Warren, New York, in 1862 and then paroled; he was captured again at the Appomattox Court House in 1865 but paroled in May of that year. After the war he served in the army of the Khedive of Egypt as Colonel of Coast Defenses in the Engineer Department from 1870-1874, where he supervised the construction of a counterpoise battery in Alexandria on a plan he devised. Upon his return to the United States he claimed to have invented the disappearing cannon used on land fortifications, and spent his last years in an effort to obtain compensation from the government for it. He died in New York City on November 21, 1890.

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Series Description

CORRESPONDENCE

Series

CORRESPONDENCE

Includes two letters from Commodore Beverley Kennon, one letter from George Kennon, and one letter from Clarence Bowen. The letters from Commodore Beverley Kennon date from 1834 and 1843. One letter reports household news, and the second details plans for Colonel Beverley Kennon II's naval career. George Kennon, Colonel Beverley Kennon II's uncle, wrote jointly to Colonel Beverley Kennon II and his brother William Dandridge Claiborne Kennon in 1845, reminding the boys of the debt they owe to their stepmother Britannia (Peter) Kennon for spending her own money on their schooling, and instills in them a sense of their responsibilities. Clarence Bowen responds to an invitation to visit Fort Hamilton, New York.

LITERARY PRODUCTIONS

Series

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

ND

Written for the Secretary of the Navy to explain his resignation from the service, this copy is in Armistead Peter, Jr.'s, hand, and details antecedents, schooling, and his naval service. The account ends with the reasons for his resignation in 1861.

THE BOAT HOWITZER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

ND

Annotated copy, apparently prepared as the first step to a revised edition.

THE BOAT HOWITZER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

ND

A draft of a section of a revision to *The Boat Howitzer*.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAYING DOWN TORPEDOES

ND

Draft copy with diagrams.

KENNON'S WORK IN THE ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT IN NEW ORLEANS

ND

Recounts events that occurred in 1861.

LETTER TO *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*
ON DESTRUCTION OF GUNBOAT, *STATE OF LOUISIANA*
1886

A letter to the editor of *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* protesting the destruction of a gunboat.

UNIDENTIFIED DRAFT

ND

Concerns the defense of New Orleans in 1861.

UNIDENTIFIED DRAFT

ND

Recounts a naval battle.

UNIDENTIFIED DRAFT

ND

Fragments of ordnance drill instructions.

NOTES

ND

Fragmentary notes, apparently dealing with events in 1861.

NOTES

ND

Fragmentary notes dealing with the ship *Stonewall Jackson*.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Series

WILL, Copy

1884

Bequeaths entire estate to his wife Genevieve (Griswold) Kennon and notes why no family members are included. Refers to a history of the battle of Fort Jackson, Louisiana, which he wishes be published posthumously.

PETITION FILED ON BEHALF OF GENEVIEVE (GRISWOLD)
KENNON WITH THE KHEDIVE OF EGYPT
1896

Presents a claim for the estate of Colonel Beverley Kennon II in the amount of \$7,000 dollars earned acting as an engineer between 1870 and 1874 with the rank of Colonel of Coast Defenses.

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Series

BILLS AND RECEIPTS

1890

Expenses for the funeral of Colonel Beverley Kennon II.

PRINTED MATERIAL

Series

*A COMPLETE AND UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY OF SIGNALS FOR THE
BOATS OF HER MAJESTY'S FLEET*

1850

Inscribed: Beverley Kennon/ 'Fenimore Cooper'/ Hong Kong. March 17th
1855.

MS-9
Box 1

Folder		
1	Correspondence	1834-1889
2	Autobiographical Statement	189_
3	Correspondence: To <i>The Illustrated Century Monthly Magazine</i> on “The Destruction of <i>State of Louisiana Gunboat</i> ”	ND
4	Draft: <i>The Boat Howitzer of the United States Navy</i> [Remarks, Revision]	1858-1859
5	<i>Instructions for Laying Down Electrical Torpedoes</i>	ND
6	<i>Kennon's Work in Ordinance Department at New Orleans</i>	ND
7	Draft: Unidentified	ND
8	Draft: <i>Defense of New Orleans</i>	ND
9	Dahlgren, J.A. <i>The Boat Howitzer of the United States Navy</i>	Ca.1862
10	Draft: Additional notes of <i>The Boat Howitzer of the United States Navy</i>	ND
11	Notes: Miscellaneous	Oct 12/13 1861
12	Notes: <i>Stonewall Jackson</i>	ND
13	Will: Copy	Jan 28, 1884
14	Estate: Petition Filed on Behalf of Genevieve (Griswold) Kennon with the Khedive of Egypt	1896
15	Estate: Bills and Receipts, Funeral	Nov 24, 1890
16	Eardley-Wilmont, Arthur Parry. <i>Complete and Universal Dictionary of Signals for the Boats of Her Majesty's Fleet</i> . London: W.J. Cleaver, 1850. Inscribed: Beverley Kennon “ <i>Fenimore Cooper</i> ” Hong Kong. March 17 th 1855.	1850
17	Electrical Experiments	ND