An Archival Mystery: Follow the Yellow Brick Road

New discoveries are common at Tudor Place. Whether found in the back of a drawer, the bottom of a trunk, beneath the ground, or amid a box of family papers, encounters with “new” objects and information fuel the imagination and reveal fresh stories about the past. Archivist Wendy Kail’s recent discovery of an unattributed manuscript launched an inquiry that combined her skills as a historian, researcher, and sleuth to reveal the author of the work, as well as details of his life and a curious connection to Tudor Place.

The holdings in the Archive of Tudor Place Historic House & Garden contain the personal and collected papers of the Peter family of Georgetown, Washington, D.C. In a box of unprocessed papers, we recently discovered an unsigned and undated manuscript. Although the document was comprised of three distinctly different handwritings, it was apparent that these scripts were not in the hand of a Peter family member.

Upon examination the manuscript appeared to be a visitor’s guide to the national capital, as perfectly described by its title: *The Federal Metropolis, or the Story of A Century.* The unknown author’s preface presented clearly and confidently his intention:

One hundred and three years have now passed away since the law was adopted by Congress, looking to the establishment of the Federal metropolis on the banks of the river Potomac. It is this fact which has induced the writer to try and prepare a volume that might be in keeping with the event in question, and of interest to the lovers of historic lore. The primary object has been to collect all the facts and personal incidents connected with the earlier houses and mansions of the District of Columbia, before they shall have been entirely obliterated by the combined influence of time and sordid instincts of humanity. Not only will the plan have reference to the earlier homes and houses of the Metropolis, but also to their present condition, and will include a running account of the public institutions of the city; and to all of this material it is
proposed to add a collection of Biographical Sketches, of men whose names
and deeds are honourably identified with the goodly City of Washington,
during the closing of the [first] administration [1885-1889] of President
Cleveland.¹

This preface contains a clue to determining the date
of this manuscript. The bill for locating the Federal
City on the Potomac River was passed by Congress,
then situated in Philadelphia, on July 16, 1790; the
author states that 103 years have passed since that
decision, which dates this manuscript to 1893. The
groundwork the author wishes to cover will begin in
1790 and end in 1889, the last year of the first
Cleveland administration.

A brief perusal of the manuscript is in order. The
Founding of the Federal District, the opening essay,
details the eventual removal of the seat of government to Washington in 1800 during
the presidency of John Adams, with legal jurisdiction assumed by an act of Congress
in 1801 and the city incorporated in 1802. An essay entitled The National Capital
contains “attractions and peculiarities” of the District of Columbia, in which the
author describes the building of the Capitol, the Capitol Rotunda, the National
Library, Statuary Hall, and the crowning placement of the Lady of Freedom in its
prominent position in December 1863.

The District of Columbia traces: the discovery of the locality by John Smith in 1608; the
Indian tribes residing there; the decision of Congress in 1790 to locate the capital on
this land; identification of the original landowners; and the boundaries established for
the city.

The Executive Mansion contains the history of “a plain two-story house,” the
cornerstone of which was laid on October 13, 1792. The house was burned by the
British in 1814 and not occupied again until its restoration was complete in 1818.
Entertainments, receptions, and the visitors who attended these events are noted by
the author, who observed, “the historic charms of the Executive Mansion do not
depend upon the building itself, but upon the men who made it their official home.”

The Executive Departments in the national capital then numbered eight. At the time of
this writing, two “large and commodious” brick buildings, which housed the War and
Navy Departments, were located on the west side of the White House. The War
Department oversaw The Signal Office, which charted weather observations, and the
Hydrographic Bureau, located in the Octagon House. The National Almanac Office and the National Observatory were attached to the Navy Department. On the east side of the White House two similar brick buildings served the State and Treasury Departments.

*Sundry Official Localities* named three bureaus controlled by the *Treasury Department*: Bureau of Engraving and Printing; the Coast Survey; and the Photograph Office. The *General Post Office* bounded by E, F, Seventh and Eighth Streets, was commenced in 1839 but the edifice not finished until 1855. *Department of the Interior*, often referred to as the Patent Office because it held a museum of models, oversaw the Pension Building situated on Judiciary Square. On the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian Institution stood the *Agricultural Department*, which contained a library and museum. The *Department of Justice* occupied the former Freedman’s Bank [Bureau], and stood proudly on Pennsylvania Avenue opposite the Treasury. It was the domain of the Attorney General, and “in its influence as the legal centre of the Metropolis it occupies a lofty position.”

True to his promise, the author included 54 brief biographies of well-known men who “formerly figured in the Metropolis as a popular citizen,” residing in Washington permanently or temporarily due to the nature of his work. Each sketch begins with the location, if known, of the resident’s house and commences with a commentary on his life and occupation. According to the author, these men “who by the purchase of property or personal proclivities, are remembered by the people of the District, as special friends and fellow citizens.” This section includes Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Treasury, Secretaries of War, Secretaries of the Navy, Attorney Generals, Chief Justices of the Supreme Court, United States District Attorneys, senators, congressmen, ambassadors, bankers, lawyers, professors, writers, newspaper editors, poets, philanthropists, and one Commander and Chief of the Army, Winfield Scott.

The manuscript was written in ink on lined 7 ½” x 9 ½” writing paper taken from a copybook. The front and back cover of the copybook remained intact. The cover retained its original label: “Columbian Linen/Writing Paper/Marcus Ward & Co., Ltd.”
New York.” Stamped beneath this label was the local dealer from whom this tablet was purchased: “W.H. Morrison’s Son/Bookseller & Stationer/1328 P Street, N.W./Washington, D.C.”2 But the backing of the copybook proved most interesting, for it revealed a holograph signature in reverse, which when held up to a mirror read “Charles Lanman.” Now the question arose, who was Charles Lanman?

Meet the Press: Charles Lanman

Charles Lanman was born in 1819 “on the banks of the River Raisin in [Monroe], Michigan, in the shadow of a primeval forest. My paternal name originally signified the man of launde [lawn or plain], or the dweller at the forest clearing … Whether a star fell from the skies, or an old tree to the ground, I cannot tell, but I do know that from my earliest years the work[s] of nature have been preeminently dear to my heart.”3 Lanman’s father, Colonel Charles James Lanman (1795-1862), had studied law and in 1817 was admitted to the bar in Connecticut, but chose to travel west to the Territory of Michigan. There he was appointed Receiver of Public Moneys for the District of Michigan by President James Monroe, and again by President John Adams. A founder of Tecumseh, Michigan, he owned land where Grand Rapids is now located.4

Charles James Lanman married Marie Jeanne Guie (1801-1879), a woman of French and Native American descent.5 Their son, Charles Lanman, was sent east at the age of ten to live in Norwich, Connecticut, with his grandfather, James Lanman (1769-1841), a United States Senator (1819-1825). Charles Lanman attended the Plymouth [possibly the Plainfield] Academy until 1835. His father wanted him to become a merchant, and according to his father’s wishes,
the boy entered the East India mercantile house of Suydam, Jackson and Company in New York City and remained there ten years. During his time in New York, however, Lanman began to earnestly explore the eastern United States, and his father soon perceived that despite the mercantile business, his son’s:

[T]aste inclined him more to his pen, and I have ever thought it unwise to direct or control the natural bent of the mind as to pursuit in life. His motives of action are pure and high-minded, and his industry is untiring. As a general rule I believe young men attain most success in life when thrown upon their own resources and efforts.6

His father’s observation was sympathetic and would prove accurate. This inclination “to his pen,” along with a yearning for exploration that father and son shared, indeed determined his son’s destiny.

Although stationed in New York, young Lanman returned constantly to the Midwest, where he walked the land, rode on horseback, or parted waters in a canoe. He explored the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, and the Appalachian Mountains from the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf states. He possessed the ability to convey what he witnessed in both words and pictures. His sketches of the land and accompanying essays were published in magazines and newspapers. Lanman studied engraving under Asher B. Durand. His drawings and paintings earned him an associate membership in the National Academy of Design in 1846, and the friendship of Thomas Cole.7 He often referred to himself as an “amateur landscape painter,” but eventually executed approximately one thousand pictures. He later acknowledged, “My idea was to cultivate in the minds of the American people, as far as possible, a love for the wonderful scenery of their country, and for art itself.”8
He noted years later, “I have sketched and written in every State east of the Mississippi, and in many of those west of that stream.”  He published *Essays for Summer Hours* (1842), *Letters from a Landscape Painter* (1845), *A Summer in the Wilderness: Embracing a Canoe Voyage Up the Mississippi and Around Lake Superior* (1847), *A Tour to the River Saguenay, in Lower Canada* (1848), *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains* (1849), and *Haw-ho-noo, Or Records of a Tourist* (1850), in quick succession, all odes to nature.

In 1847 Lanman sent a copy of *A Summer in the Wilderness: Embracing a Canoe Voyage Up the Mississippi and Around Lake Superior* to the writer Washington Irving (1783-1859) in Irvington, New York.  He modestly described his book as “an unpretending affair” and requested a brief letter of advice regarding his work. Irving replied encouragingly: “I do not see that I have any literary advice to give you, excepting to keep on as you have begun. You seem to have the happy, enjoyable humor of old Izaak Walton.” Several years later, in 1857, Lanman again turned to Irving. He took the liberty of sending *Adventures in the Wilds of America*, originally published in 1854, but revised including his many contributions to periodicals of the times, and therefore republished in London in two volumes in 1856. Irving wrote to thank Lanman: “I hope the success of your work has been equal to its merits. To me, your ‘Adventures in the Wilds’ are a continual refreshment of the spirits . . . I ramble with you among the mountains and by the streams in the boundless interior of our fresh, unacknowledged country.” Along with this book Lanman enclosed *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains*, in which Irving took great interest, “having been campaigning, in my work, in the
upper parts of the Carolinas, and especially in the ‘Catawba country,’ about which you gave such graphic sketchings.”

Lanman’s written words and innate wanderlust drew strong praise from Irving:

I look upon your work as a vade mecum [Go with me] to the American lover of the picturesque and romantic, unfolding to him the wilderness of beauties and the variety of adventurous life to be found in our great chains of mountains and systems of lakes and rivers. You are, in fact, the picturesque explorer of our country.

In 1845 Lanman revisited Monroe, Michigan, and worked briefly for the *Monroe Gazette*; in 1846 he became an associate editor of the *Cincinnati Chronicle*, but returned to New York as art editor for the *New York Express*. In 1848 James Brooks (1810-1873), founder and editor of the *Express*, sent him to Washington with good advice: “Public affairs are taking an interesting turn down there, and you must send us some good letters; but one thing I wish you to remember, don’t believe anything that you hear, and not more than one-half that you see.” Lanman left for Washington that night, and provided the requested series of letters.

But soon the lure of the Capital proved more attractive and interesting than that of New York City and Lanman resigned his post at the *Express* and joined the staff of the *National Intelligencer*. The District of Columbia became his new permanent home, a move strengthened by the companionship he found with the associates who boarded with him in the house of the Indian Agent and Ethnologist Henry R. Schoolcraft (1793-1864). These men included: A.D Bache (1806-1867), Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey in 1843; Joseph Gales, Jr. (1786-1860) and William Winston Seaton (1785-1866) of Gales and Seaton Publishing Company and the *National Intelligencer*, Professor Joseph Henry (1797/99-1878), first director of the Smithsonian Institution; and George P. Marsh (1801-1882), the Whig senator from Vermont. As Lanman later described his early days in Washington, “I had access to the most cultivated society.”

As a writer and reporter, Lanman adhered to Brooks’ advice while he actively pursued the “most cultivated society.” A description of social events during the administration of James Polk [1845-1849] noted an entertainment given by Colonel William Winston Seaton, mayor of Washington 1840-1850, at his mansion on E Street for the Whig
members of Congress and accompanying journalists, including Lanman and Erastus Brooks (1815-1886), the brother of the editor of the *New York Express* who had sent Lanman to Washington. The guests included: John Quincy Adams (1767-1848); Henry Clay (1777-1852); ex-Attorney General John J. Crittenden (1786-1860); Senator Thomas Corwin (1794-1865) of Ohio; Mr. Speaker Robert C. Winthrop (1809-1894); Commodore Robert F. Stockton (1795-1866), U.S.N.; and General Walter Flood Jones (1776-1861) of the Army and Navy. At the entertainment there was “a sumptuous collation, with much drinking of healths and many pledges to the success of the Whig cause.”

But if cultivated society won Lanman’s interest, Adeline Dodge (1824-1914) of Georgetown won his heart. The marriage took place in the morning of June 12, 1849. Four children of Francis Dodge, Sr., (1782-1851) of Georgetown were married in a single swoop: Adeline Dodge married Charles Lanman; Virginia Dodge married Ben: Perley Poore; Allen Dodge married Mary Ellen Berry; and Charles Dodge married Elizabeth G. Davidson. Two contradictory explanations and times for this group marriage have been offered. The first explanation suggested the couples were married at 5 o’clock because there was only one train to New York every day and a 5 o’clock marriage ceremony would enable all to depart for the 6 o’clock train to New York from the Baltimore and Ohio depot at Delaware Avenue and C Street; the second explanation stated the couples were married at 4 o’clock in the morning because then they could all...
take the stage coach leaving Georgetown for Baltimore at 5 o’clock. The truth in this matter has never been established. Both explanations suggest a rather hurried marriage of four couples within an hour, and with time to depart and catch a train or coach. Evidently the brothers and sister not only married together, but honeymooned together.¹⁹

On their return from New York, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lanman occupied a house, 120 West [P] Street, on the Dodge property in Georgetown that Adeline’s father had built in 1810. Dodge owned the square bounded by Washington [30th] Street, Congress [31st] Street, West [P] Street, and Stoddert [Q] Street.²⁰

Thus the newlyweds became residents of Georgetown.

Charles Lanman was appointed Librarian of the War Department in 1849; by 1850 he was Librarian of Copyrights. At the personal request of Secretary of State Daniel Webster (1782-1852), however, he relinquished official government employment to serve as Webster’s private secretary. Webster’s choice of Lanman was not without merit. The two held mutual interests, politics and fishing; Webster referred to Lanman as “my junior brother angler.”²¹

Ben: Perley Poore (1820-1887), a well-known journalist for Harper’s Weekly and Lanham’s brother-in-law, described Webster’s relationship with Lanman:

His [Webster’s] private secretary was Mr. Charles Lanman, a young gentleman of literary and artistic tastes, who was a devoted disciple of Isaak Walton. Mr. Webster and he would often leave the Department of State for a day of piscatorial enjoyment at the Great Falls of the Potomac, when the Secretary [Webster] would throw off public cares and personal pecuniary troubles to cast his lines with boyish glee, and to exult loudly when he succeeded in hooking a fish.²²

As a result of this employment and personal relationship Lanman published Personal Memorials of Daniel Webster in 1851. The following year he wrote The Private Life of Daniel Webster, and described his aim in doing so:
The writer of this little volume was attached to its distinguished subject by the official tie of private secretary, and also by the endearing ties of admiration for a great intellect, and the strongest attachment to a most noble Heart and the best of Friends . . . In the following pages a regular biography has by no means been attempted; it was only the writer’s intention to narrate, in a simple and unpretending manner, a collection of authentic personal memorials, which may tend to embellish the extensive biographies of Webster which will hereafter be added to our national literature. Charles Lanman/ Washington, November, 1852

After Webster’s death in 1852, Casimir Bohn (1816-1883), mapmaker, lithographer, printmaker, and bookseller specializing in guidebooks and maps at his bookshop on Pennsylvania Avenue, presented Lanman a new opportunity to study in detail the history of the United States Capital, his new residence. In 1852 the two produced Bohn’s Hand-Book of Washington: Illustrated with Twenty Engravings of Public Buildings, &C. The book proved so popular that it was reprinted in 1854, 1856, 1858, 1859, 1860, and 1861, each version revised and enlarged by Lanman.


During his career in government, Lanman was Librarian and head in the Returns Office in the Interior Department 1855-1857. In 1857 he catalogued the art collection of William Wilson Corcoran (1798-1888). The collection of 82 pieces housed in Corcoran’s neo-Renaissance residence on Lafayette Square contained European works, but largely focused on American artists. Locally Lanman’s own work was included in exhibitions by the Washington Art Association in 1857, 1859, and 1860.
He also continued to travel extensively. The *National Intelligencer*, published by his friends Seaton and Gales, documented his travels and occasionally printed “a letter from our friend & townsman, Mr. Chas. Lanman.” In July 1857 Lanman visited Coos Country, New Hampshire, resided temporarily at the Glen House hotel, and wrote a description of Mount Washington, the highest point in the White Mountains:

> The word Coos is of Indian origin, & is said to signify ‘the pine country.’ Walter Neale is the first white man who explored these mountains in 1631; Darby Field is said to have been the first European who, with 2 Indians, in 1642, visited the summit of what is now called *Mount Washington*. Forty rods from the top of Mt. Washington stands a little monument of stone.²⁷

Possibly encouraged by his mother’s heritage, throughout his life he exhibited a keen interest in and admiration for American Indian life and lore; he was rumored to be one of the first to use the canoe as a pleasure craft. This interest possibly strengthened his relationship with Henry R. Schoolcraft (1793-1864), in whose house he boarded before his marriage.²⁸ From the 1830s until his death in 1864, Schoolcraft specialized in ethnological studies; his occupation as an explorer and his fascination with the history of American Indians, their customs and way of life, was an obsession that Lanman shared. This, and Schoolcraft’s years spent in the Michigan wilderness with which Lanman was so familiar, gave the two men much in common. Ben: Perley Poore, Lanman’s fellow journalist and brother-in-law, noted this connection when he observed in the last winter of the Pierce administration [1856/7], “Captain [Seth] Eastman (1808-1875), of the army, was at work on the sketches for the illustrations of Schoolcraft’s great work on the Indians, and Mr. Charles Lanman, the author-artist, added to his already well-filled portfolios of landscapes.”²⁹ But now Lanman was about to embark on his most useful and profitable venture:
It was during the winter of 1858 that the idea first occurred to me to prepare a biographical volume connected with the General Government, of which nothing of the same character had ever been issued in this country or Europe. . . It has been mentioned as a peculiar fact that my *Dictionary of Congress* is the only work prepared and owned by a private individual, which was ever published as a public document at the expense of the Government.  

Lanman collected biographies of former and sitting members of Congress for a *Dictionary of The United States Congress, Compiled as A Manual of Reference for the Legislator and Statesman*, published by J.B. Lippincott & Company in 1859 with an appendix describing other branches of the government, including information on states and foreign emissaries. In 1864 an updated version of the *Dictionary* was published by the Government Printing Office with the approval of the House of Representatives and the Senate. In his preface to this edition, Lanman wrote:

> Not being a politician, it has given me but little trouble to be impartial. My intention has been to express no opinion of living men, and but seldom to echo public opinion in regard to the dead . . . in the Appendix, I have endeavored to bring together, from the Government archives, a mass of Legislative and Executive information, calculated to be of service to Members of Congress, while engaged in their public duties, and especially in their examination of the Public Documents. Washington, January, 1864

He devoted an *Appendix* of 139 pages to this volume which included the history of Congress, the House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, the Continental Congress, the Constitution, the Executive Departments, and described the states and territories of the United States and their population growths and presidential elections through 1861.

In 1866 the Senate confirmed the publication of Lanman’s third revision, but Congress recruited his brother-in-law, Ben: Perley Poore, Clerk of the Senate Committee on Printing and Records, to prepare a directory modeled after Lanman’s. It has been acknowledged that Poore’s biographies mirrored Lanman’s, although Poore noted references to party allegiance. In 1868 Lanman revised a new edition of his own work and had it privately published by T. Belknap and H.E. Goodwin of Hartford, Connecticut, but sales were poor. He privately published one more edition in 1869, but sales indicated that further editions would not be necessary.
Not to be discouraged, however, in 1876 Lanman turned his attention to a new work, the *Biographical Annals of the Civil Government of the United States, During Its First Century*; this work was revised and published again in 1887, the final directory of congressional biography to be prepared and published privately.35

I have endeavored to present, within a convenient space, and in biographical form, the names and public services of all those who have, in a prominent manner, been identified with the National and State Governments of the Republic . . . in a few instances I have over-stepped the line which separates the civil from the military and naval history, but all the names thus added have a place in the hearts of their countrymen, and no apology, I trust, will be required for their introduction. Georgetown, District of Columbia, January, 1876.36

Lanman’s *Biographical Annals* included about seven thousand entries, and added tabular records which amount to fifteen thousand personal references. His biographies detail the lives of Delegates to the Colonial and Continental Congresses, Senators, Representatives, Territorial Delegates, Cabinet Ministers, Justices of the Supreme and Federal Courts, Officials of the Executive Departments, Governors of States and Territories, Diplomatic Ministers, and Military and Naval Officers.

Lanman continued his work for the federal government as Librarian of Copyrights in the State Department and Librarian of the Interior Department of the House of Representatives 1861-1862.37 He was appointed head in the Returns Office of the Interior Department again in 1865. He served as American Secretary to the Japanese legation in 1871-1882, Assistant Assessor of the District of Columbia in 1883, and Librarian of the Washington City Library in 1888.

His last years were spent writing and painting, both at home in Georgetown and during his constant travels. An article in *The Washington Post* on March 5, 1895, alerted the city to the fact that Charles Lanman, the artist, writer, and traveler, was dangerously ill; his death was announced in the same newspaper and the *New York Tribune* the following day.38
The Yellow Brick Road: Detours and Roadblocks

Our investigation into the life of Charles Lanman, multifaceted artist and writer, strongly suggests that the subject matter of the manuscript in the Archive—the founding and history of the United States Capital, descriptions of the branches and workings of the government, and the inclusion of brief biographies of famous citizens and their homes—would have been familiar to him considering his government employment record, and that his work with Casimir Bohn on the visitor’s guide and its revisions was not forgotten. For further confirmation, an analysis of Lanman’s handwriting was in order, to see if it matched one of the three scripts in the manuscript of the city guide.

This was easier said than done. For his Dictionary and the Biographical Annals Lanman composed letters of inquiry to individuals requesting information. While several of the replies are held in museums and libraries across the country, his letter of inquiry was almost never returned with the subject’s reply. One such letter, however, was found and serves as a prototype for Lanman’s mode of inquiry and handwriting. With a letter addressed to Professor J.E. Hilgard (1825-1891) requesting “a few biographical notes respecting C.P. Patterson (1816-1881), Benjamin Peirce (1809-1880), and yourself,” it was possible to compare Lanman’s handwriting with that of the manuscript. Small variations in the script occur, but considering that the letter was written in 1875 and the manuscript in 1893, it would not be unusual for handwriting to alter slightly over a period of eighteen years. Furthermore, the letter to Hilgard would have been in the author’s best hand, while the manuscript was a rough draft that only an editor or research assistant would address. The result appeared to confirm the theory that Lanman was the author.
In 1893 The Memorial Association of the District of Columbia published *Historic Washington*, a visitor’s guide to the Capital. The Association had three aims: to preserve noteworthy houses that were associated with the great men of the nation; to mark places of interest to visiting citizens and foreigners; and to preserve the historic spirit of the Republic. The association acknowledged, “This preliminary pamphlet has been prepared with as much care as time would allow, under our direction, by the well-known author, Mr. Charles Lanman.” The unidentified manuscript in the Tudor Place Archive appears to be a draft for the Association’s guide. It indeed follows their mission: it notes great men of the nation and their noteworthy houses; it marks places of interest to visiting citizens and foreigners; and it preserves the historic spirit of the Republic.
In a comparison of subject matters, of the 17 chapters in *Historic Washington* only six chapters do not contain writing from the unidentified manuscript. These chapters include: *District of Columbia; Suter’s Tavern; Decatur House;* and *The Washington Monument*. *The Union Hotel* and *Tudor Place* are in the published document, but entirely absent from the manuscript. These two subjects may have been originally included in the draft, but were excised on purpose or by carelessness; the draft, however, holds a brief note regarding Tudor Place, “Thomas Peter- 4 houses on South side of K. St. Built them all, and lived in one of them, until he built Tudor Place and there lived,” but a complete entry in the text does not exist. There is no mention of the Union Hotel.
The remaining 11 chapters in the published version that do quote extensively from the draft include: The Capitol; The White House; Executive Departments; Octagon House;

The following chapters are examples from the Association’s guide; italicized print indicates the script in the guide taken exactly from the manuscript:

1. OCTAGON HOUSE: On the northeast corner of 18th street and New York Avenue, was built, in 1798, by Col. John Taylor, of Virginia. He also owned “Mt. Airy,” Virginia, and lived there and at the Octagon alternately. His income was princely, and it is said that among his five hundred slaves were artisans of every class, so that he wrought iron, felled forests, and built ships without going outside his domain. When President Madison returned to Washington, after the burning of the White House in 1814, he resided at the Octagon, where official receptions and executive councils were held. The treaty of Ghent was signed in the Octagon room over the hall, 18.

2. KALORAMA: At the north extremity of 21st street is one of the finest of the old suburban homes, built in 1805, by Joel Barlow, a poet and politician. Robert Fulton was a frequent visitor at this house and here began his experiments in steam navigation, on Rock Creek. Joel Barlow was sent by Madison as ambassador to France; during his absence Kalorama was occupied by the widow of Commodore Decatur. After the death of Mr. Barlow abroad, his niece, Clara Baldwin, who married Col. George Bomford, inherited the property which was long known as Bomford Place. It was afterward owned by Mrs. Lovette, but was vacated during the civil war, and used as a small-pox hospital; since that time it has been restored and reoccupied by Mrs. Lovett, 20.

3. THE VAN NESS HOUSE: was situated at the foot of 17th street, near the Potomac River. It was built in the centre of a square of six acres, and was at the time not excelled by any private building in the country. Here originally stood the cottage of David Burns. His plantation and property descended, in 1802, to his only child, who married General John P. Van Ness, a Representative from New York. Mr. Van Ness built his fine residence within a few feet of the Burns cabin which Mrs. Van Ness would never allow to be removed and she frequently invited her distinguished guests to inspect it. The house was noted for its hospitality and the beauty of its location, 21.

4. LINTHICUM PLACE: Is situated on Georgetown Heights. It was purchased by Mrs. Calhoun, the mother of John C. Calhoun, and there he resided with her and his brother James, while Secretary of War under President Monroe. His entertainments in this house were very elegant, one of the most notable being given to Lafayette. He drove in a carriage and four at that time. The house was afterward owned by Brooke Mackall, of Georgetown, and by him sold to Edward Linticium, who added to the building, 23.

5. THE OLDEST SCHOOL HOUSE: The first public school in Washington was at the southeast corner of Fourteenth and G Streets, No. 621 G. It was one of the oldest landmarks in this city, and associated with the earliest recollections of the oldest residents. Thomas Jefferson built it for a stable when he was Secretary of State. It was not long so used but was given by him to the District early in the century, when a school was needed. He was president of the board of trustees. In 1871 it was used as a carpenter’s shop. The largest school building in Washington is now known as the “Jefferson School,” on the southeast corner of 6th and D streets, 25.

6. ARLINGTON HOUSE: Is on the Virginia side of the Potomac, fronting the Capitol, and occupies a lofty and commanding position, between two and three hundred feet above the river. The estate comprises one thousand acres, and was owned by John Parke Custis, the stepson of George Washington, and was inherited by George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of General Washington, who built the present house in 1802. He married Mary Lee Fitzhugh, and their only daughter, Mary Randolph Custis, married Robert E. Lee. She inherited the property from her father. It was sold for non-payment of taxes and bought by the United States Government and made the National Soldier’s Cemetery, the family burial-ground on the place remained undisturbed. General Lee resided in Lexington, Va., after the war, where he died October 12, 1870. He was buried under the chapel of Lee University, and at his request no funeral oration was pronounced. General Lafayette made several visits to Arlington and pronounced the view from the grand portico the finest he had ever seen, and urged Mrs. Custis to cherish the native forest trees, 25-26.
Kalorama; The Van Ness House; The Cosmos Club House; The Blaine House; Linthicum Place; The Oldest School House; and Arlington House.

Neither the manuscript nor the published guide is dated, but an inscribed addition to the manuscript’s chapter on The Oldest School House gives a clue to date of publication: “Thomas Jefferson built the first school house in Washington. The largest school building in Washington in 1893 bears the same honored name” [Jefferson School, southeast corner of 6th and D Streets]; 1893 is the year assigned for publication to the guide by Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries. This was the same year that the “unknown” author of The Federal Metropolis, or the Story of A Century stated that he wrote 103 years after the bill for locating the Federal City on the Potomac River was passed by Congress. The biographies of “special friends and fellow citizens” in the manuscript were not included; possibly cost factored into this elimination.
Epilogue: There’s No Place Like Home

In 1810 Colonel Francis Dodge erected two identical houses on his property in Georgetown. Upon the marriage of his daughter Adeline to Charles Lanman in 1849, the Colonel gave her these two three-story brick and frame houses; 120 West Street was for her and her husband and 123 West Street was for her to rent. In October 1880, however, the streets in Georgetown were renamed to coordinate with the streets of Washington, and thereafter West Street was known as P Street, making the Lanman’s new address 3035 P Street. A newspaper correspondent who interviewed Charles Lanman in his home in 1884, wrote that he lived “as he has for a quarter of a century in aristocratic old Georgetown,” and was surrounded by a large and rare collection of books and paintings. A reviewer after Lanman’s death recalled, “Mr. Lanman’s house was an ideal one with its wealth of books, autographs, pictures and
curios, presided over by the genial, courtly author-artist and his gracious, sweet-faced wife.”

Mrs. Charles Lanman remained until her death in 1914 at 3035 P Street, her home where Charles Dickens and Washington Irving had been entertained, and Daniel Webster had been a constant visitor. Mrs. James D. Patton, a piano teacher and the head of a sewing circle that donated its profits to local charities, lived next door at 3033 P Street. After the deaths of these two ladies, the two houses were combined into one. “[C]hanged from their pristine loveliness,” they became known as the Margaret Mary Home [Catholic Home for Aged Ladies], a residence for invalids and the elderly under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

In 1958 builder A.L. Wheeler, owner at that time of the combined houses then known officially as 3033 P Street [formerly 120 and 123 West Street], planned to demolish the structure to make way for a 17-rowhouse complex that he was constructing in the interior block bounded by 30th, 31st, P, and Q Streets. Wheeler stated, “The building, once two houses and now one, is too run down to save without too much expense.” Wheeler told the Federal Commission on Fine Arts it would cost $60,000 to repair the two-part house, which would never sell for more than $40,000. The Federal Commission on Fine Arts recommended the house be restored “because of its aesthetic and historical value,” but noted that the restoration would place “an unusual financial hardship on the owner.”

The president of the Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown in 1958 was Armistead Peter 3rd (1896-1983) of Tudor Place. On September 30 of that year, a private hearing was held before the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners on the demolition of 3033-3035 P Street. In his book of minutes of the Association of Georgetown kept by Armistead Peter, he recorded: “These houses were built about 1810 and are examples of [the] kind of house Public Law 808 [81st Congress] was designed to protect.” A petition of protest was circulated and signed by more than 100 prominent citizens to save the 148-year-old house:

The age of these two houses is far over a century. They are of excellent architecture of their period, and sound construction; and form an integral part
of the present ‘thirty’ (30) back of P Street which contains many similar houses of the ‘Federal’ period. They have fine old woodwork and fireplaces. They are of substantial historic value. Their destruction would be of irreparable loss to ‘Old Georgetown.’

At a private hearing Wheeler brought a brick from the house as “proof of the bad condition of the house” and Wheeler’s architect testified that the bricks could not be reconditioned. Peter wrote further that no representative of the Fine Arts Commission appeared at the hearing; one representative from the National Trust was present but remained silent throughout. Peter, who must have visited the house, observed in his notes:

Wheeler wishes to remove these houses so that he can build four new houses on each side of [the] entrance to his new development. Actually there is not a visible crack in the walls and I feel sure that they could have been reconditioned, but Wheeler would thereby have lost the chance to build one extra house.

Peter appealed to his own lawyers to obtain a restraining order against demolition, but the firm declined his request, possibly because it would be difficult to prove the Commissioners had been derelict. Peter then appealed directly to the current Commissioner, Robert E. McLaughlin, and a former commissioner, who could issue a restraining order, but they too declined. At this point Peter “regretfully gave up the
Yet he could not let the matter rest, and on Sunday, October 12, Armistead Peter sent a telegram to the Board of Commissioners:

I respectfully request in the name of the Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown that the razing permit issued for thirty thirty five P Street Northwest be held in abeyance pending a report on the physical condition of the house by a panel of Architects appointed by the District of Columbia Chapter A.I.A. and the publication of the report. I believe that the commissioners owe to the Congress the employment of impartial experts in making such determinations and to the residents of Georgetown the publication of the results.

But on Monday, October 13, Wheeler received his permit, which had evidently already been approved by the Commissioners on October 9, and the destruction of the combined houses was immediately underway, “in spite of a law passed by both houses of Congress with the express purpose of saving just such houses.” The fatal defect, Armistead Peter reasoned, was that the act allows the Commissioners to “take such actions as in their judgment are right and proper in the circumstances.”

Early in October, a Georgetown neighbor described the combined house:

Weeds and vines near the front porch formed a veritable tanglewood. A door was wide open and the piazza steps looked safe, so I used them and stepped inside the hall. All furniture had been removed except a bookshelf or two with some woe-begone volumes in pitiful array. A wide straight shaft of sunlight showed me to the old stairway, and then seemed to guide me around to the windows and fireplaces where the woodwork was simple but good. I walked upstairs, in fact I wandered everywhere . . . I did not hurry; I did not want to, but even if I had wanted to, I think something would have detained me. I had . . . real appreciation of the house as a home lived in by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lanman.

The same writer added days later:

I passed by P Street. No. 3035 was entirely demolished. A few piles of rubble and brick were mere vestiges of the early 19th Century building. No. 3033 was
almost down. Two walls, only, were standing like battered and weary sentinels, and by sunset I presume they will be gone forever.\textsuperscript{55}

Ironically the author of the manuscript in the Tudor Place Archive had foreseen such actions. As stated in his \textit{Preface}, “The primary object has been to collect all the facts and personal incidents connected with the earlier houses and mansions of the District of Columbia before they shall have been entirely obliterated by the combined influences of time and the sordid instincts of humanity.”\textsuperscript{56} Though separated in distance by years and time this author and Armistead Peter 3\textsuperscript{rd} shared the same conviction, respect for the past and a strong desire to preserve for the future. As the “picturesque explorer of our country,” Charles Lanman would have indeed applauded Armistead Peter 3\textsuperscript{rd}’s efforts on his own behalf and Peter’s continual efforts throughout Georgetown.

Despite our investigation into this manuscript, we still do not know how or why it entered the Archive. The material and history we uncovered, following the yellow brick road to the author, led us to Charles Lanman. We identify him as the author until contrary evidence appears. We confirm and salute his and Armistead Peter’s mutual conviction. But once again, it was the journey as well as the destination that mattered.

--Wendy Kail, Tudor Place Archivist

\textsuperscript{1} Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 80, \textit{The Federal Metropolis, or the Story of A Century}, No Date [1893], \textit{Preface}, 4. The manuscript draft remains in the order found, which presumably is not the original order. Page numbers have been added by the archivist to maintain the order found and for reference purposes.
\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.} By the nineteenth century, Marcus Ward & Co. of Belfast had begun to manufacture paper; by 1823 it was well known for printing, and soon functioned also as a bookbinder and stationer. Its biggest success was issuing copybooks, which were eventually sold worldwide. (www.Oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780198187318.001.0001-chapter 11)
\textsuperscript{3} M.L.D. Ferris, “Charles Lanman,” \textit{The American Author}, Volume 1, Number 12, November 1902 (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Society of American Authors, 1902), 353. \textit{Laund}: a lawn; a plain extended between woods: William Bolles, Editor, \textit{An
6 Ferris, 354.
9 Ibid.
12 Irving, 30-31, letter of October 15, 1847.
15 Ibid. Biographical material on Lanman contain variations of this quote. Bolles, 933: Vade mecum, “Go with me. A young man’s vade mecum: That which should be his constant companion.”
16 Ferris, 355.
17 Ibid.
18 Ben: Perley Poore, Perley’s Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis Volumes I and II (Philadelphia, Chicago, Kansas City: Hubbard Brothers, 1886), 339. Colonel Seaton was Mayor William Winston Seaton; Gaither & Addison, Compilers, Washington Directory and National Register, for 1846 (Washington, D.C.: John T. Towers, 1846), 74, lists Seaton, W.W., Mayor of Washington, on the south side of E Street between 7 and 8 Streets. Allen C. Clark, “Colonel William Winston Seaton and His Mayoralty.” Records of the Columbia Historical Society Volume 27 (Washington, D.C.: Published by The Society, 1928), 6, states: “When the military title was bestowed and by whom, the writer is uninformed. The recognition of his [Seaton’s] executive possibilities may have been when in defense against British invaders,” and notes that History of The Invasion and Capture of Washington (1857), a description of the actions of the actions of
the War of 1812, is dedicated to Colonel William W. Winston: see, John S. Williams, *History of The Invasion and Capture of Washington* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1857), iii. The identification of General Walter Flood Jones is tenuous, as it was not possible to be a general in both the army and the navy; Walter Flood Jones’ dates and the fact that he was commissioned by President Monroe as Brigadier General of Militia of the District of Columbia suggests his presence at the entertainment; no naval officer by this name could be placed.


20 Ecker, 232. Cordelia Jackson’s article in the *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* states that the two houses were built by Dodge in 1825, 153; later sources state 1810.

21 Ferris, 356.

22 Perley Poore, 382-383. Webster was Secretary of State under President Millard Fillmore 1850-1852.

23 Charles Lanman, *The Private Life of Daniel Webster* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1852), up. Lanman remained proud of his relationship with Webster. Several years later he took the liberty of sending “His Excellency, President Lincoln” a copy of this book with a note explaining that it “will show you on what terms I was with that distinguished man.”: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Lincoln Papers, General Correspondence 1833-1916, Charles Lanman to Abraham Lincoln, letter of November 16, 1864.


28 Ferris, 355; Margaret Brent Downing, “Literary Landmarks” Records of the Columbia Historical Society Volume 19 (Washington, D.C.: Published by The Society, 1916), 53. According to Downing, Henry C. Schoolcraft and his wife lived at 315 C Street and later at 1321 F Street N.W. It is unclear in which house Lanman boarded.


30 Ferris, 356.


33 Ibid., up. This volume is inscribed by the author in graphite: “Francis Dodge/from/Charles Lanman Esq./August 1876.” This would have been Francis Dodge, Jr. (1809-1881), a brother-in-law of Lanman.


36 Ibid., Introduction, 3.

37 Dictionary of American Biography, 605, states that Lanman received this appointment in 1861. Joan M. Dixon, National Intelligencer Newspaper Abstracts, Special Edition: The Civil War Years January 1, 1861-June 30, 1863 Volume I (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 2001), 260, entry of Friday, March 14, 1862, states, “Charles Lanman, heretofore associated with Mr. Etheridge in the House of Representatives, has been appointed the librarian in that body in place of Honorable C. Chaffee, late a member of Congress from Massachusetts.” It is probable that the appointment did take place in 1861; the Intelligencer was frequently months behind in relaying information. The titles of Lanman’s jobs and the dates of his employments vary in all of his relevant biographical material.


41 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 80, *The Federal Metropolis, or the Story of a Century*, No Date [1893], 99.


46 Ecker, 217-218.


48 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 38, Folder 14, Minute Book, 5.

49 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 34, Folder 7.

50 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 38, Folder 14, Minute Book, 5-6.


52 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 39, Folder 7. There was confusion in the address of the combined houses; Peter refers to the address as 3035 P Street; newspaper accounts and letters.
from the Board of Commissioners refer to the address as both 3035 and 3033 P Street.

53 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 38, Folder 14, Minute Book, 8.

54 Knox, “Introductory Memorandum,” up.

55 Ibid.

56 Tudor Place Historic House & Garden Archive, Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, Manuscript 21, Box 80, *The Federal Metropolis, or the Story of A Century*, No Date [1893], Preface, 4.

**Bibliography**


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**Libraries and Archives**

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Frick Art Reference Library, The Frick Collection, New York City, New York

Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, District of Columbia

Monroe County Museum, Research Room and Archives, Monroe, Michigan


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