As we celebrate our Bicentennial this year, we are reminded of another milestone event significant both to Tudor Place and the field of historic preservation. Fifty years ago Armistead Peter 3rd, Tudor Place’s final private owner, donated a scenic easement to the United States providing for the perpetual preservation of the historic buildings and gardens at Tudor Place—the first such easement provided under the Historic Sites Act of 1935. At the ceremony commemorating this landmark agreement, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall referred to Peter’s easement as “a gift to the nation.”

Inspired by Tudor Place’s designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1960, Armistead Peter 3rd contemplated additional ways Tudor Place could receive the recognition it deserved while ensuring it would be preserved for posterity. His partner in this endeavor was his friend and legal advisor, Richard Wilmer. By early 1966 they were discussing the possibility of a easement “for the benefit of the United States of America through the preservation of this historic site for the inspiration of the people of the United States.” Peter and Wilmer were furrowing new ground for preservationists. In a memo to his client, Wilmer acknowledged that buildings and grounds were “features not previously encountered in scenic easements.”

The 1935 Historic Sites Act authorized the federal government to enter into cooperative agreements to preserve historic buildings and sites for public use but made no provision specifically for easements and did not explicitly define “public use.”

Peter desired that Tudor Place become a museum for the enjoyment of the public in the future, but did not wish to provide public access to the grounds or house while he resided there. While acknowledging uncertainty about a court challenge to the easement regarding the meaning of “public use,” Wilmer asserted that public use is defined by “public convenience, benefit or advantage, none of which necessarily requires physical use.” Toward meeting the public use requirement and his desire for the property to remain a private residence, Peter maintained that the easement would preserve the house and grounds for future public use, while presently providing enjoyment to the public who passed on the street and sidewalk.

Peter held fast to this position, causing National Park Service historian Robert Utley to characterize him in an internal memorandum as “a man of considerable force and firm opinions.”

Despite their concerns, the Interior Department saw the advantages of accepting the easement and even considered amending the Historic Sites Act to facilitate it. Within the Department—especially the National Park Service—the environment was favorable toward historic preservation in 1966, the year the National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law.

Ultimately Secretary of the Interior Udall consented to Tudor Place’s “public use” stance and accepted the easement on behalf of the nation at a ceremony in his office on December 8, 1966. The easement prohibits alteration of the main

Photo at left: Richard Wilmer (left), Armistead Peter 3rd, and Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall announce the Tudor Place preservation easement at a ceremony at the Department of the Interior on December 8, 1966.
house exterior and limits construction elsewhere on the site. It provides that the Department of the Interior must approve removal of trees greater than eight inches in diameter and prescribes that the main house be used only as a private residence or museum. The terms of the easement continue to guide preservation of the house and management of the site.

In a statement issued at the signing event, Secretary Udall declared, “Tudor Place is one of the most historic structures in the Nation’s Capital remaining in private ownership, and this easement will assure that its dignity and beauty will be preserved unimpaired for future generations.”

The response to this announcement was favorable. A December 11, 1966 Washington Post op-ed, entitled “Tudor Place Saved,” hailed the easement and declared Tudor Place to be a fine example of early American architecture. The Citizens Association of Georgetown offered a resolution of support, as did the Virginia Garden Club. Mr. Peter also received numerous letters from owners of other historic properties, seeking advice on the use of scenic easements for preservation. Within a decade, the National Trust for Historic Preservation began accepting easements to protect historic properties. Its Preservation News article announcing this program lauded the Tudor Place easement for originating a new tool for historic preservation.

Through his vision, persistence and devotion to the preservation of his home, Armistead Peter 3rd ensured Tudor Place would be preserved for the “inspiration of the people of the United States” and devised an instrument that has been vital to historic preservation in the decades since.

—Mark Hudson

3 Tudor Place Archive. Papers of Armistead Peter 3rd, MS 21, Box 43, Folder 6. Richard Wilmer to Armistead Peter 3rd, November 15, 1966.

Interns at Tudor Place

Each semester we provide practical experience for students through internships. During this spring semester we have been pleased to welcome three exceptional interns, working in collections, development, and education.

**Isabel Smith** has engaged her love of art while serving as a collections intern. Her Tudor Place experience began with her full immersion in the museum’s “January Clean.” Since then she has been assisting with collections care and entering information into our collections management software. She has enjoyed the diversity of experiences at Tudor Place and is intrigued by the unique challenges associated with managing the historic house as a collection intern. When she is not engaged in her studies or working with us at Tudor Place, she is playing the cello. Her internship concludes at the end of April, just in time for the completion of a graduate degree in art history from American University.

**Michael Breton** indulges his interest in history and culture while learning about non-profit finances through this development internship. During the remainder of the spring semester and throughout the summer, Michael will assist with prospect research, invitation lists and special events. His love of historic estates corresponds with his love of vintage films, classical literature and sophisticated English television. Michael is working on a degree in accounting from the University of Maryland.

**Samantha Theriault** has enjoyed working with the public and observing their reactions to the museum experience at Tudor Place as an education intern. A museum education graduate student at The George Washington University, Sam has had a range of experiences here including tours for students and educators, special event planning, teas and children’s activities like Eggstravaganza and Tudor Tots. In the final weeks of her internship she will be developing the programming that will accompany George Washington’s Revolutionary War tent that will be at Tudor Place at the end of April. A native of New England, Samantha enjoys hiking, cooking, watching films and listening to Taylor Swift.
Dear Friends,

For many years, Tudor Place Times served as our primary vehicle for providing information to you, our members and friends. While we will continue to rely on the newsletter to describe new research, introduce the people of Tudor Place, and update you on major projects and events, other avenues abound now for providing timely information about programs and activities.

These include our website (www.tudorplace.org), rich with information and images and featuring a calendar of events just updated this year with a fresh look and enhanced functionality. From there and elsewhere on the web, you can also reach us through several social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, each offering perspective on Tudor Place activities, and brilliant photographs of artifacts, people, places, and programs. These serve also as a forum for sharing your thoughts and interacting with knowledgeable professionals on our staff about everything from D.C. history to plant identifications to caring for silver. For daily takes on programs, collections, historic preservation and the beautiful gardens and grounds, nothing beats their immediacy. “Events” and invitation emails are another way to ensure you never miss out on upcoming programs, with easy links to online registration. (If you’re not receiving them yet, sign up using the “envelope” icon at top right on our website.)

Given this abundance of ways to communicate with and hear from us, we hope you will be as excited as we are about some upcoming changes in the content and format of this newsletter to ensure that it continues to inform and inspire you with the many ways that “America’s Story Lives Here.” One of those, beginning later this year, is online delivery. In addition to being a green alternative that also saves on printing and postage, online delivery will let us provide you direct access to additional rich content online and links for immediate registration and other services, as well as full-color illustrations and photography.

Much thought has gone into this transition. We hope you will appreciate our efforts to share the Tudor Place experience with you as broadly as possible. I welcome your thoughts, feedback and questions about the future of Tudor Place Times; you can reach me at mhudson@tudorplace.org.

Sincerely,

Mark Hudson

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The Tudor Place Bicentennial is in full swing. We hope you will join us for the upcoming events.

**Washington's Revolutionary War Tent**

April 30 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Long before the White House, George Washington's “Oval Office” was a humble camp tent. On April 30 Tudor Place welcomes a beautiful reproduction of this historic structure to the grand South Lawn. See and experience how General Washington slept, ate, and strategized during critical moments of the Revolutionary War. Living history demonstrations, hands-on activities and discussion of life in the period will accompany the tent.

FREE with advance registration | $5 per person at door

Washington's Camp Tent is on loan from the Museum of the American Revolution which will open in spring 2017 with the original tent on display for the public.

**Tudor Nights: Washington's Revolutionary War Tent Sneak Peek**

April 29, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Join us for a special Friday evening “Tudor Nights” and enjoy an exclusive viewing of the tent before its one-day public exhibition, while sipping cocktails and enjoying hors d’oeuvres on the grounds.

Members: FREE | Non-Members: $20

Ages 21+, in addition to tent and artifact viewing, admission includes hearty appetizers, soft drinks, two bar beverages and signature cocktail.

**Landmark Society Lunch:**

Carol Joynt's Q&A Café at Tudor Place with Author Julia Reed

Luncheon & interview on “spirited” southern entertaining.

May 26, Lunch seating at 11:45 a.m., and program begins at 12:15 p.m.

Presented by the Tudor Place Landmark Society, author and journalist Carol Joynt returns to Tudor Place for an online broadcast of her Q & A Café with renowned food writer Julia Reed. Enjoy lunch under the elegant South Lawn tent and an early look at entertaining trends and tips in *Julia Reed's South: Spirited Entertaining and High Style Fun All Year Long*, coming from Rizzoli in May.

Members: $30 | Non-Members: $40 | 2 tickets for $70. Ticket price includes seating, lunch, and soft beverages.

**Peter Family Reunion**

June 10-11

Descendants of Thomas and Martha Peter will be welcomed at Tudor Place for a two-day gathering that will feature special tours, activities for families, historical presentation and plenty of opportunities for fellowship. By invitation only; for an invitation or event details, please contact Felice Herman at fherman@tudorplace.org

**Happy Birthday, America and Happy Birthday, Tudor Place!**

July 2 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Join us to celebrate our Bicentennial and patriotism in a festive, onetime event for all ages in the historic gardens. Play traditional American outdoor games, take self-guided garden tours, make patriotic crafts, and of course, enjoy a piece of the giant Tudor Place birthday cake from Dog Tag Bakery.

Veterans + military families: FREE | Members: $3 | All others: $5

To register and for more information about these and other Tudor Place events, visit www.tudorplace.org/programs