BIography

OF

MARGARET ANN PRENDEngAST

By: Terry Robinson
27 February 80
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TO my husband and daughter
   For their patience and encouragement

TO Ben Axion, Superior Court of Chatham County
   Susan Floyd, Georgia Historical Society
   Mildred Gartleman, Lutheran Church of Ascension
   William H. Samuel, Laurel Grove Cemetery
The following biography of Margaret Ann Prendergast reveals a life of a woman who remained in the shadows of her family. She appeared only infrequently in comparison to the male predominance that was customary of the early and middle 19th Century.

A glimpse at her character and style of living is seen best through her male counterparts. These would include her maternal grandfather, Joachim Hartstein¹, her father, Tobias Vanzant Gray², and her husband of 16 years, Pierce Butler Prendergast³.

Joachim Hartstein, a planter from Purisbury, South Carolina⁴, accumulated wealth in real estate stretching from Beaufort, South Carolina to Savannah, Georgia totaling some 1,985 acres at the time of his death in 1803.⁵ (Value in 1980 real estate market would be approximately $992,500 at a minimum.) In addition to real estate, Joachim utilized 90 slaves on his plantation for a value of $24,611 at his death.⁶ This wealth was distributed to his five descendent children: Benjamin, Jacob, Ann Margaret, who is Margaret's mother, Mary and Catherine and to his wife, Catherine. Along with the boys, Ann Margaret received an equal share.⁷ It is during this transaction that 360 acres on White-
marsh Island in Savannah would become the birth place \textsuperscript{8} of Margaret Ann Prendergast and Lot 20 Warren Ward \textsuperscript{9} in Savannah her future home.

Ann Margaret Hartstein, Margaret's mother, married Tobias V. Gray on May 18, 1809 \textsuperscript{10} at the tender age of 16 \textsuperscript{11}. Tobias, father of Margaret Ann and George Sweet, \textsuperscript{12} was a prosperous merchant \textsuperscript{13} dealing in pipes, tobacco, flour and grains. \textsuperscript{14} He also was a politically active resident in Savannah being elected for one term as Alderman in 1810 \textsuperscript{15} after suffering a defeat in the 1809 race. \textsuperscript{16} He also was socially active organizing and attending a Washington Day celebration ball \textsuperscript{17}, militarily involved with Chatham Artillery Company of the Georgia militia, \textsuperscript{18} and residentially responsible as Fire Master of Warren Ward. \textsuperscript{19} This influence in Margaret's life must have acquainted her with some of the finer things in life.

Margaret was born on July 31, 1817 \textsuperscript{20} on the 380 acres \textsuperscript{21} on Whitemarsh Island, later called "Gray's Cottage" \textsuperscript{22}, that had been passed down from her grandfather, Joachim. A tragic event was beset on the Gray family on August 9, 1825 when her mother, Ann Margaret, was found dead from apparent drowning in the Savannah
This left 8-year old Margaret as the lady of the house and her 3-year old brother, George, without a mother. After her father's death, the estate was settled on March 3, 1843. George received the "Gray's Plantation and 12 slaves; while Margaret took Lot 20 warren ward, $1200 in cash, 200 bushels of corn and a $217 note from George.  

Margaret Ann Gray became Mrs. Pierce Butler Prendergast on February 6, 1834 at the age of 16 in the Lutheran Church of the Ascension. Pierce was also a good provider and was self-employed as a lottery and exchange broker in 1834-1838. In 1839 he joined the Greene & Pulaski Lottery. Pierce participated in the Savannah Volunteer Guard and was given a governor's order to draft men to counter the Seminole Indians. He also sat on the Committee of Charity of the German Firendly Society, and became involved with the Solomon's Lodge of the Masons in December 15, 1836. He attended regular meetings working toward his acceptance on January 2, 1837. Although most of the societies were fraternal in membership, the wives of members contributed their time and energies toward filling the gap left by the father's absence. And for this Margaret
should be commended. For as busy as her husband appeared to be, the parental duties and obligations of raising their two daughters, Margaret Ann and Susan Robertson, was left to her.

Margaret's life was consumed in household duties and parental responsibilities but on occasion she did take a trip to Charleston with the two children, as she did on May, 1838 on the steamboat, William Seabrook. From all indications she must have remained there until September, 1838 because the Post Office continued to hold her mail on the list of letters. Another trip on the Seabrook was made to Charleston on January 18, 1841. Whether these trips were for leisure or perhaps for some need to return to the South Carolina area, the reason is not known.

Upon the death of Pierce Butler on April 15, 1850, a settlement of the estate was made by June 27, 1850. The property was valued at $40,000 but after claims had been paid, Margaret was granted $20,000 in the property settlement, which was to be distributed equally among the three heirs. (Further information could be available from Superior Court Deed Settlement dated April 15, 1853 if the deed book is located.) The
information available presently only indicates one daughter's share, Susan H., of the estate which included $5,000 in Georgia State Bonds, 8 shares in Savannah Gas Company, 5 shares in Central Railroad and Banking Company valued at $237.50, 1 slave, and one-third of the household furniture. If the apportionment was equitable, Margaret would have received approximately $7,000. She did manage the trust for the minor child, Susan, until she reached majority and was released from any further accounting on August 2, 1861.

During the first few years after her husband's death, Margaret remained at the 20 St. Julian address in Savannah which was part of her inheritance. But on May 1856, Margaret purchased the Lot #36 west 1/2 of Monterrey Ward for $650 and moved to this location in 1859. From 1855 until 1870, Margaret gradually accumulated a modest return from the estate; because in 1868 major renovations had been completed on the 20 St. Julian and she was being taxed for 27 slaves, and $400 worth of furniture.

Her financial stability throughout her life never seemed insecure even to her death on July 6, 1872, 25 days before her 55th birthday. The cause of death
was listed as hypertrophy, an excessive enlargement of an organ. Her funeral was held in the home of her daughter, Susan Wade in Cassel Row. She is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery, Lot 402 along side her brother, George, and his family. Her daughters had erected a 6' granite tombstone that states "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Margaret A. Fendegast Born on Whitemarsh Island July 31, 1817 Died at Savannah, Georgia July 6, 1872", with a footstone inscribed "Our Mother". The question of Pierce's burial place has been researched but the only conclusion that could be drawn was that Pierce died during a period of transition of the Old Brick Cemetery to Laurel Grove. He must have been lost in the exchange.

In conclusion, Margaret Ann came from a strong, financially sound Southern background and was able to grab a larger slice of life than most during those times. She had available a refined standard of living and outside of the tragedy of her mother's death at the young age of 8, Margaret was unscathed and continued to be resilient in her drive for life.
RESIDENCE OF MARGARET ANN FRANDERGAST

420-422 E. St. Julian Street
Savannah, Georgia
27 Feb 80
To the Honourable the Justices of the Inferior Court of said County, sitting for Ordinary purposes.

Gentlemen:

I hereby apply for Letters of Administration
on the estate of Pierce A. Pendergast
late of Chatham County, deceased, and pray that the same may be granted
for the benefit of the heirs and creditors.

Respectfully,

Amount of property, $20,000. 00

Securities,

M. Robertson

J. Richardson

GEORGIA—Chatham County.—To all whom it may concern:

Whereas, Margaret A. Pendergast will apply to the
Honorable the Inferior Court of said county, when sitting
for Ordinary purposes, for Letters of Administration on
the estate and effects of Pierce A. Pendergast, late of said
county, deceased.

These are therefore to cite and admonish, all and sin-
gular the kindred and creditors of the said deceased, to
file their objections, if any they have, to the applicant in
the Clerk's Office of said Court, on or before the tenth
day of June next; otherwise Letters of Administration
will be granted.

Witness, the Honorable Anthony Porter, one of the
Justices of said Court, this tenth day of May, 1858.

Seaborn Goodall

May 10

C. C. o. c. c.

This is to certify that the above printed advertisement has been published in the
Savannah Republican as the law requires.

Savannah June 27th 1858

App. B
STATE OF GEORGIA,  
Chatham County.

Know All Men by these Presents, That we Margaret A. Pendergast and Corde H. Richardson and William Robertson

are held and firmly bound and obliged unto the Honorable the Justices of the Inferior Court of Chatham County, for the time being, acting as a Court of Ordinary, in the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars, to be paid to the said Justices, their successors in office, or assigns: for which payment well and truly to be made and done, we bind ourselves, jointly and severally, and each of our heirs, executors and administrators, firmly by these presents.

Sealed with our Seals, and dated at Savannah, the ninth day of May in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and fifty.

Whereas, Pierce R. Pendergast, late of Chatham County, deceased, died intestate, having whilst he lived and at the time of his death, divers Goods, Chattels and effects and Credits within the County and State aforesaid: And whereas the above bound Margaret Pendergast had made application to the Clerk of the Court of Ordinary, for Letters of Administration on the estate and effects of the said Pierce R. Pendergast deceased, but the time limited by law, for the granting of the same, not having expired, and the Goods and Chattels of the deceased being liable to be wasted and injured, unless authority is granted to some person to collect and keep the same together until administration thereon shall be granted:

Now the Condition of this Obligation is such, That if the above-bound Margaret Pendergast do and shall faithfully collect, gather and keep together, the Goods, Chattels and effects of the said Pierce R. Pendergast, deceased, without impeachment of waste, or charge of waste, or improper management of the property which shall come into her possession: or for any transactions concerning the same until legal Administration shall be granted thereon, and in the mean time render into the office of the Clerk of Ordinary of Chatham County, an account of his actings and doings therein: then this Obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

Sealed and Delivered in the presence of

Haborn Goodall
Chano.

Nathaniel Richardson

C. C. Richardson
1. Marriage and Death Index, Georgia Historical Society, (G.H.S.) Savannah, Georgia (1820-1830) p. 51
   Chatham County Deed Book, Superior Court, Savannah, Georgia, 23 p. 355 (marriage settlement between Pierce B. Frendergast and Margaret Ann Gray)

2. Chatham County Deed Book, 23 p. 355

3. ibid.


5. Chatham County Court of Ordinary, will of Joachim Hartstein, Index 45

6. See Appendix A

7. Will of Joachim Hartstein

8. Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, lot 402 epitaph

9. Galloway, David H., City Directory, 1849 p. 30

10. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, G.H.S.,
    May 22, 1809 p. 3 col. 3

11. Georgian Review News, G.H.S., August 8, 1825 p. 2 col. 4

12. Chatham County Deed Book, 3A 1842-1843 p. 438

13. Savannah Republican, G.H.S., May 20, 1809 p. 2 col. 2

14. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, G.H.S.,
    March 5, 1810 p. 1 col. 5

15. Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, G.H.S.,
    1-2, February 19, 1810 p. 3 col. 3
    Gamble, Thomas, Jr., History of Savannah, 1790-1901, p. 15
16. **Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser**, G.H.S., K-2, December 25, 1809, p. 3 col. 5

17. **Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser**, G.H.S., Feb 21, 1811, p. 3 col. 4

18. **Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser**, G.H.S., Feb 28, 1811 p. 3 col. 3

19. **Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser**, G.H.S., Aug 26, 1811 p. 3 col. 4

20. Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Ga. Lot 402 tombstone

21. ibid.

22. ibid. 12

23. ibid. 11

24. ibid. 12

25. Chatham County Court of Ordinary, *Chatham County marriages* 1805-1877 pl46

26. Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Savannah, Ga. Parish Records, via telephone conversation with historical secretary, Miss Mildred Gartleman

27. **Daily Georgian**, G.H.S., Feb 20, 1836 p. 2 col. 5 (con't advertisement twice a month til Dec 13, 1838 p. 3 col. 1

28. **Daily Georgian**, G.H.S., Feb 6, 1839 (listed as manager agency office)


30. **Daily Georgian**, G.H.S. Jan 18, 1839, p. 2 col. 2

31. *Masonic Solomon Lodge #1 A.Y.M. Minutes*, Dec 15, 1806-Jan 2, 1842, G.H.S. (recorded present on 15 Dec 96 as honorary member)
32. Masonic Solomon Lodge J. A. Y. M. Minutes, Dec 15, 1806-Jan 2, 1842, G.H.S. minutes from Jan 2, 1837 meeting

33. Chatham County Deed Book, 3U p. 358

34. Daily Georgian, G.H.S., May 28, 1838 p. 2, col. 5

35. Daily Georgian, G.H.S., Jul 3, 1838 p. 3 col. 3

36. Daily Georgian, G.H.S., Jan 18, 1841 p. 3 col. 2

37. Daily Morning News, Chatham County Public Library, Savannah, Ga. Apr 15, 1850 p. 3 col. 2

38. Appendix B (obtained from Chatham County Court of Ordinary, Will of Pierce B. Fendergast.

39. Appendix C

40. Appendix B

41. Chatham County Deed Book, 3U p. 358

42. ibid.

43. ibid.

44. Galloway, David H., City Directory 1849 p. 30 & 1850 p. 31

45. Chatham County Deed Book, 3Q p. 446

46. City Directory, Public Library Chatham County, 1859 p. 144

47. Daily News & Herald, Public Library, Jul 9, 1868 p. 3 col. 3

48. Tax Digest, J.H.S. 1855 p. 157

49. Vital Statistics, Savannah, Ga. 1872

Laurel Grove Cemetery, General Index to Keepers

Record Book, 1852-1938 Vol. 3 A-V
50. *Laurel Grove Cemetery General Index to Keepers Record Book*, 1852-1938 vol. 3 k-V
    *Daily Evening News*, Public Library, Jul 9, 1872
    p. 3 col. 5

    col. 5

52. *Laurel Grove Cemetery Index*, 1853 - present,
    G.H.J.

53. Laurel Grove Cemetery, Lot 402

54. *Code of City of Savannah*, Ordinances adopted by
    Mayor of City, 1853 Chap. 43, p. 213 Laurel Grove Cemetery
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  "    "    "    "    3G p. 302, 365.
  "    "    "    "    3N p. 364.
  "    "    "    "    3W p. 236.
  "    "    "    "    3W p. 445-446, 290.
  "    "    "    "    3F p. 414.
  "    "    "    "    4Q p. 446, 477.
  "    "    "    "    3U p. 358, 502, 504.
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  "    "    "    "    5A p. 41.

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