

**Mary Strachan**  
*People of London Town, Maryland<sup>1</sup>*

Mary was born to Eleanor and her successful merchant and mariner husband Patrick Sympson in 1719.<sup>1</sup> She grew up in London Town and in 1743, at the age of 24, married the Scottish born sea captain William Strachan.<sup>2</sup> Mary may have been Scottish by descent, helping to forge a bond between them that William would call “loving.”<sup>3</sup> The two were married for about twenty-five years and had two daughters: Margaret and Eleanor.

Shortly after the death of William in 1767 or 1768, Eleanor married Thomas Harwood. Mary had her portrait painted by the famous artist Charles Willson Peale about 1770-1772, a painting that is now in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum.



Charles Willson Peale (American, 1741-1827). Portrait of Mrs. William Strachan, ca. 1770-1772. Oil on canvas, [Brooklyn Museum](#)

This may be a companion piece to a portrait done of her daughter Margaret, also done by Peale, at about the same time and now in the collection of the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#). In 1772, Margaret married the successful Annapolis merchant John Davidson.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Edgar Wright, *Anne Arundel County Church Records, 17th & 18th Centuries*, Family Line Publications, Westminster, Maryland, 44.

<sup>2</sup> Wright, *Church Records*, 57.

<sup>3</sup> Michelle Kerns, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, MA Thesis: UMBC, 1999, 101; 6MSA AA Co. Probate Will Liber 36, folio 211 ;1 768- William Strachan.

After William's death, Mary continued to live in London Town, and expanded her holdings. In 1771 she bought eleven acres of Scorton Plantation, which bordered London Town.<sup>4</sup> In a 1783 tax assessment, Mary is listed as owning eight lots in London Town that were purchased from the merchant James Dick.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> As the research into colonial London Town's inhabitants is an ongoing process, the caveat is offered that additional information may be found at any time and that a correction of information might also occur at any time.

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<sup>4</sup> MSA AA Co. Deeds Liber 183, folio 107, 1771.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Kerns, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, MA Thesis: UMBC, 1999, 101.