

## Slave Ships at London Town

Kyle Dalton, Historic London Town and Gardens, September 28, 2017

So far, there are three confirmed slave ships from which enslaved people were sold at London Town. These are the *Margaret*, the *Clapham*, and the *Jenny*. I wish to acknowledge the help of historians Marcus Rediker and Sean Kelley in providing personal advice and support in this research, and the debt I owe to the works of Mechelle Kerns, Charles M. Flanagan, and John H. Hemphill II.

### *Margaret*, 1718

Eighteen enslaved people from Sierra Leone were sold in London Town, after most captives had already been sold in Annapolis. This sale is detailed in Charles Flanagan's doctorate dissertation *Sweets of Independence: The James Carroll Daybook, 1714-1721*. The James Carroll Daybook is in the Georgetown University Library's Special Collections Division. A relevant excerpt of the dissertation is below:

Four days later [September 3, 1718], the *Margaret* sailed to Stephen West's dock at Londontown on the South River with the twelve remaining slaves. Half of the people were sold on the first day. Hezekiah Linthicum, on whose credit Carroll had traded at Patrick Sympson's Londontown store in 1715, bought a "reeling" man for £23. Robert Ward, whom George Douglass had paid to capture an enslaved man who had run away from James Carroll, bought a woman for £25. In addition, two men were sold, one for the full £30 and the other for £22. Two boys were also sold for £18 and £20. The following day, tailor Edward Coyle, returned to the buying by purchasing a woman described as "fluxed" for 249 £4.15.00. His was the same buying strategy as the other two bargain hunters, coming back at the tail end of the sale and buying a sick person for a greatly reduced price. Three old men, a sickly woman and a sick boy remained. On September 8, Thomas Larkin bought two of the men for £22 each. William Ford bought the woman for £20. The next day, Richard Isaac bought the last person, a boy who sold for £22.10.00.<sup>1</sup>

Historian Sean M. Kelley at the University of Essex offered me this background on the enslaved people of the *Margaret*:

The *Margaret* purchased captives in the Sierra Leone estuary, which probably means Bence (Bance, Bunce) Island. In 1718, the Royal African Company was still operating Bence Island. Unfortunately, no ledgers survive for those years, but documents from slightly later indicate that the Bence Island factory was purchasing most of its captives from the 'Northern Rivers' (also 'Rivers of Guinea,' and if you're in Senegambia, 'Southern Rivers'). These are the Rio Pongo and Rio Nunez, in present-day Guinea, and even closer at Mania, to the north of the Sierra Leone River. The RAC was also very active at Sherbro, to the south of Sierra Leone, as far down as Cape Mount in present day Liberia. All of these places fed Bance Island. In this era, most enslavement probably occurred relatively near the coast. That would all change after the 1720s. But as of 1718, enslavement was probably driven by local circumstances: political fights/wars, judicial enslavement, opportunistic kidnapping. Some were probably traded by Luso-Africans and few of the captives taken from the Northern Rivers may have been

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<sup>1</sup> Charles M. Flanagan, *Sweets of Independence: The James Carroll Daybook, 1714-1721*, doctorate dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2005, pages 248-249.

enslaved by as a result of predatory raids by the Kaabu kingdom, which was located to the south of the Gambia River.

What this all suggests is that most of the captives shipped out of Sierra Leone at that moment were speakers of Western Atlantic languages: Temne, Bullom, and Baga, for the most part. There would also have been some speakers of the Mande languages: Mende, Vai, Susu, but these were a probable minority.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Sierra Leone was not a significant source of captives in this period. For the period 1701-1725, an average of 263 captives left Sierra Leone every year—one or two ships. As I say, that would all change soon, but when it did, the source areas for captives and their ethnolinguistic makeup would all shift as well.<sup>2</sup>

### *Clapham, 1729*

The *Clapham*, under Captain Richard Williams, arrived in Barbadoes sometime in May, 1729, carrying “340 Negroes from Angola.”<sup>3</sup>

The *Maryland Gazette* for June 3-10, 1729 advertises a ship “lately arrived on the South River” bearing “two hundred choice slaves.”<sup>4</sup> It is possible that Angolan captives were sold in Barbados before the *Clapham* arrived in Maryland. According to *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database*, only two slave ships sailed to Maryland in 1729: the *Clapham* and the *Duke* (sometimes styled the *Duke of London*).<sup>5</sup> The *Duke* is listed as arrived four days after the advertisement was placed.<sup>6</sup>

There are three merchants who offer the enslaved for sale: Daniel Dulany, Peter Hume, and Richard Snowden. Peter Hume was a London Town merchant, and in the same issue of the *Gazette* that advertised the enslaved for sale, Hume also advertised “Barbadoes Rum, Barrel’d Beef, *Madera* Wine, Lime-Juice, and Musquevado Sugar, To be Sold at reasonable Rates, by *Peter Hume, at London, Town.*”<sup>7</sup> Stephen West, the London Town resident whose dock was used for the *Margaret’s* slave sale in 1718, must have known Captain Richard Williams, as their children would eventually marry.<sup>8</sup>

The *Maryland Gazette* for July 1-8, 1729 includes a runaway advertisement for an unnamed sailor of the *Clapham* “lying in South River.”<sup>9</sup> The land record stating the rate Captain Williams would buy tobacco for also lists the *Clapham* as “Now Rideing at Anchor in South River,” and is dated July 1, 1729, while the sale of the enslaved people is still ongoing.<sup>10</sup> Advertisements for the sale of the captives

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<sup>2</sup> Sean M. Kelley, e-mail message to the author, July 20, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> *The Daily Journal*, May 31, 1729, page 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, June 3-10, 1729, page 4.

<sup>5</sup> “Voyage 21905, Duke of London (1729),” *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database*, accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/21905/variables>>; “Voyage 25971, Clapham (1729),” *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database*, accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/25971/variables>>

<sup>6</sup> “Voyage 21905, Duke of London (1729),” *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database*, accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/21905/variables>>; *Maryland Gazette*, June 3-10, 1729, page 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, June 3-10, 1729, page 4.

<sup>8</sup> Edward C. Papenfuse, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature 1635-1789*, Maryland State Archives, Volume 426, page 878, accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000426/html/am426--878.html>>; Charles M. Flanagan, *Sweets of Independence: The James Carroll Daybook, 1714-1721*, doctorate dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2005, pages 248.

<sup>9</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, July 1-8, 1729, page 4.

<sup>10</sup> Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Land Records, MSA CE 76-13, Liber RD 1, pages 250-251.

from the *Clapham* continue through the Maryland Gazette of July 15-22, 1729. This advertisement is immediately followed by another by Peter Hume for "Madera Wine" being sold "at London Town."<sup>11</sup>

*Bristol, May 28.* On Monday last arrived the *Sherley*, Capt. Kennedy, the *Matilda*, John Gythens, and the *Lovely*, Capt. Jackson, all 3 from Jamaica; the *Antilope*, James Eustace, from Barbados; and the *Unity*, Capt. Beard, from Antigua; and just now the *Prudent Nancy*, Capt. Fowey, from Jamaica; they bring an Account of the Arrival of the *Mary*, Capt. Fell, and the *Seawell*, Capt. Williams, both from London; the *Roebuck*, Richard Challoner, the *Monmouth*, Capt. Smith, the *Trial*, the *Comb Pink*, Capt. Denton, and the *Squirrel*, George Griffiths, all of and from this Port, at Barbados. The *Paddington*, Capt. Hodges, from London, at St. Christopher's. And the *Jamaica Pink*, Capt. Long, from London; the *Katherine*, Capt. Dagg, from Guiney; the *Mansell*, Capt. Trevisa, from New England; and the *Alice* and *Elizabeth*, from hence, at Antigua. Also at Barbados, the *Clapham* was arrived, with 340 Negroes from Angola; she left there only Capt. Hunt, and two French Ships.

*The Daily Journal* [London, England], May 31, 1729, page 1.

May 19. 1729

**N**otice is hereby given, that there's a Ship arrived in *South River*, with about Two Hundred choice Slaves, which are to be Sold, by

*Daniel Dulany,  
Richard Snowden, and  
Peter Hume.*

*Maryland Gazette*, June 3-10, 1729 page 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, July 15-22, 1729, page 5.



Anne Arundell County ss. These are to give Notice  
 to all persons whom it May concern that Richard  
 Williams Commander of the Ship Clapham now riding  
 at anchor in South River in the County of ss. Being  
 (Purposed)

Purposed to Export Tobacco from Maryland to  
 Great Brittain, On Freight this present Voyage  
 Doe hereby Publish the Rate there of at Seven  
 Pence Half Penn the Freight for Consigning  
 there Tobacco to whom they please his Will is  
 My hand this 4<sup>th</sup> Day of July 1729

R. Williams

Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Land Records, MSA CE 76-13, Liber RD 1, pages 250-251.

**R**UN away (lately) from the Ship Clapham,  
 lying in South-River, a Sailor, thick and well-set, with  
 Sun-burnt Freckles, short Sun-burnt Hair, and swell'd Legs,  
 and one of his Shins very sore. He had on an Oznabrig  
 Wastecoa and strip'd Trowsers. Whoever brings him to Capt.  
 Williams, Commander of the said Ship, shall have a Pistole  
 Reward.

N. B. There was another Sailor run away with him.

Maryland Gazette, July 1-8, 1729, page 4.

### *Jenny, 1760*

This is an unusually well documented voyage, with newspaper reports throughout the colonies and in Britain, as well as Port of Entry and land records.

Based in Liverpool, the full rigged ten gun *Jenny* was captained by Captain John Wilkinson. He and his crew of twenty or thirty-five were casting off from England and into an ocean divided between warring powers.<sup>12</sup> It was the fourth year of the Seven Years War, and the sixth of the French and Indian War. Through these dangerous waters Wilkinson guided his vessel to Africa. The Portuguese had long had a foothold in Angola and Congo, and sold off enslaved people from major ports like Cabinda. It was from here that the *Jenny* arrived sometime in February.<sup>13</sup>

After departing on March 4, 1760, Wilkinson led the *Jenny* across the Atlantic for an uneventful eight weeks. On April 29th, at approximately 12.58° North Latitude and 46.1° West Longitude, the *Jenny* was attacked by a fourteen gun French privateer sloop.<sup>14</sup> The determined Frenchman, "full of men," attacked the *Jenny* and "was received so warmly that she was twice beat off."<sup>15</sup> Finding her a tough nut to crack, the French captain got creative. His crew affixed "Stink-pots at her Jib-boom End."<sup>16</sup>

Widely reported after the fact, Wilkinson took the dangerous step of arming fifty of the enslaved men he had taken as cargo. The French sloop tried to sheer away from her final attack, but "her Topping-lift got foul of the *Jenny's* sprit-Sail Yard ; and had it not been for a Mistake of his Helm's-man, [Wilkinson] believes he should have taken the privateer." After six and a half hours of combat, the sloop bore away, while "Blood streamed plentifully out of the privateer's scuppers."<sup>17</sup>

Wilkinson guided the *Jenny* to Charleston, South Carolina, where she docked on June 12, 1760.<sup>18</sup> It does not appear that any captive Angolans were sold during this time, as no advertisements were placed and I have not yet found any records of sales.

The Annapolis Port of Entry records for the *Jenny* in Maryland was completed on July 15, 1760 with "333 Negroes."<sup>19</sup> Despite her being registered in Annapolis, the *Maryland Gazette* makes it clear that the South River was the primary destination for the *Jenny*, and gives no indication that she ever touched at Annapolis. On July 13, 1760, "arrived in *South River*, the Ship *Jenny of Liverpool*, Captain *John Wilkinson*, with upwards of 300 choice healthy Slaves. She left the Coast of *Angola* on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March."<sup>20</sup> The same edition of the *Maryland Gazette* that announces the arrival of the *Jenny* posts an advertisement for the sale of "A parcel of choice, healthy slaves, consisting of men, women, boys and Girl; and will be Sold on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> of this Instant *July*, at *South River Ferry*."<sup>21</sup> London Town was the site of the South River Ferry. For months the advertisements continued. In August, some of the enslaved were carried down to the West River and sold there.<sup>22</sup>

Of note, the account of the *Jenny's* battle with the French privateer appears in the *South Carolina Gazette*, *Maryland Gazette*, and *Boston Evening Post*. These are very similar accounts, using the

<sup>12</sup> *Boston Evening Post*, July 28, 1760, page 2.

<sup>13</sup> "Voyage 90767, *Jenny* (1760)," *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database*, accessed September 16, 2016, <<http://slavevoyages.org/voyage/90767/variables>>; *General Evening Post*, July 8-10, 1760, Supplement, page 2.

<sup>14</sup> *South Carolina Gazette*, June 14, 1760, page 2; longitude determined by Michael Romero of the Colonial Williamsburg foundation. I want to emphasize that these measurements are approximations, and express my gratitude to Mr. Romero for his calculations.

<sup>15</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, July 17, 1760, page 2.

<sup>16</sup> *South Carolina Gazette*, June 14, 1760, page 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> *South Carolina Gazette*, June 14, 1760, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> Maryland State Archives, Port of Entry Records: Annapolis Inbound, July 15, 1760.

<sup>20</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, July 17, 1760, page 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, August 7, 1760, page 3.

same phrases. The *Maryland Gazette* account includes a phrase not present in the other two. After relating the role of the fifty enslaved men, the *Gazette* states that they “all behaved very well, and laid down their Arms as soon as the Engagement was over.”<sup>23</sup> Quite possibly this was intended to assuage the fears of potential buyers in Maryland at buying enslaved people who could handle firearms and fight well enough to fight off French privateersmen. The *Gazette*’s addition may not represent the facts of the event.

On November 29, 1760, the *Jenny* set sail for England with a new cargo of tobacco, barrel staves and headings, and iron.<sup>24</sup>

**Accounts from Melimba, on the coast of Africa, of the 14th of February last, advise of the arrival of the Nancy, Capt. Bere, and the Prince Tom, Capt. Smith, both of Liverpool; the Eagle, Capt. Jones, the Antelope, Capt. Hamilton, both of Bristol; and one Dutch ship. At Loango, the Elizabeth, Capt. Bailey, and the Pearl, Capt. Pollard, both of Liverpool. At Cabenda, the Jenny, Capt. Wilkinson, of Liverpool, and had got 350 slaves on board; at the same place Capt. Picket of London, Capt. Chilcot, and Capt. Brown, both of Bristol.**

*General Evening Post*, July 8-10, 1760, Supplement, Page 2

<sup>23</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, July 17, 1760, page 2.

<sup>24</sup> Maryland State Archives, Port of Entry Records: Annapolis Outbound, November 29, 1760.



the Line.

The same Day arrived in South River, the Ship *Jenny* of Liverpool, Capt. *John Wilkinson*, with upwards of 300 choice healthy Slaves. She left the Coast of *Angola* on the 4th of *March*; and on the 29th of *April*, 60 Leagues to the Eastward of *Barbados*, was attacked by a French Privateer Sloop of 14 Guns, and full of Men, which was received so warmly that she was twice beat off; however, she made a third Attempt, by coming along Side with Stink-pots, &c. in order to Board, but was obliged to sheer off again. The *Jenny* had 24 Men and Boys, and a few small Carriage Guns, and the Captain arm'd 50 of the Slaves, who all behaved well, and laid down their Arms as soon as the Engagement was over. One of the Crew was mortally wounded, and died next Day, and one of the Negroes was kill'd, and several slightly wounded. The Enemy's Loss was considerable.

Maryland Gazette, July 17, 1760, page 2.

Ship *Jenny* John Wilkinson Ditto 120 10 35 French Liverpool 1759 James Clemens & Co. 333 Negroes

Annapolis Port of Entry Records, inbound voyages, July 15, 1760.

**A** CHOICE Parcel of healthy SLAVES,  
Part of the Cargo of the Ship *Jenny*, Capt.  
*John Wilkinson*, to be Sold at *West-River*, by  
*Th.* SAMUEL GALLOWAY.

Maryland Gazette, August 7, 1760, page 3.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, ANNAPOLIS, Enter'd,  
 Ship Atlas, George Brayley, from Bristol;  
 Schooner Sufannah, Darcey Dawes, from New-Providente;  
 Brig Anson, Henry Costin, from St. Martin's;  
 Ship New-Castle, Matthew Spencer, from New-York;  
 Brig Martha, James Reith, from Antigua;  
 Brig Robinson, James Thompson, from Hamburgh;  
 Ship Jenny, John Wilkinson, from Africa.

*Cleared for Departure,*  
 Sloop Henrietta, Joseph Thompson, for St. Christophers;  
 Schooner Chester, Thomas Ireland, for Ditto;  
 Schooner Neptune, William Thomas, for Antigua.

JUST IMPORTED,  
*Directly from the Coast of ANGOLA, in the Ship*  
 JENNY, Capt. JOHN WILKINSON,  
**A** PARCEL of choice healthy SLAVES,  
 consisting of Men, Women, Boys and Girls;  
 and will be Sold on Monday the 21st of this In-  
 stant July, at South River Ferry, for Bills of Ex-  
 change, Sterling, or Current Money, by

X 1 Ch. THOMAS RINGGOLD,  
 SAMUEL GALLOWAY.  
 N. B. The Sale to continue till all are Sold.

Maryland Gazette, July 17, 1760, page 2.

Virginia	Delaware	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	Florida	Alabama	Mississippi	Louisiana	West Indies	Europe	Asia	Africa	America	Other	Total	Remarks	
136															30	7600	London 27-11-1760

Annapolis Port of Entry Records, outbound voyages, November 29, 1760.



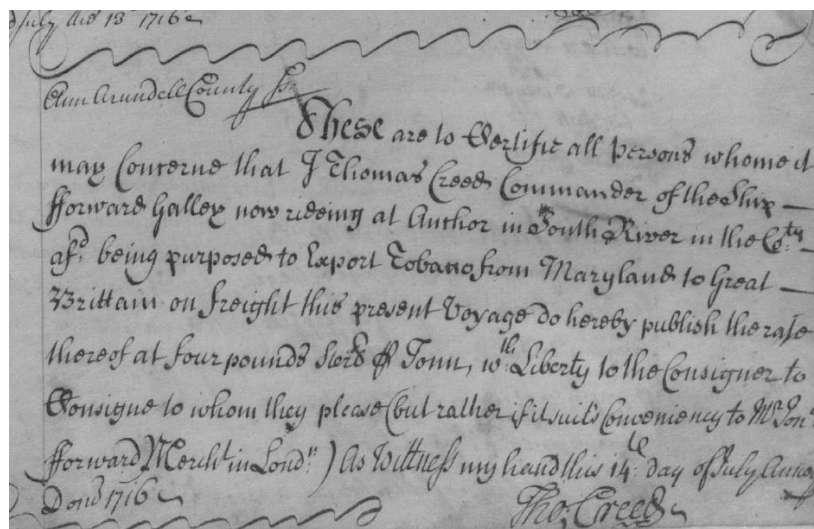
## Potential and Disproven Voyages

I am indebted to the work of John H. Hemphill II and Mechelle Kerns. Hemphill's appendix to his paper "Freight Rates in the Maryland Tobacco Trade," published in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* provided a comprehensive and easy to access list of all ships listed in the Maryland land records advertising for tobacco.<sup>25</sup> Mechelle Kerns used this appendix in her "Trade in Colonial Anne Arundel County: The Tobacco Port of London Town," along with port of entry records, as a way of examining precisely what goods were being imported and exported from London Town.<sup>26</sup> Kerns' methodology provided a framework for my study of the slave trade at London Town.

Combing through Hemphill's appendix, I compared every ship that called in on the South River with the arrival dates, vessel names, and sea captains listed on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyages Database as having called into Maryland. From here I extracted twenty-one potential slave voyages that may have called in at London Town.

One of these vessels, named the *Phoenix*, was eliminated as sharing the same name as another ship known to have called in elsewhere in Maryland. The *Arrabella*, which twice sailed to London Town in 1731 and 1732, is known to have sold the captive Africans aboard in Annapolis, and likely called into London Town only to load a cargo of tobacco. The *Clapham*, as explained above, is known to have made London Town the primary destination for the sale of enslaved people, as did the *Jenny*. The *Margaret*, which along with the *Jenny* is not present in land records, made London Town a secondary destination. For all other vessels, known slavers that certainly loaded tobacco on our river, anything within this spectrum (selling all or most enslaved people here, selling only a few as a secondary destination, or selling none and only loading tobacco) is possible. There is still much research to be done to sort out the remaining ships and their precise relationship with our seaport.

By way of example, the slave ship *Forward* arrived in London Town in 1716, appearing in the land records on July 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>27</sup>



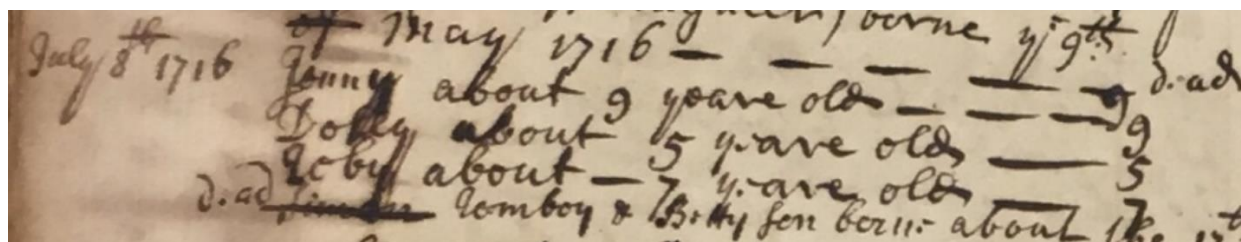
Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Land Records, CE 76-9, Liber IB 2, page 286.

<sup>25</sup> John H. Hemphill II, "Freight Rates in the Maryland Tobacco Trade," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 54, No. 2, June, 1959, pages 153-187.

<sup>26</sup> Mechelle L. Kerns-Nocerito, "Trade in Colonial Anne Arundel County: The Tobacco Port of London Town," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 98, No. 3, Fall 2003, pages 325-344.

<sup>27</sup> Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Land Records, CE 76-9, Liber IB 2, page 286.

Just a few days prior to the appearance of the *Forward* in land records, James Carroll records buying three enslaved children on July 8, 1716 from London Town merchant Samuel Peele and Annapolitan Charles Carroll.<sup>28</sup> These dates are tantalizingly close, but I have not yet found any proof that these three children were sold from the *Forward*, nor any indication whether they were sold in Annapolis or London Town.



"James Carroll, 'An Account of my Negroes,'" The Georgetown Slavery Archives, Georgetown University.

Similarly circumstantial is the voyage of the *Elizabeth*.<sup>29</sup> She appears in the Anne Arundel County land records for July 16, 1719 on the South River.<sup>30</sup> Humpry Morice, leader of a slave trading empire, wrote a letter dated December 4, 1718 asking William Nicholson and Major John Smith "in Patuxant River" to sell the estimated two hundred enslaved people that Captain Stephen Bull, commander of the *Elizabeth*, would bring to Maryland.<sup>31</sup> Nicholson was a landowner in London Town, and often did business here.<sup>32</sup> Once again, like the *Forward*, we can't say more than that without further research.

It is also important to recognize that Maryland was decidedly secondary to Virginia for importing captive Africans in the eighteenth century. Further, the Chesapeake was not as active in the slave trade as the Caribbean or South America. Even if every single vessel that potentially sold enslaved people at London Town was proven to, London Town would still not be considered a major slave trade port in the Atlantic world. There is no evidence nor likelihood of a designated permanent slave marketplace.

This is not to diminish the importance of the transatlantic slave trade to the economy of London Town. London Town, for this area, was a remarkably active seaport, with twice as many ships calling in for tobacco as Annapolis.<sup>33</sup> That tobacco was cultivated and processed by enslaved labor. All the slave ships that called in to London Town, whether they sold people here or not, used the money from their sale of human beings to purchase that tobacco.

Beyond numbers and economics, the enslaved people of the past deserve our respect. It is our responsibility as an institution devoted to historical truth to teach the history of those that lived and labored here. Their suffering should not be diminished simply because they don't represent the average experience of slavery in the Atlantic world.

<sup>28</sup> "James Carroll, 'An Account of my Negroes,'" *The Georgetown Slavery Archives*, Georgetown University, Accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/items/show/135>>; Flanagan, *Sweets of Independence*, page 231.

<sup>29</sup> "Voyage 75390, *Elizabeth* (1719)," The Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyage Database, accessed September 28, 2017, <<http://slavevoyages.org/voyage/75390/variables>>.

<sup>30</sup> Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Land Records, Liber CW, CE 76-10, page 41.

<sup>31</sup> Humpry Morice Papers, Bank of England, Roll 4, Item 542.

<sup>32</sup> Mechelle Kerns, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, unpublished master's thesis, UMBC: 1999, page 74.

<sup>33</sup> Mechelle L. Kerns-Nocerito, "Trade in Colonial Anne Arundel County: The Tobacco Port of London Town," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 98, No. 3, Fall 2003, pages 329.