

## **Margaret Brown** *People of London Town, Maryland<sup>1</sup>*

Margaret was the fourth child and third daughter of William and Susannah Brown. She was born in London Town on August 8, 1759.<sup>2</sup> It may be that she was born in the William Brown House, which still stands on the grounds of Historic London Town and Gardens. She appears to still be living there with her four siblings and her parents in the 1776 census.<sup>3</sup>

Although it is unclear when, Margaret does marry the sea captain John Steuart of Annapolis. He commands a privateer schooner named the *Molly* in 1780, fighting in the American Revolutionary War.<sup>4</sup> After the war, Steuart continues as a sea captain, sailing goods to Annapolis in the *Willing Tom*.<sup>5</sup> Certainly the two are married by 1794, and are housing the now destitute William Brown. Margaret's father dies at their residence that year, leaving what little he has left to her husband.<sup>6</sup> It is unknown if the Steuarts had any children.

Margaret was not yet through with tragedy. John died only three years later. Handling the estate of her deceased husband was John Shaw, the most famous furniture maker of Maryland in the early United States. As part of his handling the estate, John Shaw freed the three-year-old enslaved girl Jenn.<sup>7</sup>

Shaw married Captain Steuart's widow, and Margaret likely moved into Shaw's house which still stands today in Annapolis.<sup>8</sup> In reference to their wedding, the silversmith and watchmaker William Faris refers to Margaret as "Peggy."<sup>9</sup> The couple were wed on March 4, 1798.<sup>10</sup>

Margaret and John welcomed a daughter named Jane into the world on October 1, 1799. Their family was short lived. On May 22, 1801, Jane died. No other children followed, and Margaret Shaw died on July 5, 1806.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</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.

<sup>2</sup> F. Edward Wright, *Anne Arundel Church Records of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*; Mary Shaw's Book, 1806, page 5, Maryland State Archives, City Tavern Collection.

<sup>3</sup> Bettie Stirling Carothers, *1776 Census of Maryland*, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Henry Lincoln, *Naval Records of the American Revolution, 1775-1788*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1906, page 395; MSA, *Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Maryland, 1779-1780*, Volume 43, Page 206, <<http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000043/html/am43--206.html>>

<sup>5</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, May 27, 1784, page 3.

<sup>6</sup> MSA, *Anne Arundel County Register of Wills*, original; MSA C155-2, Box B, Folder 84

<sup>7</sup> MSA, Legacy of Slavery, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/OVOqiewVhe/>>

<sup>8</sup> MSA, Capsule Summary: John Shaw House, 21 State Circle, <[http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagsere/se1/se5/001000/001800/001826/pdf/msa\\_se5\\_1826.pdf](http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagsere/se1/se5/001000/001800/001826/pdf/msa_se5_1826.pdf)>

<sup>9</sup> *The Diary of William Faris: The Daily Life of an Annapolis Silversmith*, edited by Mark B. Letzer and Jean B. Russo, Page 282; MSA Maryland Indexes, Marriage References, MSA S 1527, <<http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/stagser/s1500/s1527/html/ssi1527s.html>>

<sup>10</sup> Mary Shaw's Book, 1806, page 4, Maryland State Archives, City Tavern Collection.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, page 5.