

Beck

People of London Town, Maryland¹

Beck is only mentioned once, in the probate inventory of Alexander Ferguson. Ferguson was a tailor who died in London Town in 1770. Beck is the first of four enslaved people listed in his property, where she is described as a “Negro Woman...Aged 22 Years.” She is joined on the inventory with her unnamed baby, a twenty-year-old enslaved man named Abram, and a three year old boy named Pomfry. It is very possible that this is a family of enslaved people held by the Fergusons. Of the enslaved people, Beck holds the highest value at fifty pounds. The family, if it is one, represents nearly 20% of the Fergusons’ wealth.ⁱ

Interestingly, Beck is born about the same time that London Town based sea captain Anthony Beck dies at sea. It is possible that she was named for his family. There is an enslaved girl named Rebecca listed in Beck’s inventory, who is too young to occupy her own line and for whom there is no age given.ⁱⁱ

The Fergusons had a tavern, ran a ferry, and operated a tailors and stay-makers shop out of their home at the foot of Church Street, one block from the William Brown House.ⁱⁱⁱ It is very likely that Beck was involved in garment making in some fashion.

ⁱ Transcription in Kerns, Mechelle, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, unpublished Master’s Thesis, UMBC, 1999, page 352.

ⁱⁱ Transcription in Kerns, Mechelle, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, unpublished Master’s Thesis, UMBC, 1999, page 311.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹ 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.