

“Woman”

People of London Town, Maryland¹

For hundreds of Africans, London Town was their gateway into the new, brutal world of slavery. After being kidnapped, many were stripped of their names, cultures, and identities and simply became “woman,” “boy,” or “man” to the enslavers of the colonies. One enslaved person, who we know only as “woman” entered London Town in 1718, though her story began before then.

Her home may have been somewhere in the coastal regions stretching from Southern Guinea, through Sierra Leone, to Northern Liberia. She may have spoken Temne, Bullom, or Baga, or perhaps Mende, Vai, or Susu.

She was kidnapped and likely held in the slave castle of Bunce Island in Sierra Leone. She was chained aboard the slave ship, *Margaret*, with 136 other captives, and forced to endure the horrors of the middle passage: crossing of the Atlantic Ocean in the belly of a slave ship. In August 1718, the *Margaret* laid anchor in Annapolis where the majority of those who had managed to survive the middle passage were sold into bondage. Four days later, the *Margaret* arrived at London Town to sell 12 “refuse slaves” – the remainder of its human cargo.



Among these sickly or unwanted people was an unnamed “woman” whose condition was only listed as “maugre.” This means her captors considered her “ill willed” or “spiteful.”² Maybe this woman was particularly fiery in her resistance. Or perhaps she was a dangerous organizer, as women were often the instigators of bloody shipboard revolts.³ She was sold into slavery on September 8, 1718 for £20.⁴ It is unknown what became of her after that.

Image above is a detail from [Auguste Edouart | Dalmany | The Metropolitan Museum of Art \(metmuseum.org\)](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/652087?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&when=A.D.+1800-1900&ft=slave&offset=40&rpp=20&pos=41)
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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.

2 Flanagan, *Sweets of Independence*, page 243.

3 Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, New York: Viking, 2007, pages 19-20.

4 Flanagan, *Sweets of Independence*, page 243.
