

THE BURNING OF THE "PEGGY STEWART."<sup>1</sup>

[Editorial Note.]

The burning of the brigantine "Peggy Stewart" just off the City of Annapolis on the nineteenth of October 1774 having been chosen by a number of organizations as an event in the history of the State worthy of commemoration, it occurred to Mr. Richard D. Fisher, a member of this Society, to ascertain whether there existed documents bearing upon the matter, not previously published or generally known. His investigations, begun in the latter part of 1904 and continued in the years 1905, 1906 and 1907, brought to light from among the British Government Archives a memorial and several affidavits relating to the event. These were printed in 1905 in *The Evening News*, of this city, at considerable intervals; but such publication was, necessarily, ephemeral, and these contributions to the history of the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Revolution, seem of sufficient importance to justify the reprinting in more durable form. The memorial and affidavits are here given without comment.

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[March 10<sup>th</sup> 1777.]

To the Right Hon<sup>ble</sup>  
the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury &c. &c. &c.

The Memorial of Anthony Stewart and Thomas Charles Williams, late of the City of Annapolis in the Province of Maryland in North America, Merchants.

Humbly Sheweth.

That your Memorialist Anthony Stewart was Owner of the Brigantine Peggy Stewart on a Voyage from Annapolis to London in the year 1774. That your Memorialist Thomas Charles Williams, who was in London in the year 1774 did ship on board the said ship at the Port of London, Among other Goods, seventeen Chests and half Chests of Tea consigned to, and the Property of your Memorialist Thomas Charles Williams and his Brothers Joseph and James Williams his Partners, then Resident in the City of Annapolis aforesaid.

And your Memorialist Anthony Stewart begs Leave to represent to your Lordships that on the Arrival of the Brigantine Peggy Stewart at the Port of Annapolis which was in the Month of October 1774 he did regularly enter the said Brigantine and Cargo at the Custom house, paying the Duty on the abovementioned Tea, as imposed by Act of the British Parliament. That this Step gave great Offence to the People of Annapolis who had entered into divers Combinations to prevent the said Act from taking Effect and a Town Meeting (as it was called) being summoned immediately to take this Matter into Consideration it was there debated in what Manner your Memorialist should be punished for the Crime, but at Length it was agreed that this being a weighty Business no further Proceedings should be held on it til the sense of the County could be taken at large, or in other Words til' the Mob might be gathered from all quarters. That printed hand-bills were accordingly dispersed in the Country for that Purpose, and on the Day appointed a Number of disorderly People under different Ringleaders (as set forth in the affidavit hereunto annexed) did repair to Annapolis and joining with the Inhabitants of the Town did meet in a tumultuous Manner, and calling your Memorialist the said Anthony Stewart before Them, then and there with Threats both against his Person and Property for paying the Duties on Tea abovementioned, did require Him to sign a Paper which they presented to Him declaring Himself sorry for the Offence he had given and voluntarily offering to destroy both the Tea and the Vessel as an Atonement. That your Lordships Memorialist at first refused to sign such Paper, but his Wife being then ill in Child Bed, apprehensions of the Consequence to Her and His Family, should he expose Himself any longer to the Fury of a lawless Mob, prevailed on Him to sign. That he was then carried by the said Mob in Triumph aboard the Brigantine and there in Conjunction with Joseph and James Williams Brothers to your Memorialist Thomas Charles Williams were obliged with their own Hands to set Fire to the Brigantine and Tea which were in Consequence soon consumed to the Waters Edge and wholly destroyed. The amount of this Loss to your Memorialist

Thomas Charles Williams valueing the Tea at First Cost, Freight, and Duty being Three Hundred and Ninety six Pounds. And the Loss to your Memorialist Anthony Stewart valueing the Brigantine at Cost, as it was her first Voyage, being Fifteen Hundred Pounds—makes in the whole Eighteen Hundred and Ninety six Pounds.

That your Lordships Memorialist Anthony Stewart after this Sacrifice was suffered to remain undisturbed for some little Time, but as he continued on all Occasions strenuously to oppose the Measures of the Enemies of Government he at Length became so obnoxious to Them that they sought every Opportunity to harrass and distress Him, that he even could not without being insulted travel in the country about his lawful Business, that he was hanged and burnt in Effigy in different Parts of the Province and many Threats thrown out against both his Person and Property, and at Length, after open Hostilities were begun against Great Britain, being put to the Alternative of either taking up arms or subjecting Himself to such Punishment, as the Provincial Convention should think proper to inflict, he was fain to fly from the Country leaving his Wife Family and Property at the Mercy of the Rebels.

That your Memorialist Thomas Charles Williams arrived from London at New York on the very Day the Account came there of the Entry of his Tea, that finding the Populace highly irritated and threatening to proceed with the greatest Violence against Him, he fled out of Town in Disguise and concealing Himself in the Woods, for that Time escaped their Fury. That Parties were sent out after Him to take Him and a Price set upon his Head in the public Papers. That thus hunted about for near three Months he was at last obliged to surrender Himself to the Committee of Philadelphia upon a Negotiation begun by his Friends, by which he agreed to sign a Paper such as they chose to dictate to Him. That from this Time your Memorialist continued in America till the open Rebellion broke out, when he was obliged to fly or take up arms against his Country. That a due sense of his Duty determined Him to the first and that accordingly

he contrived to make his Escape in the Night leaving all his Estate Debts &c. behind Him.

That your Lordships Memorialists having thus represented to your Lordships the signal sufferings they have undergone purely from their Obedience to an Act of Parliament relating to a Matter of Revenue, and that their having actually paid a Duty to his Majesty's Collector as imposed by said Act directly produced to your Memorialists a Destruction of Property to the amount of Eighteen Hundred and Ninety six Pounds, besides great Disstress and Injury in its Consequences to Them and their Affairs as set forth in the above Memorial, They Humbly pray your Lordships will be pleased to take their Case into Consideration and order Them Indemnification for the heavy Loss they have so sustained and such further Relief in the Premises as your Lordships in your Wisdom shall think meet.

Anthony Stewart  
Thomas J. Williams

March 10, 1777.

Richard Jackson late of the province of Maryland in North America Mariner Voluntarily make Oath that he the said Richard Jackson was Employed by M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart of the City of Annapolis in the year 1773 and 1774 as Master of a Vessell and he commanded the Brigantine Peggy Stewart belonging to M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart and Co. on a Voyage from Annapolis to London, and on or about, the 14<sup>th</sup> Day of October 1774. This Deponent arrived at the Port of Annapolis aforesaid in the said

Brigantine from London, having on Board upwards of Fifty Indented Servants under Engagements to the Owners of the said Brigantine and a Cargo of Goods upon Freight Consigned to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Thomas Cha: Williams & Co. Merchants in Annapolis. And the Deponent saith that among other Goods Consigned to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Thomas Cha. Williams & Co. there were Seventeen Chests and half Chests of Tea and this Deponent Sayeth that Immediately on his arrival he waited on M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart and told him that the people were Murmuring about Tea being on Board the Brigantine, as it is liable to a Duty imposed by the British Parliament and threatned that it should Neither be Entered or landed and on being Informed of this, this Deponent Sayeth that M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart went Immediately with this Deponent to the Custom house and there entered the said Brigantine and her Cargo, and lodged with the Deputy Collector, a Bill of Exchange for the payment of the duty on the Tea, and this deponent Saith that on the Evening of the Day on which the Brigan<sup>te</sup>: Peggy Stewart, was entered at the Custom House the Committee of Annapolis called a Meeting of the Inhabitants to enquire into the Transaction at which Meeting M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart, M<sup>r</sup>: John Muir the Deputy Collector and this Deponent were Ordered to Attend that accordingly M<sup>r</sup>: Muir and this Deponent did attend but M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart did not attend and this Deponent saith that after the Meeting had Chose John Hall a Lawyer their Chairman they proceeded to enquire into the Circumstances of the arrival and the Entry of the Brigantine and this Deponent saith that John Muir the Deputy Collector being Called upon was asked by the Chairman who paid the Duty on the Tea whereupon M<sup>r</sup>: Muir informed the Meeting that M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart had paid on the Tea and this Deponent saith that the said M<sup>r</sup>: John Muir added that it was much against his Inclination to do anything against the Interest of the Colonies but as M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart had Insisted on the Brigantine being entered he was Obliged to Receive the Duty on the Tea and this Deponent saith that the Meeting was much enraged at M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart's Conduct and some of the Meeting proposed that the Tea should be Immediately landed and burnt under the Gallows

and this Deponent Saith that M<sup>r</sup> Mathias Hammond Objected to that proposal alledging that it was not proper to do any thing in the Matter untill the County was Assembled and this Deponent saith that a Day was proposed and that the Wednesday follow<sup>g</sup> being the 19<sup>th</sup> was fixed on for a Meeting of the People Notice of which was given by printed hand Bills being dispersed through the County and this Deponent saith that at the Meeting above-mentioned a Guard was appointed on the said Brigantine to prevent the Tea from being landed or Removed from on Board and that the Guard came on Board every day untill the Brigantine was destroyed, and this Deponent saith that on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of October a Number of people from different parts of the Province met at Annapolis and that he this Deponent being present heard a great many threats uttered against M<sup>r</sup> Stewarts Life and Property on Account of his having entered the Tea and this Deponent saith that it was proposed at the Meeting that the Tea and Register of the Brigantine should be burnt and the Brigantines Name Altered from Peggy Stewart to Wilks and Liberty, that Doctor Warfield proposed that the Brigantine and Tea should both be burnt and M<sup>r</sup> Stewart Obliged to Build another and Call her Wilks and Liberty and this Deponent saith that soon after the people assembled that he this Deponent went on Board the Brigantine Peggy Stewart and that about two hours after he had been on Board several Ringladers of the Mob Came on Board and brought M<sup>r</sup> Stewart and also Mess<sup>rs</sup> Joseph and James Williams with them and this Deponent saith that soon after a Messenger came from the Shore and told M<sup>r</sup> Stewart that some of the people were against burning the Brigantine but that M<sup>r</sup> Rezin Hammond and M<sup>r</sup> Charles Ridgley who were then on Board told M<sup>r</sup> Stewart in this Deponents hearing that if he did not Immediately set fire to the Brigantine that his House and Family would be in danger that night and added that if he did set fire to the Brigantine they would protect him from any further danger and that this deponent saith upon these threats and Assurances M<sup>r</sup> Stewart and M<sup>r</sup> Joseph & James Williams jointly set fire to the Brigantine and Tea which were Consumed to ashes and this

Deponent saith that the said Brigantine was burnt with all her Sails and Riggin standing and Colours flying and that he this Deponent was not suffered to remove any of the Apparel or Furniture Belonging to the said Brigantine.



Robert Caldeleugh

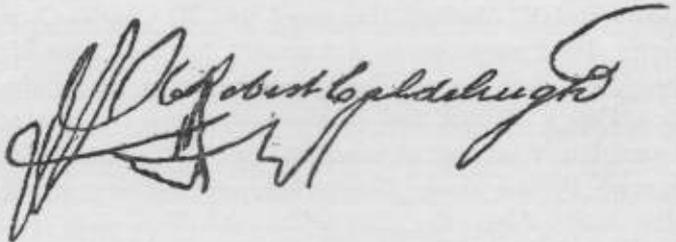
March 10, 1777.

Robert Caldeleugh late of the City of Annapolis in the Province of Maryland in North America Rope maker voluntarily maketh Oath, That he the said Robert Caldeleugh did for many years previous to the breaking out of the present Rebellion in America, live in the Employment of M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart of the City of Annapolis as Manager of a Rope Manufactory carried on by the said Stewart and Company and thereby had an Opportunity of being intimately acquainted with many other Transactions in Business carried on by the said M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart, particularly that the said M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart and Company were Owners of a Brigantine called the Peggy Stewart whereof Richard Jackson was Master That the said Brigantine arrived at Annapolis aforesaid on or about the 14<sup>th</sup> Day of October 1774 having on Board to the Deponents certain Knowledge upwards of fifty Indented Servants under the usual Engagements as this Deponent verily believes to the Owners of said Brigantine and also a Cargo of European and East Indian Goods upon Freight Consigned to and as this Depo-

nent verily believes the Property of Thomas Charles Williams and Co. in Annapolis aforesaid, And this Deponent saith that among the Goods belonging to Thomas Charles Williams & C<sup>o</sup> were several Chests said to contain Tea, which this Deponent verily believes did so, and this Deponent saith, that on the Day the said Brigant<sup>e</sup> arrived at Annapolis aforesaid, M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart did enter the said Brigantine at the Custom house and secured the Duty on the Tea to be paid to His Majesty's Collector as this Deponent was informed by M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart, and this Deponent saith that on the Arrival of the said Brigantine and it being Known that the said Vessell was entered at the Custom house, and the Duty of the Tea paid or secured to be paid, the Committee of Annapolis called a Meeting of the Inhabitants to enquire into the Transaction, and the Deponent saith that the Meeting of the Inhabitants of Annapolis aforesaid was on the Evening of the Day on which the Brigantine Peggy Stewart Arrived, and that he this Deponent being present at the said Meeting, had an Opportunity of observing Everything which passed, and this Deponent saith, that after the people then Assembled had chosen John Hall a Lawyer Chairman of the Meeting, they made Enquiry, who was the Person that had entered the Tea Imported in the Brigantine Peggy Stewart whercupon John Muir the Deputy Collector who attended at the Meeting was called upon, and declared that the Brigantine Peggy Stewart was entered at the Custom House by M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart, and that the Duty on the Tea on Board the said Brigantine was secured to be paid by the said M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart, and this Deponent saith that s<sup>t</sup>: John Muir the Deputy Collector likewise said that he said Muir did not like to do anything against the Liberties of America, but as M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart had insisted upon entering his Vessell he was obliged in Virtue of his Office to enter the Tea and demand Security for the Duty thereof which M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart readily granted and this Deponent saith that after the Meeting had received the abovementioned Information from M<sup>r</sup>: Muir the Deputy Collector, M<sup>r</sup>: Mathias Hammond made a Motion to the following Effect, as near as the Deponent can recollect, That as M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart had acted in Defiance of the Resolves of the Committee in Entering of the Tea, and had

made such a daring Infringement on the Liberties of America It was proper that a Meeting of the County should be called before they proceeded any further in the Matter then before them. Accordingly the Meeting was adjourned till the Wednesday following being the 19<sup>th</sup> Day of October and printed Hand Bills were dispersed through the Province giving Notice thereof to the Inhabitants, and this Deponent saith that he was present at Annapolis on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> Day of October, and that a great Number of people from different parts of the Province of Maryland met at Annapolis on that Day, and that many of them threatned M<sup>r</sup>: Anthony Stewart with Death to burn his House and himself in it, and such other punishment as their Rage dictated, and this Deponent saith that the parties from the different parts of this province were headed by the following persons Viz. A Party from Prince George County headed by Walter Bowie a Planter, a Party from Baltimore headed by Charles Ridgly Jun<sup>r</sup>: a Representative in Assembly for that County, a party from Baltimore Town headed by Mordecai Gist and John Deavor, a party from Elk Ridge in Arundel County headed by D<sup>r</sup>: Ephraim Howard, another Party from same place by D<sup>r</sup>: Warfield, a party from the Head of Severn River headed by Rezen Hammond son of Philip, And this Deponent saith that when the Mob was Assembled M<sup>r</sup>: Mathias Hammond and M<sup>r</sup>: Charles Carroll (Bar-rister) did Propose as an Attonement for the Crime M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart had Committed that the Tea Should be taken out of the Brigantine Peggy Stewart and carried under the Gallows and there burnt, but this was objected to and not deemed Satisfaction enough by the above Ringleaders, and nothing would Satisfy the Mob unless the Brigantine and Tea were both burnt, and this Deponent saith that after the Mob had rejected the Proposal of M<sup>r</sup>: Hammond and M<sup>r</sup>: Carroll, they sent M<sup>r</sup>: Charles Wallace and M<sup>r</sup>: Mordecai Gist for M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart who brought him from his own House to the Place where the Mob was Assembled, and this Deponent saith, that Mess<sup>rs</sup>: Joseph Williams and James Williams Partners with Thomas Charles Williams were present also, and this Deponent saith that a Paper was produced to M<sup>r</sup>: Stewart and Mess<sup>rs</sup>: Williams which they

were Ordered to read separately to the People then Assembled which they did accordingly purporting that they were sorry for the Offence they had given the People Mess<sup>rs</sup> Williams in importing the Tea, and M<sup>r</sup> Stewart in having paid the Duty and that they now voluntarily Offered to destroy the Tea as an Atonement for their Crime, and this Deponent saith that he verily believes if M<sup>r</sup> Stewart had not complied with the Order of the Mob that his Life would have been in im̄inent Danger their Rage was levelled particularly against him for having paid the Duty on the Tea, and this Deponent saith that after the abovementioned paper was read M<sup>r</sup> Stewart together with Mess<sup>rs</sup> Williams were carried off in a Boat and were obliged to set Fire to the Brigantine with all her sails Rigging and Tackle of every kind and also the Tea belonging to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Thomas Charles Williams & C<sup>o</sup> all which were consumed in a few Hours, and this Deponent saith from what he heard among the people that day, he verily believes that if M<sup>r</sup> Stewart had not agreed to set Fire to the Brigantine, that his House and other property in Annapolis would have been destroyed, and this Deponent further believes that M<sup>r</sup> Stewart's person would have been much Maltreated and his Life in im̄inent Danger, if he had not complied with the Requisition of the Mob.


 A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Caldwell". The signature is written in dark ink and is somewhat stylized, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

MEMORANDUM.

In the year 1905, the preceding memorial and the accompanying affidavits were discovered by Messrs. B. F. Stevens and Brown of London in Vol. 6 of the Loyalist Series of the British Public Record Office. They were copies, and were undated ; but a foot-note was appended to the memorial, reading : "Two affidavits respecting burning of the Peggy Stewart annexed to this Memorial each sworn to before Sir John Fielding" and a foot-note was appended to each

affidavit, reading : "Sworn to before Sir John Fielding, The Original Deposition will be found in the Treasury annexed to the Memorial of Anthony Stewart and Thomas Charles Williams."

It was then determined to examine the Treasury Papers ; and among these after a long and laborious search, the three signed originals were disinterred from Bundle 533, with two sets of copies one of which was endorsed by John Robinson, the then Secretary of the Treasury, "Rx 10th March 1777, J. R.", thus fixing the date. From the originals were traced the signatures of Stewart, Williams, Jackson and Caldeleugh and the attesting scrawl of the blind magistrate Sir John Fielding, as given above.

It may here be mentioned that transcripts of all the British Papers bearing on the Peggy Stewart affair are in the possession of the Maryland Historical Society.

For other contemporary accounts of this incident, see *Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History*, Vol. 25, p. 248.

RICHARD D. FISHER.

June, 1910.

## MORE FRAGMENTS FROM THE ENGLISH ARCHIVES.

BERNARD C. STEINER.

In the *Magazine* for 1909 (vol. 4, p. 251) was printed an article entitled : "New Light on Maryland History from the British Archives." Since that time a number of additional copies of manuscripts in the English Archives have been received at the Library of Congress and some of these have a little interest for Marylanders.

Additional Manuscript 25302, f. 96, contains the proceedings in the Chancery Suit brought in 1640 by Cecil Lord Baltimore against Sir Thomas Reynell, Henry and William Sandys, Trustees under deed made by Lord Arundell of Wardour, and Henry Swetman, Roger Gourd and John Browne, Tenants of the Manor of Semley in Wiltshire. Unfortunately, the decrec in the suit is not found together with the bill, answer, replication and abstract of the evidence, which are contained in the manuscript.

Lord Arundel, who was Baltimore's father-in-law, was a large land owner, possessing estates in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire worth about £25,000. On June 13, 1529, on receipt