

Peggy Stewart

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(Redirected from Peggy stewart)

The *Peggy Stewart* was a British tea ship burned in protest of the Tea Act on October 19, 1774 in Annapolis by a crowd of citizens inspired by the Boston Tea Party.

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Arrival in Annapolis



Anthony Stewart, the owner of the *Peggy Stewart*.

The *Peggy Stewart* was a brig owned by Anthony Stewart and James Dick, two Annapolis merchants, and named for Stewart's daughter. It regularly carried tea between London and Annapolis and was loaded with 2,320 pounds of tea when it arrived on October 15, 1774. Anthony Stewart ordered the captain to quietly land the ship, pay the tea tax, and unload. However, local residents quickly became unhappy that Stewart intended to pay the tax. Stewart did pay but, in an attempt to avoid a confrontation, he issued a handbill on October 17, distancing himself from the ship's cargo and asking other citizens to allow the ship to unload peacefully.

Burning of the ship

Annapolis residents were not appeased by Stewart's decision and on October 19, an angry crowd gathered near the Maryland State House and demanded that Stewart either burn his ship and cargo completely or be hanged. Stewart attempted to compromise, agreeing to burn the tea and publicly apologize if the crowd would allow him to unload the remainder of his cargo. Although a majority of citizens agreed to Stewart's offer at a hastily arranged public meeting, a small group vowed to burn the ship anyway.

When this group threatened to hang Stewart if he interfered with their plans, Stewart personally set the *Peggy Stewart* on fire, leading the crowd to cheer in delight at their success. Fearing further retribution after the burning, Stewart fled to England and eventually Nova Scotia. Despite the significant financial loss he sustained, Stewart remained wealthy until his death in 1783, at which time his possessions still included 1200 acres (1.87 square miles or around 4.86 square km) of land in Maryland.

Legacy of the burning

After the American Revolution, citizens of Maryland came to view the burning of the *Peggy Stewart* as an act of heroism, considering the angry crowd who demanded the burning to be devoted patriots for their resistance of the British Tea Act. In the 1920s, the city of Baltimore commemorated the event with a mural painted on the walls of the local courthouse. On October 19, 1974, the Bicentennial Council of the 13 Original States created a silver ingot honoring the two-hundredth anniversary of the burning. Ironically, the incident is also honored by "Peggy Stewart Tea", a blend sold by Eastern Shore Tea Co. The burning is honored each year by a ceremony in Annapolis.

References

- The Drink that Sparked a Revolution (<http://www.hammondharwoodhouse.org/Tea%20Lesson.htm>) accessed May 19, 2006.
- The Peggy Stewart (<http://www.marylandtheseventhstate.com/article1083.html>) accessed May 19, 2006.

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A painting by Francis Blackwell Mayer depicting the burning of the *Peggy Stewart*.



A commemorative ingot issued in 1974 to honor the *Peggy Stewart* burning.

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