



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number: 097

Name: Bolling, Mary Marshall (Tabb)

Dates: (c. 1737-14 Oct 1814)

Colonial Society: VA

Date added to ROA: 2-6-2024

Service: Woman of Distinction: Merchant - managed a large estate of warehouses, a gristmill & land

Authority: Lebsack, Suzanne, "Mary Marshall Tabb Bolling (ca.1737-1814)," Dictionary of Virginia Biography, Library of Virginia (1998-), published 2001

(http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.php?b=Bolling_Mary_Marshall_Tabb, accessed February 6, 2024).

Biography:

Mary Tabb Bolling was born about 1737 to Thomas and Rebecca Booker Tabb most likely on her parents estate in Amelia County, Virginia. Thomas was one of the wealthiest Virginia merchants at the time. It was here that Mary undoubtedly witnessed her father's profitable business dealings, which would foretell her similar path.

On 11 April, 1758, Mary wed Robert Bolling of Dinwiddie County, also a successful merchant and from another wealthy merchant family. Mary and Robert Bolling had six children; two sons, Robert and Thomas, and four daughters, Anne Bolling Shore, Frances Bolling Lemessurier, Rebecca Bolling, and Marianna Bolling.

Eleven years following their marriage, Mary's father died, and she inherited 10,000£. Six years later and on the doorstep of the Revolutionary War, Robert Bolling died on 24 February 1775. Mary undertook management of a vast estate, portions of which were situated in Amelia, as well as much of the land where Petersburg was later built. These holdings included several plantations, tobacco warehouses, and a mill.

The Revolution would soon test Mary's resolve, for the British occupied Petersburg in early 1781, made her residence, Bollingbrook, their headquarters. Mary was then placed under house arrest when she bravely tried to save her properties from destruction by the British. Despite the fact that Mary's tobacco was burned and horses commandeered, the British somehow left her warehouses and gristmill untouched.

A widow for 39 years, Mary was an astute businesswoman, and continued to execute land transactions, rented out shops and houses, invested in two new Petersburg banks, lobbied the assembly to improve the streets, subsidized the Episcopal Church, the Female Orphan Asylum and a fire company, and contributed land for town offices.

When Mary died in October 1814, she was buried at home in the family graveyard.