



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number: 124

Name: Olney, Hallelujah (Brown)

Dates: (1680 - 6 August 1771)

Colonial Society: RI

Date added to ROA: 4-12-2024

Service: Midwife, said to have delivered over 3,000 children

Authority: Schouler, James, *Americans 1776 Daily Life in Revolutionary America* (Williamstown MA: Corner House Publishers, 1984), 39.

Biography:

Hallelujah was a descendant of Chad Brown, considered the progenitor of the prominent Rhode Island Brown family, who was among the founders of what was to become Brown University.

In 1702, she married James Olney (1670-1744), a descendant of another early Rhode Island family. Together they had at least two sons: Joseph and Jonathan and two daughters: Mary and Mercy.

Midwives were not uncommon in colonial New England. However, Hallelujah's record of delivering "upwards of 3,000 children" in her 36-year career is remarkable. It seems that she employed her skill beyond the white colonial settlements. Court records show that she gave a disposition involving a land claim. Key in the suit was a birth resulting from a relationship between a native woman and a black man. She was the midwife assisting in the birth. (See Plane, Ann Marie, *Colonial Intimacies, Indian Marriage in Colonial New England*.)