



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number : 137

Name: Baldwin, Lydia (Peters)

Dates: (24 Feb 1742 - 3 Sep 1825)

Colonial Society: NH

Date added to ROA: May 15, 2024

Service: Midwife, Beginning c. 1765

Authority: Baldwin, Charles Candee. The Baldwin Genealogy from 1500 to 1881. Cleveland, OH: The Leader Printing Co., 1881. p. 630-631.

Biography:

Lydia Peters was born in Hebron, Connecticut, on Feb. 24, 1742/3, the second of fifteen children born to John and Lydia (Phelps) Peters. On Nov. 25, 1761, she was married to Benjamin Baldwin, also of Hebron. By 1765, the couple had moved to Thetford, Vermont, on the Connecticut River, joining her older brother John and next younger sister Mary in a region of new settlements. In later years, they were joined by two more of Lydia's sisters and their husbands. During their lives, Lydia and Benjamin lived in several nearby towns in both New Hampshire and Vermont.

Benjamin built a sawmill on the Wait's River, a Vermont tributary of the Connecticut River, established a successful farm, and was active in public affairs. It was probably in Orford, New Hampshire, that Lydia started her midwifery practice in 1768. She headed out when called in all kinds of weather, either riding sidesaddle on her own horse or on a pillion behind the man who had come for her. She kept a detailed diary of her cases, assisting in 926 births over a 50-year period. Her last entry was on Jan. 20, 1819. Due to Lydia's skill, only one mother died of complications while she was in charge. A biographer noted her "cheerfulness, resolution, and energy" all the while birthing and raising nine children of her own.

Lydia Peters Baldwin died in Bradford, Vermont, on Sep 3, 1825. All but one of her children survived to adulthood. Most stayed in the area but a few grandchildren moved West.

A somewhat distant cousin of Lydia's husband Benjamin Baldwin, the noted engineer Laommi Baldwin, is credited with the development and propagation of the Baldwin apple, which was discovered on the farm of a neighbor in Wilmington, Massachusetts.