



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number: 021

Name: Catherine (Kaidyee) Blaikley

Dates: (c. 1695-25 Oct 1771)

Colonial Society: VA

Date added to ROA: 2-7-2015

Service: Business Owner – “Eminent Midwife” 1739-1771

Authority: Kneebone, Looney, et. al., Dictionary of Virginia Biography, vol. 1 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1998): 534-535;

Biography:

Catherine was probably born in York County, Virginia, as the only daughter of William and Martha Kaidyee.

On September 11, 1718, she married William Blaikley, a watchmaker from James City County. The couple had at least three daughters and two sons and lived a comfortable lifestyle. William left her substantial holdings in real estate when he died in 1736. Upon William's death, she inherited his entire estate of land in Henrico County, a mill in Brunswick County, as well as the lot and house in Williamsburg, Virginia that she called home.

After her husband's death, she had a long and active life and was able to support her family by offering room and board to the gentlemen coming to attend governmental, political and legal business in Virginia's capital. She was obviously very successful in this business which is evidenced by the account she held with a Yorktown merchant whose accounts show that she paid in cash. Offering lodging was one of the few acceptable economic pursuits for women in the 18th century.

Another acceptable economic business for women was midwifery which Catherine began practicing in 1739. Her midwife career lasted approximately 32 years, and at the time of her death she had delivered more than one-and-a-half times the capital's population of 2,000 at



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

the time. This amazing feat earned her the title of “an Eminent Midwife” in an article announcing her death in the *Virginia Gazette*.

Catherine is buried in the Bruton Parish Church cemetery in Williamsburg. Her tombstone states October 25, 1771 as her date of death.