



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number : 063

Name: Fulton, Sarah (Bradlee)

Dates: (24 Dec 1740 - 9 Nov 1835)

Colonial Society: MA

Date added to ROA: March 29, 2023

Service: "Mother of the Boston Tea Party", leading nurse at Bunker Hill, Spy for Gen. Washington in early 1776.

Authority: Sketches of Representative Women of New England, compiled by Mary E. Elliot and others, under the editorial supervision of Julia Ward Howe. Boston, New England Historical Pub. Co., 1904.

Biography:

Sarah Bradlee was born 24 December 1740 in Dorchester, MA, the fifth of twelve children born to Samuel and Mary (Andrews) Bradlee. Her father was a weaver and fisherman and moved the family to neighboring Boston in 1753. In 1762 Sarah was married to John Fulton, the son of John and Ann (Weir) Fulton of Boston. Shortly thereafter the couple moved to Medford, MA.

The younger John Fulton was an avid patriot, and the couple belonged to the groups Sons of Liberty and Daughters of Liberty and participated in boycotts against the British. Sarah's younger brother Nathaniel, a carpenter, lived in Boston and was known for hosting Saturday codfish suppers where friends and members of the Sons of Liberty would gather. The Fultons and the Bradlees participated in the planning of the Boston Tea Party at meetings held in Nathaniel Fulton's shop. On December 16, 1773, the ladies disguised the Sons of Liberty as Mohawk natives before they set out for the harbor. After a successful mission, the men returned to the shop and Sarah Fulton and Ann Bradlee removed the face paint and hid the disguises. Reportedly, a spy trying to connect Nathaniel to the Sons of Liberty passed by the house later in the evening and was disappointed to find only two women engaged in their usual chores. The episode earned Sarah the nickname "Mother of the Boston Tea Party".

Sarah was home in Medford on June 17, 1775, when wounded from the Battle of Bunker Hill were brought to town and she took the lead on organizing local women as nurses and surgeons to care for them. In March 1776, when Major John Brooks of Medford needed to get an urgent dispatch to General Washington in Charlestown harbor, and John Fulton was not available, Sarah volunteered to travel behind enemy lines to deliver it. It was not the only time she made such a trip as a spy from Medford to Boston. After the war was over, Washington paid a visit to the Fulton home to thank her personally.



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

John and Sarah Fulton had eleven children, most of whom lived to adulthood. John died in 1790. Sarah Bradlee Fulton died on 9 November 1835, just shy of her 95th birthday. Eight of her children were still alive.

The chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution which was organized in Medford in 1898 was named the Sarah Bradlee Fulton Chapter and in 1900 the Chapter placed a memorial stone where Sarah Fulton is buried in the Salem Street Cemetery.