



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number : 179

Name: Turner, Mary

Dates: (c. 1673 - 20 Feb 1760)

Colonial Society: RI

Date added to ROA: October 8, 2024

Service: Midwife

Authority: Newport [RI] Mercury, February 26, 1760. P. 4.

Biography:

Mary Turner was probably born in Newport, RI around 1673. Nothing verifiable has been discovered about her maiden name or family. She married Lawrence Turner, also of Newport, about 1691/2. He was born around 1667 to Lawrence and Hope Turner. His grandfather Lawrence (b. 1621) had arrived in America in the 1640s and originally worked in the ironworks in Saugus and Taunton. By 1653 he had moved with his family to Newport and would become a landowner and town official. Mary's husband Lawrence probably inherited much of this land as he may have been the only heir.

Mary and Lawrence would have at least twelve children, 9 daughters and 3 sons, all of whom are mentioned in Lawrence's will. He died on 15 April 1719, when the youngest was only two. His will left Mary, "my well-beloved Wife as a Gift my negro girl Kate, household goods, living stocks, and privilege of cutting wood, but not to destroy or sell any." She was instructed to pay all debts and to receive all debts lawfully due and was to have full authority to bind out the children for their education and learning trades.

Mary's obituary upon her death on 20 February 1760 says: "She retained her Reason and Memory to the last; employ'd all her leisure Hours in Reading; was an experience'd Midwife, and otherwise useful in the Community, by assisting those who laboured under the Disorders incident to the human Body, with her Advice and Remedies." She left a legacy of nine living children, 98 grandchildren, 117 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Her daughter Sarah married a grandson of Gov. Benedict Arnold of Rhode Island. One of her sons was Dr. John Turner, a well-known physician in Freeport, MA.