



## FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

**Female Ancestor Number: 239**

**Name:** Roker, Mary (Keen) Crathorne

**Dates:** (29 Sep 1728 - May 1780)

**Colonial Society:** PA

**Date added to ROA:** 6-29-2025

**Service:** Mustard & Chocolate Manufacturer (Globe Mill) & Purveyor of Goods

**Authority:** Keen, Gregory B. "The Descendants of Joran Kyn, The Founder of Upland (Continued)." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 4, no 4, 1880, pp. 491-493; "Mary Crathorne" advertisement, *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 11 February 1768.

### **Biography:**

Mary Keen was the daughter of Jonas and Sarah (Dahlbo) Keen, born in Pilesgrove Township, Salem County, NJ on September 29, 1728. She married on August 16, 1760, Jonathan Crathorne in Christ Church, Philadelphia. Crathorne, as sea captain, first arrived in Philadelphia in 1749, in command of the *Snow Sea Horse*, from Lisbon. Based on reports published in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Crathorne made at least four journeys back and forth, making stops in Madeira and Fayal. In 1754 he was Master of the *Union* which arrived from Halifax. Aboard the *Union* he traveled multiple years until retiring to Philadelphia. In 1759 he formed a partnership with Benjamin Jackson in a mustard and chocolate mill, known as the Globe Mill. Now married, the Crathornes established a home and shop on Letitia Court. They also sold wine, coffee, and spices. Between 1760 and 1765, utilizing Crathorne's seafaring fortune, they enlarged the Mill and continued to add machinery "*at a very Considerable Expense*." Crathorne bought out their partner Jackson in October of 1765. Upon his death in August of 1767, his estate was valued at £5000 and was granted in full to Mary. She soon relocated to a new house on the corner of Letitia Court and Market Street and advertised that she was continuing the manufacture of "*the articles of mustard and chocolate*."

With Crathorne, Mary had three children, all born in Philadelphia: Joseph, (1762), Mary (1765), and Dorothy (1767). That meant when she became a widow, she had a newborn and two toddlers to care for. There is also indication that her husband's old partner tried to claim ownership of the rights to the processing of the mustard and chocolate. A claim she would need to counter. To prevent anyone from confusing *her* products from those of Jackson or other competitors, she advertised with a special woodcut drawing that illustrated Crathorne products were sold with a proprietary stamp placed on every bottle of mustard and each pound of chocolate. One wonders which of these factors might have contributed to Mary's decision to remarry in 1771, to fellow merchant, Thomas Roker of Philadelphia. Unfortunately for Mary, Thomas was a Loyalist during the American Revolution and was held for treason. We don't know Mary's position on Independence, but through the British law of coverture, her husband now owned



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everything she once did. Which would be devastating when his entire estate was confiscated in 1778 by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as punishment. Mary died at age 58, perhaps of a broken heart, just two years later and was buried in the Christ Church burial ground.