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978-0-521-02785-4 - The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London
Doreen A. Evenden
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The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London

This book is the first comprehensive and detailed study of early modern midwives in seventeenth-century London. Until quite recently, midwives, as a group, have been dismissed by historians as being inadequately educated and trained for the task of child delivery. *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* rejects these claims by exploring the midwives' training in an unofficial apprenticeship and their licensing by the Church. Dr. Evenden also offers an informed depiction of the midwives in their socioeconomic context by examining a wide range of seventeenth-century sources. This expansive study recovers the names of almost twelve hundred women who worked as midwives in and about London. It also brings to light details about midwives, their spouses, families, and associates in the setting of twelve London parishes.

Doreen Evenden is an associate professor of history at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Dr. Evenden's doctoral thesis that developed into this book was awarded the Canadian Historical Association prize for the best doctoral thesis on a non-Canadian topic in 1991. She is the author of *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (1988) and contributor to *The Art of Midwifery* (1993). Dr. Evenden has also been published in *Medical History* (1998).

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*To the midwives of all times and places
whose names will never be known.*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of seventeenth-century midwives had its genesis more than a decade ago when I set off for London on a quest for information about female medical practitioners. I was not particularly interested in midwives as I shared many of the prevailing misconceptions about early modern midwives and also believed that there was nothing more to discover about them. That was about to change upon my arrival at the manuscript section of London's Guildhall Library.

Initially, then, to Jim Alsop for insisting that I take at least a "quick look" at midwives, and who continued to provide scholarly guidance and direction, and to the efficient and welcoming staff at the Guildhall Library, must go a sincere "thank you." As my search widened, the resources of other archives were tapped, and I am also deeply indebted to the archivists and librarians of the Corporation of London Record Office, London Metropolitan Archives (formerly the Greater London Record Office), the Public Record Office, Lambeth Palace Library, and, back home, McMaster University Library in Hamilton, Ontario. Special thanks as well to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for permission to make extensive use of Ms. Rawl. D 1141, to the Marta Danylewycz Memorial Fund for support in the early stages of my research in London archives, and to Mount St. Vincent University for assistance with expenses incurred by publication.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office
CRO	Cumbria Record Office
GLRO	Greater London Record Office (now London Metropolitan Archives)
GL	Guildhall Library
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
PRO	Public Record Office
RCOG	Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
VL	Victoria Library

Note: For purposes of this study the new year will commence on January the first.