



# **A History of Midwifery in the United States: The Midwife Said Fear Not**

*Helen Varney Burst RN CNM MSN DHL (Hon.) FACNM, Dr. Joyce E. Thompson DrPH RN CNM FAAN  
FACNM*

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Written by two of the profession's most prominent midwifery leaders, this authoritative history of midwifery in the United States, from the 1600s to the present, is distinguished by its vast breadth and depth. The book spans the historical evolution of midwives as respected, autonomous health care workers and midwifery as a profession, and considers the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for this discipline as enduring motifs throughout the text. It surveys the roots of midwifery, the beginnings of professional practice, the founding of educational institutions and professional organizations, and entry pathways into the profession. Woven throughout the text are such themes as the close link between midwives and the communities in which they live, their view of pregnancy and birth as normal life events, their efforts to promote health and prevent illness, and their dedication to serving women wherever they may be and in whatever health condition and circumstances they may be in.

The text examines the threats to midwifery past and present, such as the increasing medicalization of childbearing care, midwifery's lack of a common identity based on education and practice standards, the inconsistencies in its legal recognition as a profession, and reimbursement issues for midwifery practice. Illustrations and historical photos depict the many facets of midwifery, and engaging stories provide cultural and spiritual context. This is a "must-have" for all midwives, historians, professional and educational institutions, and all those who share a passion for the history of midwifery and women.

## KEY FEATURES:

- Encompasses the most authoritative and comprehensive information available about the history of midwifery in the United States
- Considers the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for midwifery
- Illustrated with historical photos and drawings
- Includes engaging stories filled with cultural and spiritual content, introductory quotes to each chapter, and plentiful chapter notes
- Written by two preeminent leaders in the field of midwifery

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