

**American Antiquarian Society
Manuscript Collections**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Sprague, John, Papers, 1713-1815

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "S"
Oversize vols. "S"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

two manuscript boxes; one oversize volume (238 p.)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For biographical information, see E. G. Sprague, *The Ralph Sprague Genealogy* (Montpelier, Vt.: s.n., 1913), p. 68-69. See also, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, vol. X, p. 240-243.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of James Green Estate (date unknown)

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

John Sprague (1718-1797) was a distinguished physician in Boston and Dedham, Mass., an extensive landowner, and a successful businessman. He married Elizabeth Dalhonde (-1757) in 1745 and Esther Harrison (1728-1811), the widow of Charles Harrison (-1769), in 1770.

This collection consists of legal documents, for the period 1713 to 1815, including land deeds for property in Dedham, Milton, and Stoughton, Mass., involving such individuals as Nathaniel Kingsbury (1697-1775) and Ebenezer Knap (1703-1777), indentures relative to land sales and the marriage contract between Sprague and Esther Harrison, and deeds concerning property transferred to Sprague in lieu of payment for medical debts. There are also many bills, receipts, promissory notes, accounts, and inventories, including a list of Sprague's losses during the blockade of Boston, 1775-1776, and extensive papers dealing with the estate of John and Esther Harrison Sprague, 1797-1811. These include several inventories with a full listing of Sprague's personal (including his library) and property holdings with a schedule of debts due the estate. The collection also contains papers concerning the lengthy court battle in 1797 among family members after Sprague died in testate. Included are Esther Harrison Sprague's appeals against sharing the administration of her husband's estate with her stepsons Edward Sprague (1750-1817) and Dr. John Sprague, Jr. (1752-1800), their counter-appeals, and the final disposition of the estate.

The collection also includes Esther Sprague's will, 1811, the bills of her wealthy first husband Charles, of Dedham, 1766-1769, inventories of her estate and that of Rebecca Sprague (1755-1813), the wife of

John Sprague, Jr., and the extensive legal papers of John and Esther Sprague's attorneys and beneficiaries, Fisher Ames (1758-1808) and Samuel Swett (1744?-1853?).

There is also an oversized ledger, 1750-1773, containing brief accounts of debts that Sprague held against various people, with the entries frequently including the individual's occupation, name of spouse, or family origin. Included are merchants, ship's captains, widows, retailers, carpenters, and lawyers. The entries contain only the names, date and amount of debt, settlement date, and method of settlement, i.e., by work or cash.

See Contents List.

**American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**

JOHN SPRAGUE, PAPERS, 1713-1815
CONTENTS LIST

BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	1	Land deeds, 1713-1775
	2	Land deeds, 1782-1803
	3	Indentures, petitions, court judgments, 1733-1800 --including John and Esther Sprague's marriage agreement
	4	Bills, receipts, inventories, miscellaneous accounts, and wills, 1772-1814
2	1	Estate inventories, 1797
	2	Estate business of John and Esther Sprague; Wills of family members, 1782-1813
	3	Wills of Charles Harrison, 1766-1771; Accounts of Samuel Swett and Fisher Ames (administrators of Sprague estate)