

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

<p>Name of collection:</p> <p>Parker Family Papers, 1762-1908</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Mss. boxes "P" Octavo volumes "P" Folio volumes "P"</p>
<p>Size of collection:</p> <p>1 mss. box; 16 octavo vols.; 8 folio vols.</p>	<p>N.U.C.M.C. number:</p> <p>62-3810</p>
<p>Finding aids:</p> <p>For biographical data, see Seth Chandler, <u>History of the Town of Shirley</u> (Shirley: published by the author, 1883), pp. 580-89</p>	
<p>Source of collection:</p> <p>Gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Knowles Bolton, 1930s-1940s</p>	
<p>Collection Description:</p> <p>This collection encompasses three generations of Parkers, all of whom lived in Shirley, Massachusetts. James Parker (1744-1830) was born in Groton, Mass., but settled in Shirley and lived there until his death. Apparently, he did not participate in public affairs and although enrolled with 80 volunteers called out by the alarm of 19 April 1775, he served only for several months and took no active part in the Revolution. He devoted himself to the discharge of his personal business--his lands were so skillfully cultivated and his business relations so shrewdly conducted that he retired from his farm in 1802 a wealthy man. He married Sarah Dickinson (-1829) in 1767 and had ten children, including James Parker (1771-1853), who later held a military commission and rose to the rank of captain, the usual title by which he was addressed. He was an Overseer of the Poor but, for the most part, followed the example of his father and devoted himself to the obligations of home and farm. Captain Parker married Ruth Harkness (-1859) in 1803 and had three children: Thomas Harkness Parker (1804-1881), who married Nancy P. Crossman (-); James Otis Parker (1811-1883), who married Martha Lincoln Carter (-1847); and Sarah Parker (1807-1845), who married Edward Fales (-). Thomas Parker followed the occupational interests of his father. James Otis Parker graduated from Amherst College in 1834 and received an M.D. from the Berkshire Medical College in 1841. He practiced in Shirley from 1841 to 1849, but left for San Francisco in 1849 to escape debts and a difficult family situation. He returned to Shirley in 1853 and spent the rest of his life there farming and</p>	

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Collection Description (continued)

Parker Family Papers, 1762-1908

practicing medicine.

This collection of Parker Family Papers includes 49 diaries interleaved in almanacs of the elder James Parker, 1770-1829, with only a few years missing. The diaries reflect his preoccupation with farming and consist primarily of entries about the weather, crops, and animals. There is also one octavo volume of accounts from the 1790s, with a few entries to 1815.

Captain James Parker also kept diaries and the entries are very similar to those of his father. Folio volume #1 covers the period 2 April 1799 to 18 February 1815; folio volume #2 covers 1 January 1815 to 2 January 1828; folio volume #3 covers 1 January 1828 to 18 April 1848; and octavo volume #12 covers 1 April 1848 to 30 October 1853. (Several of these volumes are incorrectly labeled on the spine.) There is also a typescript of excerpts from the diaries (22 January 1810 to 30 October 1853) prepared by Ethel Stanwood Bolton.

Following in the Parker family tradition, Thomas Parker also kept a diary with similar entries. This covers the period 16 July 1837 to 31 July 1878 (with fragments for what appears to be 1879). There are four account books that he kept from the 1830s through the 1870s. The volume for the 1850s and 1860s includes agreements of the Overseers of the Poor.

James Otis Parker is represented by letters in the manuscript box that he wrote back to family members in Shirley from San Francisco, 1849 to 1851, concerning chaotic conditions in California and his efforts to pay off his debts in Shirley so that he can return.

The collection also includes folio scrapbooks. The first scrapbook contains house leases and assorted memoranda of legal disputes, court documents, and receipts. The second scrapbook has similar items as well as town and school bills for Shirley, records of Captain James Parker's military service, records of the Overseers of the Poor, and farm records. The third scrapbook contains papers and legal documents of the Parkers as well as papers of Samuel Hazen (-) and Dr. Ebenezer P. Hills (1804-1854), both of Shirley. The fourth volume contains a few Parker family items. Most of the pieces, however, are Shirley memorabilia or items relating to Ethel Stanwood Bolton's research for her book on Shirley.

See Contents List.

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Parker Family Papers

Contents List

Manuscript Box:

- Folder 1 Miscellaneous notes, receipts, accounts, 1806-1872
- Folder 2 Diary, 16 July 1837-31 July 1878, fragments 1879, of Thomas Harkness Parker (1804-1881), mostly concerning farming
- Folder 3 Family notes, receipts, letters, 1764-1859, including letters of James Otis Parker (1811-1883) from San Francisco, 1849, relating to the Gold Rush; and family letters concerning squabbles over property, etc.

Octavo Volumes:

Traycases:

- #1 Diaries of James Parker (1744-1830), 1770-1775
- #2 Diaries of James Parker, 1776-1781
- #3 Diaries of James Parker, 1782-1787
- #4 Diaries of James Parker, 1788-1795
- #5 Diaries of James Parker, 1796-1802
- #6 Diaries of James Parker, 1803-1808
- #7 Diaries of James Parker, 1809-1814
- #8 Diaries of James Parker, 1818-1824
- #9 Diaries of James Parker, 1825-1829

Volumes:

- #10 Diary of James Parker, 1825
- #11 Volume of Accounts, 1790-1815, including farming and personal expenses. Attributed to James Parker (1744-1830)
- #12 Diary of Capt. James Parker (1771-1853), April 1, 1848-October 30, 1853
- #13 Account Book of Thomas Harkness Parker (1804-1881), 1824-1856, including farm accounts, work records, cider mill records
- #14 Account Book of Thomas Harkness Parker, 1848-1869
- #15 Account Book of Thomas Harkness Parker, 1857-1871
- #16 Account Book of Thomas Harkness Parker, 1870-1879

Folio Volumes:

- #1 Diary of Capt. James Parker, 1799-1815
- #2 Diary of Capt. James Parker, 1815-1828
- #3 Diary of Capt. James Parker, 1828-1848
- #4 Typescript copy of diary of Capt. James Parker, 1810-1853
- #5 Scrapbook, 1777-1876, of house leases, receipts, memoranda, court documents, including a petition, 1777, for a court martial signed by James Parker
- #6 Scrapbook, 1782-1862, of legal documents, town and school bills, military records and records of Overseers of the Poor and the farm
- #7 Scrapbook, 1762-1861, of papers and legal documents and early maps of Shirley
- #8 Scrapbook, 1820-1908, containing Shirley memorabilia