

# SPARHAM, THOMAS,

## Additional Genealogical Information

Thomas SPARHAM MD was born in 1739. He died on 19 Feb 1813 in Kingston. He was buried in Kingston's Lower Burial Ground, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Kingston, Ontario Canada.

Evidence for Thomas's birth begins with his description as being a native of England in his 1778 Empire Loyalist Claim and his son's obituary giving his father's birth year as 1740.<sup>i</sup> Thomas' obituary in 1813<sup>ii</sup> indicated that he was "about 80" which would indicate a birth year of roughly 1733.

Extensive searches of British records indicates that the only possible match is a Thomas Sparham born in 1739 and baptised 1 October 1739 in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England to Thomas Sr, and Margaret SPARHAM nee PELL.<sup>iii</sup> These dates would make Thomas' age at passing as 74 years old which could have been described as about 80 given what is recorded of his decline in the preceding years.

Margaret and Thomas Sr. were married 29 Nov 1736 at Burgh Castle, Norfolk and had a first son born in 1737 whom they named Thomas, but he sadly died in 1738. When a second son was born in 1739, they also named him Thomas. At some point Thomas SPARHAM Sr. and his wife Margaret and their surviving son, traveled to the Americas and the senior Thomas SPARHAM, a surgeon, is noted there as becoming a Freeman in New York City on 1 Nov 1748<sup>iv</sup>, as a medical witness in a Coroners Proceeding on 9 August 1749<sup>v</sup> and finally in a City Court Record on 2 August 1749 when he was indicted for assault.<sup>vi</sup>

Dr. SPARHAM Sr died in New York city and his will of 1758 named his wife Margaret as Executrix and she and her Heirs as Beneficiaries.<sup>vii</sup>

A few years after his father's death, the younger Thomas indicated that he served with the British 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot at Martinique (Martinico) in January and Havana in June 1762 in his 1778 Empire Loyalist Claim. He was appointed Surgeon's mate in this period perhaps because he had medical training from his father. When the Regiment returned to Ireland, he did not go with them, instead Thomas became the Acting Surgeon's Mate for a detachment of volunteers with the British 31st Regiment under Captain Hodgson, and they sailed from New York intending to serve at Pensacola, Florida. But the troop transport ship – the Cumberland - was shipwrecked off the east end of Grand Cayman Island on November 29, 1767, coming from Jamaica. Three people died, and all provisions and valuables lost. The crew were rescued 3 months later on Friday 22nd of January 1768 from Seven Mile Beach by the HMS Adventure.

About 1770 Thomas had his portrait painted and it is part of the Art Gallery of Ontario collection.<sup>viii</sup>

He retired from service to Crown Point, New York where he married Anna Ulrica BENZEL and had an apothecary's shop.

Anna Ulrica BENZEL was the daughter of Swedish Baron Adolphus BENZEL and Rebecca TRANBERG. Anna was born on 28 April 1753 in Wilmington, Delaware, USA. She was christened on 10 May 1753 in the Holy Trinity Church, Wilmington, Delaware.

In 1775 Thomas was reduced from the British Army service and received a Certificate from James Robinson to officially recognize this. <sup>ix</sup>

In May 1775, the Americans under Benedict Arnold took Crown Point.

In November of that year Thomas wrote a letter to General Philip Schuyler regarding getting help recovering an indentured servant girl but he includes a P.S. that states "I should have done my self the Honour to have waited on your Excellency in person but my family being indisposed hindered" perhaps alluding to the death of his father-in-law or his child. The original letter is part of the New York Public Library Collection<sup>x</sup> .

In 1776 the Americans were at work on Lake Champlain building a fleet to prevent a British invasion from Canada. As the fleet neared completion in August, Brigadier General Benedict Arnold began looking for a fleet surgeon. On August 16 Arnold reported "I have applied to Doctr Sparham who (I believe) Cannot be persuaded to go with the Fleet -- I dont think it prudent to go without a Surgeon." <sup>xi</sup> General Gates replied there was a need for surgical instruments "but wish you could hire Doctor Speram's for the Voyage." Arnold replied immediately that "I have borrowed Dr Sparhams Instrum[en]ts." <sup>xii</sup>

So Thomas turned down Gen. Arnold's request to serve with the Americans and instead rejoined the British Army under General Carleton, and then with General Burgoyne, under Col. Campbell as surgeon to the savages.

The American fleet commanded by Arnold was defeated by the British fleet on the lake in October 1776 and the retreating Americans burned everything at Crown Point. Thomas Sparham lost everything he owned.

Thomas finished the war as a surgeon's mate at Oswegatchie until 1783.

After fleeing to Canada, Thomas was appointed barrack-master at Cataraqui, (which later became Kingston) Ontario on 12 August 1784 and may have also worked as hospital mate until his passing. The location of his home is identified on a Plan of the Town of Kingston. <sup>xiii</sup>

In 1813 Thomas Sparham died on the 19th of February in Kingston Ontario<sup>xiv</sup>. He was buried in Kingston's Lower Burial Ground, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Kingston, Ontario Canada<sup>xv</sup>.

The timing and location of his wife Anna's passing is unknown although records of her acting as a sponsor at the baptism of her first grandchild in 1807 in Kingston Ontario suggest she lived at least into her fifties.<sup>xvi</sup>

Thomas and Anna had the following known children: Thomas SPARHAM Jr. and an unnamed child. The only record for the existence of this unnamed child is in the original

(not transcribed) detailed list of losses during the retreat from Crown Point, New York in 1776 where Thomas and Anna claim – “Wearing apparel of self, wife and 2 Children.”<sup>xvii</sup>

Thomas SPARHAM, Jr. was born in 1773 at Crown Point, New York. He was educated though in Wilmington, Delaware, the birth place of his mother Anna and where his grandmother Rebecca TRANBERG returned to live from 1783 until her death in 1790. He rejoined his parents in Kingston, Ontario Canada in 1788.<sup>xviii</sup>

He became barrack-master at Carleton Island until 1792 and then settled in Kingston where he became Assistant Barack Master under his father. Disturbing correspondence in British Military and Naval Records describe Thomas Jr.’s “unkind treatment of his father, who is entirely dependant on him”<sup>xix</sup> as well as less than high praise for his job performance. Perhaps because of his father’s increasing inability to function as Barrack Master as he aged and his subsequent passing, Thomas Jr. left this position.

He was a lieutenant and quartermaster of the militia from 1812 to 1815 during the war with the United States. When he retired, he settled near the village of Sydenham and was one of the first settlers in the Township of Loughborough.

He also served as a Magistrate for the Midland District in Ontario, Canada.

In 1834 he was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor as the first Keeper of Nine Mile Point Lighthouse<sup>xx</sup> at the entrance to the Harbour of Kingston, a role he held until just before his death when his son George took over the position.

Thomas Jr. married Rosamond SMYTH on 25 Nov 1805 in Kingston Ontario Canada. She was born 3 Feb 1787<sup>xxi</sup> in Brockville, Ontario. Rosamond was the eldest daughter of a notorious spy for the British, Thomas SMYTH and his wife Lavina COMSTOCK. They had also come north to Canada in about 1783 after the war and settled in Elizabethtown, Ontario. Her Irish father, Thomas SMYTH had served in the King’s Royal Regiment and was a British Frontier Spy along with his father Dr. George SMYTH and brother Terence. Major Thomas SMYTH, U.E.L., was the original grantee of land at Smiths Falls, Ontario in 1786 and the city is named after his family.<sup>xxii</sup>

Thomas died on March 18, 1855, in Kingston, Ontario, and was buried at the old Cataraqui Cemetery in the village of Waterloo, Ontario which later became part of Kingston.

As a widow Rosamond lived with her bachelor sons George and William in 1871 in Kingston. Rosamond died on 20 September 1882 in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.<sup>xxiii</sup> She was buried on 22 September 1882 in Cataraqui Cemetery, Kingston, Ontario.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Thomas and Rosamond had a possible total of 8 children:

Adolphus SPARHAM was their eldest child born about 1807 in Kingston, Ontario and was christened on 4 January 1807 at St. Paul’s Anglican Church, Kingston, Ontario.<sup>xxv</sup> He married Anna KNIGHT. Adolphus died 27 Jul 1842 in Waterloo Village which became Cataraqui, Ontario, of Scarlet Fever at the age of only thirty-five. He was buried on 28 July 1842 in Wesleyan Methodist Burying Ground, Waterloo, Ontario next to his father.<sup>xxvi</sup> Anna died after her husband as she is mentioned in his obituary but sometime before the 1851 Canadian Census as she does not appear there.

They had a total of six children according to his obituary:

Rosamond SPARHAM, born in 1831, married 28 Feb 1851 to Nelson H WATERS and died 27 Feb 1888, Ellis, Kansas<sup>xxvii xxviii</sup> They had nine children.

William Henry SPARHAM, born ca 1835, married Sophia RALPH 26 Sept 1852, Lanark, Ontario and died 23 Apr 1915, Frontenac, Ontario. Together they had six children.

Alexis SPARHAM, born ca 1836, married Louisa RUSSELL, died August 1876, Guthrie, Iowa, buried Utica, La Salle, Illinois, USA. They had no known children.

Mary SPARHAM, born 10 Mar 1839, married William KENNEDY 1856, died 30 Dec 1907, Loughborough, Ontario. Together they had seventeen children.

Emily SPARHAM, born 12 Dec 1842 Cataraqui, Ontario, married Terence Peter SPARHAM, her cousin on 10 Aug 1875, Smith Falls, Ontario, and died in 1902. They had four children.

Unknown SPARHAM, birth unknown. As six children were referenced in Adolphus Sparham's Obituary, it is assumed there was one more child of Adolphus and Anna, but no sources have identified this child to date.

It is most likely that the unnamed SPARHAM child who was buried on 27 September 1808 in Kingston's Lower Burial Ground, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Kingston, Ontario Canada<sup>xxix</sup> was the second child of Thomas Jr. and Rosamond Sparham. In 1808 there were only five people with the SPARHAM surname living in Canada: Dr. Thomas SPARHAM, his wife, his son, and his wife and their first child Adolphus born in 1807. This can be confirmed by a tally of Sparhams that appear in the first Canadian Census of 1851. In 1851 there were a total of 20 listed: Nine in Grenville Ontario all related to Dr. Thomas Sparham, seven in Frontenac County, also all Dr. Sparham's family and in Glandford, Wentworth Ontario four Sparhams unrelated to Dr. Thomas Sparham consisting of a father, wife and son and his daughter. The son William SPARHAM (recorded incorrectly as SPAREHAM) was born in England about 1825 and his daughter in Canada in 1848 so they could have come to Canada only sometime after 1825 and before 1848.

Dr. SPARHAM's family are also the only Sparhams recorded in the Parish Register of Kingston in that time period. The Sparham child is listed as "Sharpham" in The Parish Register of Kingston, Upper Canada, 1785–1811, ed. A. H. Young (Kingston, 1921) p. 62 and corrected to Sparham on p.207<sup>xxx</sup>

If it is assumed there must be a connection to Dr. Thomas Sparham who was also buried in Kingston's Lower Burial Ground in 1813, then as Thomas Jr. was the only child of Dr. Sparham known to survive to adulthood, his children are the only possibilities. Based on a gap of four years between the births of Thomas Jr.'s known first children, it could be assumed that another child was born in this period between 1807 and 1811. The Lower Burial Ground would have been a logical place to inter a grandchild in a family plot.

The next documented child born to Thomas Jr. and his wife was George Smyth SPARHAM who was born about 1812 in Kingston. He took over as the Keeper of Nine Mile Point Light House from his father from 1851 to 1855.<sup>xxx</sup> He then studied to be a Doctor/Dentist and graduated from Queen's University in 1859.<sup>xxxii</sup> He did not marry and died on 20 Apr 1904, in Athens, Ontario, Canada.

Terence Peter SPARHAM was the third son born on 6 Nov 1813 in Ontario, Canada who survived. He was also a doctor in the long line of Sparham doctors. Terence married Sarah FREEL in 1842. Sarah was born in 1812. He graduated from McGill in 1843 and then studied in England. He left his practise in Kemptville in 1849 and went to California to pursue gold mining activities both there and in British Columbia. Eventually he returned to Ontario and took up practise in Brockville. She died on 11 August 1896 in Brockville, Ontario. She was buried in Old Protestant Cemetery, Brockville, Ontario. He died on 11 January 1902 in Brockville He was buried in Old Protestant Cemetery, Brockville, Ontario.

They had the following children:

Thomas W. SPARHAM, born in 1844 and died 16 Feb 1915, in Leeds Ontario.

Terence Peter SPARHAM, born in 1848, in Kemptville, Ontario, married Emily SPARHAM his cousin on 10 Aug 1875, Smith Falls, Ontario and died in 1894.

Ada L. SPARHAM, born in 1849 and died in 1945.

Rosamond SPARHAM, born ca 1850.

Jessie Ulrica SPARHAM, born in 1853, married Thomas A STAYNER and died in 1945<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Anne Louise SPARHAM was Thomas Jr. and Rosamond's youngest daughter and was born about 1818 in Kingston, Ontario. She died on 6 August 1897 in Frontenac, Ontario, Canada. Anne married Richard Henry LIGHT on 15 June 1859 in Frontenac, Ontario, Canada. He was an artist who was born In England about 1822. She died on 6 Aug 1897. They had no known children. He died 28 April 1898 in Kingston.

William Patrick SPARHAM was born about 1819. He never married and lived with his widowed mother for most of his life. He worked as a Gardiner in Kingston and died on 6 Dec 1899.

Emmanuel Bayard SPARHAM was born about 1821. He was also a doctor. Emmanuel married Ellen FAIRFIELD on 1 Jul 1852. They had four children: .Baynard Emanuel, Anna Ulrica L., William Fairfield and Rosamond.

Thomas Jr. and Rosamond's last child Eric Benzel SPARHAM, was born in 1832 in Waterloo, Ontario. He was a graduate of McGill College in 1852 and practised first in Picton, Ontario and then Brockville. He married Annie SHERWOOD on 11 Dec 1866, there. The transcribed marriage record indicates his parentage, born ten years after his next older brother. It was Annie's second marriage and her children from the first marriage with Mayor Mack, took on the Sparham surname and are buried in the Cataract Cemetery in Kingston under that surname.

In 1874 Dr. E.B. Sparham was charged with the murder of patient in Brockville Ontario and was found guilty. His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and he served several years in prison before being released and pardoned.

Eric had no children of his own and died on 26 Jul 1894, in Brockville, Ontario<sup>xxxiv</sup> but is buried in Kingston. Annie died on 1 July 1912 and was buried on the 3rd with her husband.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Carolyn Goddard  
5<sup>th</sup> Great-granddaughter

Original research and guidance credit to Dr. Paul Huey, Historical Archaeologist and Michael Sasse, U.K. Genealogical Researcher. *Kingston before the War of 1812: a collection of documents*, ed. R. A. Preston (Toronto, 1959). *The parish register of Kingston, Upper Canada, 1785–1811*, ed. A. H. Young (Kingston, 1921). *Kingston Gazette*, 1813. *Marriage and Children from The Rambo Family Tree* Beverly Rambo and Ronald S. Beatty. *The Records of Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church, Wilmington, Del., from 1697 to 1773*. Year: 1851; Census Place: Frontenac, Canada West (Ontario); Schedule: A; Roll: C-11721; Page: 63; Line: 8. Ancestry.com. Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Ancestry.com and Genealogical Research Library (Brampton, Ontario, Canada). Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826-1938 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

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- <sup>i</sup> The Kingston Whig-Standard (Kingston, Ontario, Canada) · 26 Mar 1855, Mon · Page 2
- <sup>ii</sup> Reid, William D. Death Notices of Ontario [1810-1848]
- <sup>iii</sup> Norfolk, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1535-1812
- <sup>iv</sup> The Collections of the New-York Historical Society for 1885, page 164  
<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/567415-collections-of-the-new-york-historical-society-v-18-1885?viewer=1&offset=0#page=4&viewer=picture&o=&n=0&q=>
- <sup>v</sup> Minutes of Coroners Proceedings ... 1748-1758 (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2004), page 21
- <sup>vi</sup> New York City Court Records, 1684-1760 (Washington: National Genealogical Society, 1982), page 65.
- <sup>vii</sup> Record of Wills Recorded At Albany, New York, 1629-1802; Index 1629-1828; Author: New York. Surrogate's Court (Albany County); Probate Place: Albany, New York
- <sup>viii</sup> 18th Century Thomas Sparham c 1770 Gift of James J Limacher 2002 Copyright Art Gallery of Ontario
- <sup>ix</sup> Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. "Document" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bac0a75c-2743-b981-e040-e00a18067fd9>
- <sup>x</sup> Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. "1775 November 26" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1775. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c2ef3350-4d32-0134-18d0-00505686a51c/?uid=c3ab7d70-4d32-0134-b7a7-00505686a51c>
- <sup>xi</sup> [Naval Documents of the American Revolution Volume 6 \(navy.mil\)](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?template=document&docId=25252)
- <sup>xii</sup> NAVAL DOCUMENTS OF the American Revolution VOLUME 6 [Sparham, Thomas | Kingston's Lower Burial Ground](https://www.ndar-history.org/br/>Major General Horatio Gates to Brigadier General Benedict Arnold, August 23, 1776 | Naval Documents of the American Revolution (ndar-history.org)</a></p><p><sup>xiii</sup> Kingston before the War of 1812: a collection of documents, ed. R. A. Preston (Toronto, 1959).</p><p><sup>xiv</sup> Kingston Gazette</p><p><sup>xv</sup> <a href=)
- <sup>xvi</sup> The Parish Register of Kingston Upper Canada, 1785-1811 Edited with Notes and Introduction BY A. H. Young <http://my.tbaytel.net/bmartin/kingstn2.htm#l>
- <sup>xvii</sup> UK, American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835 for Thomas Sparham Memorial, Account of Losses, The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; American Loyalist Claims, Series II; Class: AO 13; Piece: 015
- <sup>xviii</sup> Thomas Sparham Jr 1855 Obituary, The Kingston Whig-Standard – 26 Mar 1855, Mon. page 2
- <sup>xix</sup> British Military and Naval Records ( RG 8, C series) Nine Mile Point Lighthouse, Ontario Canada at Lighthousefriends.com
- <sup>xxi</sup> Petition of T. W. Smythe for land is Heir at Law of Terence Smythe, Esq., 1850
- <sup>xxii</sup> *Shadow Soldiers of the American Revolution, Loyalist Tales from New York to Canada*, Mark Jodoin, Ch.10
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1948
- <sup>xxiv</sup> [Rosamond Smyth Sparham \(1787-1882\) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111111111/Rosamond-Smyth-Sparham-1787-1882)
- <sup>xxv</sup> The Parish Register of Kingston Upper Canada, 1785-1811 Edited with Notes and Introduction BY A. H. Young <http://my.tbaytel.net/bmartin/kingstn2.htm#l>
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Obituary Waterloo 2 Aug 1832
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Partial death notice [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com/~/media/Files/Archives/Br) Ellis Review (Ellis, Kansas) 02 Mar 1888, Fri Page 1
- <sup>xxviii</sup> [Rosemond S Waters \(1831-1888\) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111111111/Rosemond-S-Waters-1831-1888)
- <sup>xxix</sup> [Sparham | Kingston's Lower Burial Ground](https://www.kingston.ca/~/media/Files/History/Thomas%20Sparham%20Lower%20Burial%20Ground.pdf)
- <sup>xxx</sup> [The parish register of Kingston, Upper Canada, 1785-1811 : Young, A. H. \(Archibald Hope\), 1863-1936 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=1)
- <sup>xxxi</sup> [Nine Mile Point Lighthouse, Ontario Canada at Lighthousefriends.com](https://www.lighthousefriends.com/~/media/Files/Archives/Br)
- <sup>xxxii</sup> [https://quinte.ogs.on.ca/quinte/pdf\\_files/Brearley\\_Queens\\_Med\\_Grads.pdf](https://quinte.ogs.on.ca/quinte/pdf_files/Brearley_Queens_Med_Grads.pdf)
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> [Jessie U Sparham Stayner \(1853-1945\) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111111111/Jessie-U-Sparham-Stayner-1853-1945)
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> [Dr Eric Benzel Sparham \(1832-1894\) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/111111111/Dr-Eric-Benzel-Sparham-1832-1894)
- <sup>xxxv</sup> List of Sparhams buried in Cataraqui Cemetery provided by the Cemetery.