

## GUIDE TO THE SHELDON FAMILY PAPERS

### Scope and Content Note

The Sheldon Family Papers, property of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, consist of more than 200 items dating from 1698 to the 20<sup>th</sup> century representing eight generations of the family. Most of the material relates to John Sheldon (1658-1733), one of earliest permanent settlers of Deerfield, and his descendants. Accompanying the papers is an extensive file of correspondence that dates from 1868 to the present, pertaining to the family, along with genealogical material. The superscript numbers that accompany the names in the notes below are those assigned by George Sheldon in the genealogical section of his *History of Deerfield* (1895).

### Biographical Notes and Description of Series

**Isaac Sheldon<sup>1</sup>**, a son of Isaac Sheldon of Dorchester, Mass., and later Windsor, Ct., was born in 1629. The younger Isaac moved to Northampton, Mass., and in 1653 he married Mary Woodford of Hartford, Ct., mother of his 14 children, three of whom are mentioned below. The year after Mary's death in 1684, he married Mehitable, daughter of Thomas Gunn and the divorced wife of David Ensign, all of Hartford. Isaac died in 1708; Mehitable in 1720. The collection includes his will, probated September 1, 1708; and an inventory of his estate, presented for probate on the same date by his widow and sons, Isaac and Thomas.

**Isaac Sheldon<sup>2</sup>**, born in 1656, was the eldest son of Isaac<sup>1</sup> and Mary (Woodford) Sheldon. He succeeded his father on the Northampton homestead. In 1685, he married Sarah Warner of Hatfield. The couple had seven children, one of whom is named below. Isaac died in 1712.

His will, dated March 28, 1712, is in the collection.

**Isaac Sheldon**, son of Isaac<sup>2</sup> and Sarah (Warner) Sheldon, was born in 1686. He probably settled in Hartford, Ct., and in 1716 married Elizabeth Pratt of that town.

He is represented by a receipt, dated 1764.

**Ebenezer Sheldon<sup>7</sup>**, son of Isaac<sup>1</sup> and Mary (Woodford) Sheldon, was born in 1677. He lived in the old homestead in Northampton, Mass., and died there in 1755. His widow, the former Mary Hunt of Northampton, died in 1767.

The collection contains four of his papers: a receipt of 1734, two plats of land east of the Green River in Deerfield (1736), and a third document, undated, concerning land he owned.

**John Sheldon<sup>3</sup>**, second son of Isaac<sup>1</sup> and Mary (Woodford) Sheldon, was born in 1658. He came to Deerfield at the permanent settlement and took a leading part in town affairs, as selectman, ensign of the first military company, and church deacon. He was the builder of the "Old Indian House" and was occupying it at the time of the raid in 1704. In 1679, he married Hannah Stebbins of Northampton. She was killed in the 1704 raid. Sent by Governor Dudley to Canada in 1705, he returned with five Deerfield captives, including his daughter-in-law, Hannah. He made other trips in 1706 and 1707. About this time he moved to Hartford, Ct., where he became prominent. In

1708, he married Elizabeth Pratt of Hartford. John died in 1733; his widow in 1758.

His papers consist of four undated accounts, a receipt from his brother-in-law, John Bridgeman, in 1698, and two other receipts dated 1707 and 1712, an undated letter which was enclosed in another letter (not in the collection) from his daughter-in-law, a letter of 1706 from his son, John, and a copy of his will.

**John Sheldon**<sup>9</sup>, eldest son of John<sup>3</sup> and Hannah (Stebbins) Sheldon, was born in Deerfield in 1681. He married Hannah Chapin 1703. During the raid the following year the young couple escaped from their house. John went to Hatfield, Mass., to spread the alarm, but Hannah, injured during their escape, was captured and marched to Canada. She was redeemed by her father-in-law in 1705. John died in 1713. Hannah married a second time, to Lt. Timothy Childs, and lived until 1765.

John's papers consist of a letter from his wife Hannah (June 12, 1705), four receipts, three deeds to land in Deerfield, and a letter from Thomas Hastings regarding his daughter's (Hannah's?) illness. With these are an inventory of his estate, September 23, 1713, and a letter to his wife Hannah from her father-in-law, John Sheldon, April 1, 1705.

**John Sheldon**<sup>13</sup>, son of John<sup>9</sup> and Hannah (Chapin) Sheldon, was born in 1710. He settled in Deerfield on Lot 4 and became a large land holder. He was active in town affairs and served on the Committee of Safety in 1777. In 1735, he married Mercy, daughter of John Arms. They had two daughters and one son (named below). John died in 1793; his wife in 1768.

An early document filed with his papers is a certificate of appointment (January 22, 1719/20) naming Lt. Thomas Wells and Lt. Samuel Barnard as guardians of John and his sisters after their mother's second marriage in 1719 to Lt. Timothy Childs. John's papers, dated 1762 to 1792, include receipts, promissory notes, accounts, and a power of attorney, but they are mostly concerned with his extensive land holdings. Included is a copy of his will, November 21, 1792.

**John Sheldon**<sup>20</sup>, son of John<sup>13</sup> and Mercy (Arms) Sheldon, was born in 1739. He was a soldier in the last French war. A farmer, he settled on the old homestead which was deeded to him by his father in 1773. In 1769, he married Persis, daughter of David Hoyt, and the couple had eight children. John died in 1806, his widow in 1830.

His papers consist mainly of deeds to land, receipts, and other business papers. There is a letter of 1803, addressed to him and his wife from A[mos] Amsden, asking for the hand of their daughter [Mercy], who died before the marriage took place. Also wills John made in March and November 1803, and July 1806. Filed with his papers are papers of his wife. Four relate to her appointment as executrix of his estate; and include a letter of condolence from Amos Amsden; a release by her brothers, sister, and their spouses of a tract of land devised to her by their father, David Hoyt; a copy of her will; and a second copy by the Register of Wills.

**David Sheldon**<sup>29</sup>, eldest child of John<sup>20</sup> and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1770. A farmer, he lived on Lot 35. He and Abigail Clesson were married in 1811 and had a son, David, and two daughters. David senior died in 1841, his widow in 1855.

His papers include deeds to land (two from his brother John, who had moved to Mansfield, Ct.), receipts, and promissory notes, several signed by David and his son, David. With these are papers

relating to the settlement of his estate by his brother Seth, and Ralph Williams; and papers of his wife, Abigail Clesson Sheldon. The latter include a letter from her sister-in-law Mehitable Clesson (1838) and an inventory and other papers relating to the settlement of her estate.

**William Sheldon**, son of John<sup>20</sup> and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1773. In 1801, he married Sophia, daughter of Abner Cooley. William died the following year at the age of 29.

He is represented by one paper, a deed to land in Deerfield in 1802; Sophia by a receipt for her share of her husband's estate, received from her brother-in-law, John, in 1803.

**John Sheldon**<sup>30</sup>, son of John<sup>20</sup> and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1776. A saddler, he settled in Mansfield, Ct, at some time before 1806. He and his wife, the former Emily Trapp, had five children. John died in 1845.

His papers consist of a deed to the homelot in Deerfield, received from his father in 1792, and two other deeds, one for land in Deerfield from Sophia, widow of his brother William.

**Epaphras Sheldon**, son of John<sup>20</sup> and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1779. He died without issue in 1807.

His papers consist of deeds, the original and a printed reproduction of a receipt from Daniel Clay who made a Pembroke table for Epaphras in 1805, and a copy of his will, dated July 20, 1807. Filed with these is a paper appointing his mother, Persis Sheldon, as executrix of his will (1808).

**Mercy Sheldon**, a daughter of John<sup>20</sup> and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1782. She was one of three of their daughters who contracted tuberculosis. She died unmarried in July 1806.

She is represented by a letter received from Amos Amsden of Sullivan, NY, who had hoped to marry her. This letter was dated less than a month before her death.

**Seth Sheldon**<sup>31</sup>, youngest son of John<sup>20</sup>, and Persis (Hoyt) Sheldon, was born in 1787. A farmer and town selectman, Seth lived on Deerfield Lot 4. In 1810, he married Caroline, daughter of Col. Joseph Stebbins. Two of their sons and one daughter are mentioned below. Seth died in 1860; his widow in 1865.

His papers consist mainly of deeds and other documents pertaining to land in Deerfield. Also included are receipts, one for "tuition in Dancing for a young lady" (1828), a gathering of accounts (1843-45), and an undated manuscript identified by his son, George, as having been written by Seth.

**Arabella Sheldon**, daughter of Seth<sup>31</sup> and Caroline (Stebbins) Sheldon, was born in 1812. In 1843 she married Henry Wells of Shelburne, Mass.

Her papers include two school reports, a poem in her writing and signed by her in 1826, and two letters she received from L[ouisa] Stebbins and Arabella [Barnard].

**William Sheldon**<sup>37</sup> and **George Sheldon**<sup>38</sup>, sons of Seth<sup>31</sup> and Caroline (Stebbins) Sheldon, were born in 1815 and 1818, respectively.

They are represented by two papers: a deed from Seth to these two sons for land in Deerfield common field, and a release to William and George as executors of their father's estate, from their sister Arabella. [N.B. A large group of the papers of George Sheldon are shelved separately, with a guide to this material available]

**John Sheldon**,<sup>40</sup> son of George<sup>38</sup> and Susan (Stearns) Sheldon, was born in 1848. A businessman, he settled in Greenfield where he married Ellen Louisa, daughter of George A. Arms in 1871. They had two sons, one mentioned below, and one daughter. John died in 1908.

His papers consist of a mortgage deed to land in Greenfield, a memorandum he wrote in regard to the will of James Stebbins (d. 1872), and a letter relating to broom material. Filed with these are two releases, one in favor of John's son, George A. Sheldon, by Anna G. Shepardson, the other a copy by George A. Sheldon in favor of three members of the Packard family.

**Ebenezer Sheldon**<sup>10</sup>, son of John<sup>3</sup> and Hannah (Stebbins) Sheldon, was born in 1691. He married Thankful Barnard in 1714. Four of their sons are named below. Ebenezer died in 1774, and his wife in 1746.

He is represented by a note from Elijah Williams directing him to pay a sum of money to Aaron Denio (1739).

**Ebenezer Sheldon**,<sup>15</sup> a son of Ebenezer<sup>10</sup> and Thankful (Barnard) Sheldon, was born in 1717. He was sergeant in the French war, a selectman, town treasurer and winter scout. In 1740, he married Mary, daughter of Jonathan Hoyt. They had nine children.

He is represented by a receipt he signed as "Eben<sup>r</sup> Sheldon Ju<sup>r</sup>" for money received from John Burk for the Proprietors of Falltown [i.e., Bernardston, Mass.] in January 1745/46.

**Remembrance Sheldon**<sup>16</sup>, another son of Ebenezer<sup>10</sup> and Thankful (Barnard) Sheldon, was born in 1717. He was a sergeant in the French war and in charge of the fort in Bernardston, Mass., in 1758. He and his wife, the former Mehitable Burke, had eight children. Remembrance died in 1742, his widow sometime after 1790.

He is represented by a note from Caleb Sharpe of Greenfield, Mass., asking for payment of the money due him (1768).

**Henry R. Sheldon**<sup>32</sup>, son of Elisha B.<sup>22</sup> and Eunice (Hale) Sheldon and grandson of Remembrance Sheldon<sup>16</sup>, was born in 1791. He lived in Shelburne and kept a tavern and store in Charlemont. He lived later in Bernardston and Deerfield, where he died in 1860. His first wife was Polly, daughter of John Sheldon<sup>20</sup>, whom he married on her deathbed. In 1818, he married Susan Mayhew of Williamsburg, Mass.

His papers are a promissory note and a writ of attachment of the goods of those who signed the note and defaulted in 1818.

**Abner Sheldon**<sup>17</sup>, another son of Ebenezer<sup>10</sup> and Thankful (Barnard) Sheldon, was born in 1721 in Bernardston, Mass. A soldier in the French war, in 1745 he married Lucy, daughter of Thomas Bardwell.

He is represented by a deed to land in Falltown [Bernardston, Mass.], received from his father Ebenezer (1745). Pasted to the verso of this document are five receipts and other business papers directed to John Sheldon<sup>13</sup>.

**Abner Sheldon**<sup>24</sup>, youngest child of Abner<sup>17</sup> and Lucy (Bardwell) Sheldon, was born in 1752. He was brought up by his uncle, John Bardwell. Abner was a resident of Shelburne, Mass., in 1781, later of Conway, Mass. He and his wife, the former Rebecca Frary, had eleven children.

His papers consist of one letter and two writs for a debt he owed John Fellows of Shelburne. Filed with these is an undated request of Lucy Sheldon, his sister, for a pound of whalebone.

**Salmon Sheldon** and **Ora Sheldon**<sup>35</sup>, sons of Reuben Sheldon<sup>26</sup> and great grandsons of Ebenezer Sheldon<sup>10</sup>, were born about 1782 and 1786, respectively.

They are represented by one document concerned with the settlement of their brother, Reuben, in 1846.

**Elijah Sheldon**<sup>19</sup>, a son of Ebenezer<sup>10</sup> and Thankful (Barnard) Sheldon, was born in 1733. He was selectman in Bernardston, Mass., and a soldier in Capt. Burke's Rangers in 1748. He was captured at Fort William Henry in 1756. He married Anna, daughter of Aaron Denio about 1759.

An account of 1768 showing that he owed part of a bill for weaving is in the collection.

## **Container List**

### **Box 1**

Folder 1 Papers of Isaac Sheldon <sup>1</sup> 1708	(2 items)
Folder 2 Papers of Isaac Sheldon <sup>2</sup> 1712, and of his son Isaac 1764	(1 item)
Folder 3 Papers of Ebenezer sheldon <sup>7</sup> 1734, 1736 and undated	(8 items)
Folder 4 Papers of John sheldon <sup>3</sup> 1698-1726 and undated	(9 items)
Folder 5 Papers of John Sheldon <sup>9</sup> 1705-1713, and of his wife Hannah 1705	(10 items) (1 item)
Folder 6 Papers of John Sheldon <sup>13</sup> 1719/20, 1732-1792	(36 items)
Folder 7 Papers of John Sheldon <sup>20</sup> 1760-1806 and of his widow Persis 1807-1828	(34 items) (8 items)
Folder 8 Papers of David Seldon <sup>29</sup> 1800-1846 and of his wife Abigail 1838-1856	(17 items) (17 items)
Folder 9 Papers of William Sheldon 1802, and of his wife Sophia 1803	(1 item) (1 item)
Folder 10 Papers of John Sheldon <sup>30</sup> 1792-1802	(3 items)
Folder 11 Papers of Epaphras Sheldon 1804-1808, and of his sister, Mercy 1806	(6 items) (1 item)
Folder 12 Papers of Seth Sheldon <sup>31</sup> 1811-1845 and undated	(18 items)
Folder 13 Papers of Arabella Sheldon 1818-1835 and undated	(5 items)
Folder 14 Papers of William Sheldon <sup>37</sup> and George Sheldon <sup>38</sup> 1848, 1860-1861	(3 items)

Folder 15 Papers of John Sheldon <sup>40</sup> 1874, 1897, 1901, and of his son George A. Sheldon 1916-1917	(3 items) (2 items)
Folder 16 Papers of Ebenezer Sheldon <sup>10</sup> 1739, and of his son Ebenezer Sheldon <sup>15</sup> 1745/46	(1 item) (1 item)
Folder 17 Papers of Remembrance Sheldon <sup>16</sup> 1768 and of his grandson Henry R. Sheldon <sup>32</sup> 1817-1818	(1 item) (2 items)
Folder 18 Papers of Abner Sheldon <sup>17</sup> 1745 and undated, and his son Abner Sheldon <sup>24</sup> 1788-1789, and his daughter Lucy Sheldon, undated	(6 items) (3 items) (1 item)
Folder 19 Papers of Salmon Sheldon and Ora Sheldon <sup>35</sup> 1846	(1 item)
Folder 20 Papers of Elijah Sheldon <sup>19</sup> 1768	(1 item)
Folder 21 Papers of Socrates Sheldon, receipt 1839	(1 Item)

## **Box 2**

- Folder 1 Correspondence relating to the Sheldon family 1868-1896
- Folder 2 Correspondence relating to the Sheldon family 1897-1900
- Folder 3 Correspondence relating to the Sheldon family 1901-1908
- Folder 4 Correspondence relating to the Sheldon family 1909-1975
- Folder 5 Miscellany, including Sheldon family lists and notes made by Elizabeth Boyden

## **Boxes 3-7**

Hosmer Collection: genealogical material

**Box 8** Sheldon Family Association records