

Sprague Mansion's History

Located in what was once Spragueville (also known as the Cranston Village), the Federal style, Sprague Mansion, originally built in 1790, still stands as a tribute to Rhode Island's textile history. In 1808, it was from this house that the Sprague family established a mill for printing calico cloth. The Sprague Print Works was the root of what is today the Cranston Print Works, the only continuously operating textile printer in America.



The mill owner's house, the mill, the church and the mill villages are still intact as reminders of a bygone way of life around the factory.

Walk though the door to the time when the Sprague family ruled the cotton textile industry of New England. Three generations of the family lived in this Mansion and controlled the lives of thousands of mill workers, many of them hard working immigrants.



Our Famous Son of Rhode Island

William Sprague IV
Governor 1860-1863
United States Senator 1863-1875

Born at the Sprague Mansion on September 12, 1830, William Sprague IV went on to follow in his father's footsteps when he inherited the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company in 1856 with his brother, Amasa Sprague. The Sprague Company was the richest textile company in the United States at the time of the Civil War. The Sprague brothers were operating five cotton mills supplying greige goods to the Cranston Print Works for calico printing.

Later when as Governor of Rhode Island, William Sprague IV was the first governor to offer his militia to President Lincoln for the defense of Washington against the rebellious South. For his foresight he is known as the 'first volunteer of the Civil War'. He is also called "Lincoln's War Governor". Governor Sprague was tested under fire at the first Battle of Bull Run with the Rhode Island Volunteers.

He voted with Senator Henry B. Anthony for the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson against the wishes of presiding Chief Justice of the United State Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase, his father-in-law.

The Legend of the Mansion's Ghosts

Is Sprague Mansion haunted by the history of all the events that have happened within its walls? In 1843, the master of the mansion, Amasa Sprague was murdered in Johnston. A young Irish immigrant man was put to death for his murder but there is still doubt about his guilt. This rush to judgment ended capital punishment in Rhode Island in 1845. Do the souls of these two men haunt the mansion forever?

There is also the legend of the unhappy butler named Charlie who told his story through a Ouija board to college students in 1968, some hundred years after it happened. He told them the tale of his daughter who was involved with one of the sons of the wealthy people who lived in the mansion and how she was going to marry the son and make her father rich. When that wedding never took place, it broke Charlie's heart and perhaps now he wanders the mansion, wanting his story to be told.

Could the ghost be Kate Chase, the wife of Governor William Sprague IV? She visited the mansion before her engagement to William. Once the richest woman in America, after their divorce, she fell on hard times and died in poverty in 1899. Does the mirror in her vanity in the mansion which once reflected the face of the 'most beautiful woman in Washington' hold her spirit?

Most of the Sprague family could be candidates for tortured souls who still seek to inhabit the mansion since many of them had unhappy lives.

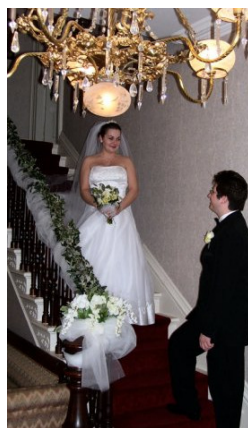
Our legendary spirits are quite shy although at times they can make themselves seen to those who believe in their existence.

Sprague Mansion as a Venue



The Sprague Mansion is available for weddings, showers, receptions of all kinds, parties and corporate functions. We offer a full kitchen for your use and for the use of caterers.

For brides, we can supply a bride's changing room.



To make the Wedding March very special, we offer use of our rare 1880 Steinway Grand Centennial Concert Piano. A gift from the Shaw Safe Family of Newport, this piano is sure to make your wedding one to remember.

Book all your special occasions at the historic Sprague Mansion and make your own history.

The Mansion is handicapped accessible to the first floor and has handicapped rest room facilities.

There is convenient ample off street parking behind the mansion.

Please call 401-944-9226

For a price list and available dates

Directions to the Governor Sprague Mansion



FROM 95N or 95S, take Exit 16 to Rte. 10 Cranston; If heading north, bear left while on the exit; if traveling south, bear right while on the exit. Proceed north approx. 1/4 miles on Rte. 10 and take the Industrial Park/Cranston Street exit; Stay on your left on the exit, take a left at the light to Cranston Street. Then take a left onto Cranston Street. At the sixth light take a sharp right staying on Cranston Street. Look for a big white house and our sign on the right. Turn right at the traffic light on Dyer Avenue and then a quick turn right at the brick carriage house into our parking lot.

FROM 295N or 295S, take Exit 4 to Rte. 14 Plainfield Pike; If heading north, bear right to the end of exit; if traveling south, bear left to the end of the exit; Go through three traffic lights; take a right onto Atwood Avenue; Continue through the first traffic light, move into left lane as you approach the second traffic light; At the second traffic light, take a left onto Randall Street; At the next traffic light, take a left onto Cranston Street; The Mansion is on the left just after the traffic light. Turn left at the light and then a quick turn right at the brick carriage house into our parking lot.

The Cranston Historical Society's

Governor Sprague Mansion

Historic Home and Museum



1351 Cranston Street
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920
401-944-9226

A visit to the Governor Sprague Mansion brings Rhode Island history to life:

**Cranston History
Textile History
Judicial History
Industrial Revolution History
American Civil War History
Early Transportation History
Sports History**

Mansion tours are \$10 for adults, \$5.00 for children under 12. Please call for an appointment.

www.cranstonhistoricalsociety.org