

Guide to the Justus Forward Papers

MS 219



compiled by Manuscripts and Archives Staff

1966

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 219

CREATOR: Forward, Justus, 1730-1814

TITLE: Justus Forward papers

DATES: 1752-1813

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist primarily of sermons preached by Justus Forward between 1754 and 1813. Also included are correspondence, largely on church matters, other church papers, a notebook kept by Forward while at Yale College (1752-1753), and nine diaries (1759-1814) mostly with brief entries. There is one description of the military developments in the French-Indian War for the month of July, 1759. Of particular interest in the correspondence is an exchange with Dr. Martin Phelps, later excommunicated from the church, on the question of communion.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0219>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0219>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Earl M. Ingham and Norman W. Ingham in 1966 and 1978. Gift of Norman W. Ingham, 1993.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Justus Forward Papers (MS 219). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Justus Forward graduated from Yale College in 1754. He studied theology with Rev. Timothy Woodbridge and was licensed to preach by the Hampshire Association of Ministers in 1755. Forward was pastor of the Congregational Church in Belchertown, Massachusetts, from 1756-1812.

Scope and Contents

The Justus Forward Papers contain correspondence, diaries, over one thousand sermons, church papers, Forward's Yale papers, one hardback book, fragments of two Congressional bills, and miscellaneous materials. The period covered is from 1752 to 1814.

Correspondence includes letters of church business, as well as debates and discussions of Reverend Forward and colleagues on religious subjects and foreign policy. Of particular interest is an exchange with Dr. Martin Phelps, later excommunicated from the church, on the question of communion.

Collection Contents

Inventory, 1752-1814

	Correspondence, arranged chronologically	1773-1812
b. 1, f. 1, item 1	Wood, David (Somers, Mass.) Letter asking Forward to assist in ordination of infamous Samuel Ely.	1773 July 30
b. 1, f. 1, item 2	Taylor, John (Belchertown, Mass.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Letter advises Forward not to move into the new church before the building has been formally presented to the town.	1790 November 23
b. 1, f. 1, item 3	Forward, Justus (Belchertown, Mass.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Reply to Mr. Taylor with reasons for his actions regarding the new church.	1790 December 7
b. 1, f. 1, item 4	Society, Congregational Charitable (Boston, Mass.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Letter (with enclosed subscription paper) notifying Forward of the formation of a government-sponsored corporation to collect, manage, and dispose of funds for the relief of widows and orphans of deceased ministers.	1803 January
b. 1, f. 1, item 5	Scott, Amasa (Shirley, Mass.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Social correspondence.	1803 February 7
b. 1, f. 1, item 6	Field, Lemuel (Belchertown, Mass.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Part of correspondence that has explored several religious problems. In this particular letter, Field argues against infant baptism.	1804 March 25
b. 1, f. 1, item 7	Scott, Amasa (Peachem, Vt.) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Social correspondence.	1804 April 30

Correspondence, arranged chronologically (continued)

Taggart, Samuel (Washington, D.C.)

Samuel Taggart (1754-1825) was a graduate of Dartmouth College who served as pastor of a church in Colrain, Mass. He was elected as a Federalist to the Eighth Congress and to six succeeding Congresses. He continued as pastor until Oct. 28, 1818. He died in Colrain April 25, 1825.

b. 1, f. 1, item 8	1808 February 9	1808 February 9
	<p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>This letter is concerned with Taggart's disenchantment with the nation's foreign policy, which he claims is influenced by powerful voices in Paris. He complains about the effects of the Embargo Act on American merchants and discusses the propriety of the British in regard to the Chesapeake incident and exaggerated charges of British impressment of American sailors.</p>	
b. 1, f. 1, item 9	1808 March 21	1808 March 21
	<p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>In this letter Taggart expresses his fears that the President is leading the nation toward a needless war with Great Britain. Taggart suspects clandestine dealings between Washington and Paris.</p>	
b. 1, f. 1, item 10	Hawley, Timothy (Morgan)	1808 November 14
	<p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>Forward's cousin here relates circumstances surrounding his life in new settlement of New Connecticut.</p>	
b. 1, f. 1, item 11	Parish, Amelia (Reading)	1812 June 17
	<p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>Letter revealing interest to live in Belchertown and to devote life in God's service.</p>	
b. 1, f. 2	<p>Correspondence between Reverend Forward and Dr. Martin Phelps</p> <p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>Martin Phelps (1757-1838) was a graduate of Yale College, Class of 1776. After serving as physician and deacon in the Congregational Church in Haverhill, New Hampshire, he went to Belchertown. In 1796 his failure to join the village church provoked notice. He was finally called on by the minister (Forward) and the deacons for his reasons. The two parties rushed into print and the letters between Phelps and Forward were published. By the desire of the Reverend Aaron Bascom, the pastor of the church in Chester, Phelps removed thither. Soon a bitter controversy developed involving the entire community and Dr. Phelps was excommunicated from the church. In 1807 he was chosen as an Anti-Federalist to represent the town in the</p>	

state legislature. He subsequently renounced infant baptism and was admitted to the nearest Baptist church in Hinsdale. He was instrumental in starting a Baptist society in Chester. He died there on Nov. 26, 1838. This particular correspondence consists of four letters from Phelps to Forward and a copy of Forward's preface and his remarks to the public. The letters are concerned with Phelps' arguments behind his refusal to join the church. The basic problem involves his interpretation of the qualities necessary for communion. Phelps claims that the church's practice is in opposition to the church's covenant. There has been no test to see if those receiving communion actually possess the essential characteristics of real Christians. Besides presenting his own arguments, Phelps refutes his opponent's reasons for church practice.

b. 1, f. 3	Journals (nine diaries) These journals contain little more than a daily account of the weather, deaths, and visits to friends. There is one description of the military developments in the French-Indian War for the month of July, 1759. In the diary for 1812 Forward mentions Bonaparte's march on Europe.	
b. 1, f. 3, item 1	No. 8 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1759
b. 1, f. 3, item 2	No. 27 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1778
b. 1, f. 3, item 3	No. 41 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1794
b. 1, f. 3, item 4	No. 42 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1795
b. 1, f. 3, item 5	No. 43 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1796
b. 1, f. 3, item 6	No. 49 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1802

Journals (nine diaries) (continued)

b. 1, f. 3, item 7	No. 52 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1805
b. 1, f. 3, item 8	No. 59 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1812
b. 1, f. 3, item 9	No. 61 English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1814

Yale papers

b. 1, f. 4, item 1	Student notebook, Yale College, 1752-1753. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Arguments for theological debate with a list of debate topics. Questions range from legality of slavery to immortality of animals.	
b. 1, f. 4, item 2	"Origin of Royal Courtship. A poem on the courtship and marriage of the patriarch Isaac. Interspersed with moral reflections. Written in 1757 by a gentle man educated at Yale Colledge." English A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	

Church material

b. 1, f. 5	Papers relating to the case of Stephen Fairfield vs. Nathan Parsons and the church council of 1774 concerning it. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. Case is a suit involving failure on the part of Parsons to abide by a verbal contract he supposedly made before witnesses.	
b. 1, f. 6	List of church members in Belchertown in 1793. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	

Church material (continued)

b. 1, f. 7	<p>Papers regarding a church council in Belchertown, 1797 Nov</p> <p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p> <p>This council was called to decide whether Forward and his church had acted criminally, causing the withdrawal from communion of a certain faction of the church. This controversy was an outgrowth of the Forward-Phelps debate.</p>	
b. 1, f. 8	<p>"An Attempt briefly to Explain the Epistle to the Romans..."</p> <p>English</p> <p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p>	
Sermons (incomplete number series, Nos. 17-2289)		
b. 4, f. 30-38	1780-1804 September	1780-1804 September
b. 1, f. 9-12	1755, 1757-1761	1755, 1757-1761
	<p>A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.</p>	
b. 2	1762-1770 May	1762-1770 May
b. 3	1770 June-1778	1770 June-1778
b. 5	1804 October-1813, undated	1804 October-1813, undated
Miscellaneous papers		
b. 6	<p>"With Regard to the Article of Falsifying Charges agt. me by Capt. Nath. Dwight..." (1758)</p> <p>English</p> <p>3 sheets. Forward's answer to charges of refusing to quarter a company of Dwight's men in his house.</p>	
b. 6	<p>"An Allegory. Faintly shewing, the analogy of Literals, and Spirituals; Temporals and Eternals; Externals; and Enternals," by Lemuel Field, 1801.</p> <p>English</p> <p>Dedicated to Rev. Justus Forward.</p>	
Two bills		
b. 6	<p>Printed copy of "Bill for Incorporating the Society for Relieving Widows and Orphans of the Ministers of the Congregational churches in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay," provincial legislature, 1767</p> <p>Inscribed, "Belchertown."</p>	

Miscellaneous papers > Two bills (continued)

b. 6	<p>Fragment of printed bills: "In provincial Congress, Cambridge, December 6, 1774"</p> <p>Calling on parishes of province to give aid to inhabitants of Boston suffering from results of Boston Port Bill. Inscribed on reverse: "For the Revd. Mr. J. Forward, Belcher Town."</p>
	<p>Miscellaneous papers, mostly sermons. Advisory hints to children. Proposal to print a volume of sermons of Justus Forward, A.M.</p>
b. 6	<p>"Dedication Anthem" -- "The Lord reigneth ..."</p> <p>English</p> <p>Text not in JF's handwriting.</p>
b. 6	<p>"Friendly Advice to youth in the following Aphorisms"</p> <p>English</p> <p>One sheet folded into four pages.</p>
b. 6	<p>Notes on political philosophy (perhaps extracts from JF's reading)</p> <p>Made on back and margin of a report of choice of electors at the Belchertown town meeting of 1812 Nov 12.</p>
b. 6	<p>Book--<i>The Religion of Nature Delineated</i>, by Mr. Wollaston, 7th ed. (London, 1750).</p> <p>Inside front cover is Forward's book-plate; on fly-leaf inscription: "Justus Forward's book, July 5th Anno Domini 1753 Price 15/6 y M)."</p>

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Clergy
Congregational churches -- Massachusetts

Geographic Names

Belchertown (Mass.) -- Religion
Massachusetts
New England
United States -- History -- French and Indian War, 1754-1763
United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783

Genres / Formats

Diaries
Sermons

Names

Forward, Justus, 1730-1814
Phelps, Martin, 1757-1838
Taggart, Samuel, 1754-1825

Corporate Bodies

Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1754
Yale University -- Students