

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Mather Family, Papers, 1613-1819

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "M"
Octavo vols. "M"
Folio vols. "M"
Oversize mss. boxes "M"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

fifteen manuscript boxes; eighty-eight octavo volumes; five folio volumes; one oversize manuscript box

CONTENTS LIST:

yes

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

See accompanying sheets for additional information.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

See accompanying sheets for additional information.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Richard Mather (1596-1669) was born in Lowton, Lancashire, England, in 1596. He attended Oxford briefly before being called as minister to the Toxteth Park Puritan congregation. He was ordained in 1620, but was suspended from preaching in 1634. He sailed for Massachusetts in 1635 and was called by the church in Dorchester, Mass., where he remained until his death in 1669.

Mather was an active preacher and writer and was a leader of Massachusetts Congregationalism. His Church Government and Church Covenant Discussed (London: R.O. and G. D. for Benjamin Allen, 1643) was the first defense of the New England theory of religion. He collaborated with the Rev. John Eliot (1604-1690) and the Rev. Thomas Welde (1595-1600/01) in adapting the Psalms for singing in a work called the Whole Booke of Psalms (Cambridge, Mass.: Stephen Day, 1640), better known as the Bay Psalm Book. Mather also authored a draft of the "Cambridge Platform", the principal doctrinal statement of New England Congregationalism, and was an advocate of the Half-Way Covenant at the Synod of 1662.

Richard Mather married Catherine Holt (-1656) in 1624 and had six sons by her, four whom became ministers. He later married Sarah Story (-1676), widow of the Rev. John Cotton (1585-1652).

Increase Mather (1639-1723), youngest son of Richard Mather, was born in Dorchester, Mass. He received his early education from the Rev. John Norton (1606-1663) and graduated from Harvard in 1656. He sailed for England and Ireland in 1657 and received his M.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1658. Mather held various religious offices in England, but returned to his father's parish in Dorchester after the Restoration. In 1664 he was chosen minister of the Second Church of Boston, and in 1685 he was elected president of Harvard, an office which he held until 1701. Mather took an interest in politics and went to England in 1688 to request the return of the Massachusetts charter. He served as an agent for Massachusetts from 1690 to 1692 and returned in 1692 with Governor William Phips (1650/51-1694/95) and a new charter granted by William and Mary. Mather suffered criticism for his support of

the governor and the charter, and consequently took a less active part in politics after 1692. He devoted himself to his ministry and his writings in the later years of this life.

Cotton Mather (1662/63-1727/28), son of Increase Mather and grandson of Richard Mather, was born in Boston in 1662/63. He received his early education at home and graduated from Harvard in 1678. He received his M.A. from Harvard in 1681, and in 1685 he was ordained at the Second Church of Boston, where he preached for the remainder of his life.

Mather, like his father, supported Governor William Phips and defended the Massachusetts charter. He was also involved with the Salem Witchcraft Trials in 1692, although he was an advocate of moderation. In 1702 Mather unsuccessfully attempted to oust Joseph Dudley (1647-1720) as governor and was passed over as president of Harvard. Despite these setbacks, he remained a leader of Massachusetts Congregationalism.

In his later years, Cotton Mather devoted himself to humanitarian causes, such as aiding the poor, building churches, and opening a school for slaves. Mather was also an early advocate of smallpox inoculation. He spent much time on his writings, completing more than four hundred fifty books on topics ranging over religion, medicine, and history. His Magnalia Christi Americana (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1702) was the most complete work on the New World to date. Mather constantly overworked himself and died in 1727/28.

Samuel Mather (1706-1785), a son of Cotton Mather, was born in Boston and attended the North Grammar School. He graduated from Harvard in 1723 and became the chaplain of Castle William in Boston Harbor. In 1731 he was chosen assistant to the Rev. Joshua Gee (1698-1748) at the Second Church of Boston and was elected pastor in 1732. He was dismissed in 1741 and formed a new church, the Tenth Congregational Society, with part of the old congregation and remained pastor there until his death in 1785.

Mather published nearly twenty books and pamphlets, but lacked the influence or prestige of preceding generations. He outlived two of his sons, and his eldest son was a loyalist during the Revolution. With his passing the Mather "dynasty" in Boston came to an end.

The Mather Family papers span the period 1613 to 1819 and document the activities of five generations of Mathers, including Richard Mather (1596-1669), Increase Mather (1639-1723), Cotton Mather (1662/63-1727/28), Samuel Mather (1706-1785), and Hannah Mather Crocker (1752-1829). The papers document to a lesser extent other Mather family members and other early New England divines. The papers include correspondence, diaries, essays, sermons and sermon notes, notebooks, and other miscellaneous items.

The papers of **Richard Mather** span the period 1633 to 1662 and include five letters and drafts of letters to Thomas Shepard (1605-1649), John Cotton (1585-1652), and three unidentified recipients. There is a box of writings with eight essays, including "An Apologie of the Churches of New England against the exceptions of Mr. Richard Bernard...", an early draft and copy of the "Cambridge Platform", "Observations and Arguments respecting the Government of Christian Churches", and others. There are additional essays filed with the bound volumes as well as an indexed volume of sermon notes, a volume of notes on verses of the Bible, and a sermon in the volume of "Specimens of the Handwriting of the N.E. Fathers." Finally, there are miscellaneous notes, manuscript fragments, and photostat copies of the title pages of Mather's printed works.

The papers of **Increase Mather** contain correspondence (including photocopies and transcripts), 1664-

1702, and undated; a box of writings with seven essays, including: "What are the evils that have provoked the Lord to bring his Judgments on New England?", "A Testimony against several profane and superstitious Customs now Practised in New England", as well as others. There are fifteen diaries, 1659-1721, with photocopies and also edited typescripts (published in the AAS Proceedings) by Mason I. Lowance and David Watters, as well as Mather's "Autobiography" with a transcript by Abijah P. Marvin. There are approximately three hundred twelve bound and unbound sermons, 1667-1719, two volumes of sermon notes, c.1670, and sermon fragments. There are undated manuscript fragments, along with copies and photostat copies of the title pages of various printed works of Increase Mather.

The papers of **Cotton Mather** include correspondence, 1690-1725?, with undated letters and fragments. There is a box of writings with nine essays, including "Seven Essays on the Mission of Jesus Christ", "Problema Theologicum. An Essay concerning...the Church upon Earth...", "Curiosa Americana. In Eight Letters to Dr. James Jurin", and others. There is also the "Angel of Bethesda" with Mather's "Proposals for printing..." the volume and a typescript of the work by Worthington C. Ford. There are nine diaries, 1688-1717, five volumes of notes from various works labeled "Quotidiana", and a notebook on Books of the Bible and references to sermons and undated sermons and sermon fragments. There are twenty-three volumes of sermon notes, 1676-1704, as well as other manuscripts, manuscript fragments, photocopies, and photostat copies of the title pages of Mather's printed works.

The papers of **Samuel Mather** include a small amount of correspondence, 1742-1761, and a box of writings with five essays, including "Scriptural Philosophy...", "The Song. The very Songs of Shelomah, or Solomon Himself...", "An Apology for the Liberty of the Churches in New England", and others. There are five volumes of notes taken from books and pamphlets labeled "Adversaria", two volumes of "Quotidiana", and an unidentified index to a volume. There are approximately five hundred twenty-seven sermons, dated 1744-1785, as well as sermon fragments and miscellaneous manuscript fragments.

The collection also includes papers of **Hannah Mather Crocker (1752-1829)**, daughter of Samuel Mather. There are three essays written by her under her nom-de-plume, "Increase Mather Jun. of the Inner Temple". These essays are entitled "Fast Sermon", "Thanksgiving Sermon", and "An Humble Address to the reason and Wisdom of the American Nation". There are other essays, a play entitled "Midnight Beau", and miscellaneous loose manuscripts.

The collection also contains catalogues of **Cotton Mather's** library and a list of books and manuscripts purchased from Mrs. Crocker by Isaiah Thomas and donated by him to the American Antiquarian Society.

There are also writings, 1630-1750, by contemporaries of the Mathers, including a letter and a rhymed poem on Alchemy by John Norton (1606-1663), two copies (with variations) of Nicholas Street's (1602/03-1674) "Errata Synodalia", Ralph Partridge's (1579-1658) "Modell of Church Discipline", Jonathan Mitchell's (1624-1668) "The Results of the Synod of 1662", John Russell's (1626-1692) "Antisynodalia", and essays by John Cotton (1585-1652), John Wilson (1588-1667), John Rayner (1600-1669), Nathanael Mather (1631-1697), Joseph Gerrish (1650-1719/20), Simon Bradstreet (1670/71-1741), and others. There is a 1737 letter from Warham Mather (1666-1745); partially identified and unidentified letters, sermons, and essays, as well as miscellaneous manuscript fragments. Finally, there are copies and photocopies of the title pages of all the Mather's printed works arranged alphabetically by title.

Filed in the Mather Family library are eleven volumes of unpublished transcriptions of shorthand sermon notes purchased for £10 by Increase Mather from the bookseller Thomas Parkhurst in London on 1 January 1692. The sermons on the Revelation of Saint John were preached by Henry Wilkinson

(1616-1690) and were recorded by Mr. Williams from whose notes many of the sermons of Jeremiah Burroughes (1599-1646) were published. These sermons were preached in the 1660s and begin with the sixth chapter. Sermons on chapters twelve and twenty-two are missing.

See Contents List.

6 February 1970
rekeyed 7 October 2008

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

MATHER FAMILY, PAPERS, 1613-1819

CONTENTS LIST

BOX	FOLDER	DATE	CONTENTS
<u>Writings of Richard Mather, 1639-1657</u>			
1	1	1639	"An Apologie of the Churches of New England against the exceptions of Mr. Richard Bernard..." (55 leaves). Portions of this work may have been published as <i>An Apologie of the Churches in New-England for Church-Covenant</i> (London, 1643)
1	2		copy of the above (50 leaves) [and a typescript]
1	3	c.1644	"Animadversions upon the Answer of Mr. Ball to the 9 positions called a Tryall of the new church way in N. England." (10 leaves)
1	4	1646	"The Result of the disputations of the Synod or Assembly at Cambridge begun September 1, 1646 about the power of the Civill Magistrate..." (incomplete, 8 leaves)
1	5	1648	"A Modell of Church Government" [an early draft of the Cambridge Platform] (51 leaves, including a one-page table of contents)
1	6	1648	"A Platforme of Church discipline...of the churches, assembled in the Synod at Cambridge in New England...1648" [known as the "Cambridge Platform" (29 leaves, including an eleven-page preface entitled "The Platform", with an index. Published as <i>A Platform of Church Discipline</i> (Cambridge: S[amuel] G[reen], 1649)
1	7		transcript of the above (123 leaves)

BOX	FOLDER	DATE	CONTENTS
1	8	1646-1650	"The Summe of Seventie Lectures upon the first chapter of the second Epistle of Peter" (partial index at beginning, incomplete (stops in lecture 61), 149 leaves)
1	9	c.1649-1652	[Richard Mather?], "Observations and Arguments respecting the Government of Christian Churches" (39 leaves)

Writings of Richard Mather, 1639-1657 (cont.)

1	10	1657	"Answer to 21 Questions from the General Court of Hartford to the General Court in Boston (15 leaves)
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Letters from [Richard Mather?]

1	11	undated c.1644	to Thomas Shepard (1 leaf) to "Dear Brother" (1 leaf)
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Notes of Richard Mather

1	12	undated 1656/57	manuscript fragments (8 leaves) "Opinion of Richard Mather and John Norton on a Question of Church Discipline" (1 leaf)
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Writings of Increase Mather, 1663-1717

2	1	1663	"An Apologetical Preface to the Reader" (8 leaves). Published in John Davenport, <i>Another Essay for Investigation of the Truth...</i> (Cambridge: Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson, 1663)
2	2	c.1665	["The Power of Civil Magistrates"?] (fragment, 4 leaves)
2	3	1675	"The Substance of Several Sermons tending to Vindicate the Truth Against...H[abbakuk] G[lover]", together with "An Answer unto the Arguments...opposing and denying the Meritorius Obedience of Christ" (26 leaves)
2	4	1679	"What are the Evils that have provoked the Lord to bring his Judgments on New England?" [Question 1; Synod of 1679] (9 leaves). Published in <i>The Necessity of Reformation...</i> (Boston: John Foster, 1679)
2	5	1679	"What is to be done that so [sic] those Evils may be Reformed?" [Question 2; Synod of 1679] (8 leaves with a photocopy). Published with above.

BOX	FOLDER	DATE	CONTENTS
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Writings of Increase Mather, 1663-1717 (cont.)

2	6	1680 Feb 26	"An Answer to Mr. Stoddard's 9 Arguments against Examinations concerning a Work of Grace before Admission to the Lord's Supper" (10 leaves). For edited version, see Everett Emerson and Mason I. Lowance, "Increase Mather's Confutation of Solomon Stoddard's Observations Respecting the Lord's Supper, 1680", <i>AAS Proceedings</i> , v. 83, Pt. I (1973), pp. 29-65.
2	7		copy of the above, transcribed by Cotton Mather
2	8	1687	"A Testimony against several profane and superstitious Customs now Practised in New England (15 leaves). Published in <i>A Testimony Against...Profane...Customs</i> (London: n.p., 1687)

Correspondence of Increase Mather

2	9	undated	to [?] (4 leaves)
		1664 Apr 5	from Eleazer Mather (2 leaves)
		1676 Dec 13	to John Cotton (2 leaves with transcript)
		1676 Mar 19	to John Cotton (typescript only, 1 leaf)
		and 1677 [?]	
		14	
		1677 Apr 21	to John Cotton (1 leaf)
		1678 Feb 18	to John Cotton (1 leaf)
		1683 Nov 21	to Thomas Gauge (2 leaves and typescript)
		1690 Oct 25	to John Cotton (2 leaves)
		1702 Sep 15	to Abraham Williams (photocopy and typescript only; original at Marlborough Public Library)
		1690/91	copy of letter of T. Beverly to Increase Mather

Sermons of Increase Mather

[see also octavo volumes 19-32]

2	10	undated and 1675	two sermon fragments (4 leaves)
		1675	three sermons (10 leaves, including 1 mutilated leaf)
		1680 Nov 28	sermon preached at North meetinghouse, Boston (12 leaves)

BOX	FOLDER	DATE	CONTENTS
		1717 Oct 9	[Increase Mather?], ordination sermon preached in Cambridge, Mass. (5 leaves)
2	11	undated	unidentified manuscript fragments (3 leaves)

Writings of Increase Mather, 1663-1717 (cont.)

2	12		edited typescript of Increase Mather's "A Discourse concerning the glorious state of the church on earth under the New Jerusalem", by Mason I. Lowance and David Watters. Published in <i>AAS Proceedings</i> , v. 87, Pt. II (1977), pp. 343-408 (see also, folio volume 4)
2	13-14		transcript of Increase Mather's "Autobiography", by Abijah P. Marvin (1881) (218 leaves; see also, folio volume 5 and oversize mss. box)
2	15		transcription of Increase Mather's "Catechism Logicus", Walter Price (AAS) and John Clark (Yale) copies

Typescripts of Increase Mather's Diaries, 1659-1717

compiled by Michael G. Hall

[see also octavo volumes 4-18 and oversize mss. box]

3	1	1659; 1663; 1664-1667	(58 leaves)
3	2	1675-1676	(69 leaves; original at MHS)
3	3	1680-1684	(117 leaves)
3	4	1688-1689	(64 leaves)
3	5	1691	(64 leaves; original at MHS)
3	6	1693	(34 leaves)
3	7	1695-1696	(45 leaves)
4	1	1696	(43 leaves)
4	2	1697	(38 leaves)
4	3	1698	(44 leaves)
4	4	1702	(25 leaves)
4	5	1704	(34 leaves)
4	6	1704	(24 leaves)
4	7	1717	(28 leaves)
4	8	undated	(22 leaves)

Correspondence of Cotton Mather

5	1	undated	unidentified letters and fragments (107 items)
5	2	1681; 1690- 1692; 1702- 1714	(44 letters)
5	3	1715-1717	(42 letters)
5	4	1718	(36 letters)

BOX	FOLDER	DATE	CONTENTS
5	5	1719	(23 letters)

Correspondence of Cotton Mather (cont.)

5	6	1720-1723	(57 letters)
5	7	1724-[1725?]	(47 letters)

For selected edited correspondence of Cotton Mather, see Kenneth Silverman, *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

Principal correspondents include William Ashurst, Anthony William Boehm, Gurdon Saltonstall, Joseph Gerrish, Jeremiah Dummer, Samuel Shute, Robert Wodrow, and Paul Dudley. The correspondence represents primarily autograph drafts by Cotton Mather of correspondence, though there are also memorials, petitions, and notes. These documents illuminate life at Harvard University, activities in the churches of the Massachusetts Bay colony, and relations with local Indians.

Writings of Cotton Mather

6	1	undated	[Cotton Mather?], "Seven Essays on the Mission of Jesus Christ) (108 leaves, starting on p. 5, with 1 loose item)
6	2	undated	[Cotton Mather?], "Important points relating to the Education at Harvard College..." (2 leaves)
6	3	undated	"Utility of Synods or Ministerial Councils" (4 leaves, with photographic copies). Also undated sermon, "The Churches of New England...taught from Reason..." (1 leaf)
6	4	1687	"Observata in the year 1687" (1 leaf)
6	5	1687	"Spicilegia Eucharista" [Gathering concerning the Eucharist] with a diary page, dated 1689 (7 leaves)
6	6	1692	"A Brand Pluck'd Out of the Burning" [an account of Mercy Short, who was supposed to have been a witch] (20 leaves).
6	7	1703 Dec 25	
6	8	1704	
6	9	1721	
6	10	1723	
6	11	[1715-1718?]	
6	12	c.1724	"Proposals for printing a Book Entitled <i>The Angel of Bethesda</i> " (1 leaf). Published in Gordon W. Jones, M.D., <i>Cotton Mather: The Angel of Bethesda...</i> (Barre, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1972), pp. 1-4 (see also, octavo volume 51 and mss. box 7).

Typescript of Cotton Mather's "The Angel of Bethesda by Worthington C. Ford
(see also, octavo volume 51 and mss box 6, folder 12)

7	1		
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AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY**MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**

MATHER FAMILY, PAPERS, 1613-1819
 FURTHER INFORMATION

Sources of Information on Collection

For an intellectual biography relating the Mather family to the background of Anglo-American Puritanism, see Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

For information on the Mather Family, see Horace E. Mather, Lineage of Rev. Richard Mather (Hartford, Conn.: Case Lockwood and Brainard Co., 1890).

For information on Richard Mather, see Barry R. Burg, Richard Mather of Dorchester (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1976).

For information on Increase Mather, see Mason I. Lowance, Jr., Increase Mather (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974); see also, Thomas James Holmes, Increase Mather: A Bibliography (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931); and Michael G. Hall and William L. Joyce, "The Half-Way Covenant of 1662: Some New Evidence," AAS Proceedings, v. 87, Pt. I (1977), pp. 97-110; and Michael G. Hall and William L. Joyce, "Three Manuscripts of Increase Mather," AAS Proceedings, v. 86, Pt. I (1976), pp. 113-23.

For information on Cotton Mather, see Thomas James Holmes, Cotton Mather: A Bibliography (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940); see also, Kenneth Silverman, Selected Letters of Cotton Mather (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Diary of Cotton Mather (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957); and Gordon W. Jones, M.D., The Angel of Bethesda (Barre, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1972).

For other manuscript authors, see Thomas James Holmes, The Minor Mathers: A List of their Works (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940).

Source of Collection

The majority of the Mather Family papers were purchased from Hannah Mather Crocker by Isaiah Thomas and donated to the Society by Thomas in 1814. Other items in the collection were the gifts of Thomas Walcut, 1834; Charles Chauncy Clark, 1835; George Mather Randle, 1934; the estate of Thaddeus Mason Harris, 1937; and Michael G. Hall, 1978.

Microfilm

Under a joint AAS/MHS project, both the Cotton Mather and the Increase Mather manuscripts held by both institutions have been microfilmed. A positive microfilm copy is available for use at the AAS. The microfilm sets can be purchased from the Massachusetts Historical Society only.

Several portions of the Mather Family papers described in this collection description and contents list have been microfilmed. Consult the microfilm file in the Manuscripts Workroom.

Publications of Material in this Collection

Mather, Cotton, "A Brand Pluck'd out of the Burning" published in George Linclon Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), pp. 259-287.

Shepard, Thomas, *Relations of Religious Experience*, Cambridge, 1648-1649 published in Mary R. McCarl, "Thomas Shepard's Record of Relations of Religious Experience, 1648-1649," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 48 (1991), pp. 432-466.