

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

---

**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Forward, Justus, Diaries, 1762-1797

**LOCATION(S):**

Octavo vols. "F"

---

**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

five octavo volumes

**CONTENTS LIST:**

yes

---

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

For a biography of Forward, see Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Yale Biographies and Annals* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1885), vol. 2, pp. 328-30. For an account of events in Belchertown, Mass., during Shays' Rebellion, see William E. Shaw, *History of Belchertown in the 18th Century* (Amherst, Mass.: Newell Press, 1968), pp. 44-50. There are several Justus Forward diaries at Yale University Library.

---

**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

The diaries for 1762, 1766, 1786, and 1797 were the gift of Emily D. Smith, 1979. The diary for 1785 was transferred from the Misc. Mss. collection, 1988.

---

**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

Justus Forward (1730-1814) was born in Suffield, Mass., and graduated from Yale in 1754. He taught at Hatfield Academy, Hatfield, Mass., until 1756 when he was ordained as minister in Belchertown, Mass. In that year Forward married Violet Dickinson (1738-1834) of Hatfield. He served as minister in Belchertown for fifty-six years, practiced medicine among his parishioners, and published various theological works.

This collection consists of five diaries of the Rev. Justus Forward for the years 1762, 1766, 1785, 1786, and 1797. The last two diaries also have a few notes dated in subsequent years. Some of the diaries contain personal cash accounts and financial memoranda, and summations of world events, frequently recorded at month's end. The latter included references to political upheavals in Russia and New Spain, battles in Europe and Canada during King George's War, and political events in England, including repeal of the Stamp Act.

The diaries contain records of Forward's preaching, visits with his parishioners and to neighboring towns, Belchertown marriages, illnesses, and deaths, and Forward's attendance at town and church meetings, and at Ministers' Association meetings and public examinations at Hatfield Academy. There are entries concerning farm chores performed on his land, business transactions, births of his children (including the degree of difficulty of each birth), and weather conditions. In 1766 Forward viewed a meteor and an eclipse. There are descriptions of various illnesses, including prolonged illness of his father, Joseph Forward (1707-1766), and details of public hearings and church meetings concerning altercations among his parishioners. One such hearing, 1762, involved Forward's troubles with Capt. Nathaniel Dwight (1712-1784) and his musings concerning his own performance; and another, 1797, related to Forward's assumption of the right to negate church votes.

Of special interest is the 1786-1787 diary of Forward. It contains details of Shays' Rebellion from the gathering of the Hampshire County Convention in Hatfield in August 1786 to the final events of January

---

---

1787. Forward recorded the divisiveness in Belchertown as a "mob" gathered to march on the courts at the same time that the militia assembled: "The steady Men however were for support of authority." Included are Forward's attempts to speak with the town's insurgents to convince them of their wrongdoing, and the temporary truce which was called on the 28th of September 1786.

See Contents List.

---

4 April 1979  
addition 13 May 1988  
rekeyed 19 September 2008

*AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY*  
**MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**

JUSTUS FORWARD, DIARIES, 1762-1797  
CONTENTS LIST

**OCTAVO** Diaries,  
**VOLUME** 1762-1797

1	1762
2	1766
3	1785
4	1786
5	1797