

Guide to the Edwards Family Papers

MS 191



compiled by Manuscripts and Archives Staff

November 1979

Yale University Library
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 191

CREATOR: Edwards family

TITLE: Edwards family papers

DATES: 1805-1874

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.25 linear feet (9 boxes, 1 half archive box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence and scrapbooks of the fourth and fifth generations of the family of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) chiefly relating to their health and welfare. Includes the correspondence of Jonathan Edwards (1789-1875), a politician from upper New York State; his brother-in-law, George Champion, a missionary to the Zulus in 1838; and his son, Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (1841-1886), who studied medicine but did not practice and who edited Yale's catalogue of Greek and Roman coins. Subjects covered in the letters include the Know Nothing movement, business risks in New York in the 1840's, religious conversions, the Civil War, temperance, and descriptions (1861-1862) of Albert Hamilton Emery's inventions for the cannon. Includes a letter from Jeremiah Clemens, Senator from Alabama, relating to Aaron Burr.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0191>

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.0191>.

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 Jonathan Edwards, 1962. Transferred from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2014.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Edwards Family Papers (MS 191). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

JONATHAN EDWARDS, SR., 1798-1875

JONATHAN EDWARDS was born in Hartford, Conn., Sept. 27, 1798, and was the eldest son of Jonathan Walter Edwards (Y. C. 1789), a distinguished lawyer of Hartford, and son of the younger President Edwards. His mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Capt. Moses Tryon, of Wethersfield, Conn.

After leaving college, he studied law with Chief-Justice Zephaniah Swift (Y. C. 1778), of Windham, Conn., was admitted to the bar in 1824, and was for a few years a practicing attorney in Hartford. In 1830 he went to the island of Cuba to reside, but the death of his father in April, 1831, changed his plans, and induced him to return to his native city. In 1835 he was appointed by the state legislature judge of probate for the district of Hartford, and held the office for one year. In 1836 he was nominated by the Whigs for secretary of state, but was defeated, with all his associates on the ticket. He removed in 1838 to Troy, N. Y., where he was subsequently mayor of the city (1854 and 1855) as well as a member of the state legislature in the same years.

He was married, March 1, 1837, to Maria Champion, of Colchester, Conn. After her death he removed in the spring of 1867 with his son to New Haven, Conn., where he spent the remainder of his life in invalid retirement. He died in this city, quite suddenly, of a congestive chill, Aug. 23, 1875, in his 77th year. His only son graduated at this college in 1863.

Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College Deceased from June, 1870, to June, 1880. p. 209

JONATHAN EDWARDS, JR., 1841-1886

*JONATHAN EDWARDS, son of Jonathan (Y.C., '19) and Maria (Champion) Edwards, was born at Troy, N. Y., October 5, 1841. He was prepared for college in the city of New Haven.

Immediately after graduation he made a tour through some of the Western States, and commenced the study of medicine in Troy, in January, 1864. Later he attended lectures in the Albany Medical College, and

from October, 1865, to March, 1867, was a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, in New York City, from which he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in the latter month.

He never practised his profession, but devoted all his time to the care of an invalid father, with whom he fixed his residence in New Haven. For several years he acted as Class secretary, and edited the first history of the Class. During his residence in New Haven he was greatly interested in the collection of coins, devoting much of his time and labor gratuitously to the care and increase of the college collection, and also having a valuable collection of his own. He prepared a catalogue of Greek and Roman coins in the numismatic collection of Yale College, which he edited and printed, largely at his own expense. He also devoted considerable time to making a collection of facts for the history of the Edwards family. He made several trips to Europe, from the last of which he returned with his constitution undermined by Roman fever, passing the rest of his life in New Haven in increasing weakness, where he died June 19, 1886.

He married, February 28, 1882, Marion Collins, daughter of Clarissa and the late David C. Collins.

A History of the Class of 1863, Yale College. New York, 1889. p.58

Scope and Contents

The Edwards Family Papers consist of letters, a diary, financial and numismatic material, genealogical notes, and miscellaneous papers of Jonathan Edwards, Sr. (1798-1875), Maria (Champion) Edwards (d.1867), Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (1841-1886), and their Edwards and Champion relations.

Jonathan Edwards (1798-1875), a prominent upper New York State politician, was defeated as a Whig candidate for Secretary of New York State but elected Mayor of Troy in 1838. In 1837 he married Maria Champion of Colchester, Connecticut, and thus acquired for a brother-in-law the Reverend George Champion, one of the first missionaries to the Zulus. The Edwards' only child, Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (1841-1886), graduated from Yale in 1863, proceeded to obtain a medical degree only to be called home to tend his declining father, a guardianship which prevented the resumption of his profession. In 1875 he removed to New Haven where he devoted much time to the College's numismatic collection. Largely at his own expense he edited and published the *Catalogue of Greek and Roman Coins*.

The bulk of the letters in this collection are exchanges between the elder Jonathan Edwards, his wife, and their son, pertaining primarily to their frets - "Today I am afflicted with a cold" - and joys - "Your chirography has certainly improved." Rather than focusing on the specifics of political life, they convey a sense of endurance in the face of hardship: death, fire, and business failure. Spotted throughout the collection are insights into community life: the Know-Nothings (1854 Nov 8, Dec 27), the risk of business in New York (1841 Feb 9, Apr 1), religious conversions (1838 Aug 24), appropriation of wartime rhetoric by temperance advocates (1861 Feb 22, May 10). Letters from the engineer, Albert Hamilton Emery (1834-1926), give carefully detailed descriptions of his new inventions for the cannon (1861 Jul 22, 1862 Jul 30); and a letter from Jeremiah Clemens (1814-1865), senator from Alabama, concerns his desire to redress Aaron Burr's unfavorable reputation resulting from his involvement in setting up another government in the Southwest. Letters from George Champion (1810-41) describe conditions in Natal in 1838, shortly after the Zulu chief Dingaan had killed the Boer leader Piet Retief and begun his effort to wipe out the rest of the Boers as well.

Collection Contents

Inventory, 1765, 1805-1983

Family correspondence		
b. 1	1805 April 4-1838 September 19	1805 April 4-1838 September 19
b. 2	1838 October 1-1843 August 28	1838 October 1-1843 August 28
b. 3	1843 October 11-1849 November 26	1843 October 11-1849 November 26
b. 4	1850 January 2-1859 February 21	1850 January 2-1859 February 21
b. 5	1859 March 4-1861 May 8	1859 March 4-1861 May 8
b. 6	1861 May 10-1863 March 30	1861 May 10-1863 March 30
b. 7	1863 April 1-1866 October 27	1863 April 1-1866 October 27
b. 8	1866 October 28-1883 July 27	1866 October 28-1883 July 27
Class of 1819 correspondence (by or about)		1859-1870
b. 8	Abbell, James	
b. 8	Bishop, Elijah	
b. 8	Booth, David	
b. 8	Buffett, William L.	
b. 8	Bulkley, Ichabod	
b. 8	Bull, Norman	
b. 8	Chapin, Edward	
b. 8	Hubbard, Samuel	
b. 8	Huntington, Asahel	
b. 8	Payson, Joshua	
b. 8	Porter, Theodore	

Class of 1819 correspondence (by or about) (continued)

b. 8	Riddell, Freeman	
b. 8	Sheldon, George	
b. 8	Spring, Samuel	
b. 8	Strong, Maltby	
	Class of 1821 correspondence	1861
b. 8	Brewer, Josiah	
	Class of 1863 correspondence (by or about)	1864-1882
b. 8	Brown, Edward F.	
b. 8	Elgin, Benjamin	
b. 8	Emerson, Thomas A.	
b. 8	Scott, Henry	
b. 8	Sheldon, Charles	
b. 8	Whitehead, Courtland	
	Financial papers	
b. 8	Receipts	1765, 1802-20, 1853-54, 1868
b. 8	Record of sales of land	[1818-33?]
b. 8	Record of auction sales	1854
	Jonathan Edwards, Sr.	1798-1875
b. 9	"Old Political Squib" regarding the censure of J. Q. Adams English	Undated
b. 9	"Epitaph for [Sidney Smith?]" English	Undated
	[Maria (Champion) Edwards, d. 1867?]	
b. 9	Notes on Books of the Bible	Undated
	Jonathan Edwards, Jr.	1841-1886
b. 9	Letterbook	1854 August 11-1860 August 23
b. 9	Diary	1857
b. 9	"Coin Journal for 1858" English	1858
b. 9	"Coin Journal for 1859" English	1859

Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (continued)

b. 9	<i>Catalogue of the Cabinet of Coins</i> English	1863
b. 9	Coin catalogue	Undated
b. 9a, f. 1	Account book, thermometrical and meterological register	1852-1864
b. 9	Genealogical material	Undated
b. 10	Diploma for the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology conferred on Jonathan Edwards (1745-1801) from Princeton University	1787 September 26
b. 10	Diploma for the degree of Doctor of Medicine awarded to Jonathan Edwards (1841-1886) from Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons	1867 March 12

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.

Emery, Albert Hamilton, 1834-1926

Subjects

Business
Coins
Families
Missionaries
Ordnance
Religion
Zulu (African people)

Geographic Names

Africa
Kwazulu-Natal (South Africa) -- History
New York (State) -- Politics and government --
1775-1865
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
United States -- Politics and government

Genres / Formats

Diaries

Occupations

Politicians

Names

Bliss, William, 1806-1886
Boardman, Derek L.
Burr, Aaron, 1756-1836
Champion, George, 1810-1841
Champion, Henry, 1751-1836
Champion, Ruth Robbine, 1782-1863
Clemens, Jeremiah, 1814-1865
Deming, Abigail Champion
Dingane, King of the Zulu, approximately
1793-1840
Edwards, Eugene, 1819-1899
Edwards, George, 1789-1896
Edwards, J. E. (John Erskine), 1809-1873
Edwards, Jonathan, 1798-1875
Edwards, Jonathan, 1841-1886
Edwards, Maria Champion, d. 1867
Edwards, Timothy, 1738-1813
Edwards, Walter, 1801-1882

Families

Edwards family

Corporate Bodies

American Party
Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1819
Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1821
Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1863
Yale University. Numismatic Collection --
Library
Yale University -- Students