

Guide to the Benjamin Trumbull Papers

MS 505



compiled by William E. Brown, Jr. and Michael Lotstein

June 1985

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 505

CREATOR: Trumbull, Benjamin, 1735-1820

TITLE: Benjamin Trumbull papers

DATES: 1629-1867

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 15.75 linear feet (29 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain correspondence, bills and receipts, sermons, church papers, writings, and miscellanea documenting the personal life, religious career, and literary work of Benjamin Trumbull. Sermons include material on a wide range of religious, historical, political, and social topics. Correspondence and other papers include material relating to Trumbull's family life, student years, religious responsibilities, and writings on Connecticut history, divorce, and land settlement.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0505>

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.0505>.

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 Walter Wetmore Holmes, 1936-1937, and subsequent purchases.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Benjamin Trumbull Papers (MS 505). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Benjamin Trumbull was born on December 19, 1735 in Hebron, Connecticut. He graduated from Yale College in 1759 and began work as pastor for the Congregational Church of North Haven, Connecticut in 1760. He served there for sixty years, interrupted only by service as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War. He wrote thousands of sermons and several historical texts, treaties, and pamphlets. He died on February 2, 1820.

Scope and Contents

The papers contain correspondence, bills and receipts, sermons, church papers, writings, and miscellanea documenting the personal life, religious career, and literary work of Benjamin Trumbull and his family. Sermons include material on a wide range of religious, historical, political, and social topics. Correspondence and other papers include material relating to Trumbull's family life, student years, religious responsibilities, and writings on Connecticut history, divorce, and land settlement. Information on the town of North Haven, Connecticut and the New England region is also included in the papers.

The Trumbull papers were willed to Yale University upon Benjamin Trumbull's death, and in 1936 Walter Wetmore Holmes made a significant addition to the papers. Other materials have been added through purchase. The papers are arranged in three series: I. Correspondence and Papers, 1629-1867; II. Sermons, 1758-1820; III. Personal Papers, 1724-1834.

SERIES I, CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS, 1629-1901, contains the correspondence of Benjamin Trumbull and other family members arranged in chronological order. The series also contains notes, student compositions and notebooks, diary entries, minutes of town meetings, church records, legal, financial, and military documents, manuscripts, wills and other papers. SERIES III, PERSONAL PAPERS, 1724-1834, also contains this type of material. Student materials include account books (folders 3 and 5) and a diary (folder 5). A small quantity of material documents Trumbull's military career (folders 22-24) and includes an account book and mileage role of a company of volunteers in 1777.

Material documenting Trumbull's religious career in North Haven, Connecticut and the work of the Congregational Church in Connecticut and Massachusetts is also organized in this series. SERIES II and III contain additional files on these subjects. Documents relating to the North Haven church include correspondence with parishioners, a diary of pastoral visits (folder 31), and a will of property to the church (folder 2). Items relating to the town of North Haven include summonses, licenses, warrants, deeds, indentures, bills, receipts, and other papers. Minutes of a 1771 town meeting (folder 17) and legal documents of Justus Bishop, Trumbull's son-in-law and a justice of the peace, are found in box three.

Additional papers in this series include a diary of Nathan Porter, 1806-1841 (folder 45), political correspondence of Chauncey Fitch Cleveland, 1835-1837 (folder 56), accounts and papers of Samuel Gray (folders 27-28; 66), an account book and memoranda of Denison Olmsted (folder 68), items relating to Daniel Pierpont's patent for a butter churn (folder 46), and statistics relating to the population of North Haven (folders 61, 67).

SERIES II, SERMONS, 1758-1820, contains a chronological arrangement of Trumbull's sermons. Isolated sermons are missing from the numbered run of material, and additional sermons are organized in SERIES III, box 28. Trumbull's copies of sermons by other ministers and notes on their sermons are arranged in SERIES III, box 26.

SERIES III, PERSONAL PAPERS, 1724-1834, contains a variety of financial documents, church-related materials, writings, and other items similar to material found in SERIES I. Trumbull's notes on sermons he attended at Yale College chapel meetings (folders 158-163, 165), papers relating to his ministry in North Haven, drafts of religious and historical writings, and other papers are arranged in this series. Files arranged under the heading "Church papers" include materials documenting the activities of many area churches (folder 129), complaints lodged against local ministers (folder 130-134), Trumbull's interest in liquor licenses (folder 136), and his historical research. Other files contain papers relating to North Haven communicants (folder 144), minutes of the General Association of the State of Connecticut (folder 145), and printed material for various church organizations.

Confessions of church members, which record public statements of sorrow for such sins as neglect of public worship, use of strong liquor, bearing false witness, and fornication (folders 149-155) provide an interesting glimpse of Trumbull's parishioners.

Benjamin Trumbull's historical writing on Connecticut and the United States is documented through drafts of his writings, research notes, and financial records relating to publication. Manuscript versions of his work on divorce (1785), the history of Connecticut (1796-1797), and land titles in Connecticut (1774) are arranged in this series.

Accession 2011-M-077 contains one manuscript by Trumbull which chronicles the Indian Wars in Connecticut written in 1767.

Additional Trumbull Papers are housed at the Beinecke Rare Book Library.

Arrangement

Arranged in three series and one accession: I. Correspondence and Papers, 1629-1867. II. Sermons, 1758-1820. III. Personal Papers, 1724-1834.

Collection Contents

Series I: CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS, 1629-1901

This series is arranged in two sections: General, and Bills and receipts. General is arranged in chronological order. Bills and receipts is arranged in alphabetical order.

General

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|
| b. 1, f. 1-21 | 1629-1774 General, 1629-1774 | 1629-1774 |
| b. 2, f. 22-40 | 1775-1800 | 1775-1800 |
| b. 3, f. 41-57 | 1801-1867 | 1801-1867 |
| b. 4, f. 58-63 | n. d. | n. d. |

Bills and receipts

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| b. 5, f. 64 | B-F |
| b. 5, f. 65 | Bishop, David |
| b. 5, f. 66 | G-M |
| b. 5, f. 67 | North Haven, Connecticut |
| b. 5, f. 68 | P-W, miscellanea |
| b. 5, f. 69-70 | Trumbull, Benjamin |

Series II: SERMONS, 1758-1820

This series is arranged in chronological order.

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| b. 6 | 1758 - 1762 April | 1758 - 1762 April |
| b. 7 | 1762 April - 1764 February | 1762 April - 1764 February |
| b. 8 | 1764 March - 1766 July | 1764 March - 1766 July |
| b. 9 | 1766 August - 1769 March | 1766 August - 1769 March |
| b. 10 | 1769 March - 1771 December | 1769 March - 1771 December |
| b. 11 | 1772 January - 1775 December | 1772 January - 1775 December |
| b. 12 | 1776 January - 1780 June | 1776 January - 1780 June |
| b. 13 | 1780 July - 1783 October See also: box 14 | 1780 July - 1783 October |
| b. 14, f. 71-77 | 1780 September - 1784 December | 1780 September - 1784 December |
| b. 15, f. 78-85 | 1785 January - 1787 December | 1785 January - 1787 December |
| b. 16, f. 86-91 | 1788 January - 1792 December | 1788 January - 1792 December |
| b. 17, f. 92-97 | 1793 January - 1798 December | 1793 January - 1798 December |
| b. 18, f. 100-106 | 1801 - 1807 | 1801 - 1807 |
| b. 19, f. 107-114 | 1808 - 1815 | 1808 - 1815 |
| b. 20, f. 115-121 | 1816 - 1819 July | 1816 - 1819 July |
| b. 21, f. 122-125 | 1819 August - 1820 Jan, undated See also: box 28, folders 185-187 (p. 11) | 1819 August - 1820 Jan, undated |

Series III: PERSONAL PAPERS, 1724-1834

This series is arranged in alphabetical order.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| b. 22, f. 126 | Account book | 1761-1820 |
| | Church papers | |
| b. 23, f. 127 | Accounts and financial papers | 1774-1813 |
| b. 23, f. 128 | Addresses | 1767-1814, undated |
| b. 23, f. 129 | Cities | 1729-1796 |
| b. 23, f. 129 | Connecticut: Branford-Watertown | |
| b. 23, f. 129 | Massachusetts: Hardwick-Westfield | |
| b. 23, f. 130-132 | Complaints: A-S, and correspondence | 1767-1791 |
| | Confessions See: box 24, folders 149-155 (p.8) | |
| | Congregational Church in Connecticut: | |
| b. 23, f. 133 | Associations | 1767-1817, undated |
| b. 23, f. 134 | Councils | 1768-1791 |
| b. 23, f. 135 | "Doctrine of Faith and Covenant" by Isaac Stiles, annotated by Ezra Stiles English | 1724, 1746 |
| b. 23, f. 136 | Liquor licenses | 1814-1820 |
| b. 23, f. 137 | "A List of the First Ministers in the Colonies of Connecticut and New Haven," 1629-1641 English | undated |
| b. 23, f. 138 | Meeting house: specifications, etc. | 1822, 1834, undated |
| b. 23, f. 139 | Minutes | 1760-1833, undated |
| b. 23, f. 140 | Miscellanea | 1776-1821 |
| b. 23, f. 141 | Missionary Society | 1798-1799 |
| b. 23, f. 142 | Mutual Improvement Society | 1779-1787, 1818 |
| b. 23, f. 143 | Ordination of Leverett Griggs | 1833 |
| b. 23, f. 144 | Parish records | 1762-1766 |
| b. 23, f. 145 | Prayer meetings | 1787-1795 |
| b. 23, f. 146 | Printed material | 1776-1832 |

Church papers (continued)

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| b. 23, f. 147 | Recommendations for church membership | 1764-1813 |
| b. 23, f. 148 | Requests for prayers | undated |
| b. 24, f. 149-155 | Confessions | 1743-1807 |
| b. 25, f. 156-157 | Musical notebook: photostats | Circa1760 |
| Sermons | | |
| b. 26, f. 158-159 | General: chronological notes on sermons by Peter Buel, Thomas Clap ["President"], Naphtali Daggett, Elizur Goodrich, [John?] Graham, Elijah Lathrop, Eneas Munson, John Noyes, [STP?], Benjamin Pomeroy, Benjamin Tallmadge, Josiah Whitney | 1754-1759 |
| b. 26, f. 160 | Beach, Nathaniel | undated |
| b. 26, f. 161 | Daggett, Naphtali | 1755-1759 |
| b. 26, f. 162 | Lathrop, Elijah | 1754-1757 |
| b. 26, f. 163 | Pomeroy, Benjamin | 1754-1760 |
| b. 26, f. 164 | Price, [Richard?] | 1789 |
| b. 26, f. 165 | Wheelock, Eleazar | 1759 |
| b. 26, f. 166 | Unidentified | 1727 |
| Writings | | |
| b. 26, f. 167-170 | General | 1759-1814 |
| b. 26, f. 171 | "A Confession of Faith" English | undated |
| b. 26, f. 172-173 | Essays: "Honesty is the Best Policy," miscellaneous | 1758-1759, undated |
| b. 26, f. 174 | Funeral orations | 1761-1793, undated |
| b. 26, f. 175 | Lecture | 1770 |
| Manuscripts | | |
| b. 27, f. 176 | An Appeal to the Public, ... With Respect to the Unlawfulness of Divorces, ..., 1785 | 1785 |
| <u>A Complete History of Connecticut, ...</u> | | |
| b. 27, f. 177 | Notes | undated |
| b. 27, f. 178 | Original manuscript | Circa1797 |
| b. 27, f. 179 | Proposals | 1796 |
| b. 27, f. 180 | Plea in Vindication of the Connecticut Title to the Contested Lands..., | 1774 |
| b. 27, f. 181 | New England History, miscellaneous | undated |

Writings (continued)

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| b. 28, f. 182 | Notes and fragments | undated |
| b. 28, f. 183 | Notes on reading | undated |
| b. 28, f. 184 | Religious questions | undated |
| b. 28, f. 185-187 | Sermons | 1772-1810, undated |

Accession 2011-M-077: Additional Material, 1767

- | | | |
|------|--|------|
| b. 1 | <p>Benjamin Trumbull manuscript, "A Compendium of the Indian Wars in New England, more particularly such as the Colony of Connecticut have been concerned and active in. - New Haven, August 25th. Anno 1767." <i>1 Film Reel (16mm)</i></p> <p>Title on Manuscript: "A Compendium of the Indian Wars in New England, more particularlly such as the Colony of Connecticut have been concerned and active in. - New Haven, August 25th. Anno 1767."</p> | 1767 |
|------|--|------|
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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
Clergy -- Connecticut
Congregational churches -- Clergy -- Biography
Divorce
Families
Historians
Solar eclipses

Corporate Bodies

Congregational Church (North Haven, Conn.)
Yale University -- Students

Geographic Names

Connecticut -- History -- Colonial period, ca.
1600-1775
Connecticut -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783
Connecticut -- Religion -- 18th century
New Haven (Conn.) -- History
North Haven (Conn.) -- History
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca.
1600-1775
United States -- History -- Revolution,
1775-1783

Genres / Formats

Sermons

Names

Beach, Nathaniel
Bishop, Hannah Trumbull
Clap, Thomas, 1703-1767
Daggett, Naphtali, 1727-1780
Eastman, Mary Trumbull
Lathrop, Elijah, 1724-1797
Morse, Jedidiah, 1761-1826
Pomeroy, Benjamin, 1704-1784
Stiles, Isaac, 1783-1808
Trumbull, Benjamin, 1735-1820
Tuttle, Sarah Trumbull
Wheelock, Eleazar, 1711-1779
Woodward, Martha Trumbull

Families

Trumbull family