

# Guide to the Zachariah Brigden Papers

GEN MSS 86



by Bruce P. Stark

February 1988

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 86

**CREATOR:** Brigden, Zachariah, 1734-1787

**TITLE:** Zachariah Brigden papers

**DATES:** 1691-1798

**BULK DATES:** 1748-1787

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.75 linear feet (2 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers contain bills and receipts, daybooks, estate papers, invoices, and other materials documenting the life of a Boston silversmith.

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

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.brigden>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was purchased by the Yale University Art Gallery in 1985 with funds from The Barre Foundation, William Core Duffy, Benjamin A. Hewitt, and the Josephine Setze Fund for the John Marshall Phillips Collection, and was transferred to The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library in December 1987.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Zachariah Brigden Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Zachariah Brigden Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## BRIGDEN FAMILY

Michael Brigden (1697-1767) m. Elizabeth

Timothy Brigden (1726-1796)

Zachariah Brigden (1734-1787) m. 1756 Sarah Edwards (1725-1768) m. 1774 Elizabeth Gillem

John Gillem Brigden (1775-1779)

Elizabeth Cuming Brigden (1777-1777)

Winifred Brigden m. Lemuel Davis EDWARDS FAMILY

John Edwards (1691-1746)

Thomas Edwards (1701-1755) m. Sarah Burr

Sarah Edwards (1725-1768) m. 1756 Zachariah Brigden (1784-1787)

Anne Edwards m. Baker

May Edwards m. Ebenezer Storer

Samuel Edwards (1705-1762) m. Sarah Smith

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## Scope and Contents

The Zachariah Brigden Papers document the life of an eighteenth-century Boston silversmith and the lives of other members of the Brigden and Edwards families. They will be of interest both to those studying early American silversmiths and to those attempting to reconstruct silver ownership in the Boston area. The papers span the dates 1691-1798, but the bulk of the material covers the period 1748-87.

The Brigden Papers are divided into two sections: *Zachariah Brigden* (folders 1-41) and *Brigden and Edwards Families* (folders 42-56). The first section is alphabetically arranged by subject, while in the second the order is alphabetical by individual. Within each file the papers are chronologically arranged.

Materials on the career of Zachariah Brigden (1734-87), contained in eleven folders, include three daybooks. The first (folder 27) holds 1691-93 accounts in an unknown late seventeenth-century hand and a series of designs for silver objects such as a "French Fork," "the Indian Minister's Cup," "Tea Tongs," a "tooth Picker," and a "Chape for a Sword." The third daybook (folder 29) contains extensive records of the silver work Brigden did for a number of individuals from Boston, eastern Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, including John Alen (tailor), Daniel Boyer, William Cario, the Reverend Samuel Cooper (1725-83), Moses

Gill, Thomas Jackson (distiller), Christopher Lair, John Leverett, Dr. James Lloyd (1728-1810), the Reverend Jonathan Mayhew (1720-66), Zacheus Morton (baker), James Otis, Adino Padock, Josiah Quincy (1744-75), the Reverend Chandler Robbins (1738-99), Isaac Royall, Colonel Nathaniel Sparhawk, and Ebenezer Storer (1750-1807). Invoices for Daniel Boyer, Joseph Callender, Benjamin Phillips, and for general silversmith work contain additional information. The silversmith work material (folders 37-38) includes invoices for Major Edward Carns, Nathaniel Gorham (1738-96), Benjamin Hall, Samuel Holbrook (1729-84), the schoolmaster, and Daniel Jones. Additional material can be found in folders 19, 20, and 41. Folder 41 holds "An Acco[un]t of the Value of Silver pr ounce from the Year 1700-1750." It shows that in 1700 silver cost seven shillings an ounce, while fifty years later the price had increased to fifty-six shillings.

The rest of the Zachariah Brigden papers document the economic circumstances of a Boston artisan and his family in the era of the American Revolution. The collection holds, for example, twenty-five folders of bills and receipts, some organized by subject (clothing, liquor, wood) and others by individual. The Nathaniel Sparhawk bills (folder 21) show that Brigden sometimes acted as agent for the Kittery, Maine, councilor, while several bills for purchases of shoes for Samuel Hirst Sparhawk and Andrew Sparhawk (folder 22) suggest that he may have been a shoemaker as well as a silversmith. A December 1, 1766 bill from the editors of *The Boston Gazette*, Edes & Gill (folder 5), requests payment from Brigden for advertising to sell a horse and "sundries." The miscellaneous bills and receipts (folder 12) include bills for rental of a barn, the labor of a black man belonging to Peter Combes, and the purchase of tools. The estate papers include an inventory taken on April 2, 1787, and tax bills covering the years 1777-86 from the "town" of Boston, the county, and the commonwealth.

The *Brigden and Edwards Families* section contains a small number of papers concerning several members of those families. The collection holds the estate papers of John Edwards, the grandfather of Zachariah Brigden's first wife Sarah; miscellaneous papers of her uncle Samuel Edwards; bills and receipts of her mother Sarah Burr Edwards; and a bill of lading, court papers, estate papers, and financial papers of Thomas Edwards, her father. Thomas Edwards was himself a silversmith, and invoices in folder 55 provide some information on his work. Also included are bills for the final sickness of Elizabeth Brigden and funeral expenses for Elizabeth and John Brigden, children of Zachariah's second marriage.

## Collection Contents

### Zachariah Brigden

Bills and receipts		
b. 1, f. 1-3	Bread	1756-84, n.d.
b. 1, f. 4	Cloth and clothing	1768-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 5	Edes & Gill	1766
b. 1, f. 6	Groceries	1768-81, n.d.
b. 1, f. 7-8	Home repairs	1766-85
b. 1, f. 9	Lair, Christopher and Sophia	1763-84
b. 1, f. 10	Liquor	1781-85
b. 1, f. 11	Milk	1766-71
b. 1, f. 12	Miscellaneous	1764-83, n.d.
Newspapers		
b. 1, f. 13	<i>Boston Magazine</i>	1786
b. 1, f. 14	<i>Centinel</i>	1785-87
b. 1, f. 15	<i>Continental Journal</i>	1785-86
b. 1, f. 16	<i>Independent Ledger</i>	1781
b. 1, f. 16	Miscellaneous	1786
b. 1, f. 17	Painting	1765-71
b. 1, f. 18	Shoes	1765-72
b. 1, f. 19	Silversmith work	1766-83
b. 1, f. 20	Sparhawk, John	1783-86
b. 1, f. 21	Sparhawk, Nathaniel	1764-72
b. 1, f. 22	Sparhawk, Samuel Hirst and Andrew	1766-68, n.d.
b. 1, f. 23	Wig and hair	1759-69
b. 1, f. 24-25	Wood	1765-87
b. 1, f. 26	Correspondence	1773, 1783, n.d.
b. 1, f. 27-29	<a href="#">Daybooks</a>	1691-1789
b. 1, f. 30-31	Estate papers	1785-92
Invoices		

## Invoices (continued)

b. 1, f. 32	Boyer, Daniel	1770-77
b. 1, f. 33	Callender, Joseph	1785, 1787
b. 1, f. 34	Cheever, William D.	1769-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 35	Kneeland, Nathaniel	1772-75
b. 1, f. 36	Phillips, Benjamin	1757-74
b. 1, f. 37-38	<a href="#">Silversmith work</a>	1751-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 39	Storer, Ebenezer	1770-75
b. 1, f. 40	Promissory notes	1770-91
b. 1, f. 41	Silver prices, 1700-50	n.d.
b. 2, f. 42-43	Tax bills	1777-86

**Brigden and Edwards Families, 1798**

b. 2, f. 44	Brigden, Catherine: receipt	1798
b. 2, f. 45	Brigden, Elizabeth Cuming and John Gillem: deaths	1777, 1779
b. 2, f. 46	Brigden, Michael: estate papers	1768-83, n.d.
b. 2, f. 47	Davis, Winifred Brigden: papers	1772-86, n.d.
b. 2, f. 48	Edwards, John: estate papers	1746-53
b. 2, f. 49	Edwards, Samuel: papers	1730-62
b. 2, f. 50	Edwards, Sarah Burr: bills and receipts	1755-56, n.d.
	Edwards, Thomas	
b. 2, f. 51	Bill of lading	1744
b. 2, f. 52	Bills and receipts	1729-49, n.d.
b. 2, f. 53	Court papers	1750, 1755
b. 2, f. 54	Estate papers	1756, 1771, n.d.
b. 2, f. 55	Invoices	1729-52
b. 2, f. 56	Promissory notes	1750, 1754



## **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**

Artisans -- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Silversmiths -- Massachusetts -- Boston

### **Geographic Names**

Boston (Mass.) -- Economic conditions  
Boston (Mass.) -- Social life and customs  
Massachusetts -- Economic conditions

### **Genres / Formats**

Bills (financial)

### **Occupations**

Daybooks  
Receipts

### **Names**

Brigden, Zachariah, 1734-1787  
Edwards, Thomas, 1701-1755

### **Families**

Brigden family