

Guide to the Peter Starr Papers

MS 955



compiled by Sharon Bishop Laist and Randall C. Jimerson

July 1979

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	6
Collection Contents	7
Series I: PETER STARR SERMONS, 1769-1829	7
Series II: SYLVANUS OSBORN SERMONS, 1758-1770	9
Series III: JOHN KEEP SERMONS, 1770-1783	10
Series IV: JOHN STEVENS SERMONS, 1780-1799	11
Series V: MISCELLANEOUS SERMONS , undated	12
Selected Search Terms	13

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 955

CREATOR: Starr, Peter, 1744-1829

TITLE: Peter Starr papers

DATES: 1758-1829

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 8 linear feet (21 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Sermons of Peter Starr, together with the sermons of his predecessor in Kent (now Warren), Connecticut, Sylvanus Osborn, and of two relatives by marriage, John Keep and John Stevens. Three-fourths of the papers are by Peter Starr. During the Revolutionary War Starr shifted his loyalty, and the sermons provide biblical justification on both sides. John Keep was a chaplain during the war and a number of his camp sermons are in the collection.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0955>

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.0955>.

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

Transferred to Manuscripts and Archives from the Yale Divinity School Library in 1952 and 1979.

The Peter Starr Papers were transferred to Manuscripts and Archives from the Yale Divinity School Library in 1952. Additional sermons of Peter Starr were transferred to the papers from the Sermons, Addresses and Discourses Collection of the Archives and Manuscripts division of the Divinity Library in 1979.

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

Peter Starr Papers (MS 955). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

PETER STARR (1744-1829)

Peter Starr was born in September, 1744, the youngest child of Samuel and Abigail (Dibble) Starr, of Danbury, Connecticut, and grandson of Captain Josiah and Rebekah Starr, also of Danbury. His father died soon after his birth, and his mother married Joseph Waller of New Milford (now Brookfield), Connecticut, in 1748.

In 1764, Peter Starr graduated from Yale. He taught school for three and a half years and studied theology with the Reverend Daniel Brinsmade (Yale 1745) of the Judea Society (Washington, Connecticut), and the Reverend Joseph Bellamy (Yale 1735) of Bethlehem, Connecticut.

Starr was licensed to preach by the Fairfield East Association of Ministers in 1769 and went to the East Greenwich Society in Kent (now the town of Warren), where Sylvanus Osborn was the minister. Osborn died in May, 1771, and Peter Starr was installed as pastor on May 18, 1772. He remained in this position for 57 years. In May, 1825, he was joined by the Reverend Hart Talcott, whose installation sermon is in the papers.

Peter Starr married Sarah Robbins, fourth daughter of the Reverend Philemon Robbins of Branford, on December 24, 1772. They had seven sons and two daughters. Sarah Robbins Starr died on July 7, 1809. Peter Starr then married Phebe Stevens, widow of the Reverend John Stevens (Yale 1779) of New Marlboro, Massachusetts. Phebe Stevens Starr died in 1832.

Peter Starr died at his home in Warren on July 17, 1829, at 85 years of age, the oldest Congregational clergyman in the state.

SYLVANUS OSBORN (ca. 1733-1771)

Sylvanus Osborn was pastor of the Church of the East Greenwich Society in Kent (now Warren), Connecticut, where Peter Starr began his ministerial duties in 1769. Reverend Osborn graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1754.

He married Abigail Noble, second daughter of Stephen and Sarah (Ferris) Noble of Kent. He died in 1771, and Peter Starr was installed as pastor in September of 1771.

Reverend Osborn's widow married Jeremiah Day, Sr., on October 7, 1772. She died in 1810.

JOHN KEEP (1749-1784)

John Keep was born on March 10, 1749, the younger son of Samuel and Sarah (Colton) Keep of Longmeadow, Massachusetts. His mother was the daughter of William and Hannah (Terry) Bement of Enfield, Massachusetts. John Keep's father died in 1761, and his mother married John Hale of Longmeadow in 1762.

John Keep studied theology with his pastor, Reverend Dr. Stephen Williams (Harvard College, 1713), graduated from Yale in 1769, and was licensed to preach by the Hampden Association of Ministers in January, 1771.

On March 4, 1772, John Keep was called to the Congregational Church in Sheffield (Berkshire County), Massachusetts, where he was ordained on June 10, 1772. He married Hannah Rebekah Robbins, the fifth daughter of Reverend Philemon Robbins of Branford, Connecticut, on March 2, 1775. He remained at Sheffield until his death on September 3, 1784. During the Revolutionary War, he was a chaplain to Captain Jonathan Smith's regiment, and there are a number of his camp sermons in this collection. John Keep was noted for his pulpit oratory.

John and Hannah Keep had no children. Reverend John Keep (Yale 1802) was a nephew. After John Keep's death, his widow married the Honorable Jahleel Woodbridge (Princeton College, 1761), of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who died in August, 1796. Hannah Keep Woodbridge died on February 9, 1799, at the home of her sister Sarah, the wife of Reverend Peter Starr.

JOHN STEVENS (1750-1792)

John Stevens was born in Danbury, Connecticut, in 1750. He graduated from Yale in 1779 and was licensed to preach by the Litchfield South Association of Ministers in 1780. He was called to the Congregational Church of the New Concord Society in Chatham (Columbia County), New York, and was ordained on May 13, 1781.

Stevens married Phebe Warner, eldest child of Lemuel and Sarah (Gaylord) Warner of New Milford, Connecticut, in 1781. He was dismissed from Chatham in 1793 and began to organize a new mission in New Marlborough, South Parish, where he was officially installed on October 22, 1794. Here he remained until his death on January 6, 1799.

His widow Phebe married Peter Starr on October 24, 1810.

Bibliography: Biographical information obtained from Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Yale Biographies and Annals*

Scope and Contents

Series I, PETER STARR SERMONS, contains sermons written by Peter Starr between 1769 and 1829. The sermons are arranged chronologically except where no date was discernable. The undated items are arranged by biblical texts, either Old or New Testament. Undated funeral sermons and fragments of sermons are grouped together. There are a few items that are not sermons: a journal dated 1771, notes taken for preparing sermons, and minutes of church meetings. The sermons prior to and during the Revolution reveal Starr's shift of loyalty, with biblical justifications for each side of the conflict at different times.

Series II, SYLVANUS OSBORN SERMONS, is arranged chronologically, from 1758 to 1770, with undated sermons at the end.

Series III, JOHN KEEP SERMONS, contains sermons written between 1770 and 1783. They are arranged chronologically with undated items at the end.

Series IV, JOHN STEVENS SERMONS, contains sermons written between 1780 and 1793. They are arranged chronologically according to numerical notation on the documents, with undated items at the end.

Series V, MISCELLANEOUS SERMONS, contains undated and unidentified sermons. These sermons may have been written by individuals included in the other series or by other ministers whom Peter Starr knew. Positive identification has not been possible.

Note: For additional papers concerning the family of Peter Starr, see the Starr Family Papers in the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection. These are primarily papers of the children of Peter Starr and members of other families related by marriage.

The Robbins Family Papers also contain sermons and other papers of the family of Peter Starr's first wife. The Joseph Bellamy Papers, MS. Group No. 609, contain correspondence, sermons, and other papers of Peter Starr's teacher, Joseph Bellamy.

Arrangement

Arranged in five series: I. Peter Starr Sermons. II. Sylvanus Osborn Sermons. III. John Keep Sermons. IV. John Stevens Sermons. V. Miscellaneous Sermons.

Collection Contents

Series I: PETER STARR SERMONS, 1769-1829

6 linear feet (15 boxes)

The sermons are arranged chronologically. Undated sermons are organized by biblical text, if known, with funeral sermons, fragments, and notes at the end. One journal and one set of church meeting minutes have been placed at the end of the series.

b. 1, f. 1-12	1769-1774 June	1769-1774 June
b. 2, f. 13-24	1774 July - 1778 April	1774 July - 1778 April
b. 3, f. 25-35	1778 May-1781	1778 May-1781
b. 4, f. 36-46	1782 -1785 September	1782 -1785 September
b. 5, f. 47-53	1785 October - 1788 March	1785 October - 1788 March
b. 6, f. 54-60	1788 April - 1789	1788 April - 1789
b. 7, f. 61-67	1790-1791	1790-1791
b. 8, f. 68-79	1792 - 1794 September	1792 - 1794 September
b. 9, f. 80-92	1794 October -1798 April	1794 October -1798 April
b. 10, f. 93-104	1798 May -1802 March	1798 May -1802 March
b. 11, f. 105-116	1802 April -1806 March	1802 April -1806 March
b. 12, f. 117-129	1806 April - 1808 Jul, 1808 September-1809	1806 April - 1808 Jul, 1808 September-1809
b. 13, f. 130-142	1810 -1815	1810 -1815
b. 14, f. 143-150	1816-1829, undated	1816-1829, undated
b. 14, f. 151	Sermons based on Old Testament texts	undated
b. 14, f. 152-153	Sermons based on New Testament texts	undated
b. 14, f. 154	Funeral sermons	undated
b. 14, f. 155-156	Fragments of sermons	undated
b. 15, f. 157-160	Fragments of sermons	undated

b. 15, f. 161	Notes for sermons	undated
b. 15, f. 162	Journal	1770 June
b. 15, f. 163	Minutes of church meeting	1774 August 31

Series II: SYLVANUS OSBORN SERMONS, 1758-1770

0.25 linear feet (1 box)

The sermons are arranged chronologically.

b. 16, f. 1-7

1758 - 1770, undated

1758 - 1770,
undated

Series III: JOHN KEEP SERMONS, 1770-1783

.75 linear feet (2 boxes)

This Series is arranged chronologically.

b. 17, f. 1-11	1770 - 1779	1770 - 1779
b. 18, f. 12-19	1780-1783, undated	1780-1783, undated

Series IV: JOHN STEVENS SERMONS, 1780-1799*1 linear foot (2 boxes)*

This series is arranged chronologically, according to the numerical order of the sermons.

	1780 - 1788	1780 - 1788
b. 19, f. 1	#193 - #249 English	
b. 19, f. 2	#250 - #298 English	
b. 19, f. 3	#307 - #332 English	
b. 19, f. 4	#333 - #359 English	
b. 19, f. 5	#360 - #397 English	
b. 19, f. 6	#403 - #432 English	
b. 19, f. 7	#437 - #498 English	
b. 19, f. 8	1788 - 1789, #500 - #543	
b. 19, f. 9	1789, #547 - #598	
b. 19, f. 10	1790, #602 - #643	
b. 19, f. 11	1791, #644 - #669	
b. 19, f. 12	1791 Aug - Sep, #671 - #680	
b. 20, f. 13	1792 Jan - May, #685 - #699	
b. 20, f. 14	1792 Jun - Dec, #704 - #721	
b. 20, f. 15	1793, #722 - #751	
b. 20, f. 16	1793, #752 - #778	
b. 20, f. 17	1793, #779 - #785	
b. 20, f. 18-21	n.d. (1780 - 1793), New Concord Society	
b. 20, f. 22	n.d. (1793 - 1799), New Marlborough, South	
b. 20, f. 23	undated	undated

Series V: MISCELLANEOUS SERMONS , undated

0.25 linear feet (1 box)

These sermons are all unidentified and undated.

b. 21, f. 1-4

Sermons

undated

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.

Geographic Names

Connecticut
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca.
1600-1775
United States -- History -- Revolution,
1775-1783

Genres / Formats

Sermons

Subjects

Clergy

Names

Keep, John, 1749-1784
Osborn, Sylvanus, 1733-1771
Starr, Peter, 1744-1829
Stevens, John, 1750-1799