

# Guide to the Joseph Washburn Family Papers

MS 1053



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

July 1983

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1053

**CREATOR:** Washburn, Joseph, 1766-1805

**TITLE:** Joseph Washburn family papers

**DATES:** 1783-1829

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.25 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Chiefly the sermons of Joseph Washburn, together with a collection of the sayings of others, written down from memory. Also included are a sheet of maxims written out to display fine penmanship and a Yale College song book (1790). Five letters from his son, Elizur T. Washburn to various members of the family were written during 1829 to describe his trip from New York to London.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1053>

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## 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.1053>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](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

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Henry B. Keffer, 1939, and Carroll A. Means, 1940.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

Joseph Washburn Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Joseph Washburn, the son of Joseph and Ruth Washburn, of Middletown, Connecticut, was born in Middletown on May 13, 1766, and baptized five days later. His mother was the youngest daughter of Daniel and Dorothy (Hale) Wetmore, of Middletown.

He did not enter College until May of the Freshman year, when he was 24 years old. His preparation was conducted by his pastor, the Rev. Enoch Huntington (Yale 1759). He had already taught school in the vicinity. He was admitted to the College Church on profession of faith at the close of the Junior year. At graduation he was the oldest member of the Class.

He then studied for the ministry with Mr. Huntington, and was licensed to preach by the Hartford South Association of Ministers in June, 1794.

Four months later he began to supply the vacant church in Farmington, Connecticut, and gave such satisfaction that on May 7, 1795, he was ordained and installed as pastor.

He loved his work and was successful in it, great additions being made to the church during his ministry. But his course was suddenly arrested by pulmonary consumption, brought on, as was supposed, by his incessant labors.

In October, 1805, he left home with his wife to spend the winter in a southern climate. While on their passage by water from Norfolk, Virginia, to Charleston, South Carolina, they encountered very tempestuous weather, which probably hastened his dissolution. He died serenely and peacefully on the morning of December 25, in his 40th year, and was buried at sea.

He published in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, vol. I, 1901, pp. 378-86, 420-31:

Letters on the Revival of Religion in Farmington; republished in the Rev. Dr. Bennet Tyler's *New England Revivals*, 1846, pp. 160-78.

After his death a volume was published for the benefit of his destitute family, with the following title:

Sermons on practical subjects.-- To which is added, a Sermon of the Rev. Asahel Hooker, delivered in Farmington, on the occasion of Mr. Washburn's death. Hartford, 1807. 12°, pp. 376. *Andover Theol. Sem. Harv. Y. C.*

Twenty-three of the author's sermons are included; and at the end is a very interesting list of subscribers, in which one suggestive feature is that over four hundred and fifty copies were taken in the city of

Charleston, where large public sympathy had been aroused on account of Mrs. Washburn's afflicted condition. In Connecticut over nine hundred copies were taken.

He married, on August 18, 1795, Sarah, youngest daughter of Deacon Timothy and Jemima (Johnson) Boardman, of Middletown, by whom he had two daughters and two sons. One daughter married the Rev. Dr. Horatio N. Brinsmade (Yale 1822).

Mrs. Washburn next married, on August 23, 1812, Deacon Elijah Porter, of Farmington, who died in 1845; and she died in New York City on July 2, 1847, in her 78th year, at the home of her only surviving son by her first marriage.

(*Biographical Sketches of Yale College*, by F.B. Dexter, pp. 92-93).

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## Scope and Contents

This collection contains papers of Joseph Washburn (1766-1805) and his son, Elizur Timothy Washburn (1805-1831). The papers of Joseph Washburn consist of a page of maxims done in ink and color with manuscript decorations, and intended to show proficiency in penmanship; a booklet, "Social Hilarity and Musical Entertainment," of songs, odes, and favorite Yale College pieces of music; a volume of "Sermonical observations taken from various preachers and written from memory," begun at the Leicester Academy and continued at Yale; and eleven small notebooks of sermons and one containing a register of sermon outlines.

Five letters written to his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Porter of Farmington, Connecticut, and one to his brother Horace Washburn make up the papers of Elizur Washburn. The letters are a record of his journey from New York to England, undertaken in 1829 for the sake of his health, and document his impressions of Liverpool and London.

The items in this collection were received as three separate acquisitions. The page of maxims and the song book were purchased in 1939, while the other papers of Joseph Washburn were donated in that year by Harry B. Keffer. The letters of Elizur Washburn were donated in 1940 by Carroll A. Means.

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## Collection Contents

Joseph Washburn		
b. 1, f. 1	Maxims	1783
b. 1, f. 2	<a href="#">Yale College song book</a>	1790
b. 1, f. 3	"Sermonical observations taken from various preachers and written from memory" English	1793
b. 1, f. 4	Sermons and sermon outlines	1796-1803
Elizur Timothy Washburn		
b. 1, f. 5	Letters	1829

## **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  
Families

### **Geographic Names**

Europe  
Great Britain

### **Genres / Formats**

Sermons

### **Names**

Washburn, Elizur Timothy, 1805-1831  
Washburn, Joseph, 1766-1805

### **Families**

Washburn family

### **Corporate Bodies**

Yale University -- Songs and music  
Yale University -- Students