

## **Rev. Joseph Richardson Papers, 1787-1871**

**Repository:** Hingham Public Library

**Manuscript Number:** MSC # 17

**Creator:** Rev. Joseph Richardson

**Quantity:** 1 half document box

**Processed By:** Stephanie McBain

**Related Materials:** The Bicentennial Collection contains town records that relate to the Richardson family.

### **Provenance**

These papers were created by Joseph Richardson while living in Hingham during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were donated to the library by Joseph Richardson in 1976 and 1980 as part of the Bicentennial Collection.

### **Biographical Note**

Joseph Richardson was born in Billerica, Massachusetts on February 1, 1778 to Joseph Richardson and Patty Chapman. Joseph graduated from Dartmouth College in 1802 and studied with the Reverend Henry Cumming in Billerica before being ordained pastor of the First Parish in Hingham in 1806. In 1807 he married Ann Bowers of Billerica. They did not have any children. In addition to being pastor of First Parish, Joseph was a member of the Massachusetts Convention to Revise the Constitution in 1820-21 and the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1821-23. He was elected Senator in 1823, 1824, and 1826 and to Congress in 1826 and 1828. He resided on Main Street opposite Winter Street in Hingham, and died on September 25, 1871 at 94 years old. Joseph continued as pastor of First Parish until his death, although the church added an associate pastor during his old age.

After the departure of Rev. Ware there was a backlash against his supporters. A new group of individuals rising to power sought to have Rev. Joseph Richardson installed as the Parish minister. Richardson was born in 1778 and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1802. Ware and old guard supporters had been Federalists, while these newly influential families tended to be Jeffersonians. Thus a political and religious battle ensued over whether Richardson, a Jeffersonian, would become the new minister. Many different negative claims were made against Richardson's character were, but ultimately he was chosen to be the new minister. He was installed in July of 1806 and those families who opposed his appointment left the Parish in order to establish the New North Church.

This schism would continue for many years, with Richardson being isolated from other ministers in the area. Still, he was a very active minister who was passionate about his beliefs. In many cases he beliefs fell into the area of politics. He was a confirmed abolitionist and made his beliefs known to local, regional, and national politicians many times. He was a member of the Convention to revise the State Constitution in 1820 and also served two terms as State Representatives. He also widened his sphere of influence by twice winning a seat in the United States House of Representatives in the 1820s. Throughout the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Richardson was successful in performing his duties as minister and politician. He gave rousing and heartfelt sermons at the pulpit and was held in high esteem by his parishioners. In 1855 he stopped active ministering due to his ailing health, but remained affiliated with the Parish until his death in 1871.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection contains correspondence, sermons, biographical materials, and other records created by or relating to Joseph Richardson in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Sermons are mainly by Richardson during his time as pastor of First Parish in Hingham, although there are also sermons by other First Parish pastors predating Richardson. Records mainly relate to Richardson's position as pastor and include his result of minister, confession of faith, and a hymn, as well as notes on his publications and elected offices. Also included is a copy of Richardson's publication *The American Reader*.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into the following five series:

- Series I. Joseph Richardson Biographical Materials, ca. 1871
- Series II. Joseph Richardson Correspondence, 1806-1861
- Series III. Joseph Richardson Records, 1806-1871
- Series IV. Richardson's *American Reader*, 1823
- Series V. Sermons, 1787-1867
  - Subseries 1, Joseph Richardson Sermons, 1810-1867
  - Subseries 2, Miscellaneous Sermons, 1787-1822

#### **Series I. Biographical Materials, ca. 1871**

Box 1, folder 1

This series contains materials that provide biographical information on Joseph Richardson, including a four-page sketch of his life, several pages of answers to interview questions relating to his life, and his 1871 obituary.

#### **Series II. Personal Records, 1806-1861**

Box 1, folder 2

This series contains various letters sent and received by Joseph Richardson between the years 1806 and 1861. The most frequent correspondent is Solomon Lincoln, but also included are letters to Benjamin Lincoln, Elizabeth Thaxter, and the President of the Hingham Agricultural and Horticultural Society.

#### **Series III. Professional Records, 1806-1871**

Box 1, folder 3

This series is comprised of records created during Joseph Richardson's time as pastor of the First Parish in Hingham. Included are a copy of the 1806 result of minister concerning Richardson and signed by Edmund Thaxter; Richardson's 1806 confession of faith; an 1815 list of articles on which Richardson's salary would be estimated; copies of a hymn and a song written for the 50th

anniversary of Richardson's installment at First Parish, ca. 1856; miscellaneous notes dated 1869; a telegraph sent to Solomon Lincoln announcing Richardson's death on September 25, 1871; a list of marriages of the Tuthill family; a list of Richardson's publications; and a list of Richardson's elections to offices from 1800 to 1831.

#### **Series IV. Richardson's *American Reader*, 1823**

Box 1, folder 4

This series includes a copy of the book by Joseph Richardson published in Boston in 1823 titled *The American Reader: A selection of lessons for reading and speaking, wholly from American authors*.

#### **Series V. Sermons and Orations, 1787-1867**

##### **Subseries 1, Joseph Richardson Sermons and Orations, 1810-1867**

Box 1, folders 5-6

This subseries contains a variety of sermons given by Joseph Richardson during his time as pastor of the First Parish. Folder 5 includes the 1810 "Discourse Addressed to the First Parish in Hingham on the Day of Fasting," the 1812 "Oration Pronounced July 4, 1812, Before the Citizens of the County of Plymouth on the Anniversary of American Independence," the 1813 "Discourse Delivered Before the First Parish in Hingham on Fast Day," the 1818 "Complaint Against the Clergy of the Bay Association, Plymouth County, Massachusetts," the 1821 "Address Delivered at the Consecration and Installation of Mount Zion Royal Arch Chapter, in Stoughton, Massachusetts," and the 1824 "Two Sermons Delivered to the First Parish in Hingham."

Folder 6 includes several copies of the "Oration Delivered in the South Parish in Weymouth, July 4, 1828, Being the Fifty-Second Anniversary of American Independence," the "Sermon on Conversion, Delivered to the First Parish in Hingham, Lord's Day, July 20, 1828," the 1863 "Sermon on the Eighty-Sixth Birthday" of Richardson, and a handwritten copy of an 1867 sermon.

##### **Subseries 2, Miscellaneous Sermons, 1787-1822**

Box 1, folder 7

This subseries contains sermons given by other pastors, including the 1787 "Sermon on the Interment of Reverend Ebenezer Gay" by Daniel Shute, the 1787 "Sermon Preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Henry Ware" by Timothy Hilliard, "Mr. Ware's Thanksgiving Sermon" from 1795, the 1804 "Sermon Delivered at Scituate by Henry Ware," two copies of the 1805 "Sermon Delivered at Hingham by Henry Ware," and "The Old Man's Calendar: A Discourse on the Birthday of the Author" given by Ebenezer Gay in 1822.