

Joshua Wilder Family Library Collection, 1775-1839

Repository: Hingham Public Library

Creator: Joshua Wilder Family

Quantity: 12 books

Processed By: Stephanie McBain

Access: Open for research.

Provenance

This collection was compiled by Joshua Wilder and his family and was donated to the Hingham Public Library in 1993 by Judith F. Mathews.

Biographical Note

The first Wilders to settle in Hingham were Martha Higgs Wilder, the widow of Thomas Wilder (1584-1634), and her children. Martha was born ca. 1590 in Shiplake, Oxfordshire, England. In the mid-1630s, she sent her children Thomas (1618-1667), Edward (1623-1690), and Elizabeth (1621-1690) to Massachusetts with family friends. She followed in 1638 with her daughter Mary (1625-1719). Martha settled her family in Hingham, where land was granted to both her and Edward. Martha died in Hingham on April 20, 1652. Thomas married Anna Eames and settled in Lancaster, Elizabeth married Deacon Thomas Ensign of Scituate, and Mary married Joseph Underwood of Watertown.

The Wilder line in Hingham is descended from Martha's son Edward. In 1651 he married Elizabeth Eames (1624-1692), who was born in Dorsetshire, England but whose family had settled in Marshfield. Edward and Elizabeth had eleven children: four sons and seven daughters. Edward was a farmer as well as being town Selectman in 1667, and was one of sixteen Hingham men impressed to fight in King Philip's War in the 1670s. He resided on Main Street and died intestate on October 18, 1690.

Joshua Wilder was born in Hingham on December 12, 1786, one of 21 children born to Edward (1751-1817) and Mary Hersey Wilder (1758-1842). His father Edward was a great-grandson of original Hingham settler Edward. In 1812 Joshua married Judith Shearman (1792-1853) of Sandwich. They had seven children, five of whom survived to adulthood. After Judith died Joshua married Angelina Josselyn (b. 1786) in 1854. Joshua was a clock and watchmaker who was known for his grandfather clocks and dwarf shelf clocks. One of his apprentices was his son Ezra (1819-1886). He and his family were Quakers. He resided on Main Street in South Hingham and died on October 3, 1860.

Joshua Wilder, Jr. was born in Hingham on December 19, 1813 to Joshua and Judith Shearman Wilder. He worked as a gardener and was the keeper of Minots Ledge Lighthouse from 1860 to 1861; he was the first keeper of the new lighthouse, which opened in 1860 after the original building was destroyed in a storm a decade prior. Joshua left Minots to enlist in the Civil War in November 1861, serving as a private. He was discharged for disability after a year of service. He died in Hyde Park in 1900.

Judith S. Wilder was born in Hingham on November 16, 1824 to Joshua and Judith Shearman Wilder. She died from cancer in Newton on April 7, 1853. No more information is available.

Frederick Wilder was born in Hingham on August 22, 1846 to Joshua's son Ezra (1819-1886) and Rebecca Tower Wilder (1822-1880). In 1874 he married Lucretia Hayward (1852-1880) of West Bridgewater. They had one child, a daughter named Ella (1874-1950). Frederick died in Brockton on February 19, 1894.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains 12 books, mainly from the personal collection of Joshua Wilder but also from the collections of his son Joshua, his daughter Judith, and his grandson Frederick. The books are largely on religious topics, in particular the Quaker faith and morality. The collection also includes three gazettes and a book of poetry by Felicia Hemans.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I. Joshua Wilder Family Library, 1775-1839

Series I. Joshua Wilder Family Library, 1775-1839

This series contains 12 books from the personal library of Joshua Wilder and his family, including his son Joshua, his daughter Judith, and his grandson Frederick. The books are mainly on educational topics relating to religion and the Quaker faith, morality, and manners, but the collection also includes gazettes of the world and France and a book of the poetry of Felicia Hemans. Most of the books have their owner's names handwritten in the front, and the book belonging to Judith contains notes, scribbles, and drawings in fading pencil.

Also included with the collection is a letter to Hingham Public Library Director Walter Dziura from Judith F. Mathews, donating the books and providing some background information.

Books belonging to Joshua:

- *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity: Being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People Called Quakers* (1775) by Robert Barclay
- *A Gazetteer of France*, vols. 2 & 3 (1793)
- *A Treatise on the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (1802) by James Abbadie, translated from French by Abraham Booth
- *The Duties of Religion and Morality* (1808) by Henry Tuke
- *A Catechism and Confession of Faith* (1813) by Robert Barclay
- *Piety Promoted in Brief Memorials and Dying Expressions of Some of the Society of Friends, Commonly Called Quakers* (1813) by Joseph Gurney Bevans
- *A Geographical Dictionary, or Universal Gazetteer* (1817)

Book belonging to Joshua Jr.:

- *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Hemans*, vol. 1 (1839)

Book belonging to Judith:

- *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Christian Worship* (1832), contains sketches, scribbles, and notes in fading pencil

Book belonging to Frederick (a gift his grandfather Joshua, the previous owner):

- *Guide to Men and Manners, Consisting of Lord Chesterfield's Advice to His Sons* (1821)