

## **Jonathan Edwards Collection at Andover Newton**

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During my first summer of employment I was introduced to the Jonathan Edwards Papers by Dr. George Claghorn, editor of *Letters and Personal Writings*, published by Yale University Press. The Papers had just returned to Andover Newton from Yale where they had been on loan from 1957 to 1974. During the next 22 years every summer Dr. Claghorn and I had many conversations about the collection, both in the Library and over fish and chips at Pleasure Bay in South Boston, MA. I pored over the manuscripts with many visiting scholars, assisting them in deciphering Edwards' handwriting. A magnifying glass became a trusted friend.

I have always had a cordial working relationship with Yale staff related to the Edwards collection, most recently with Dr. Kenneth Minkema, director of the Jonathan Edwards Center. I wrote letters in support of NEH grant applications and was pleased when just 3 years ago Andover Newton sent our collection to Yale for inclusion in the digital project.

The Andover manuscripts have traveled from Connecticut to Andover; to Cambridge where they remained from 1908-1930 while Andover Theological Seminary was affiliated with Harvard Divinity School; to Newton Centre in 1931 when the Seminary affiliated with Newton Theological Institution; and now back to New Haven to join the Edwards collection in Beinecke Library at Yale University.

The Jonathan Edwards Papers at Andover Newton have always been referred to as the Andover Collection, a gift of the estate of Andover Professor Egbert C. Smyth whose wife Elizabeth Bradford Dwight Smyth was the great great granddaughter of Jonathan. The manuscripts had been gathered by Sereno Edwards Dwight, son of President Timothy Dwight of Yale, with the intent of publishing a life of Edwards to incorporate into a definitive edition of Edwards' works. Sereno died before completing the project and bequeathed the papers to his brother William who in turn bequeathed them to his daughter Elizabeth.

Unlike today, in previous decades scholars were permitted to take manuscripts out of libraries to consult them elsewhere. Harvard University staff discovered some manuscripts from the Andover Collection while processing the papers of historian Perry Miller who must have borrowed them while working on an intellectual biography of Edwards. Harvard returned those manuscripts in 1980 to join the remainder of the collection in Newton Centre.

Sometime around 1870 the Yale manuscripts were made available to Andover Professor Edwards Park for a projected published life of Jonathan. The Andover manuscripts were received by Elizabeth Smyth in 1865, so it seems evident that for a period of several decades all of the literary remains of Jonathan Edwards were housed on opposite ends of the Seminary campus. In the Andover Collection there is a letterbook of Aaron Burr. In preparation for the move I was

surprised to discover two additional Burr manuscripts in the papers of Edwards Park who must have borrowed them from the Seminary Library in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There are many stories linking Andover Newton and Yale as custodians of the Edwards legacy material. At a time when difficult decisions had to be made regarding the School's future, I am happy that the Andover Collection of Jonathan Edwards and all Andover Newton archives and manuscript collections have been sent to Yale where they will be cared for and identified in Yale finding aids and access points as part of the collection of Andover Newton.

Sources used: Ellis E. O'Neal, Jr., "The Jonathan Edwards Papers at Andover Newton" (Faculty Forum presentation, 1975); Richard D. Pierce, "A suppressed Edwards manuscript on the trinity," *The Crane Review* 1 (Winter 1959).