

## THE PAPERS OF THE JOHNSON FAMILY OF CONNECTICUT

BY MAX FARRAND.

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The Johnson family, the disposition of whose papers is to be described, is one of which the people of the United States and of New England in particular have reason to be proud. It is a family distinguished for the services its members have rendered to the community in which they may happen to have settled, to their colony and state, whichever that might be, and to their nation. It is a family whose tradition has been that of public service.

Robert Johnson with his wife and four sons first appeared in New Haven in 1641. The branch of the family with which we are concerned identified itself first with Guilford where Robert's son William and his son Samuel were leading men of the town and of the Congregational Church.

In the next generation Samuel Johnson, a graduate of Yale in 1714 and later a tutor in that institution, was ordained in the Congregational Church in 1720. There were evidently doubts in his own mind, however, for two years later he announced his conviction of the superior claims of the Episcopal ordination, and the following year, after studying in England, he was ordained in the Anglican Church. Upon his return to this country he was the first Episcopal clergyman in Connecticut, and as such he was a man of consideration and of power in New England. He built the first Episcopal church in the colony at Stratford, in which town he settled and which has remained the place with which this branch of the Johnson family has been most closely associated.

With his Church interests and connections it was inevitable that Samuel Johnson should be associated with men and affairs in New York, and with his ability it was natural that he should be concerned with the project of the establishment of a college under the auspices of the Church and that he should be the first president of King's College in New York City. This position he retained from 1754 to 1763.

His son, William Samuel Johnson, was rightly regarded as one of the most learned men of his time in this country. A lawyer of ability and reputation he became a member of the colonial legislature, he was a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress, and a special agent of Connecticut in London in 1766-1771. He could not bring himself to take an active part against England and after the Declaration of Independence he withdrew from public life. This did not, however, cost him the respect of his fellow countrymen, for at the close of the Revolution he represented Connecticut in Congress, he was one of the delegates from Connecticut to the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, and he was elected the first United States senator from Connecticut. At the time of the Federal Convention in Philadelphia he was elected president of the college over which his father had presided, and he resigned his United States senatorship that he might devote his time to the presidency of Columbia, which he did until his retirement in 1800.

It is not the province of this paper to present a detailed genealogical record of the Johnson family, or even of its more distinguished members. Suffice it to say, that while the two men whom we have considered may have been the most prominent, other members of the family have rendered services as unselfish and as efficient, though perhaps less conspicuous, in every learned profession as well as in business, and they have been highly respected and honored members of their communities. Enough has been given to identify the family for present purposes.

The history of such a family is a part of the history of our nation, and the family papers are a part of our country's records. It seems well, therefore, that a statement should be made for the benefit of students or other persons interested as to where these papers can be found, and no more fitting medium of communication exists than in the Proceedings of this local and yet national organization, the American Antiquarian Society.

At one time or another by various means some of the papers had found their way into several depositories, but the bulk of the family papers remained until a few years ago at the Johnson homestead in Stratford, Connecticut, where Mrs. Susan E. Johnson Hudson, a great, great granddaughter of Samuel Johnson, has resided.

Some two or three years ago an opportunity was given to the writer to examine these papers and, because of his interest and professional connection, his opinion was requested as to the best disposition to be made of them. One naturally thinks that a collection of family papers should be kept together in one place, but there were serious if not insuperable obstacles in the present instance. As already stated some of the papers had already been scattered, and the claims from different sources upon the guardians of the family papers were conflicting and confusing.

It seeming impossible to deposit the papers in any one place without creating more dissatisfaction than could be compensated for by the gain of a single collection of such as remained, it was determined to recommend a division of the papers upon lines which had been indicated by those papers which had already passed out of the family control. Such papers as were of great national importance should be deposited in the Library of Congress; such as related to Columbia and the early history of the Episcopal Church in this country should be deposited in the library of Columbia University; while the bulk of the family papers, inasmuch as they related particularly to Connecticut, should be deposited in that State, and the natural place of deposit would be the Connec-

ticut Historical Society at Hartford. This disposition was approved by the guardians of the papers, and in accordance with their instructions, the papers were so distributed.

Personal letters later than 1865 were returned to the family.

#### THE JOHNSON PAPERS.

Attention should be called to the fact that some of the Johnson Papers have already been printed in T. B. Chandler, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1805, and in E. Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Correspondence of Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1874, and in the same author's *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1876.

There were also printed in *Documents relating to the Colonial History of New York*, vols. vi and vii, over twenty letters, mostly taken from the Lambeth Place Manuscripts, of correspondence between Reverend Samuel Johnson and the Archbishop of Canterbury (1753-1763).

Forty-three letters from William Samuel Johnson, agent for Connecticut in London, 1761-1771, addressed to Governors Pitkin and Trumbull, are in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society and were printed in that Society's *Collections*, 5th series, vol. ix, pp. 211-490, Boston, 1885.

The rest of the papers are at present distributed as follows:

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Thirteen papers relating to the Stamp Act Congress of 1765 and to the controversy between Great Britain and the colonies, one of which is a draft of a petition to the king in the writing of John Rutledge, and quite different from either of the petitions adopted.

Two manuscripts of July 23 and July 26, 1787, relating to proceedings in Congress on a sale of lands in Ohio.

Three documents relating to the Federal Convention of 1787.

Printed draft of the Virginia Plan, with annotations in the handwriting of William Samuel Johnson.

Printed draft of August 6, with all the changes made in the convention through September 3, in the handwriting of the secretary of the convention, William Jackson.

Printed draft of September 12, 1787, being the report of the Committee on Style, with annotations in the handwriting of William Samuel Johnson, chairman.

A few miscellaneous letters, including letters to and from William Samuel Johnson, of minor importance, some letters of Millard Fillmore, and quite a number of broadsides and manuscripts relating to the later Continental Congress and to the first Congress of the United States.

## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Manuscript works by Samuel Johnson, | 37  |
| Letters from him (1713-1767),       | 328 |
| Letters to him (1715-1773),         | 138 |

Among the letters to President Johnson are several from Myles Cooper, the second president of King's College, Benjamin Franklin, and others.

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| Manuscript sermons and prayers, | 109 |
|---------------------------------|-----|

Manuscripts relating to King's College and Columbia, 16

There are some 50 letters from and to William Samuel Johnson, (1747-1813) relating to Columbia, together with various manuscripts and pamphlets relating to the early history of King's College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

## CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

*Papers presented in 1840:*

Vol. I. Letters written by William Samuel Johnson, 1767 to 1770, with a few as late as 1793. They number 115.

Among them are letters to Eliphalet Dyer, Thomas Fitch, Samuel Gray, Matthew Griswold, Jabez Huntington, Jared Ingersoll, Jeremiah Miller, William Pitkin, Jonathan Trumbull, Nathan Whiting, William Williams.

Vol. 2. Letters written to William Samuel Johnson, 1760 to 1790. They number 136.

Among them are letters from Dyer, Fitch, Griswold, Pitkin, Trumbull, Whiting and Williams (above); also from Joseph Chew, Silas Deane, Timothy Dwight, Benjamin Gale, Samuel Huntington, Jesse Root, Roger Sherman, Jeremiah Wadsworth.

Vol. 3. Papers and letters relating to the Mohegan Indians and the controversy over their lands, originals and copies, some of them of considerable length. Some of the copies are of documents dated as early as 1658. The original letters are from 1742 to 1773. They number 98.

Among them are letters written by Dyer, Fitch, J. Huntington, Pitkin, Trumbull, Williams (above); also by Richard Jackson and by William Samuel Johnson. Not all of the letters are written to Johnson.

Vol. 4. Letters, with a few documents, relating to the controversy over the Susquehannah Lands, 1754 to 1787. They number 45.

Among them are letters written by Dyer, Griswold, S. Huntington, Trumbull, Sherman (above); also by Ethan Allen, Joseph Trumbull, and by William Samuel Johnson. Not all of the letters are written to Johnson.

*Papers recently presented:*

Journals Nov. 1766 to Oct. 1771.

Journal brought from England (of little interest).

Letter books 1746-1748, 1754-1762, about 70 letters.

Letter books 1764-1765, 1771-1774, 268 sm. f° pp.

Letter Books 1751-1754, 1762-1764, 324 8° pp.

Copies of 16 letters 1784-1792.

Memorandum books 1759-1760, 1762-1765, 1785-1787.

Accounts with State of Conn., 1784-1787.

Catalogue of books read 1753-1764.

Marriage contract 1800; and agreement with Samuel William Johnson and Robert C. Johnson because of said contract 1803.

Col. Dimon's proceedings on occasion of accusation of treason against W. S. J. 1799.

Memoranda for his life, communicated by him.

Superior Court diary, 1772-1774.

Volume of County Court dockets 1764-1766, 1771-1772.

Volume of County and Superior Court dockets, 1775-1786.

Law briefs, 1749-1758.

Documents, papers, opinions, etc., in various court cases, two packages.

Deeds, personal accounts, book debts due him, etc.

Papers in settlement of his estate.

Letters written by him about 1762 to 1795 to various persons, numbering 241.

Among these are letters to Rev. Abraham Beach, Jeremy Belknap, Dr. Burton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Chandler, Col. Chester, Joseph Chew, Cadwallader Colden, Rev. Myles Cooper, Tench Coxe, Rev. Daggett, Lord Dartmouth, James Duane, Timothy Dwight, Eliphalet Dyer, Benjamin Gale, Jared Ingersol, Richard Jackson, Jeremiah Learning, George Livius, Lord Bishop of London, Jeremiah Miller, James Otis, Bishop of Oxford, John Pownall, Gov. William Pitkin, Lawrence Reade, Richard Saltonstall, Roger Sherman, Gov. William Shirley, Ebenezer Silliman, Robert Temple, Agur Tomlinson, Jonathan Trumbull, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Col. Nathan Whiting, Edward Winslow.

Letters written by him to other members of the family. To  
 Samuel William Johnson, 1785-1828, 79  
 Susan Johnson, 1799-1853, 85

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Ann Johnson, 1766-1790,       | 35 |
| Robert C. Johnson, 1786-1795, | 20 |
| Miscellaneous,                | 15 |

Letters written to him about 1750 to 1795 by various persons, numbering 168.

Among them are letters from William Bayard, Jeremy Belknap, D. Burton, George Chapman, T. B. Chandler, Joseph Chew, Tench Coxe, Admiral G. Darby, James Duane, Pierpont Edwards, Benjamin Gale, Jared Ingersol, Richard Jackson, Cave Jones, Jeremiah Learning, John Ledyard, Bishop of London, Godfrey Malbone, Josiah Meigs, Stephen M. Mitchell, James Otis, Bishop of Oxford, Thomas Palmer, Samuel H. Parsons, Samuel Peters, Timothy Pickering, Thomas Pownall, Lawrence Reade, Nathaniel Rogers, Comfort Sage, Roger Sherman, William Smith, Benjamin Stiles, Jonathan Sturgis, Robert Temple, Agur Tomlinson, Jonathan Trumbull, Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., Jeremiah Wadsworth, Chauncey Whittlesey, George Wyllys.

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| Letters written to him by other members of the family. By Samuel William Johnson, 1785-1802, | 37 |
| Miscellaneous,   | 15 |

SAMUEL WILLIAM JOHNSON.

Letters written by him to Gov. Hamilton of Bermuda, and to Ann F. Edwards, Elizabeth, Nancy, Robert C., Susan Johnson, and others, 42

Journal of a journey from Stratford to Fayetteville, N. C., and return, 1799-1800.

Paper on war with France.

Small receipt and account book, 1790-1803.

His admission to the Bar, 1783.

Letters written to him, numbering 40.

Among these are letters from Gov. William Browne, Gov. Hamilton of Bermuda, Samuel Peters, John Cotton Smith.

(See William Samuel Johnson papers for letters written to him by Samuel William Johnson.)

Susan Johnson.

Letters written by her. 178

Among these are 87 written to Mrs. Faith Trumbull, and 56 to Samuel William Johnson, with others to Ann, Edwards and Sarah Johnson.

Journal of a journey from Stratford to Fayetteville, N. C., and other places, 1801-1802.

Letters written to her.

Among these are 18 written by Mrs. Faith Wadsworth.

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| Ann F. Johnson.  |     |
| Letters written by her,  | 108 |
| Among these are 70 written to Susan Johnson and<br>19 to Samuel William Johnson. |     |
| Religious Journals, 1814-1839.   |     |
| Letters written to her,  | 8   |
| Other members of family,   | 24  |

## MOHEGAN CASE.

Deeds, leases, and other papers, both originals and copies, including several original documents signed by the Indians; briefs, notes, and memoranda on the case; letters, arguments, memoranda of evidence given, reports, petitions, etc.—some of the documents in William Samuel Johnson's handwriting—dating about 1658 to 1770. About 170.

Manuscript [probably printer's "copy"] of Governor and Company of Connecticut and Mohegan Indians. Certified copy of Book of Proceedings before Commissioners of Review, 1743. [This was printed at London, 1769].

"A Plan of the east Part of the Colony of Connecticut in North America shewing the Situation of the Lands in Controversy between the Inhabitants of that Colony and the Mohegan Indians." [3 copies].

Papers relating to Stockbridge Indians, 6

## FAMILY PAPERS.

Inscriptions on Johnson monuments.

Johnson family pedigree.

Papers in estate of Charity Kneeland.

G. C. Verplanck letter.

Miscellaneous deeds and briefs, in part Johnson.

Miscellaneous bonds, stocks, notes, etc.

Family deeds, agreements, etc.

Miscellaneous papers of Ann Woolsey.

Copies of wills of William (1751) and Sarah Beach (1758).

Laura Woolsey's album, containing extracts, sentiments and original contributions written by well-known people of Hartford and elsewhere, about 1819.

Johnson arms.

## MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

Gurdon Saltonstall to Henry Ashhurst, 1711.

Sarah Edwards to Anna Huntington, 1758.

C. Browne to her husband Gov. William Browne.

Benjamin Gale to Dr. Huxham, 1766.

David Ramsey to \_\_\_\_\_, 1785.

H. Ledlie to \_\_\_\_\_, 1787.



- Benjamin Hallock to Col. Richard Floyd, 1763.  
 Col. Benjamin's claim (Revolution).  
 Abraham Beach about Noah Hobart, 1812.  
 William Smith to Jonathan Trumbull, 1783.  
 Abijah Beach to \_\_\_\_\_, 1775.  
 Bishop of London to Dr. Auchmuty, (copy).  
 H. S. Conway to Colony of Conn. about repeal of Stamp Act,  
 1766.  
 Colony of Conn. to H. S. Conway about repeal of Stamp Act,  
 1766.  
 Colony of Conn. instructions to Richard Jackson.  
 Instructions of freemen of New Haven to their Representatives  
 in General Assembly about Stamp Act.  
 Dr. Gale's remarks on inoculation.

## ECCLESIASTICAL.

- Stratford church about a minister, 1722.  
 George Pigot to Stratford, church, 1722.  
 David Humphreys to church of England in Conn., 1722.  
 Stratford inhabitants power of attorney to William James,  
 1710.  
 Papers relating to Episcopal Church and Glebe house in  
 Stratford, 32.  
 Samuel Peters' account of salary paid to Episcopal ministers  
 at Stratford, 1771-1785.  
 History of Episcopal church in Ulster Co., N. Y.  
 Stratford church to Lord Bishop of London and Society for  
 Propagating the Gospel (1771?).

## MISCELLANEOUS.

- Papers relative to Ohio lands bought of Isaac Mills and  
 George Hoadly and necessary to show title of said lands, 35  
 Vermont claims of land against New Hampshire and  
 New York [copies], 2  
 Original grant of town of Pocock, N. H., 1762.  
 Briefs relating to "Gore" land, about 1800, 2  
 Papers relating to legal cases, controversies about lands,  
 etc. 3 packages.  
 Papers relating to W. Scarborough's voyage to Canton,  
 1838, 20.  
 Records and accounts of Proprietors of bed of iron ore at  
 Merry All in Kent, 1758-1795.  
 Kent iron works papers, several.  
 Sermon by Rev. Daniel Browne at Covent Garden, 1723.  
 Catalogue of students at Litchfield Law School, 1817.  
 G. G. Beckman papers, W. S. Johnson attorney, 1787-9. 11

Sketch of Richard Edwards by his son Timothy Edwards, written about 1718.

Susquehannah claim stated, and notes arguments, etc., on the Susquehannah case. 14 documents, some of them long, one of 75 pages.

PRINTED MATTER.

Report of Commissioners to treat with Proprietaries of Pennsylvania. Norwich, 1774.

The Susquehannah Case. [Norwich, 1774.]

Right of Governor and Company of Conn. to lands west of New York. Hartford, 1773.

Trumbull, Benjamin. Plea in Vindication of Conn. title. New Haven, 1774.

Avery, Samuel. Susquehannah Controversy Examined. Wilkesbarre, 1803.

[Statement relative to Conn. claimants in Pennsylvania.] folio. 8pp.

[Petition to General Assembly of Conn. about Susquehannah matters, 1774.] folio, 2pp.

Governor and Company of Connecticut and the Mohegan Indians. Certified copy of Book of Proceedings before Commissioners of Review, 1743. London, 1769.

Mohegan Indians against Governor and Company of Conn. Case of the Governor and Company. 1800.

—[*Same.*] Appendix to Case of the Governor and Company [1770].

—[*Same.*] Summary of Case of the Governor and Company. [1770].

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