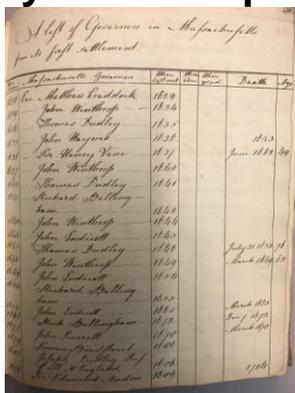


The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,  
Columbia University in the City of New York

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

**Marsh Family Manuscripts, 1795-1976**



Ebenezer Grant Marsh Log. UTS1: Marsh Family Manuscripts, 1795-1976, box 1, folder 1, the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York

Finding Aid prepared by: Rebecca Nieto, May 2017

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: John Marsh the Elder, 1742-1821; Ebenezer Grant Marsh, (1777-1803); John Marsh the Younger (1788-1868)

Title: Marsh Family Manuscripts, 1795-1976

Inclusive dates: 1795-1976

Bulk dates: 1795-1807

Abstract: John the Elder was an ecclesiastical leader and alumnus of Harvard College (1761), his sons Ebenezer Grant Marsh (Yale, 1795) and John Marsh the Younger (Yale, 1804) were educated and served in Protestant communities in New England, Ebenezer as a Hebrew scholar and John Marsh the Younger as a preacher and active member of the Temperance movement. Materials consist of biographical, historical, and religious manuscripts written by all three individuals.

Size: 1 box, 0.5 linear feet

Storage: Onsite storage

Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Email: [burkespecial@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkespecial@library.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The exact provenance of this collection is unknown; however, John Marsh the Younger (1788-1868) was the father of John Tallmadge Marsh (UTS, 1848), which is possibly the context in which these materials were donated to Union. The Marsh Family Manuscripts were found in the vault of the Burke Library in 1976. This collection was among a large group of unprocessed materials that were organized in 2017 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to [burkespecial@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkespecial@library.columbia.edu), or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. The manuscripts are extremely fragile, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** UTS: Marsh Family Manuscripts [1795-1807], series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

John Marsh the Elder was an American ecclesiastical leader in the colonial and early national period. He was born in Wethersfield, Connecticut on November 2, 1742. The son of a deacon and himself a “good genius and scholar” with a predilection for religious studies from an early age, Marsh graduated from Harvard College in 1761 at the age of 14 and continued his study of theology in ministerial roles in the neighboring towns of Hampton, Chelmsford, Westford, Waltham, and Old South Boston. He was eventually established as pastor of First Congregational Church in Wethersfield, potentially because his hometown had a strongly Puritan following. He married Anne Grant, daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Grant, on December 5, 1775.

A moderate Calvinist, Marsh held that “natural religion presented as many incomprehensible mysteries as revealed religion, and in the latter, no one should be held to any doctrine that was ‘repugnant to reason’” (*Sibley’s Harvard Graduates, 1761-1763*). In addition to his parsonage, Marsh was a founder of Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, was involved with the Massachusetts Historical Society, and “enthusiastically gathered biographical data” that was used to compile many early biographical writings on religious figures in the early national period throughout New England. This last point is noteworthy since the manuscript in this collection bearing Marsh’s name consists of biographical data concerning governors and ministry figures in New England. This point and other historical and circumstantial evidence aided John M. Cox, assistant to the archivist at Union Theological Seminary, in identifying Marsh’s writings when they were found in the seminary library’s vault in 1976.

John Marsh the Elder died in Wethersfield on September 13, 1821. Among his children were two sons, John Marsh the Younger and Ebenezer Grant Marsh. John Marsh the Younger (1788-

1868) was born on April 2, 1788, and baptized by his father on April 6<sup>th</sup>. The younger Marsh was naturally predisposed to the study of theology, and at ten began to study under preacher and Hamilton College president Azel Backus in Bethlehem, Connecticut. He entered Yale College when he was twelve, graduating in 1804 at the age of 16. Marsh taught for a number of years before his ordination in the Congregational Church of Haddam, Connecticut on December 16, 1818. He married Frances Fowler Tallmadge. Their son, John Tallmadge Marsh (1825-?) was born in Haddam, and later attended Union Theological Seminary (class of 1849). It is likely that John Tallmadge Marsh's affiliation to the seminary led to the library's acquisition of his relatives' papers.

A staunch supporter of temperance, John Marsh the Younger served as secretary and general agent with the burgeoning Connecticut Temperance Society, eventually leaving his congregation in 1833 to devote himself fully to that cause. He eventually moved from Connecticut to Philadelphia, where he served as secretary with the American Temperance Union and worked as editor of its monthly publication, *Journal of the American Temperance Union*, remaining there until 1865. In 1852, he received a Doctorate of Divinity from Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, and eventually settled in Brooklyn, New York until his death on August 4, 1868. His wife Anne predeceased him in 1852, and he was survived by two sons and three daughters.

Ebenezer Grant Marsh (alternately spelled Ebenezer) was the eldest son of John Marsh and older sibling to John Marsh the Younger. Born on February 2, 1777, Marsh was baptized by his father five days later. Dexter's *Yale Biographies* describes Ebenezer as standing out among the youngest and brightest in his class at Yale College, where he graduated in 1795. He was particularly drawn to the study of Hebrew, delivering a Hebrew oration at his Yale graduation, eventually becoming an undergraduate and graduate instructor in Hebrew at Yale as early as 1798. In 1801, Marsh was licensed by the New Haven East Association of Ministers, and a year later was appointed a professorship in Languages and Ecclesiastical History at Yale. After suffering acute complications from cancer, Marsh died in his father's Wethersfield home on November 16, 1803. He was twenty-seven years old.

### **Collection Scope and Content Note**

The Marsh Family Manuscripts consist of three study notebooks written at different points by all three individuals mentioned above, as well as correspondence dated 1978 between John M. Cox (then the seminary library archivist's assistant) and the Curator of Manuscripts at Harvard's Houghton Library, concerning the provenance of the manuscripts when they were uncovered in the Union Theological Seminary's vault in 1976.

- **Manuscripts, 1795-1976**

Materials consist first of loose notes describing the manuscripts, probably written by John M. Cox, assistant to the Union Theological Seminary Library's archivist, in 1976. These notes contain references to biographical sources (also identified in "Further Sources" in this finding aid), biographical dates for the identified Marsh family members, and correspondence with library staff at Harvard University concerning the provenance of the notebooks. The first manuscript was written by Ebenezer Grant in 1795 containing biographical and regional

information on civic and religious leaders in New England. The Ebenezer Grant notebook is entitled, "Lists of the Governors, Lt. Governors, Counsellors/Judges and Members of Congress/ in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, as far as can be ascertained from the first settlement of the country. Likewise the names of all the Ministers in the same states – the times when they were ordained when they were dismissed or when they died & the times when the churches were first gathered. Compiled from various sources, by Eben.r G. Marsh, N Haven, Sep. 1795". The second volume consists of notes written by John Marsh the Younger entitled "Observations upon the Bible/Began June 1807/by John Marsh". The final notebook consists of 21 cm of unlined leaves containing biographical entries of New England civic and religious leaders before and contemporaneous to John Marsh the Elder's time; this manuscript was likely written by Marsh the Elder.

### **Processing**

After they were removed from the Burke vault, materials were placed in acid-free envelopes and lain flat in an acid-free document box.

### **Further Sources**

#### ***Ebenezer Grant Marsh***

A biographical sketch on Ebenezer Grant Marsh is available from [HathiTrust](#) with other Yale College graduates from 1795.

Additional information is available in [Families of Wethersfield, Connecticut](#), a regional genealogical index available on Google Books.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania also holds a publication by Timothy Dwight detailing Ebenezer Grant Marsh's memorial service given at the Brick Church in New Haven on November 20, 1803 (four days after Marsh's death). That volume, "published at the request of his father, the Rev. John Marsh, Pastor of the first Church in Wethersfield", can be found [here](#).

#### ***John Marsh the Younger***

Also an alumnus of Yale College, a biographical sketch on John Marsh the Younger is available in *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College, 1792-1805* (v.5), fully available on [HathiTrust](#).

Additional information on John Marsh the Younger and his son, John Tallmadge Marsh, can be found on page 138 of Oliver Crane's *Record of the Class of 1845 of Yale College* (1881), available on [Google Books](#).

#### ***John Marsh the Elder***

Sibley's Harvard Graduates, available in digital format on Hathi Trust or through the [Massachusetts Historical Society](#).

## Contents list

### **Series 1: Marsh Family Manuscripts, 1795-1976**

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Descriptions of the Marsh Mss. [1976]
1	1	2	Ms. Notes [New England Governors, Counsellors, Congress Members, etc.; Ebenezer Marsh], 1795
1	1	3	Ms. Notes – Observations upon the Bible [John Marsh the Younger], 1807
1	1	4	Ms. Notes – [Ecclesiastical Leaders Notes and Dictionary; John Marsh the Elder], 1810