

Ohio University  
Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for  
Archives & Special Collections

**Manasseh Cutler Collection**  
**MSS# 9**

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**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

**Author:** Manasseh Cutler

**Title:** Manasseh Cutler Collection

**Date:** 1761 -- 1849

**Abstract:** Personal papers, botanical notebooks, sermons, and miscellaneous materials

**Quantity:** 4 cu.ft.

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**BIOGRAPHY OF MANASSEH CUTLER**

Manasseh Cutler was born in Killingly, Connecticut on May 3, 1742. He was educated at Yale and graduated in 1765. The following year he taught school in Dedham, Massachusetts where he met Mary Balch who he married in 1767. After the wedding he and Mary moved to Edgartown where he took over the merchant business of his wife's aunt's deceased husband. He ran the business profitably and continued his studies. A source claims he studies for the bar and was accepted and another source claims he was awarded a master's degree from Yale in 1768. In October 1768 he decided to study for the ministry and in November 1769 he left Edgartown and returned to Dedham to continue divinity studies with his wife's father, Rev. Thomas Balch. He took a master's degree from Howard in July 1770 and became the minister at Ipswich Hamlet in 1771. He kept this post, with interruptions, until his death.

During the Revolutionary War he served as an army chaplain and began the study of medicine. He had already developed interests in astronomy, meteorology, and physics, and his medical studies led to an interest in botany. He was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences at its first meeting in January 1781. He contributed small papers on astronomy, meteorology and other topics and a major work, "An Account of Some of the Vegetable Productions Growing in This Part of America, Botanically Arranged," which was published in the first volume of the Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1785 (pp. 396 – 493). Cutler was dissatisfied

with the Linnaean arrangement which he had used in this account and in 1783 began making detailed notes on plants he saw in an effort to find some better system. He worked on these notes for many years, but never completed the work. Most of his notebooks survived, but his extensive herbarium was destroyed by fire.

Cutler was interested in archaeological remains, particularly the mounds of Ohio. He proposed theories regarding their age and purpose. He also made estimates of the elevation of the White Mountains on a trip there in 1784.

Cutler played a key role in the founding of Ohio University. At the close of the Revolutionary War he joined with others interested in colonizing the Ohio Valley in the new Northwest Territory. He shared in drafting the Ordinance of 1787 and personally applied to Congress for the grant of land on which to place a university.

Cutler was awarded an LL.D. by Yale in 1791 and for a brief period he was active in politics, being elected a member of the Massachusetts General Court in 1800 and serving as a representative to the United States Congress from 1800 to 1804. He died on July 28, 1823 in Hamilton, the new name for Ipswich Hamlet.

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## **SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

The collection contains personal papers, duplicated of personal papers, botanical notebooks, sermons, and miscellaneous materials. The personal papers include correspondence and lists of plants and animals covering the years 1785 – 1810. A folder contains the inventories of the folio volumes I – XI in the “Cutler Miscellany” section of the Manasseh Cutler Collection on deposit in the Special Collections Department of the Northwestern University Library. The botanical notebooks are bound and unbound and also contain notes for sermons or sermons and journal diary from 1785. The sermons range from 1792 to 1815. The miscellaneous materials include photographs of the First Congregational Church in Hamilton, Massachusetts, a statement of Cutler’s admission to Yale College dated October 27, 1766, and proof sheets.

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## **ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION**

These records are organized into the following series:

- Series I: Personal Papers
- Series II: Duplicate Personal Papers
- Series III: Notebooks
- Series IV: Manuscript Sermons
- Series V: Miscellaneous Materials

Abbreviations with in content list:

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## RELATED MATERIALS

There are works by Cutler in the Libraries' collections as well as the Mahn Center's Ohioana Collection. Works about Cutler and the areas of his studies can be found in those same collections.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Restrictions:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Ohio University Libraries.
- Preferred Citation:** Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number, and the Ohio University Libraries, in all footnotes and bibliographical references.
- Accession Number:** Unknown
- Provenance:** The Ohio University Archives received the collection in 1950 and 1972 from General G. Dawes through Charles C. Dawes. The duplicate material came from Northwestern University in 1972. The sermons were a gift from Henry C. Torrey, excepting "A Century Discourse" which came from Calvin Cutler Brown.
- Property Rights:** Ohio University retains all property rights to the collection.
- Copyrights:** Ohio University retains all copyrights unless retained by the donor, other correspondents, or other artists.
- Photoduplication:** Ohio University will entertain requests to photocopy reasonable amounts of material from the collection for the convenience of individual researchers.
- Processing:** Unknown

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

*Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.*

## CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box/Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
	<b>Series 1: Personal Papers</b>
1 /	1 Letters from Dr. Benjamin S. Barton (Professor of Botany at Philadelphia), 1791 – 1795
	2 Letters from Rev. Dr. Jeremy Belknap (botanist and author), 1791 – 1794
	3 Letters from Rev. Dr. Henry Muhlenberg (botanist and author), 1791 – 1794
	4 Letters from William D. Peck (professor of Natural History at Harvard University), 1789 – 1807
	5 Letters from Dr. Jonathan Stokes (botanist from England), 1785 – 1803
	6 Letters from C.S. Rafinesque (of Paterno, Sicily and author of “Natural History” in French, Italian, and English), 1804 – 1807
	7 Letters, A – Z, including: Bowin, James, former Governor of Massachusetts, April 19, 1786 Castiglioni, Count, botanist of Milan, Italy, August 1, 1786 Donnery, Monsieur, French Concul, June 15, 1795 Manning, James, President of the College at Providence, December 6, 1785 Morse, Rev. Dr. Jedidiah, father of American Geography, August 1, 1786 Paykull, Gustaf, zoologist and counselor to the King of Sweden, April 5, 1798 and February 6, 1801 (2: French and translated English copies) Swartz, Dr. Olaf, professor of botany at Stockholm, September 11, 1805
	8 Letters not sent or received by Cutler, 1794 – 1849, including: Barton, Dr. Benjamin to Balknap, Rev. Dr. Jeremy Envelope containing fragments of Cutler’s letters
	9 Letter, unknown sender with a packet of foxglove seeds and a transcript, June 28, 1787
	10 Correspondence with Rev. Dr. Jeremy Belknap, 1785 – 1792
1a /	1 Correspondence with Dr. Jonathan Stokes, 1785 – 1805
	2 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1779 – 1787 including: Cutler, Manasseh to Rev. Dr. Henry Muhlenberg, February 27, 1793

- Cutler, Manasseh to Ebenezer Hazard, U.S. Postmaster  
General, October 21, 1785
- 3 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1790– 1810  
including:
- Cutler, Manasseh to Rev. Dr. Henry Muhlenberg, February  
27, 1793
- Cutler, Manasseh to Sargent, Winthrop, secretary of the Ohio  
Company, June 6, 1790
- 4 Item laid in Commonplace Book with transcript
- 5 List of specimens and others, including:
- A list of medicine plants for Morse’s Geography
- List of species of birds by W.D. Peck, May 28, 1791
- List of specimens sent to W.D. Peck, May 18, 1793
- Lists of specimens sent to Baron Paykull, November 14, 1802
- 6 Miscellaneous parts of letters
- Loose miscellaneous letters
- Morse, Rev. Dr. to Cutler, August 1, 1780
- Stokes, Dr. Jonathan to Cutler, August 17, 1785
- Cutler to Stokes, Dr. Jonathan, March 1, 1786
- Stokes, Dr. Jonathan to Cutler, August 30, 1788
- Stokes, Dr. Jonathan to Cutler, October 25, 1794

**Series II: Duplicate Personal Papers**

- 2 / 1 Duplicates of repository material, 1779 – 1789
- 2 Duplicates of repository material, 1790 – 1799
- 3 Duplicates of repository material, 1802 – 1849
- 4 Duplicates of repository material, undated
- 5 Duplicates of Volumes I – XI of Cutler Collection at Northwestern  
University

**Series III: Botanical Notebooks**

- 3 / 1 “No. 273” notebook, notes for a sermon given March 31, 1776 and  
September 15, 1776 at Camp Dorchester, unbound, sewn, 3  
¾ “ x 6”, 20 pgs.
- “Botanical Description Plants, July 31, 1782, Book IV” notebook,  
unbound, sewn, 3 ¼” x 6”, 116 pgs.
- 2 “An Account of Some of the Vegatable Productions Naturally  
Growing In This Part of America, Botanically Arranged, by  
the Rev. Manasseh Cutler” printed extract from Memoirs of  
the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, volume 1, pp.  
396 – 493, Boston, 1785, bound, ¾ leather and purple cloth

- 11 1/8" x 8 1/2"
- 3 "Account of Botanical Books Correspondents" notebook, 1785 – 1795, unbound, sewn, 3 3/4" x 6", 12 pgs.
  - 4 "Observations On a Singular Natural Production, In Which One Part Appears to be a Plant & the Other an Insect, Accompanies With a Specimen, by Rev. Manasseh Cutler....Trans. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, volume 3, part 1, pp. 161 – 164" on stationary 10" x 7 3/4," sewn, 12 pgs.
  - 5 "Extracts From Alton. Vive p. 26 of Extracts From Various Authors. Book XI. Description & Notes on American Indigenous Plants, by Manasseh Cutler, 1793 – 1797" field notebook, leather bound, 3 7/8" x 6," 126 pgs.
  - 6 "Examinations of My Descriptions & Specimens of Vegetables 1799," "NB. All my Descriptions are taken from living specimens & all of them, without exception, unless express mention is made, were found growing in a wild, uncultivated state." Notebook, unbound, sewn, 6" x 7 1/4," 36 pgs.
  - 7 "Manasseh Cutler / Some of His Sermons / 1796 to 1822" notebook, bound in blue, 6 3/8" x 8," 150 pgs.
  - 8 "Note Book – Dr. M. Cutler" "Accounts of the Properties of Vegetable Productions from Various Persons" notebook, 3/4 leather and marbled cloth, 3 3/4 " x 6 1/4", " 52 pgs.
  - 9 "Book XIV. Descriptions of American Plants. M. Cutler" notebook, leather bound, 1804 – 1807, 4 1/4" x 7," 189 pgs.  
Diary, 1785
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- 4 / 1 "Dr. M. Cutler's Botanical Notes" notebook, 3/4 leather and purple cloth, 4" x 6 1/2," 40 pgs.
  - 2 "Extracts From Dr. John Hill's Natural History, Vol. I. These Extracts Contain the Description of the Series, Classes, Orders, Genera & Many of Ye Special & Varieties" notebook, 3/4 leather and marbled cloth, 6" x 8 3/8," 127 pgs. text, 12 pgs. drawings of fossils, crystals, shells, 4 pgs. "Contents"
  - 3 "Extracts from Kalm .... Pennant's .... Jefferson's .... Cook's .... (works)" notebook, 3/4 leather and brown cloth, 5 3/4" x 9," 99 pgs. and 9pgs. Index
  - 4 "Common Place Book" notebook, mostly botanical notes, bound in black, 7" x 7 7/8," 98 pgs.
  - 5 "Observations On the Oeconomical & Medical Properties of the Whit Walnut or Oil Nut Tree, by M. Cutler" notebook, unbound, sewn, 6" x 7 1/2. " 8 pgs.
  - 6 "Sermon #1034" March 16, 1800, 9 proof sheets
  - 7 Manasseh Cutler Miscellaneous Papers

- Pamphlet  
Program  
10 photographs from the First Congregational Church,  
Hamilton, Massachusetts
- 8 Manasseh Cutler Miscellaneous Papers  
Yale College Laws – with admission form of M. Cutler,  
October 27, 1761, 25 pgs.
- 9 Proof Sheets, 7 pgs.
- 10 “Extracts from Botanical Letters” notebook, ca. 1785 – 1796,  
unbound, sewn, 4” x 6 ¼,” 70 pgs.

**Series IV: Sermons**

- 5 /
- 1 #459, July 1792
- 2 #850, January 1796
- 3 #887, November 1796
- 4 #907, March 1797
- 5 #1025, November 1799
- 6 #1054, September, 1800
- 7 #1137, March 1805
- 8 #1140, June 1805
- 9 #1145, October 1805
- 10 #1150, April 1805
- 11 #1152, May 1805
- 12 #1155, June 1805
- 13 #1159, May 1805
- 14 #1160, June 1805
- 15 #1161, June 1805
- 16 #1162, July 1805
- 17 #1163, August 1805
- 18 #1170, December 1805
- 19 #1173, April 1806
- 20 #1214, December 1807
- 21 #1335, November 1808
- 22 #1342, July 1809
- 23 #1345, July 1809
- 24 #1347, September 1809
- 25 #1350, October 1809
- 26 #1354, December 1809
- 27 #1360, March 1810
- 28 #1361, March 1810
- 29 #1363, April 1810
- 30 #1365, April 1810
- 31 #1366, May 1810

32 #1368, June 1910  
33 #1385, September 1810  
34 #1400, June 1811  
35 #1401, July 1811  
36 #1407, September 1812  
37 #1413, November 1811  
38 #1414, November 1811  
39 #1416, December 1811  
40 #1424, May 1812  
41 #1438, September 1812  
42 #1446, November 1812  
43 #1538, March 1815  
44 #n.d., Fragment  
45 #n.d., Provenance Note  
46 #none, October 27, 1814