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# **Gideon Hawley missionary journals, 1753-1806. MS1237**

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English

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Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information .....	3
Historical Note .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Administrative Information .....	5
Related Materials .....	6
Controlled Access Headings .....	6
Technical Requirements .....	7
Bibliography .....	7
Collection Inventory .....	7

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregational Library & Archives
<b>Creator:</b>	Hawley, Gideon, 1727-1807
<b>Title:</b>	Gideon Hawley missionary journals, 1753-1806.
<b>ID:</b>	MS1237
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1753-1806
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.65 Cubic Feet (1 box, 5 reels)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Rev. Gideon Hawley was born at Stratfield (Bridgeport), Connecticut. Hawley graduated from Yale College in 1749 and was licensed to preach by the Fairfield East Association May 1750. Hawley accepted a position from the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians to establish a mission among the Six Nations on the Susquehanna in 1754. In 1757 Hawley was sent on a temporary mission to the Mashpee and following a formal request by the Mashpee Hawley took up a permanent post among them on April 8, 1758. Hawley died in Mashpee in 1807. This collection of journal and correspondence records includes materials relating to life in the Mohawk country, the Six Nations, the Mashpee Indians, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Gideon Hawley missionary journals, 1753-1806, MS1237. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Historical Note

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Rev. Gideon Hawley was born at Stratfield (Bridgeport), Connecticut, the son of Gideon and Hannah Bennett Hawley. His mother, a daughter of Lieutenant James Bennett of Stratfield, Connecticut died at Hawley's birth. Hawley's father died when Hawley junior was three years old. Hawley was a descendent of Joseph Hawley, who immigrated to America in 1629.

Hawley graduated from Yale College in 1749 and was licensed to preach by the Fairfield East Association May 1750. He accepted a position in Stockbridge in 1752, under the pay of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and under the supervision of Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan Edwards was a preacher to the whites and the Housatonic Indians in the Stockbridge; he occasionally visited Hawley's school to the Iroquois and gave Hawley advice about his work with the Native Americans there.

Due to "opposing cliques among the controlling authorities" at Stockbridge, Hawley accepted a position from the Society to establish a mission among the Six Nations on the Susquehanna; he was ordained in Old South Church, Boston, July 31, 1754 for this position and left for the site, near the contemporary town of Windsor, New York (close to the area where Rev. Elihu Spencer, Yale 1746, made an unsuccessful attempt at ministry five or six years before). Besides acting as a missionary, Rev. Hawley also acted as an interpreter at this post. War did not affect his mission until May 1756, when Hawley was forced to leave. He attempted to return to his former mission, but since it was unsafe, he remained in West Springfield, Massachusetts for the winter. He tried to rejoin his former congregation in the spring of 1757, but the prevalence of small pox prevented him from doing so.

Hawley returned to Boston and accepted a commission as chaplain to Colonel Richard Gridley's regiment. He departed with the army for Crown Point July 12 but was forced to return in October, due to illness. The Society then sent Hawley on a temporary mission to the large plantation (approximately 300) of Native Americans at Mashpee, Massachusetts, who had been without a preacher for fifteen years. The Mashpee requested Hawley's permanent appointment; Hawley took up the permanent post April 8, 1758.

In Mashpee, Hawley married Lucy Fessenden July 14, 1759, second daughter of Rev. Benjamin Fessenden (Harvard 1718) and Rebecca (Smith) Fessenden of Sandwich. Hawley and Fessenden had three sons and two daughters. The eldest son died in infancy, and other children all lived to maturity. The youngest son graduated at Harvard in 1792 and died in 1800, early on in his pastoral life. Lucy Fessenden died in December 25, 1777 at the age of 50 and Hawley remarried Mrs. Elizabeth Burchard October 7, 1778, widow of Captain David Burchard of Nantucket and previous widow of a Mr. Hussey. Mrs. Elizabeth Burchard was born in Mendon, Massachusetts October 12, 1726 and died August 7, 1797. Hawley died in Mashpee in 1807.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents

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Items in this collection include correspondence, journal accounts, lists of births and deaths, a table of Native American statistics, and a map (1756) by Hawley of Onohoguage villages in New York. This collection includes materials relating to life in the Mohawk country, the Six Nations, the Mashpee Indians, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians, the Massachusetts General Court, and the French and Indian War. Persons named include James Abercromby, Jonathan Edwards, John Hancock, and William Johnson. Of particular note are records mentioning Hawley's long-time translator, Rebecca Kellogg Ashley.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Arrangement

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This collection has been arranged in volume order which generally is also date order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

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Boston, MA 02108

[info@14beacon.org](mailto:info@14beacon.org)

URL: <http://www.CongregationalLibrary.org>

### Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

### Restrictions on Use

Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

Digital Reproductions are protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use the Digital Reproductions in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. In addition, no permission is required from the Congregational Library & Archives for educational uses. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the Congregational Library & Archives. For additional information regarding copyright, please consult the Congregational Library & Archives' [Digital Collections Copyright & Use](#) policy.

## Source of Acquisition

The journals were gifted to the Congregational Library & Archives by A. C. Thompson in 1875; no accession number. The journals were originally cataloged with the call number M 11 H 31.

## Location of Copies

The Massachusetts Historical Society maintains their own copy of the microfilms. The microfilm was assigned the call number P-363 reel 8.1.

## Accruals

Additional accruals are expected for this collection in the form of full-text transcription. There is no anticipated date for this accrual.

## Processing Information

This collection was originally cataloged as M 11 H 31 and placed within the library's holdings. The collection was first described by archival staff in 1996. The collection was redescribed by Sari Mauro, September 2013, using DACS First Edition. The collection was reprocessed by Zachary Bodnar, February 2020, using DACS Second Edition.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

The Massachusetts Historical Society holds two archival collections related to Gideon Hawley. The "Gideon Hawley letters, 1754-1807" collection contains correspondence written by Gideon Hawley largely related to his missionary work and the "Letter to Gideon Hawley, April 1764" contains a single letter written by Cognehew, Reuben to Gideon Hawley asking for additional funds for his Mashpee Indian school.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Indians of North America -- Missions.

- Mashpee Indians -- Missions.
- Missionaries -- Massachusetts -- Biography.
- New England's Hidden Histories.
- Smallpox.
- Stockbridge Indians -- Missions.
- United States -- History -- French and Indian War, 1755-1763.
- Ashley, Rebecca Kellogg, 1695-1757
- Edwards, Jonathan, 1703-1758
- Hawley, Gideon, 1727-1807 -- Diaries.
- Hawley, Gideon, 1727-1807 -- Correspondence.

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## Technical Requirements

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To access digital user's copies via online-interface, a java-enabled web browser is required. Internet Explorer 8.x and later, Firefox 5.x and later, Opera 12 and later, Safari 5.x and later, or any version of Google Chrome are recommended.

A microfilm reader is required in order to access microform materials. One microfilm reader is available to the public upon request.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Bibliography

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Dexter, Franklin Bowditch. *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History*. New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1896.

Malone, Dumas, ed. *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Instances	
Journal, 1754-1756	box 1	volume 1
<u><a href="#">Digital Copies:</a></u>		

## Digital Copies

These journal records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

## Scope and Contents

The first volume chronicles Rev. Hawley's time as a missionary traveling through "the Country of the Six Nations" which is now western New York and Pennsylvania. Rev. Hawley keep record of the villages he visited, the people he interacted with, and the Bible passages on which he preached.

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Journal, circa 1753-1795

box 1

volume 2

Digital Copies:

## Digital Copies

These journal records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

## Scope and Contents

Rev. Hawley's second volume contains copies of correspondence referred to in vol. 1, financial records, and a continuation of his travelogue from "the Country of the Six Nations". His movements were often hampered by early battles in the French and Indian War, which he also described.

The first few pages in this book contain a later 19th-century letter to a genealogist with a brief Hawley family history, and the 1875 inscription from A. C. Thompson when he donated the journals to the Congregational Library.

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Journal, circa 1777-1806

box 1

volume 3

Digital Copies:

## Digital Copies

These journal records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

## Scope and Contents

The third volume is largely comprised of correspondence to friends and officials back in New England. Rev. Hawley advocates for better treatment of both their Native American neighbors and lower-class English soldiers. There are also sections in which Hawley reflects on his missionary career, providing further detail about the events recorded in vols. 1 & 2.

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Journal, circa 1781-1806

box 1

volume 4

Digital Copies:

**Digital Copies**

These journal records were digitized as part of the New England's Hidden Histories project. Digital reproductions are [available to view online](#).

**Scope and Contents**

This fourth volume is primarily correspondence. The topics range from the fates of indentured Mashpee Indians to friends' legal matters to his own personal finances. Rev. Hawley also recorded local births, deaths, and marriages at the Mashpee plantation for much of the latter half of the 18th century.

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Microfilm records, 1753-1806, 1981, 2008

Restrictions on Access:

**Restrictions on Access**

Reels 1 and 3 are available for use in the reading room. Reels 2, 4, and 5 are maintained as preservation copies and are not available for public use.

**Scope and Contents**

There are a total of five microfilm copies of the Gideon Hawley journals and each copy contains the full text of all four volumes. Two positive reels (reels 1 and 3) were produced by Harvard in 1981. Three additional reels (reels 2, 4, and 5), one positive and two negative, were produced by the Northeast Document Conservation Center in 2008.

reel 1  
(positive)

reel 2  
(positive)

reel 3  
(positive)

reel 4  
(negative)

reel 5  
(negative)