

Job Pierson Family Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1994

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm83061531>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms999004>

Prepared by David Mathisen and Margaret H. McAleer with the assistance of Paul Colton

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 1998
Revised 2010 March

Collection Summary

Title: Job Pierson Family Papers

Span Dates: 1755-1908

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1809-1896)

ID No.: MSS61531

Creator: Pierson, Job, 1791-1860

Extent: 600 items

Extent: 5 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm83061531>

Summary: Chiefly letters (1831-1835) written by Job Pierson (1791-1860) to his wife, Clarissa Bulkeley Pierson, while serving in Congress describing life in Washington, D.C., during the administration of Andrew Jackson; journal and typewritten transcripts of diary entries of Job Pierson (1824-1896) relating to his studies at Williams College, his religious conversion, family life, and his career as a Presbyterian clergyman in New York and Michigan.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845.

Pierson family.

Pierson, Bowen Whiting.

Pierson, Clarissa Bulkeley.

Pierson, Job, 1791-1860.

Pierson, Job, 1824-1896. Job Pierson papers.

Pierson, Philip T. H.

Organizations

Williams College--Students.

Subjects

Conversion--Christianity.

Presbyterian Church--Michigan--Clergy.

Presbyterian Church--New York (State)--Clergy.

Real property--New York (State)--Rensselaer County.

Real property--New York (State)--Suffolk County.

Places

New York (State)--Politics and government.

United States--Politics and government--1829-1837.

Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs--19th century.

Occupations

Clergy.

Lawyers.

Representatives, U.S. Congress--New York (State)

Provenance

The papers of the Job Pierson family were purchased from Eleanor E. Porter in 1983 and 1985. A small addition was given by Porter in 1991.

Processing History

The papers acquired by the Library in 1983 were processed and described in 1984. Additional family papers purchased by the Library in 1985 were added to the collection in 1987 and the register was revised accordingly in 1988. This register describes those papers as well as a scrapbook processed and added to the papers in 1994.

Additional Guides

A description of the Pierson Papers appears in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division*, 1983, pp. 10-14.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Job Pierson family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of the Job Pierson family are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Job Pierson Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Notes

Job Pierson (1791-1860)

1791, Sept. 23	Born, Bridgehampton, N.Y.
1811	Graduated, Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.; studied law in Salem and Schaghticoke, N.Y.
1815	Admitted to bar; practiced law with Herman Knickerbocker in Rensselaer County, N.Y. Married Clarissa Taintor Bulkeley
1824-1833	District attorney, Rensselaer County, N.Y.
1831-1835	Member, United States House of Representatives
1835-1840	Surrogate, Rensselaer County, N.Y.; moved to Troy, N.Y.
1848	Delegate, Democratic National Convention
1852	Delegate, Democratic National Convention
1856	Delegate, Democratic National Convention
1860, Apr. 9	Died, Troy, N.Y.

Job Pierson (1824-1896)

1824, Feb. 3	Born, Schaghticoke, N.Y.
--------------	--------------------------

1842	Graduated, Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.
1847	Graduated, Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, N.Y.
1849	Married Rachel Williams Smith
1850	Appointed pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsford, N.Y.
1856	Trip to Scotland; appointed pastor of a Presbyterian church, Victor, N.Y.
1863	Appointed pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo, Mich.
1869	Appointed pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Ionia, Mich.
1878	Retired from active clerical work
1881	Appointed trustee, Olivet College, Olivet, Mich.; received honorary doctor of divinity degree
1889-1892	Librarian, Alma College, Alma, Mich.
1896, Feb. 3	Died, Stanton, Mich.

Scope and Content Note

The Job Pierson Family Papers span the years 1755-1908, with the bulk of material dating from 1809 to 1896. The collection consists primarily of the papers of Job Pierson (1791-1860), lawyer and politician, who represented New York in the House of Representatives from 1831 to 1835. The collection also contains the papers of various family members and includes a journal and diaries kept by Pierson's son, Job Pierson (1824-1896), a Presbyterian minister who spent most of his clerical career in New York and Michigan. The papers are arranged into groupings that include a journal and diaries, correspondence, financial and legal papers, miscellany, a scrapbook, and oversize material.

The bulk of the papers consists of approximately 350 letters written by Job Pierson (1791-1860) to his wife Clarissa Bulkeley Pierson between 1831 and 1835. The letters, written during Pierson's two congressional terms, focus almost exclusively on political and social events in Washington. An ardent supporter of Andrew Jackson, Pierson filled his letters with accounts of the president and other major political figures, including Martin Van Buren, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun, and the spirited issues that dominated Jacksonian politics, including the Cherokee nation's legal status, the Second Bank of the United States, the tariff of 1833, and the nullification crisis. The letters also reveal much about Democratic efforts to maintain party discipline in Congress, congressional daily work routines, Washington social gatherings, and boarding-house life endured by many congressmen. Two partial subject indexes to Pierson's congressional letters are filed with correspondence dated February 1833 and March 1835.

Correspondence dated prior to 1831 concerns Pierson's student days at Williams College and his early legal practice. Pierson's interest in politics is evident throughout his early correspondence. A sizeable portion of his later correspondence consists of letters written to two of his children, Sarah J. Pierson and John B. Pierson. These letters contain, in addition to Pierson's usual political commentary, paternal advice on educational pursuits and character formation and frequent warnings against religious fanaticism. Oversize correspondence, dated between 1809 and 1832, is arranged separately.

The papers also include a journal and typed transcripts of diaries kept by Pierson's son, Job, who became a Presbyterian minister despite his father's objections to religious revivalism. The younger Pierson's journal describes a summer vacation spent in East Hampton, Long Island, New York, in 1843, shortly before he entered Auburn Theological Seminary. Pierson's diaries, transcribed in 1903 by his son, Philip T. H. Pierson, are prefaced by a memoir written by him concerning his family history, childhood, and experiences at Williams College where he attended two revivals that led to his religious conversion.

Pierson's diary entries, commencing with his marriage to Rachel Williams Smith in 1849 and continuing until shortly before his death in 1896, are essentially personal in nature. In addition to references to family life, they recount Pierson's career as a Presbyterian minister in New York and Michigan. Entries made during the summer of 1856 contain a detailed account of an Atlantic crossing made during a trip to Scotland. The diaries include only occasional references to national events.

Legal and financial papers date from 1755 to 1886 and primarily concern the family's property holdings, principally in Rensselaer County and Suffolk County, New York. Material described as miscellany includes genealogical studies, newspaper clippings, diplomas, and autographs, including those of Wendell Phillips and the theologian Henry James (1811-1882).

The papers also contain a scrapbook compiled by Philip T. H. Pierson in 1908 in memory of his brother Bowen Whiting Pierson. The memorial volume consists of photographs of family members, including Job Pierson (1791-1860), Clarissa Bulkeley Pierson, Job Pierson (1824-1896), Rachel Smith Pierson, and their children. Other photographs depict various Pierson family homes in New York and Michigan. Genealogical material and correspondence concerning the death of Bowen Whiting Pierson complete the scrapbook.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Journal and diaries, 1843, 1849-1896 (4 folders) Correspondence May 1803-Apr. 1832 <i>See also Oversize</i> (3 folders)
BOX 2	May 1832-Mar. 1835 <i>See also Oversize</i> (8 folders)
BOX 3	May 1835-Feb. 1883, undated (2 folders) Legal and financial papers Correspondence, 1810-1877, undated Miscellany 1755-1839
BOX 4	1840-1886, undated (2 folders) Wills, 1799-1885 Miscellany, 1831-1889, undated
BOX 5	Scrapbook, circa 1864-1908, undated
BOX OV 1	Oversize Correspondence, 1809-1832, undated House of Representatives seating chart, undated