

Ezra Stiles (1727-1795)

Ezra Stiles (Yale 1746), minister of the First Congregational Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 1755-1776; Dighton, 1776-1777; Portsmouth, N.H, 1777-1778; Professor of Ecclesiastical History and President of Yale College, 1778-1795.

1767 January 8 (Thursday). At Mr. *Stone's* Request in behalf of Dr. Stiles of Newport, I am preparing Some Account of *Westborough*.¹

1767 January 14 (Wednesday). Great Complaint has been made of my staying at Home so very much; I therefore undertook to visit my Brethren in the Ministry. Rode to Southborough and dined at Mr. *Stones* and communicate to him what I have writ about Westborough at his Request for Dr. Stiles.

1768 September 25 (Sunday). Read a Letter from Charlton to the Church. They vote Compliance. Received a Letter from Mr. Sumner himself concerning their Fast.

1768 October 3 (Monday). Deacon *Bond* and Mr. *Daniel Forbes* accompanying me as Delegates, I sat out about 9 a.m. for *Charlton*.

1768 October 4 (Tuesday). Mr. Bowman and I to Charlton. Meet at Mr. John Edwards -- repair to Mr. *McIntire's*, where the Council forms -- and after Prayer (by me as moderator, Rev. Messrs. Maccarty and Davis Scribes) we repair to the Meeting House, and a.m. obliged to open the Council by Prayer there, though I would fain have been excused. Soon adjourned -- for Dinner which was at Mr. *Twiss's* -- where also I lodged. The Partys very averse to one another through the Hearing.

1768 October 5 (Wednesday). Rev. Stiles prayed at opening the Council to day. We go on with the tedious Hearing. Mr. *Buckminster* Seemed to be too much of an Advocate. I gave him Some hint in the Assembly. At Eve he somewhat resented it -- but Mr. *Stiles* gave him to understand that it was the mind of others, which I had delivered. He was afterwards Silent about it: and reformed. He was very instrumental afterwards in accomplishing a Coalition which was (We hope) Successfull. We dined to Day at Mr. *Edwards's*. Lodged at the same House that I did before. Mr. *Stiles* and Dr. Morse of Sutton, entertaining in Conversation.

1768 October 6 (Thursday). Mr. *Buckminster* prays. We go on for some time -- but a Compromising and Reconcilement was promoted. Dine at Mr. *Twiss's*. P.M. It is effected. At Eve adjourn and retire to *McIntire's* for Refreshment and transcribing the proposed plan for accommodation. When we return to the meeting House is read to the Partys, and accepted by them. Mr. *Curtis* Signs it, all the aggrieved sign, except Mr. *Daniel Williams*. The Brethren of the Church, chiefly, Sign also -- and a Number of the Congregation. This was to our great Joy. It was followed by pathetic Exhortations etc. I prayed after the Result of the Council was read. Then the Moderator declared this Council was dissolved. Lodged at Mr. *Twiss's*.

¹See Heman Packard DeForest and Edward Craig Bates, *The History of Westborough, Massachusetts* (Westborough, 1891), 479-81.

1770 July 18 (Wednesday). Commencement is enlivened with News that the Custom-Acts being repealed. Mr. President *Locke* gave thanks publicly -- yet it blew over as premature. Breakfast at the Presidents -- dined in the Hall. Mr. Gardner of Stow returned Thanks. The Exercises of the Forenoon had been much diversified, and were entertaining: especially the forensic Disputation -- the Dialogue in *Chaldee* that in Greek was delivered more distinctly than heretofore. At Eve I was at the Presidents where were Dr. Langdon of Portsmouth, Dr. Stiles of Newport, and Mr. Samuel Moody.

1770 July 19 (Thursday). Broke fast at Mr. Adams's at Roxbury and prayed with the Family there -- went to Boston. Delivered the Case of *Sarah Green*, Signed by Justice Whipple, Dr. Crosby, and by me, to Dr. *Stiles*. He preached the Lecture on Luk. 12.32. "Fear not little Flock" etc.

From Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College* (3 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 1:75-76:

[Nov.] 7 [1770]. Case of S. G. of Westborough in C^o. Worcester, Mass. as I rec^d it from Mr. Parkman, Pastor, Dr. Crosby the physician that attended her: she being about twelve years of age: —

1759. End Nov. or beg. Dec. S. G. aet. 12, wet her feet in gath^s cranberries & Dr. Crosby treated her as hav^s the Jaundice till spring.

1760 *March*. Dr. Greenleaf gave her 5 gr. Calomel & Jalap, which worked once only: & a day or 2 after another potion w^c did not work, & that week after she began to spit, & in few days Saliva plentiful; cartharticks used for eight days not preventing it.

May 8, she ceased making Water. Dr. Ball called in & the Salvi^a increased. (April, began to have hysteric Fits, 18 or 20 a day.) Upon urine ceas^s, her mouth closed till Even^s or till bed time "& after all was still & quiet, she would open her mouth & could eat: the rest of the time she found ways to get spoon victuals thro' her Teeth. She soon lost feeling in her feet, & could not stand alone." Thus she continued and had fits every night till "April 22, 1761, when Dr. Wheat of Boston sent her powders & Pills," w^c she took a week before her spitting abated. "She had spit about a Gallon a day for the greatest part of the Time; about 3 qu^{ls} a day for a while before Dr. Wheat was applied to." May 15, more powders & spit^s abated. *May 20* or thereabouts *her spitting ceased*. *May 22* "made about a Tea spoon full of Water, which daily increased to about a Jill once in 24 hours."

May "23d day *she opened her Mouth* & took her powders & spoke tho' after a broken Fashion. Her feet gathered strength about the same time & she went by the help of a chair. 27th day went alone & by the help of somebody to lead her *Went out abroad*. She has now a tolerable appetite, but her fits follow her in the Even^s without much alteration from what they have been hereto fore."+

N.B. Since the aforementioned 1st of June, 1761, her fits have left her & she has gradually recovered a tolerable State of Health: is able to attend public Worship & to perform the common ord^y Business of a family.

We whose Names are hereunto annexed have all along been well acquainted with the aforementioned case & can attest to the Truth of the foregoing Relation.

W. —May 1770

Eb^t Parkman, Pastor
Francis Whipple, Justice of the Peace
(the nearest neighbor to the above S. G.)

+this wrote 1761

Sam^l Crosby Physician

1771 January 29 (Tuesday). Send a Letter to Dr. Stiles of Newport, by Lt. Baker.

1775 June 24 (Saturday). Breck who went to *Newport* a few days since, and carried Dr. *Stiles* his *Watts* on the Glorys of Christ,² returned, and brings Me the Doctors Discourse at the Installment of Mr. *Hopkins*.³

1775 June 27 (Tuesday). Read Dr. *Stiles*'s Discourse on saving Knowledge. A very learned, Sensible, judicious work. May God grant me Grace to profit by it!

1776 September 8 (Sunday). I read to the Assembly Dr. *Stiles* and *Hopkins* Address to the Publick for Contribution for propagation of the Gospel in [*Africa?*].⁴

1776 September 22 (Sunday). Preached a.m. from Ps. 2.8⁵ on Occasion of our Contribution to day.... *Contribution* for propagation etc. in *Africa* which amounted to £4.7.10 Lawful Money, which may God graciously accept!

Westborough Church Records (174), September 22, 1776: A *Contribution* was made, in Compliance with an Address of Rev. Dr. *Stiles* and Mr. *Hopkins* of *Newport* for the Support and Encouragement of Missionarys to *Annamabo* in Africa. It amounted to £4.7.10. and by Additions afterwards, to £4.12.0. lawful Money, which may God graciously accept, thro Jesus Christ!

1776 September 23 (Monday). At Eve Mr. [*illegible*] *Gleason* was here, and gave me 3/6 lawful for his Contribution to the *African* Cause, which added to the above is £4.11.4. Add 8d more, £4.12.0.

²The first American edition of Isaac Watts (1674-1748), *The Glory of Christ as God-Man*, appeared in 1795 (Boston, 1795; Evans 29,844).

³Ezra Stiles, *A Discourse on Saving Knowledge: Delivered at the Instalment of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins...Newport, Rhode-Island...April 11, 1770* (Newport, 1770; Evans 11,871).

⁴Ezra Stiles, *To the Public. There has been a design formed, and some attempts have lately been made, to send the gospel to Guinea...* (Newport, RI: Solomon Southwick, 1776; Evans 14803).

⁵Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions."

1777 November 19 (Wednesday). At Night came the worthy Dr. *Ezra Stiles*, on his journey from New-Haven to *Portsmouth* and lodged here.

1777 November 20 (Thursday). Public *Thanksgiving*. Dr. *Stiles* preached on *Gen.* 49, v. 22, 23, 24. A very acceptable Entertainment. May God bless it to us, and may it please God to grant His servant Wisdom and Direction in the weighty Affair before [*torn*] respecting the *Presidentship of Yale College*, to which [he has?] [*torn*] Election, and concerning which he asks my Advice. N.B. a Number [of Persons?], namely Lt. Bond, Mr. Joseph Harrington, Mr. Ebenezer [*torn*], Mr. Jonathan Forbes and [*blank*] came in after the Exercise to manifest their Acceptance of what was delivered, and [*torn*]sult me touching the printing [*illegible*] but they d[*torn*]d to consult the Town on the [matter at their Meeting?] tomorrow.⁶ May God be pleased to [*illegible*] this [*torn*] Glory and our highest Benefit! I am thankful for [*torn*] Providence which brought Dr. *Stiles* to us, and enabled him to [*torn*] so agreeably and profitably.

1777 November 21 (Friday). Dr. *Stiles* leaves [*torn*] *Cambridge* in his way to *Portsmouth*. Wrote by him to [*torn*]on respecting *Elias*'s staying at home till the Vaca[*torn*] [*illegible*] shall [*torn*]turn, he may have a Waitership [*torn*].... Mr. *Joseph Harrington* came and ask'd me to head a Paper for Subscriptions to printing Dr. *Stiles*' Sermon.

1777 November 24 (Monday). I Headed a paper for subscriptions to print Dr. *Stiles*'s late Thanksgiving Sermon, at the Desire of Mr. Joseph Harrington.

1781 April 2 (Monday). I wrote to Dr. *Stiles*.

1781 September 26 (Wednesday). Ordination at *South Bolton*. In the morning we rode to Mr. *Benjamin Baileys* at *Bolton*, where the Ministers and Delegates were desired to meet. All the Pastors and Messengers of the Churches sent to, came. The Church were present and Mr. *Reuben Puffer*, the Pastor-Elect, with them. They request us to proceed. The Council was formed by choosing Moderator and Scribe. The last was Mr. *Whitney* of *Northborough*. I prayed with the Council. Mr. *Puffer* delivered a Confession of Faith in his own name, which was well accepted. Near to the South side of the Meeting House a Scaffold and Breastwork was erected, and long seats for the Council. Mr. *Sumner* prayed: Mr. *Biglow* of *Sudbury* preached a good sermon on *Col.* 1.7. I prayed and gave the *solemn Charge*. Mr. Harrington gave the Right Hand: Mr. *Bridge* of *East-Sudbury* Prayed; and Hymn 100 was Sung, appointed by the Ordained, who finally pronounced the *Blessing*. The Musical stayed and Sung Anthems. Our Supper was at Mr. *Benjamin Bailey*'s. There I was informed that my dear and worthy Friend Dr. *Stiles*,⁷

⁶“This day a Gen^l Thanksgiving through Mass. & Connecticut. I preached at Westboro in Mass. for Rev^d & venerable M^r Parkman on *Gen.* xlix, 22-26. The people immed^y requested a copy for the Press, but the Sermon being a hasty production only a few minutes of that Mornings Composition & mostly extempore, I declined it. M^r Parker [*sic*] persuaded me to accept the Presidency.” Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College* (3 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2:230. Stiles also noted that Parkman “gave me an account of Pres. Leveretts Presidency at Harv. Coll. where he was educated under him. Mr Parkman shewed me a Volume of his Academic Manuscript containg Copies of *Brattles Logic, Leveretts Philosophy* or *Physics, Flynts Geography* &c. Mr. Leverett was a fine classic Scholar but seldom made public Orations, not so often as Mr. Holyoke. Mr. Levrett great and awful in Government.” *Ibid.*, 2:231.

⁷Stiles wrote, “At Bolton near Harvard attended Mr. Puffers Ordination. Mr. [*blank*] preached, Mr. Parkman prayed & gave the Charge, Mr. Harrington of Lancaster gave the Rt. Hand — sung 100th Hymn.” Franklin

President was one of the Gentlemen who saluted me after the Exercises, while I was [out?] on the Scaffold; and through my Infirmary of Sight and unapprehensiveness, I knew him not, nor could I by my utmost Enquirys, find out where he went or what became of him.... May I obtain mercy [*blot*] all my many Deficiencys and Miscarriages!

1781 September 27 (Thursday). I wrote a Letter to Dr. *Stiles*, intending to Send it per first Opportunity to *Boston*, hoping it may meet him there on his Return from *Portsmouth*.

1782 August 24 (Saturday). Mr. *Isaac Johnson* and Mr. *Outhank*, returning from *New-Haven* (whither they have been in Quest of a minister) came in with a Letter from President *Stiles*, accompanied with a Present of a Poem Spoken at Commencement September 12, 1781.⁸

Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College* (3 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2:558.

⁸Joel Barlow (1754-1812), *A poem, spoken at the public commencement at Yale College, in New-Haven; September 12, 1781* (Hartford: Printed by Hudson & Goodwin, [1781]). Evans 17090.