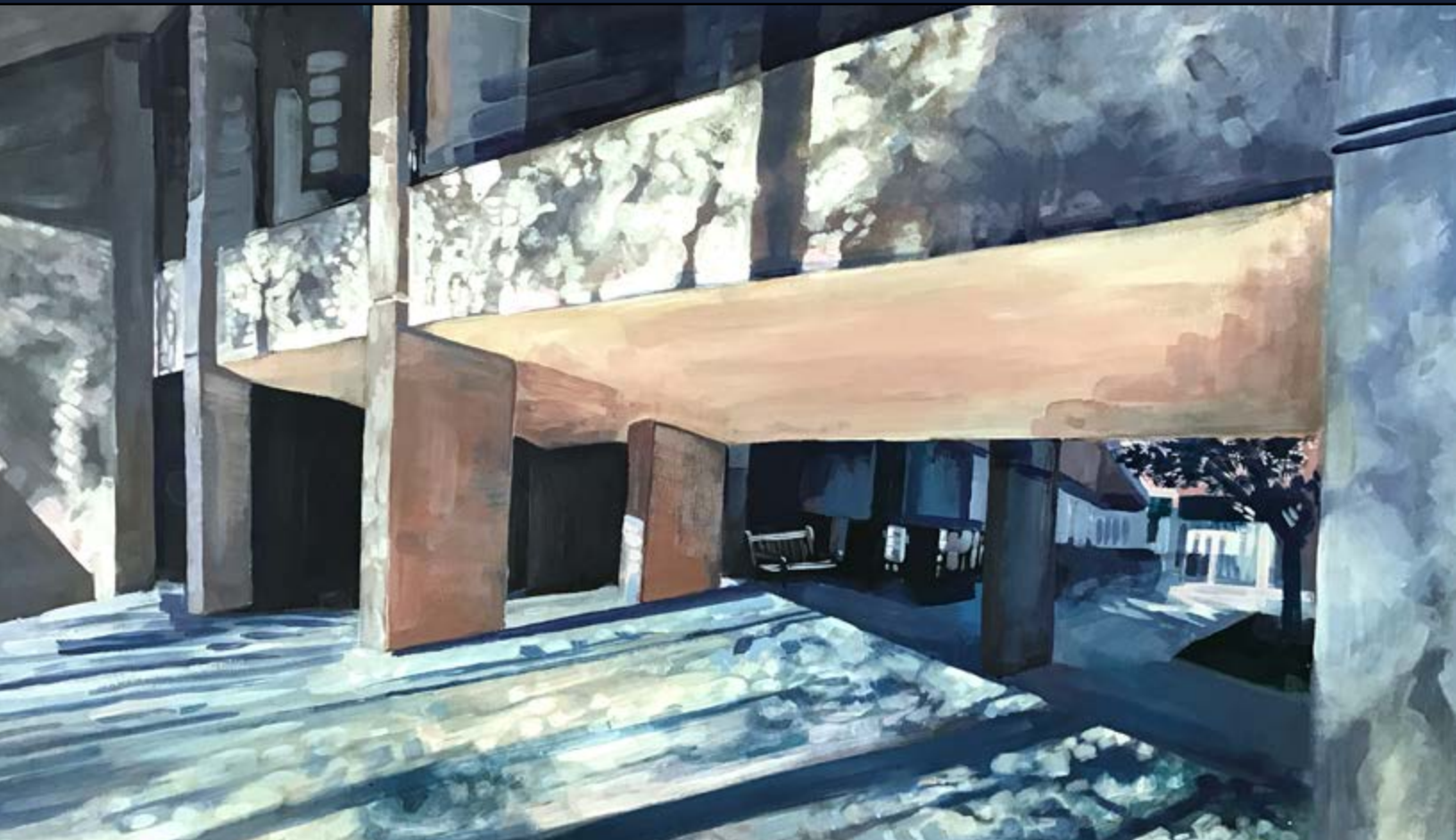


INCREASE WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The man, his legacy, and the naming of Mather House



Catalogue of an exhibition in the SNLHTC Gallery, Mather House,
February-May, 2017

INCREASE WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The man, his legacy, and the naming of Mather House

Edited by Christie McDonald, Karl M. Aspelund with graphic design by John Heine

The exhibition was based on the work of: the Research Group with George Baxter '17, Maxwell Black '18, Avni Nahar '17, Zarin Rahman '18, Richard Tong '19; the Curatorial team with Karl Aspelund '17, Christie McDonald (Mather House Faculty Dean, 2010-2017), Matthew Terry (Curator), Julia Grotto '17 (Assistant Curator); with special thanks to Barbara Meloni of the Harvard University Archives and Mather House Faculty Dean Michael Rosengarten (2010-2017).

FORWARD

In the summer of 2016, a group of Mather students, led by Mather Faculty Dean Christie McDonald and Karl Aspelund '17, came together to conduct research into the life and legacy of Increase Mather, Harvard's seventh president and the namesake of Mather House. The effort was in response to a growing discussion about confronting the historical legacies of the names that adorn the buildings on Harvard's campus. This discussion, in turn, was sparked by the increased attention in the national media and on college campuses nationwide to the controversial namesakes of landmarks around the United States, particularly those named after Confederate leaders, white supremacists and defenders of slavery like John C. Calhoun, and others with racist views like Woodrow Wilson. In discussions at Harvard, Increase Mather's name was often mentioned almost in passing as a controversial one, given that he was a long-time owner of a slave called Spaniard and that his name is associated with a defining aspect of the undergraduate experience at Harvard: one of the 12 residential Houses. It was very clear to the research group that most Harvard students, even Mather residents, knew precious little about Increase, let alone why President Nathan Pusey and the Harvard Corporation decided to name a House after him in the 1960s. When

asked about the name that defines their undergraduate lives in many ways, Mather residents could say that Increase owned a slave and that he had some affiliation with the Salem Witch Trials. Given the national conversation, it seemed an opportune time to explore the life of Mather House's namesake and his historical legacy.

After a summer of archival research, the group came together at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year to discuss preliminary strategies of how to present to the House the knowledge we had accrued. As is common in the research process, the summer also sparked a second series of research questions, particularly regarding the decision to name the House after Increase in 1966. The group ended up pursuing two projects: an exhibit in the Sandra Naddaff and Leigh Hafrey Three Columns Gallery and this booklet. The exhibit required primary sources, and this exhibition would not have been possible without the energetic support of the staff at the Harvard University Archives. With their help, we could catalogue images, transcripts, and letters—including one with Increase's own signature—to exhibit, as well as memos and other writings from the Pusey administration about the naming decision. We are so grateful for their help. With the helpful, curatorial eyes of Curator Matt Terry and Assistant

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Front Cover Image: "Mather House"
WATERCOLOR BY JULIA GROTTTO, MATHER '17
Rear Cover Image: "Mather House"
Courtesy of Shepley Bulfinch

Julia Grotto '17, the exhibit displayed the main themes of our research— Increase's political life and religious life, his presidency, his slaveholding and associations with the Salem Witch Trials-- from mid-February 2017 through the end of the academic year. Along with many curious Mather residents and visitors, President Drew Faust—a historian of the Civil War and the American South—also visited the exhibit.

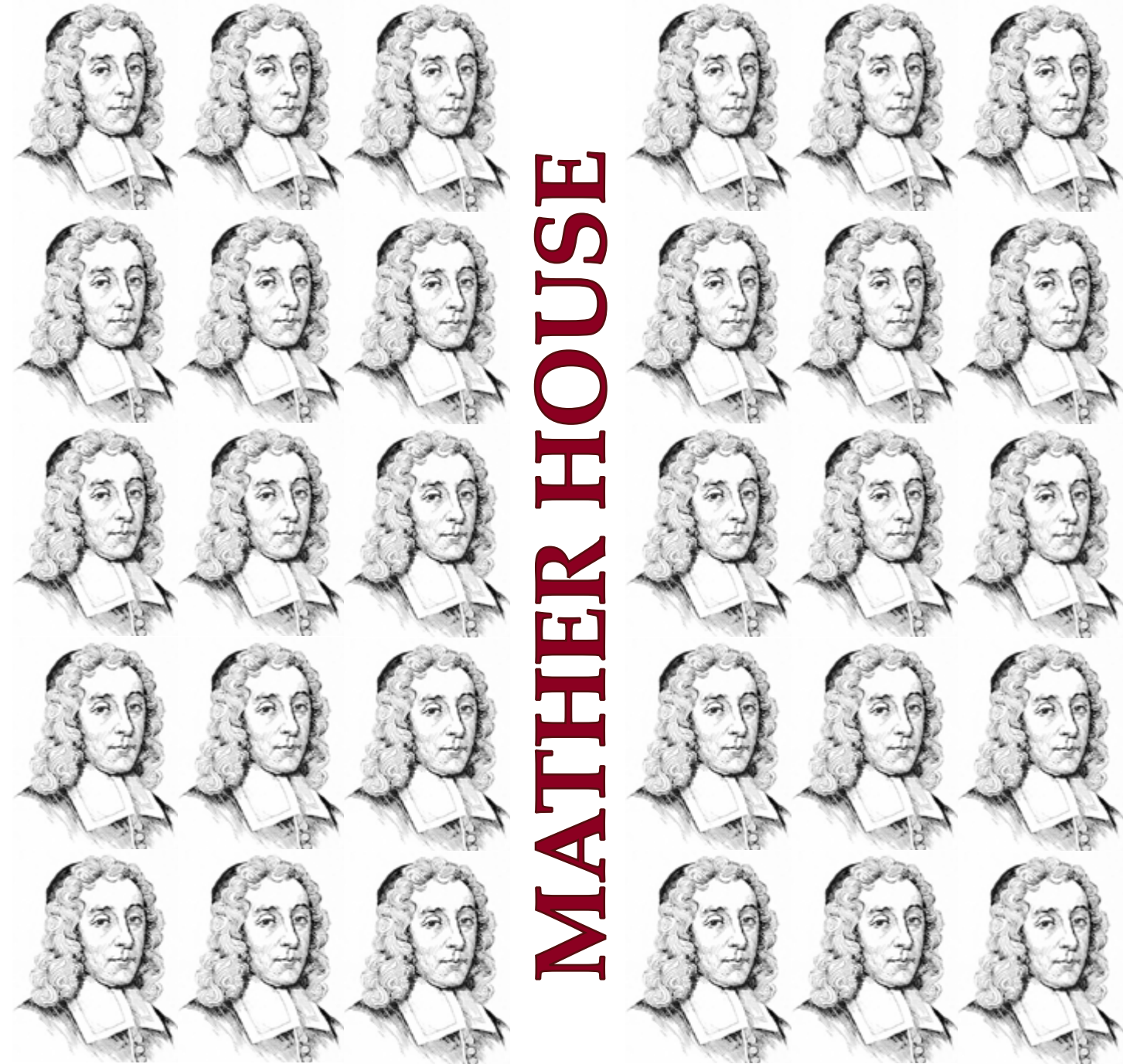
For the most part, this booklet brings the exhibit on Increase to a more permanent form. We have incorporated more text for the reader, but the images are essentially the same, as well as the themes that the booklet follows. Outlining some of the definitive moments of Increase's life, the booklet delves into the political and religious contributions for which he is remembered, and gives some context to these with descriptions of Harvard and Boston in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It then turns to the two aspects that define his historical legacy: the Salem Witch Trials and, more recently, his slaveholding. We conclude with a look at the decision by President Pusey to name the House after Increase from archival documents that only became available after fifty years in 2016.

this booklet: we hope that it can serve to both answer some basic questions about the namesake of your home and to set the stage for you to think critically about Increase's life and the context in which he lived it. As President Faust wrote in a Crimson op-ed in March 2016, "The past never dies or disappears. It continues to shape us in ways we should not try to erase or ignore." Increase Mather has now shaped you in his own small way, and it is everyone's duty to understand how and respond as needed.

Christie McDonald, Faculty Dean (2010-2017) and Karl Aspelund '17

Facing Page
"Increase Mather"
COURTESY OF
THE HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES

For the future Matherite who picks up



INTRODUCTION

“Photo of Increase Mather”
COURTESY OF THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
“Map of Boston from 17th Century”
HARVARD IN THE 17TH CENTURY
BY SAMUEL MORISON

Born in 1639 in Dorchester, Increase graduated from Harvard in 1659, 23 years after the school’s founding. In 1685, he would become the first Harvard president born in the New World. He was a respected Puritan minister, a leader with an important role in the political history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Harvard’s 7th and often absent president.

The Boston area of the late 17th century would be unrecognizable to us today. Boston itself was a town of less



first weaving one’s way through the streets of the North End to the ferry to Charlestown—which docked not too far. While he was president, Increase had a horse provided for him by Harvard in Charlestown that would take him down the long, muddy road past swamps, farmland, and Cambridge Common to Harvard Yard.



than 10,000 people, connected to the rest of Massachusetts by a narrow isthmus to Roxbury, then a separate town. Many of the city’s current neighborhoods were swampy extensions of the Charles River and Boston Harbor and would remain so for about another 150 years. From the North Church, the way to the colony’s only college lay by



“Increase’s house in the North End, built in 1677 near the Old North Church, stood until the early 20th century. A 7-11 convenience store now stands near the same location.”
COURTESY OF THE WIKIMEDIA ARCHIVES
“Photo of Increase Mather’s Tomb”
COURTESY OF KARL ASPELUND

INCREASE ARGUES THE CHARTERS



“Edmund Andros”
COURTESY OF
THE HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES
“Map of New
England from 1677
by John Foster”
WILLIAM
HUBBARD’S
“NARRATIVE OF
THE TROUBLES
WITH THE
INDIANS”

president under the acting documents—in July of the following year and continues to live in Boston.

December 1686: King James II, Charles’ successor, appoints Edmund Andros to govern a united Dominion of New England. Andros becomes very unpopular in his attempts to centralize power and his attempts to promote religious tolerance—specifically for the Anglican Church—puts him at odds with Boston’s Puritan establishment.

Spring 1687: James makes the Declarations of Indulgences to promote Catholicism. Today it is considered the first steps toward institutionalized religious tolerance in England but saw staunch opposition from the Puritan establishment. Increase was a leader in opposing the Declaration and was threatened with treason as a result.

April 1688: Increase boards a ship to London in secret to press the Puritans’ case against Andros to the King. He also seeks a new charter for Harvard and is introduced as the “Rector of the college in New-England.” James promises to Increase in October that the colony’s concerns will be addressed. Two tutors, John Leverett and William Brattle, manage the College in his stead.

December 1688: James is deposed in the Glorious Revolution, halting any discussion of redress for the colony.

June 1684: Under urging from King Charles II, the English royal court nulls the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and, with it, the 1650 charter that had governed Harvard.

June 1685: Increase Mather, Class of 1656, becomes Harvard’s acting president. He becomes “rector”—the equivalent of

April 1689: Andros is overthrown in a revolt in Boston, after he tries to subdue news of the Glorious Revolution. The Dominion of New England is dissolved, and the old colonies resume their previous forms of governance.

1690: Increase becomes the official agent of Massachusetts Bay to negotiate a new colonial charter with King William and Queen Mary.

1691: London creates a new charter for Massachusetts, which called for sweeping changes: unifying it and Plymouth colony and calling for religious tolerance and a royally appointed governor. Increase, whose many requests were rebuffed, is thus unable to restore old Puritan rule.

May 1692: Increase returns to Boston with two new charters at the height of his political influence.

June 1692: The colonial legislature approves Harvard’s new charter, formally appoints Increase as President, and appoints Increase’s nomination for governor, William Phips. The English royal court will reject the College charter as it does not allow for visitation rights by the King, and Phips will resign the governorship in November 1694 in the wake of the Salem Witch Trials, headed to London for a prison sentence and his relationship with the powerful Mathers in tatters.

1692-1701: Negotiations go back and forth about the College’s charter, seeking to balance desires for autonomy with royal demands for control. A 1697 compromise

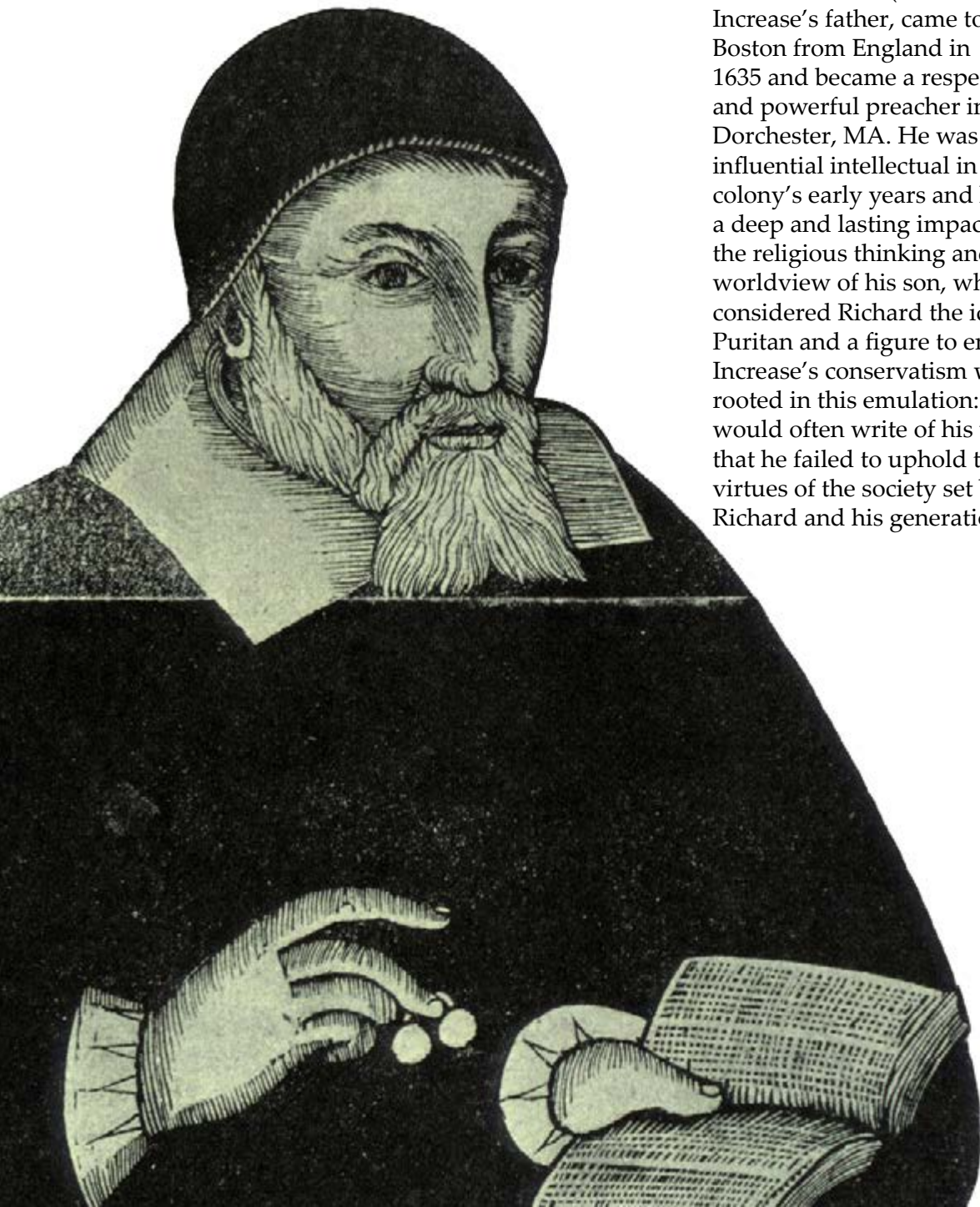
is rejected by the King and a 1700 charter lost at sea. Increase leaves the presidency in 1701 with the matter unresolved.

December 1707: In a resolve authorizing the election of John Leverett to the Harvard presidency, Massachusetts Governor John Dudley declares that the Charter of 1650 had never been “repealed or Nulled.” It remains the governing document of the University.

“Queen Mary and King William, Joint Regents of England” and “Map of England from 1733.” COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



THE REVERENDS MATHER



Richard Mather (1596-1669), Increase's father, came to Boston from England in 1635 and became a respected and powerful preacher in Dorchester, MA. He was an influential intellectual in the colony's early years and had a deep and lasting impact on the religious thinking and worldview of his son, who considered Richard the ideal Puritan and a figure to emulate. Increase's conservatism was rooted in this emulation: he would often write of his worries that he failed to uphold the virtues of the society set by Richard and his generation.

Left "Richard Mather"
COURTESY OF THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Below: Circled on this map of the North End from 1676 shows the location of the Charlestown ferry that Increase would take to campus and the North Church. Increase lived nearby.
COURTESY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

After returning from England in 1692, Increase would come to miss London's cosmopolitanism. He especially dreaded spending time in Cambridge, a backwater even by Boston's standards, and continued to live in the North End and preach at his beloved North Church throughout his presidency.

Increase's loathing to live in Cambridge presented the perfect opportunity for his political adversaries to force him out of the presidency. He would resign in 1702 after he was presented with an ultimatum by the Corporation: to live at Harvard or give it up. He would regularly warn of the Col-



lege's impending demise until his death in 1723.

Selected publications of Increase Mather:

Two Sermons Testifying against the Sin of Drunkenness

Two Sermons, Wherein is showed, what are the Signs of a Day of Trouble being Near Several Reasons Proving that Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox, is a Lawful Practice, and that it has been Blessed by God for the Saving of Many a Life

A Dissertation Concerning the Future Conversion of the Jewish Nation

The Mystery of Israel's Salvation

A Further Account of the Tryals of the New-England Witches

An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences

A Discourse Concerning Comets, wherein the Nature of Blazing Stars is Enquired into

A History of the War with the Indians in New-England

An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England, to hearken to the voice of God in his late and present Dispensations.

Cases of Conscience Concerning Witchcraft

COTTON AND INCREASE

Increase's legacy has become so intertwined with his son Cotton's that it is difficult to discuss the controversies around the Mather name without describing Cotton's role. The next few pages lay this out clearly, in the Witch Trials and slaveholding. Cotton was an even more prolific writer than his father and took his role as the scion of two prominent colonial families—the Cottons and the Mathers—very seriously, perhaps too seriously. Cotton had a very strong relationship with his father. They would not always agree (e.g. the disagreements

over the Witch Trials (below), but they often supported each other and worked together to resist the more liberal tendencies of the leadership of Harvard and the colony. Seen as pompous and stubborn, he was widely disliked by his fellow elites, who made their disdain clear when his fellow members of the Corporation refused to make him president after his father resigned, a position Cotton believed he deserved. Well before that, he had been rejected from the Corporation three times, until Increase stepped in.

Below right "Cotton Mather." Below left "More Wonders of the Invisible World" publication cover by Robert Calef. COURTESY OF THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

THE WITCH TRIALS: TAINTING THE MATHER LEGACY

The Salem Witch Trials saw a wave of hysteria from February 1692 to May 1693 that resulted in 20 women being executed for witchcraft.

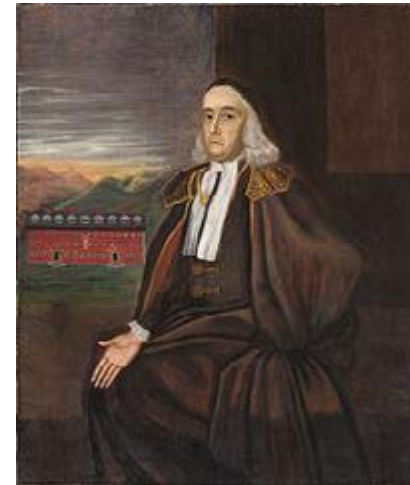
Increase and William Phips returned to Massachusetts from London in the summer of 1692, the height of the hysteria.

William Phips was the first royally appointed governor of Massachusetts from May 1692 to November 1694 and recommended by Increase for that role. While Increase, Cotton, and other ministers debated throughout the summer about whether "spectral evidence" could be used in the court proceedings, Phips ignored the controversies, afraid to create animosity with his lieutenant governor and his strong allies in the Mathers.

Throughout the debate on spectral evidence, Cotton was committed to the court proceedings, while Increase was more doubtful. Increase, for instance, called for presumed innocence of the accused. Both father and son, however, urged caution.

William Stoughton was handpicked by Increase to be the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts Bay. In May 1692, Increase also made him the chief judge of a special court to hear the large body of accusations of witchcraft from Salem and neighboring towns. He turned out to be much harsher than Puritan leaders imagined.

However, Phips disbanded Stoughton's court eventually, in October 1692, although Stoughton ignored him for a few months after. No one was condemned to death after February 1693, and all were released by May.



Stoughton, a powerful landowner, organized Phips' downfall after the governor's decisive rebuke of the witchcraft trials. The Mathers, more loyal to Stoughton,

did little to support Phips as Stoughton and other powerful Puritans moved to recall him to England for controversies related to the trials. Phips would resign from the governorship in November 1694 and die in London shortly thereafter.

The tainting of the Mathers from the witchcraft trials began with Robert Calef's 1697 book *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, a deliberate response to a book by Cotton on the trials as well, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Witchcraft*. Calef focused on Cotton's role in inflaming the hysteria and enabling Stoughton and his court.

More Wonders caused a great stir among the Puritan elite, who, mainly through the Mathers, refused to allow it to be printed in the colony (it would be printed in 1700 in London instead). Increase published a book responding to Calef's accusations in 1701 that accuses him of following Satan and scolds him for defying his colony's leadership.

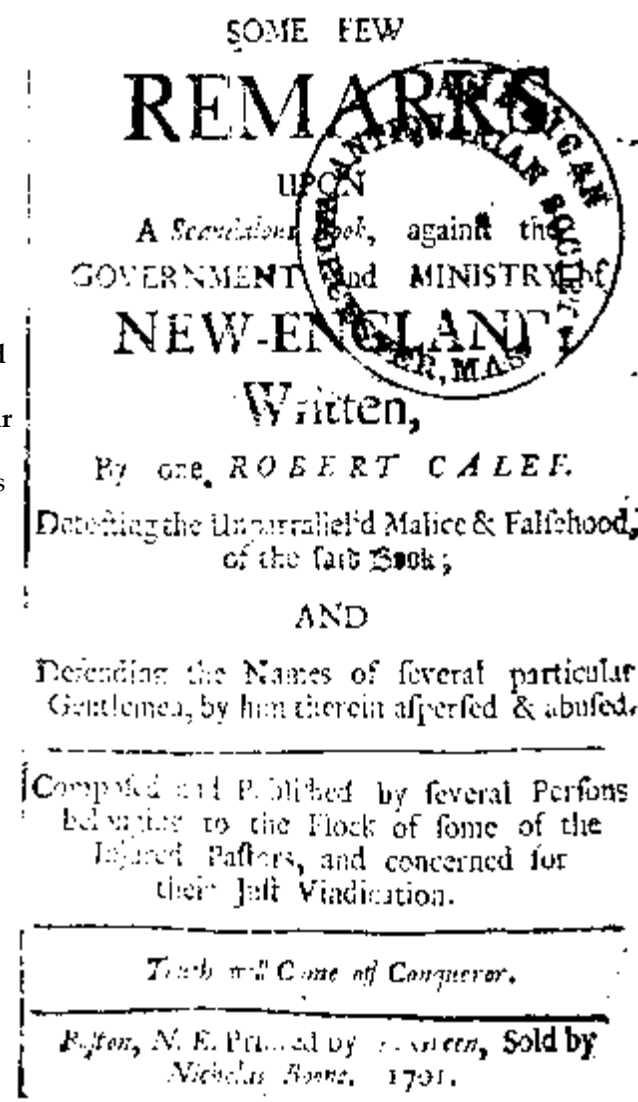
There is a longstanding account of Increase publicly burning Calef's book in Harvard Yard, the only book burning to ever take place there.

There are no contemporary sources describing such a burning. While book burning was a common practice in Western societies at the time, first references to it come in the early 19th century among historians who often held anti-Congregationalist views and as such saw the Mathers and Puritan clergy in a negative light generally. Its accuracy, therefore, is suspect.

"It was highly rejoicing to us when we heard that our Booksellers were so well acquainted with the Integrity of our Pastors, as that not one of them could admit of any of those Libels to be vended in their shops." – Cotton

The Harvard historian Samuel Morison wrote that Calef's book, (*Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*), **"tied a tin can to Cotton Mather which has rattled and banged through the pages of superficial and popular historians."** Through their close if sometimes fraught relationship as well as Increase's fiery response to the book's publication, that can was tied to the Mather name more broadly, including to Increase.

Top Left "William Phips." Below right "Some Few Remarks..." publication cover by Robert Calef. COURTESY OF THE WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY



SLAVERY

There are precious few primary source references to Increase's slave. The only reference to his name comes from Increase's will, written in 1719: *"I do hereby signify to my Executor, That it is my Mind & Will that my Negro Servant called Spaniard shall not be sold after my Decease; but I do then give Him his Liberty: Let him then be esteemed a Free Negro."*

Spaniard was part of the charter generation; that is, it is likely that he was among the slaves originally taken from West Africa to the New World. His name indicates that he spent some time in Spanish colonies to the south; it was common for slaves to come to Massachusetts through the Caribbean. Slaves of the charter generation often found places in society once freed, even if there is little indication of them in the historical record.

The report *Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History* writes, "Slaves of his generation might have labored on a plantation in Cuba or served on Spanish ships before being caught up in a New England-bound captain's hold...Though visible and allowed to sustain relationships (as in the case of Juba), slaves were at a fundamental level set apart from both the families that owned them and the free community of Cambridge."

It is unlikely that Increased acquired a slave as a house servant until later in his life. There were fewer than 200 slaves in Massachusetts in 1676 and 550 by 1708. The



slave population had jumped to 2,000 in 1715.

Cotton seems to have given the slave to his father in the 1690s, based on his diary entries. John Langdon Sibley, a long-term University Librarian in the 19th century, wrote that after the beginning of 1697, payments from the Corporation for the horse kept at Charlestown for Increase's trips to campus were sent to Mather "by his negro," quoting Corporation records. This suggests that Spaniard did indeed set foot on Harvard's campus during his life, even if he mostly stayed in the North End.

Cotton also owned a slave named Onesimus, who explained the practice of inoculation common in parts of Africa. Cotton would become a strong proponent of the practice during an epidemic in the 1720s. And while slavery was never mentioned in Increase's writings, Cotton often wrote of the condition of slaves in Massachusetts. For instance, he authored a pamphlet in 1706 that called on slave owners to educate their slaves in Christianity and to treat them with respect and kindness as they would any Christian.

Although no official legislation ever abolished slavery in Massachusetts, it died out after a series of court cases in the 1783 concluded that slavery violated the Commonwealth's constitution. Over the next decade, most slaves who were not freed by their owners won emancipation in individual lawsuits. The 1790 census listed no slaves in the state.

"Silhouette of Spaniard"
COURTESY OF
MATTHEW TERRY

INCREASE AT HARVARD

In *Queries Worthy of Consideration* Increase outlines his concerns with religious (i.e. non-Puritan) views of future members of the Harvard Corporation. As president, he tried to institutionalize Puritan orthodoxy at Harvard, including making some efforts to amend the proposed charter of the College. Some have interpreted his writings as supporting a religious test for admission to Harvard, although most biographers have doubted this.

To the Left - the equivalent of Harvard Senior Thesis Presentation from 1692 (translation below):

Questions to be Discussed under the most Distinguished and Honored C. Increase Mather, of Harvard College in Cambridge, the most well-read President amongst the New-Englanders.
In the Program for the {Bachelors of Arts} On the Sixth Day of June 1692.

A Salutatory Speech Came before these Words.

Whether Free Will always follows the final Command of the Intellect?

Jacob Allen, responding, agrees

Whether there can be middle Knowledge in God?

Samuel Moody, responding, disagrees

Whether Temporary Rule is founded in Grace?

John Emerson, responding, disagrees

Whether Good Intention is sufficient for Good Action?

John Sparhawk, responding, disagrees

Whether Thought itself is the Essence of the Mind?

Benjamin Pierpont, responding, disagrees

Whether the Knowledge of Angels is "Discursive"?

John Hancock, responding, agrees

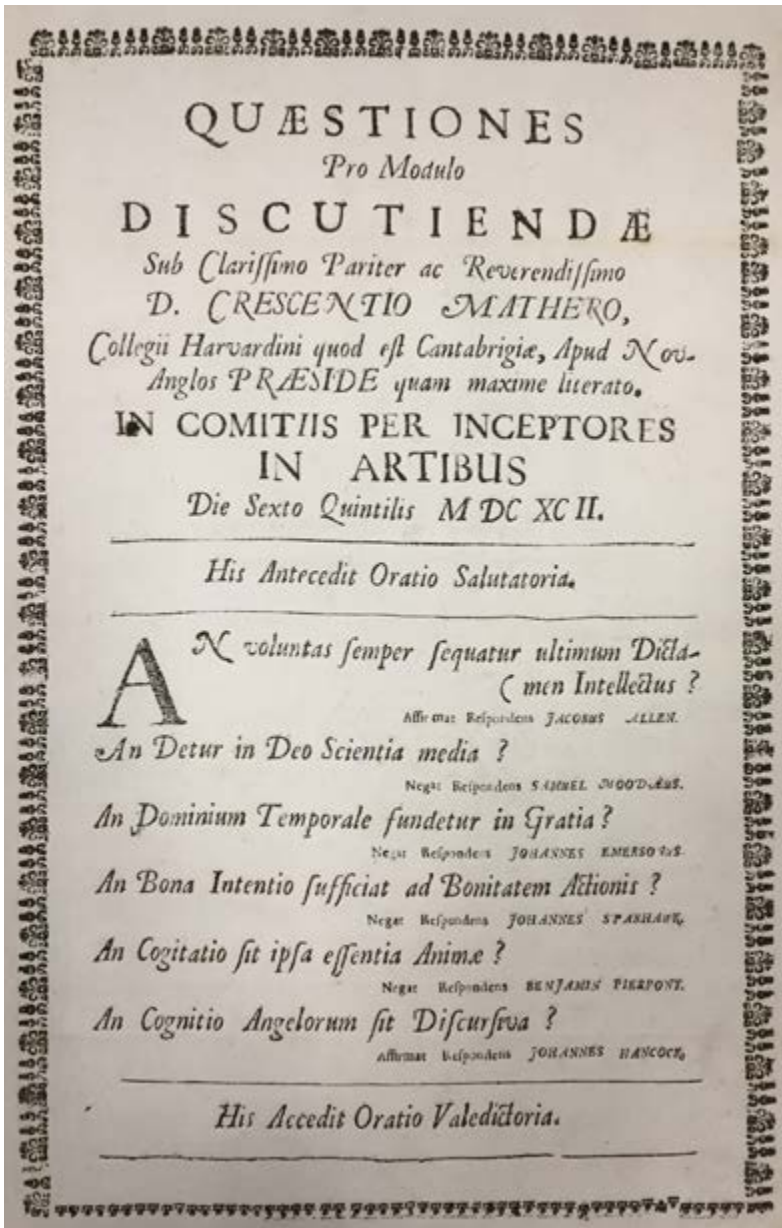
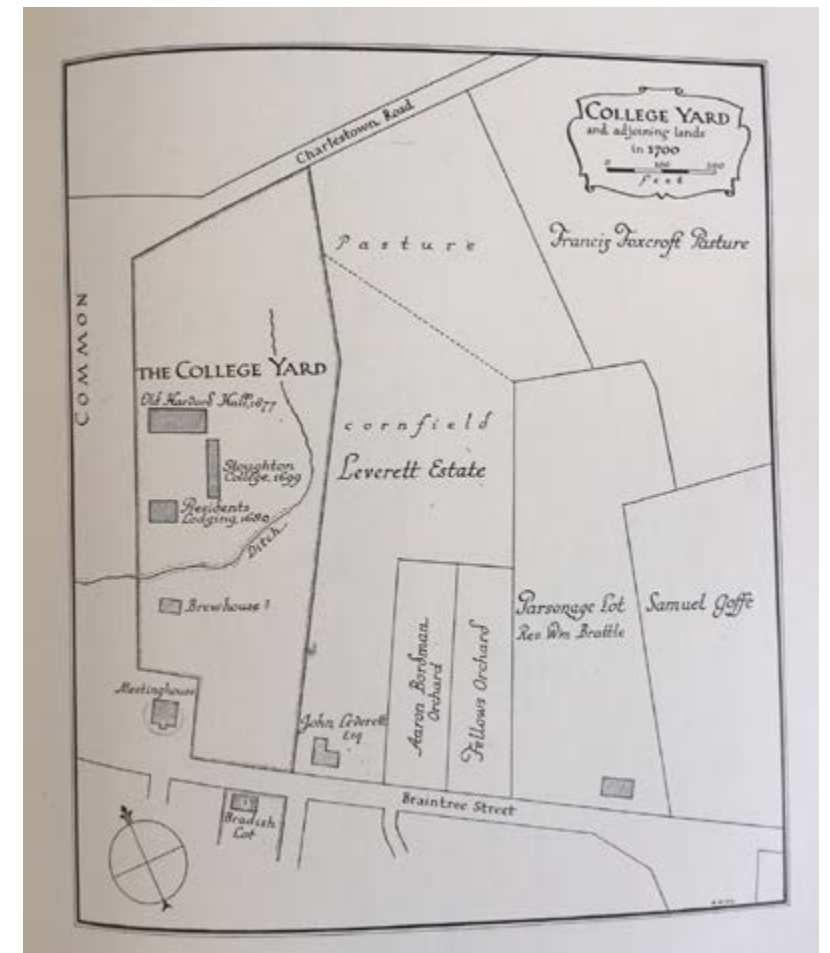
A Farewell Speech Followed these Words.

Increase's Harvard was a small school, dedicated to training ministers in an English university tradition modified to Puritanism. When Increase became President, there were a handful of buildings on campus and a few dozen students, mostly from the surrounding towns.

Massachusetts Bay was changing rapidly from the 1680s until Increase's death, as Puritan dominance began to decline. Seven years after Increase left the presidency, John Leverett would become the first president who was not a clergyman, and the school turned away from Puritanism.

One of the buildings was the dilapidated Indian College, an attempt to educate Massachusetts Indians that brought five Native students to Harvard and largely ended in 1670. The building still stood when Increase became President 15 years later but was used mainly to house Harvard's printing press, the first in the colony. It was demolished in 1693 and its bricks used to build the first Stoughton Hall.

A drawing of the Harvard campus in the 1600s from Samuel Morrison's *Harvard in the Seventeenth Century*. COURTESY OF SAMUEL MORISON Facing Page: Harvard Senior Theses from 1692 COURTESY OF THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



NAMING MATHER HOUSE: A 30 YEAR PROCESS

Abbott Lawrence Lowell, Kenneth Murdock, and Nathan Marsh Pusey photographs. COURTESY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES Mather House Design Sketch COURTESY OF SHEPLEY BULFINCH

January 1930: “President Lowell had all his Masters of the new Houses selected... and...was casting about for advice as to appropriate names for the new structures....” “The chief proponent for Increase Mather was Professor Kenneth Murdock [Professor of English, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 1931-1936] the Master-designate of what was to become Leverett House.” Murdock, a specialist of 17th century history and theology in New England, suggested the name of Increase Mather, but his views “did not prevail.” “There is no record...as to the arguments which resulted in the elimination for Mather’s name for consideration,” although debate about his political negotiations for the Charter and his son’s and his attitudes about the witch trials were likely at issue. (*Memorandum from Nathan M. Pusey, Increase Mather and the Original Houses, September 29, 1966*)

October 1956: University President Nathan Marsh Pusey announced “The Program for Harvard College,” Harvard’s first major capital campaign. Financing the construction of a new House is one of the campaign’s goals, an effort to alleviate the pervasive overcrowding in the College dormitories.

September 1966: President Pusey commissions a memorandum that reviews the history of naming the houses in the 1930s, and follows up on Kenneth Murdock’s original proposal by naming the tenth house Mather House after Increase.



-Lowell



Murdock-



-Pusey



Mather House-

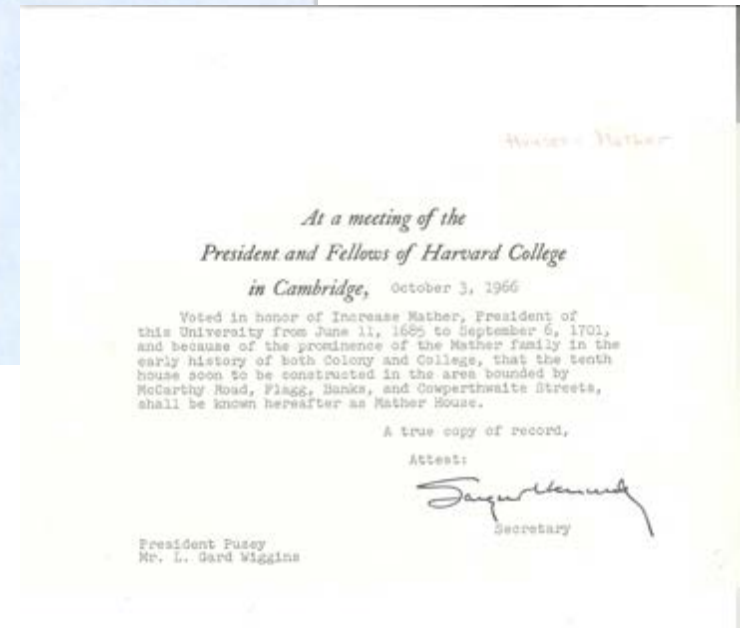
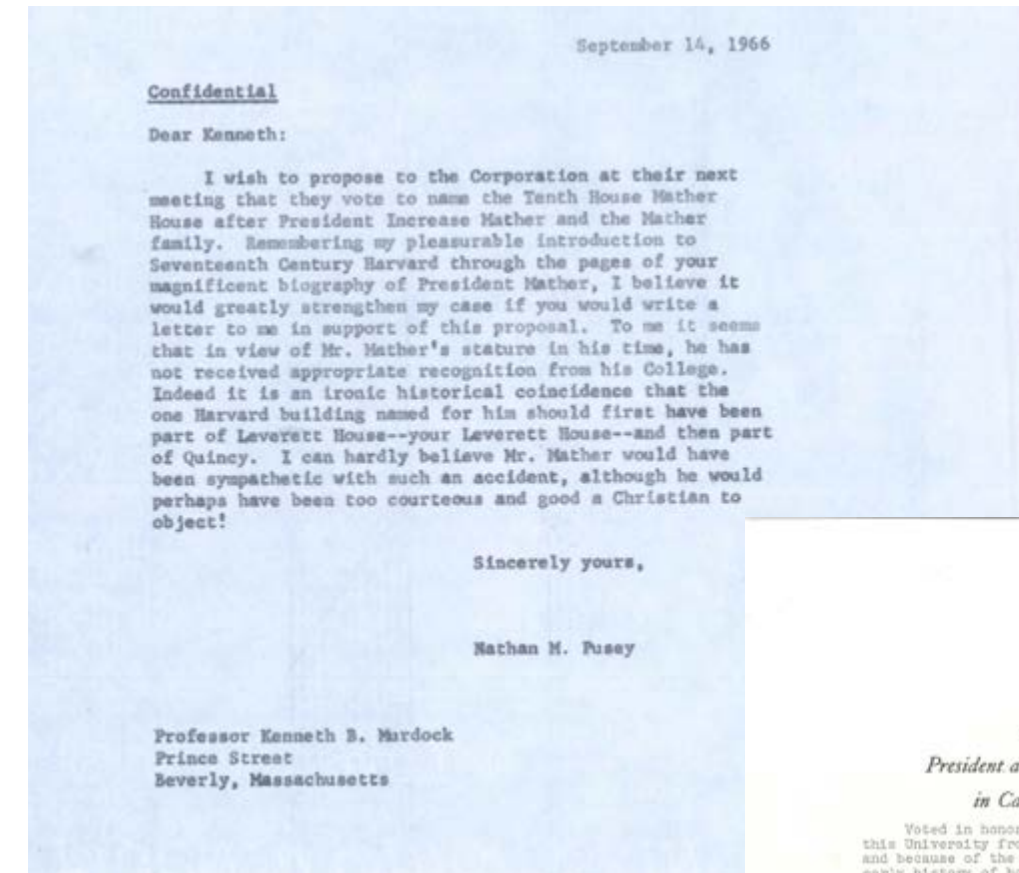
October 1966: The President and Fellows of Harvard College announce their vote to name the new House Mather House.

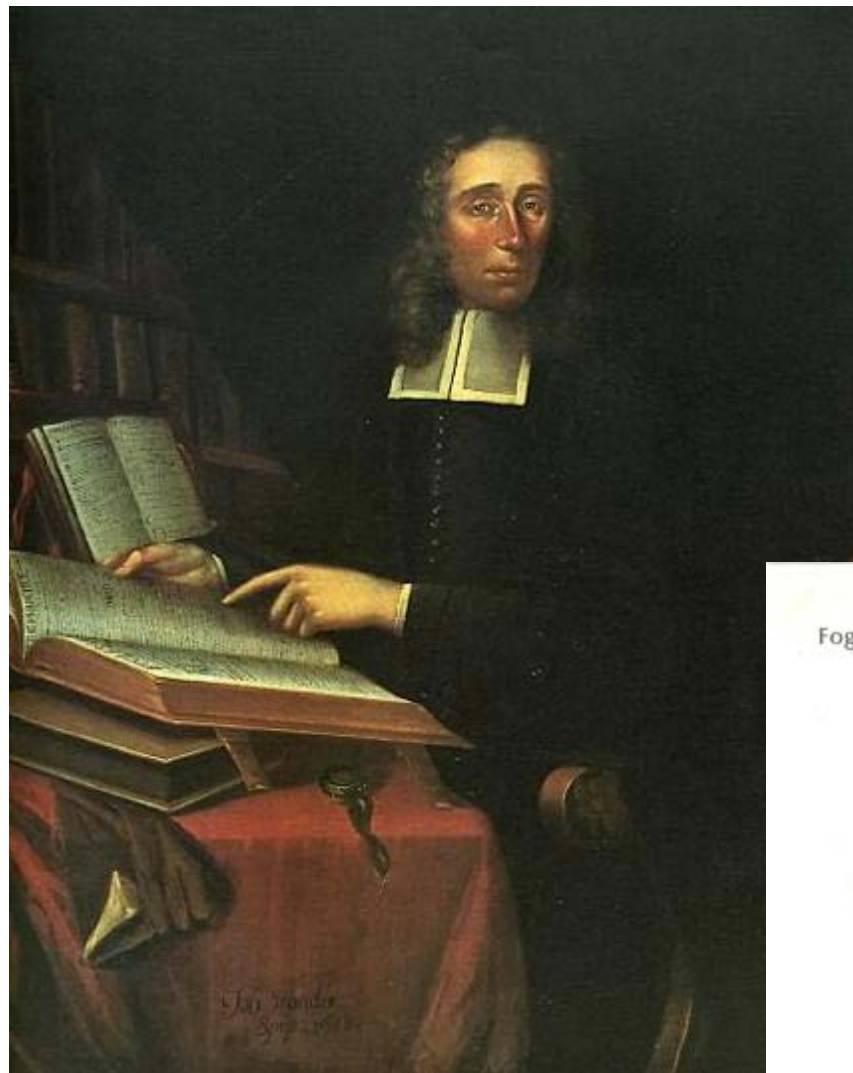
1967-1971: Construction of Mather House, lead architect Jean-Paul Carlhian with Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott. The public spaces and Faculty Deans’

residence are deemed among Harvard’s finest examples of Brutalist architecture (2007).

1970: Mather House opens to undergraduate residents where “everyone is guaranteed a single room....” (Harvard Crimson, 1970).

Confidential Letter from President Pusey to Kenneth Murdock, and Announcement from the President and Fellows of Harvard College of 10/3/66. COURTESY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES





Portrait of Increase
Mather and Letter
from the Fogg Art
Museum to Bill
Bentinck-Smith
to COURTESY
OF HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
ARCHIVES

House: (M.H.)

Fogg Art Museum Harvard University - Cambridge - Massachusetts 02138

February 9, 1967

Mr. William Bentinck-Smith
Massachusetts Hall
Harvard University

Dear Bill:

At last I have the information you requested in your letter of October 26th! The portrait of Increase Mather by Alexander James (H 407), which is now in Leverett House, is indeed a copy of the portrait by John van der Borcht owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society (and reproduced in Kenneth Murdock's book).

I have been in touch with Mr. Richard Gill, the Master of Leverett House, and he has generously agreed to let the portrait be reserved for the new Mather House. Since that is the only portrait of Increase Mather owned by the University, we are all agreed that Mather House should have it.

With many thanks for your patience in this matter, I am,

Sincerely yours,
John Coolidge
John Coolidge

cc: Mr. Richard Gill
JC/em

University Mail

