

Edward Fenner papers 1724-1802

John Hay Library Special Collections
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Collection overview

Title:	Edward Fenner papers
Date range:	1724-1802
Creator:	Fenner, Edward, 1736-
Extent:	0.25 Linear feet
Abstract:	The Edward Fenner papers consist of correspondence, family records, deeds, accounts, receipts, orders, invoices, and other documents relating to Fenner's family background, his life and his service on the Town Council of Johnston, Rhode Island during the latter half of the eighteenth century.
Language of materials:	English
Repository:	John Hay Library Special Collections
Collection number:	Ms. Fenner

Scope & content

A small collection of 24 items, covering the period 1724-1802. These documents are of primary interest for the study of Rhode Island during the eighteenth century, including local and colony governance, legal and economic practices, family life and religious affiliation, as well as local contributions to Rhode Island's participation in the Revolutionary War.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into 3 series:

- Series 1. Letters received by Fenner
- Series 2. Manuscripts by Fenner
- Series 3. Documents and miscellaneous items

Series 1 is ordered alphabetically by author. Series 3 is arranged chronologically.

Biographical note on Edward Fenner and the Fenner family

Biography of Edward Fenner, Jr. (1736?-1813)

Edward Fenner, Jr. was born 1736 in Cranston, Providence, RI, the fifth of ten children born to Edward Fenner and Amey Borden (married April 11, 1728). He married Dinah Potter on March 14, 1757 in Cranston. They had three children:

- Edward (ca. 1760 - March 19, 1782)
- Dinah (Nov. 9, 1772-Nov. 26, 1833) who married Thomas Sprague
- John (March 27, 1778- Feb. 22, 1858) who married Catherine Beverly

In addition to these children, Fenner had a son named Abel whose birthdate is unknown.

After the death of his first wife, Edward Fenner, Jr. married Welthian Colegrove on March 30, 1786 in Foster, RI.

He was President of the Johnston Town Council (in 1795) and also the town treasurer (dates unknown). He died on May 31, 1813 in Cranston, RI.

Fenner family history

The first Fenner to arrive in Rhode Island was Captain Arthur Fenner, who immigrated to Providence in 1649. He and his wife Mehitable Waterman were Edward Fenner, Jr.'s great grandparents. The house Captain Arthur and his son Thomas built in 1677 still stands in Cranston, RI.

Among Edward Fenner, Jr.'s relatives was a cousin once removed named Arthur Fenner whose wharf was used to launch the attack on the Gaspee on June 10, 1772. Known as the Gaspee Affair, this burning of a British Royal Naval Ship and the first intentional shooting of a British military man was Providence's equivalent to the Boston Tea Party.

Edward Fenner, Jr. was a second cousin to Rhode Island Governor Arthur Fenner whose son James Fenner was also a governor of Rhode Island. Governor James Fenner was the top-ranked student in the 1789 graduating class at Brown University.

Sources of information: Richard Arthur Fenner and Brown University Archives.

Access & use

Access to the collection:

There are no restrictions on access and an advance appointment is not necessary to see the collection.

Use of materials:

Researchers are advised that express written permission to reproduce, quote, or otherwise publish any portion or extract from this collection must be obtained from the Brown University Library. Although Brown University has physical ownership of the collection and the materials contained therein, it does not claim literary rights. It is up to the researcher to determine the owners of the literary rights and to obtain any necessary permissions from them.

Preferred citation:

Edward Fenner papers Fenner (Edward) papers,
Ms. Fenner, John Hay Library Special Collections

Contact information:

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Administrative information

About the collection

Aquisition:

Processing information: The title page image is a detail of a religious acrostic poem from Series 1. Letters received by Fenner and manuscripts.

About the finding aid

Encoding: This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2013-02-20

Descriptive rules: Finding aid based on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

Additional information

Other information: Brown University Library catalog record for this collection:
[Edward Fenner papers](#)

Search terms

Names: Bowen, Pardon, 1757-1826
Bushee, William
Carter, John, 1745-1814
Fenner family
Fenner, Edward, 1736-
Fiske, Caleb, 1753-1835
Pearce, Ephraim
Spencer, Benjamin
Ward, Henry, 1732-1797
Ward, Samuel, 1756-1832

Subjects: Baptists--Rhode Island
Cost and standard of living--Rhode Island--18th century

Johnston (R.I.)--History--18th century
Johnston (R.I.)--Officials and employers--
Correspondence
Rhode Island--History--18th century
Rhode Island--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

Types of materials:

Certificates
Deeds
Legal documents
Letters (Correspondence)
Poems

Occupations:

Baptists
Public officers

Inventory

Series 1, Letters received by Fenner and manuscripts, 1777-1789

Container	Description	Date
Box 1, Folder 1	Bushee, William to Fenner, Edward Autograph letter signed, 2.0 pages Scope and Contents note Stampless cover. Left Fenner's and others' notes at lawyer's. Wants to settle his business somehow before he leaves this part of country. Expresses shame at his conduct. Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [2] Names: Bushee, William Fenner, Edward	undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Pearce, Ephraim to Fenner, Edward Paulings Town, NY Autograph letter signed, 1.0 leaf Scope and Contents note 1 conjoined leaf as stampless cover. Went to Genesee Country and back in 25 days, purchased a proprietor's right; thinks their money well spent.	1788 June 16

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [22]

Names: Bushee, William
Fenner, Edward

Box 1, Folder 4

Spencer, Benjamin to Fenner, Edward,
Durham

Autograph letter signed, 1.0 leaf

Scope and Contents note

1 conjoined leaf as stampless cover.
After visit at Fenner's had smallpox;
infected wife who died from it. Had
other members of his family inoculated
and all survived.

1777

February 23

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [18]

Names: Fenner, Edward
Spencer, Benjamin

Box 1, Folder 5

Ward, Henry to Fenner, Edward,
Providence

Autograph letter signed, 1.0 leaf

Scope and Contents note

1 conjoined leaf as stampless cover.
Is opposed [in running for office]
and doesn't know opponent's name.
Asks Fenner's help and friendship on
election day.

1789 April
13

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [20]

Names: Fenner, Edward
Ward, Henry

Box 1, Folder 6	Ward, Samuel to Fenner, Edward, Providence	1781 April 10
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Autograph letter signed, 1.0 leaf
Scope and Contents note

Stampless cover. At direction of
general assembly, requests Fenner to
furnish dates of enlistment of men of
his town for past year.

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [19]

Names: Fenner, Edward
Ward, Samuel

Series 2, Manuscripts by Fenner,

Container	Description	Date
Box 1, Folder 2	It may be held by...	undated

Manuscript, 2.0 pages

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [21]

Names: Fenner, Edward

Box 1, Folder 2 Acrostic poems by Edward Fenner undated
Manuscript, 2.0 pages

Scope and Contents note

Three religious acrostic poems spelling respectively Sarah Fenner, Edward Fenner, Welthan Fenner.

Accession no: **Immediate**
Source of
Acquisition note

A54457 [7]

Names: Fenner, Edward

Series 3, Documents and miscellaneous items, 1724-1802

Container	Description	Date
Box 1, Folder 7	Record of births Birth records, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [23]	1724 September 22-1746 February 15
Box 1, Folder 8	Deed of land from Edward Fenner, Sr. to Edward Fenner Johnston, RI Deed, 3.0 pages Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [4]	1760

	Names:	Fenner, Edward Sr. Fenner, Edward	
Box 1, Folder 9	Invoice of provisions to Edward Fenner Invoice, 1.0 page Accession no:	1769-1775 Immediate Source of Acquisition note	
		A54457 [8]	
	Names:	Fenner, Edward	
Box 1, Folder 10	Deed of land from John and Amey Carter to Edward Fenner Providence Deed, 4.0 pages Accession no:	1772 December 19 Immediate Source of Acquisition note	
		A54457 [18]	
	Names:	Carter, Amey Carter, John, 1745-1814 Fenner, Edward	
Box 1, Folder 11	General Assembly...to Town of Johnston... Rhode Island Manuscript, 1.0 page Accession no:	1776 Sep Immediate Source of Acquisition note	
		A54457 [6]	
	Names:	State of Rhode Island	

Box 1, Folder 12	In council of war... Johnston, RI Manuscript, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note	1778 December 9
	A54457 [24] Names: State of Rhode Island	
Box 1, Folder 13	Deed of land from Thomas and Phebe Fenner to Edward Fenner Scituate [RI] Deed, 1.0 page Scope and Contents note	1779 February 22
	Filed with oversize manuscripts. Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note	
	A54457 [6] Names: Fenner, Edward Fenner, Phebe Fenner, Thomas	
Box 1, Folder 14	Edward Fenner's district of highway... Johnston [RI] Manuscript, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note	1780 October 3
	A54457 [15] Names: Fenner, Edward Town Council in Johnston	

Box 1X,	Deed of land from William and Huldah Borden to Edward Fenner Johnston[, RI] Deed, 1.0 page	1782 December 30
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Scope and Contents note

Filed with oversize manuscripts.

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [5]
Names: Borden, Huldah
Borden, William
Fenner, Edward

Box 1X,	Itemized and receipted bill for services and medication by Dr. Pardon Bowen to Edward Fenner Providence Itemized and receipted bill, 4.0 pages	1783 July 15-1797 June 7
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Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [11]
Names: Bowen, Pardon
Fenner, Edward

Box 1, Folder 15	Bill for schooling from Solomon Bradford to Edward Fenner Bill, 1.0 page	1785 May 5
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Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [13]
Names: Bradford, Solomon
Fenner, Edward

Box 1, Folder 16 Memorandum of mortgage from Edward Fenner to Caleb Fisk 1785 May 17
Mortgage, 1.0 page

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [10]
Names: Fenner, Edward
Fisk, Caleb

Box 1X, Mortgage deed from Edward Fenner to Caleb Fisk Providence 1785 May 9-1802 June 9
Mortgage, 2.0 pages

Scope and Contents note

On verso: Discharge of mortgage. Filed with oversize manuscripts.

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

A54457 [12]
Names: Fenner, Edward
Fisk, Caleb

Box 1, Folder 17	Receipt of papers of town treasurer Johnston [RI] Receipt, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [9]	1785 November 18
Box 1, Folder 18	Certificate of Edward Fenner's membership in Baptist Church of Coventry by Joshua Webb Clark Foster [RI] Certificate, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [14] Names: Clark, Joshua Webb Fenner, Edward	1788 May 31
Box 1, Folder 19	Receipted bill from Benjamin Dyer to Edward Fenner Providence receipted bill, 1.0 page Accession no: Immediate Source of Acquisition note A54457 [3] Names: Dyer, Benjamin Fenner, Edward	1797 June 7
Box 1X,	Mortgage deed from Edward Fenner to Caleb Fisk Providence Mortgage deed, 2.0 pages	1801 May 23-1802 June 9

Scope and Contents note

On verso: Discharge of mortgage. Filed with oversize manuscripts.

Accession no: **Immediate
Source of
Acquisition note**

Names: A54457 [1]
Fenner, Edward
Fisk, Caleb