

# **The Job Pierson Family**

**A Register of Its Papers in the Library of Congress**

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the assistance of Paul Colton**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**Washington, D.C.**

**1994**

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

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Manuscript Division, 1998**

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## 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; 5 containers plus 1 oversize; 1.5 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Abstract:** 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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Names:

Pierson, Job, 1791-1860

Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845

Pearson family

Pierson, Bowen Whiting

Pierson, Clarissa Bulkeley

Pierson, Philip T. H.

Williams College--Students

Pierson, Job, 1824-1896. Papers of Job Pierson

### 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

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)

## Administrative Information

### 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. 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.).

**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.

## Container List

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