

**Ebenezer Hazard papers, 1766-1813**  
**1766-1813**  
**Mss.B.H338**

American Philosophical Society  
105 South Fifth Street  
Philadelphia, PA, 19106  
215-440-3400  
[manuscripts@amphilsoc.org](mailto:manuscripts@amphilsoc.org)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	American Philosophical Society
<b>Creator</b>	Hazard, Ebenezer, 1744-1817
<b>Title</b>	Ebenezer Hazard papers, 1766-1813
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1766-1813
<b>Call number</b>	Mss.B.H338
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Volume(s) 1 volume; 33 items.
<b>Extent</b>	1 volume; 33 items.
<b>Location</b>	LH-MV-E-2
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Container</b>	1
<b>Container</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>This is miscellaneous material relating to postal affairs, including Hazard's appointments in the service, and certificates of membership in various institutions. There are letters from Richard Bache, George Clinton, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Samuel Huntington, Thomas Jefferson, Timothy Matlack, Samuel Miller, George Washington, and others. One manuscript is endorsed, "My Covenant with the most high God," which is Hazard's reaffirmation of the vows made for him by his parents at the time of his baptism.</p>

## Background note

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Ebenezer Hazard (1744-1817, APS 1781) was a publisher, businessman, an editor of historical documents and Postmaster-General of the United States. His two-volume work *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers and Other Authentic Documents: Intended As Materials for An History of the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1792-1794) was the first published collection of American state papers and historical documents. As an excellent Greek scholar, Hazard assisted Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, in completing his translation of the New Testament for the Thomson Bible.

Hazard was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the son of a merchant named Samuel Hazard and his wife Catherine Clarkson. He was educated at the Academy of Samuel Finley in Nottingham, PA, and at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton, University), where he graduated in 1762.

Several years after college Hazard became a partner in the publishing firm of Noel & Hazard of New York from 1769 to 1775, and later joined the firm of Benedict & Hazard. On May 1, 1775 he was authorized by the Committee of Safety of New York to reorganize the local post office, and on October 5 was commissioned postmaster of the city of New York by the Continental Congress. The following year in late 1776 he was appointed surveyor-general of the Post Office of the United States. On January 28, 1782 he succeeded Richard Bache as Postmaster-General. He administered the Post Office with great efficiency and economy, and is one of the few postmasters to have made the post office pay its way. After the reorganization of the federal government under the Constitution, Hazard was replaced by Samuel Osgood. After quitting the federal government, he moved from Philadelphia to New York and back again in an effort to make a living. In Philadelphia Hazard served as the first secretary of the Insurance Company of North America and for many years as manager of the Schuylkill Bridge Company and the Delaware & Schuylkill Canal Company. All were moderately successful ventures.

However, Hazard's greatest passion was intellectual and historical. His duties as surveyor-general of the post office (1777-1782) entailed extensive travel, and he took advantage of the opportunity to collect the documentary evidence and source-materials of early American history. In response to his petition to the Continental Congress on July 11, 1778, he was given permission to copy documents in the Continental archives, as well as a grant of one thousand dollars for expenses. He collected most of these materials before 1782, when he became Postmaster-General. The first two volumes entitled *Historical Collections* were published in Philadelphia from 1792-1794. Although subsequent volumes were planned, the first two sold so poorly that the project had to be abandoned. He also worked as a Greek translator of the New Testament for another project, the Thomson Bible published in 1808, which proved no more profitable.

Hazard was greatly concerned about the welfare of native Americans, and published a paper in 1816 entitled "Remarks on Mr. Schermerhorn's Report Concerning the Western Indians" (Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 2nd series, vol. IV).

On September 11, 1783 Hazard wed Abigail Arthur of Shrewsbury, N.J.. They had one son, Samuel Hazard, who carried on his father's legacy of preserving historical documents. An archaeologist, Samuel Hazard published several multivolume historical registers and references, including the Register of

Pennsylvania (16 vols., 1828-1836), the Annals of Pennsylvania, 1609-1682 (Philadelphia, 1850) and Pennsylvania Archives, 1682-1790 (12 vols., 1853). Ebenezer Hazard died on June 13, 1817.

## Scope & content

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This collection consists primarily of letters and notes addressed to Ebenezer Hazard, although there are also a couple of items written or signed by him. The papers deal with official business as well as personal matters. The items, which are in English, are dated between 1766 and 1813.

The earliest item, dated 1766 and reaffirmed in 1767, is a "Covenant with the Most High God." It is Hazard's reaffirmation of the vows made for him by his parents at the time of his baptism. Additional items in the collection reflect Hazard's active role in the Presbyterian Church (22 May 1792; 18 May 1804; 21 May 1813).

Some of the material relates to Hazard's appointments as New York's deputy postmaster as well as United States postmaster general. This includes letters by Benjamin Franklin acknowledging Hazard's application to be appointed postmaster of New York (3 August 1775), his commission as deputy postmaster of New York (21 September 1775), and a letter about the urgent need for a post to Albany (25 September 1775). There is also a commission appointing Hazard surveyor of post roads (6 January 1776), Hazard's oath of allegiance to the United States (22 June 1778), and a note by John Hancock excusing Hazard from all military duty while serving as postmaster general (9 July 1776). The collection includes six passes made out to Hazard, including one signed by Hancock that allowed him "to pass and repass at all Times without the least Hindrance or Molestation" (30 October 1777) during his tenure as postmaster. The three letters by George Washington deal with military matters, alterations to a post route in the wake of an accident, and, most interestingly, a request for detailed "receipts and expenditures of the Post-Office for two years," that would help explain why the office's profitability had been declining (3 July 1789).

Hazard's commitment to collect and publish historical records is evident in a letter from Thomas Jefferson that welcomes Hazard's proposal to publish "the American State papers," an "undertaking of great utility to the continent in general." Jefferson promises to contribute anything in his power to the compilation (30 April 1775).

Of particular interest is a detailed letter by Return Meigs that discusses the "object of schools in the Cherokee Nation." Meigs, who repeatedly refers to the Reverend Blackburn's plan, suggests that one reason why "efforts to civilize the Indians had never succeeded" was that they "were urged to believe, as absolutely necessary, things which they could not." He dismisses "the Spaniard's boast that they have civilized the Indians in South America," and concludes that "the time has arrived for [the Cherokee's] civilization" (5 April 1805).

Finally, the collection includes a number of items that document Hazard's membership in various civic and learned associations, such as "The Independent Company of Free Citizens" (9 October 1775), the American Philosophical Society (19 and 27 January 1781, 20 January 1786), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (9 March 1781), the Insurance Company of North America (13 January 1800), the New York Historical Society (24 October 1810), and the Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves in New York (6 July 1787).

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

## Provenance

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### Acquisition Information

Purchased and accessioned, 1943 (1943 84358).

## Indexing Terms

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### Corporate Name(s)

- American Academy of Arts and Sciences -- Membership.
- American Philosophical Society. Membership.
- New-York Historical Society -- Membership.

### Genre(s)

- Certificates.
- Institutional Records
- Military Records
- Official Government Documents and Records
- Political Correspondence

### Personal Name(s)

- Bache, Richard, 1737-1811
- Clinton, George, 1739-1812
- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790
- Hancock, John, 1737-1793

- Huntington, Samuel , 1731-1796
- Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826
- Matlack, Timothy, 1736-1829
- Miller, Samuel, 1769-1850
- Washington, George, 1732-1799

### **Subject(s)**

- American Revolution
- Government Affairs
- Military History
- Postal service -- United States.

## **Other Descriptive Information**

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FILM 234 FRAME 1-33

## **Other Descriptive Information**

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Item no. 20 not found July 18, 1983. No description available.

## **Other Descriptive Information**

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The Ebenezer Hazard Collection contains a range of documents relating to the early history and establishment of the postal service in the new American nation. Ebenezer Hazard was a New Yorker who served as a deputy postmaster general during the American Revolution and early republic. Included in the collection are two letters from Benjamin Franklin, one appointing him to the post and another advising him to quickly establish a post to Albany. There are a series of military passes issued to Hazard, lending insight into how the postal service operated during the war years. Other correspondents include Thomas Jefferson, who wrote a letter to Hazard in 1775 endorsing a proposed public papers project, and George Washington, who corresponded with Hazard as General of the Army during the war and as President.

Also of note in the collection are records of cultural institutions, such as the APS and the New-York Historical Society. Hazard has, for instance, the record of an APS election of new members in 1781.



## Collection Inventory

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### Papers

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**Hazard, Ebenezer, 1744-1817** Dec. 13, 1766 7 1/4" x 9"

1 [Covenant with the most high God]

New York, renewed March 1, 1767. A.D.S. 1p. and end: "My covenant with the most high God."  
FILM 234 FRAME 1

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**Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826** April 30, 1775 7 1/4" x 9

2 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard 3/4"

Virginia, A.L.S. 1p., add. and end. Offers to send material for the collection of American state papers Hazard plans to publish; recommends that he apply also to Colonel Richard Bland. Cannot find in print 8/43 Printed: APS Library Bulletin for 1943, p.75. Boyd, I, 164-165. FILM 199 FRAME 223, FILM 234 FRAME 2

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**Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790** August 3, 1775

3 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

Concerning Hazard's application to be appointed Postmaster of New York.

**Other Descriptive Information**

Film 54-64 Frame 210

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**Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790** Sept. 25, 1775

5 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

Regarding the necessity of establishing a Post to Albany, "as we have an Army on your Frontiers."

**Other Descriptive Information**

Film 54-64 Frame 211

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**New York. Independant Company of Free** Oct. 9, 1775 7 1/2" x 3

**Citizens** 3/4"

## Papers

6 Notice of a meeting to be held at two  
o'clock

Addressed to Mr. Ebenezer Hazard. Printed D. S: Robt. Manley, clerk. 1p. and end. FILM234  
FRAME6

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**Bache, Richard, 1737-1811** January 6, 1776 13" x 8"

7 Commission appointing Ebenezer Hazard  
surveyor of the post roads,

[i.e. 1777?] for three years. Philadelphia, January 6, 1776 [i.e. 1777?]. By authority of the Congress.  
A.D.S. 1p. and end. Seal. FILM 234 FRAME 7 FILM 54-Family FRAME 27

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**Washington, George, 1732-1799** May 2, 1776 8" x 12 1/2"

8 Letter to [Ebenezer] Hazard

A.L. in 3d P. 1p. and add. Is unable to assign a reason for the four regiments left at Boston being  
reduced to 1430 effective men. (Not in Fitzpatrick) FILM234 FRAME 8

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**Bleecker, Anthony Lispenard ?** June 24, 1776 8" x 6 1/4"

9 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard

New York, A.D.S. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 9

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**Hancock, John, 1737-1793** July 9, 1776 8 1/4" x 12

10 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard 1/2"

Philadelphia, A.L.S. president [of Congress]. 1p. and add. Informs him that by resolution of  
Congress, a postmaster while in office is excused from military duty. FILM 234 FRAME 10

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**Clinton, George, 1739-1812** Aug. 30, 1776 8 1/2" x 3

11 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard 1/2"

King's Bridge, A.D.S. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME11

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**McKesson, John, 1734-1798** December 16, 1776 8" x 4 1/2"

12 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard

at Committee of safety for the state of New York, Fishkill. Printed D. filled in in ms. S: John  
McKesson, secry. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 12

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## Papers

<b>Hancock, John, 1737-1793</b>	May 8, 1777	8" x 12 1/2"
13 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard		
Philadelphia, A(?) D.S. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 13		
<b>Hancock, John, 1737-1793</b>	October 30, 1777	6" x 4"
14 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard		
D.S. 1p. and end. On parchment. FILM 234 FRAME 14		
<b>Hazard, Ebenezer, 1744-1817</b>	June 22, 1778	8 1/4" x 13 1/2"
15 [Oath of allegiance to the United States] Lancaster county		
A.D.S. and att: N (?) Hubley. 1p . and end. FILM 234 FRAME 15		
<b>Huntington, Samuel, 1731-1796</b>	Dec. 9, 1780	9 1/2" x 7 3/4"
16 Military pass issued to Ebenezer Hazard		
Philadelphia, A.D.S: Sam. Huntington, President of Congress. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 16		
<b>American Philosophical Society</b>	January 19, 1781	7 1/2" x 12 1/2"
17 [Proceedings of the election of new members] at the meeting		
Ms. D. 1p. and end. In DuSimitiere's hand. This is more extensive than a copy of the Minutes for the stated meeting, as it gives not only the names of the persons. FILM 234 FRAME 17		
<b>Matlack, Timothy, 1736-1829</b>	January 27, 1781	7" x 11 3/4"
18 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard		
Philadelphia, A.L.S. as secretary of the American philosophical society. 2p. and add., end. Notifies him of his election to membership in the American philosophical society. FILM 234 FRAME 18		
<b>American Academy of Arts and Sciences</b>	January 31, 1781	15 1/2" x 10"
19 Certificate of membership issued to Ebenezer Hazard		
Printed D. filled in in ms. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 19		

## Papers

**Willard, Joseph, 1738-1804**

March 9, 1781

7 1/4" x 9

21 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

1/4"

Beverly, A.L.S. 1p. and end. Notice of his election to membership in the American academy of arts and sciences. FILM 234 FRAME 21

**Washington, George, 1732-1799**

May 9, 1781

8 1/4" x 13

22 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

1/2"

New Windsor, L.S. 1p. and add., end. Regarding the safety of the post riders. FILM234 FRAME 22

**Livingston, Walter, 1740-1797**

Jan. 17, 1786

7 1/4" x 9

23 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

1/4"

Board of treasury, A(?)L.S., signed also by Arthur Lee. 1p. and add. Notification that a warrant for \$4,000 has been drawn on him from the Post office revenue. FILM234 FRAME23

**American Philosophical Society.**

Jan. 20, 1786

24 Certificate of Membership

Signed by B. Franklin, James Hutchinson, Sam. Magaw, John Foulke, John Ewing, Wm. White, Sa. Vaughan. Hazard was elected Jan. 19, 1781.

**Keese, John**

July 6, 1787

7 1/4" x 9

25 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

1/4"

New York, A.L.S. 1p. and add. Notifies him of his election to membership in the Society for promoting the manumission of slaves. FILM 234 FRAME 25

**Washington, George, pres. U.S., 1732-1799**

July 3, 1789

8" x 12 1/2"

26 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard

New York, L.S. 2p. and end. Regarding the post-office of the U.S. from 1782 to 1789. FILM 234 FRAME 26

**Sproat, James, 1722-1793**

May 22, 1792

6 1/2" x 8

27 Letter to Ebenez[er] Hazard

1/4"

## Papers

Philadelphia, L.S. 1p. and add., end. Notifies him of his election to the Board of the Corporation for the relief of poor distressed Presbyterian ministers, their widows, etc. FILM 234 FRAME 27

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<b>Philadelphia Dispensary.</b>	Dec. 17, 1796	9 1/4" x 7
28 Receipt issued to Ebenezer Hazard for 1796 subscription		3/4"

Printed D.S.: Ed. Martin(?), John Clifford, Tho[ma]s Annesley. 1p. and end. FILM 234 FRAME 28

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<b>Insurance company of North America</b>	December 17, January 13,	7 3/4" x 10"
29 Extracts from minutes	1799, 1800	

Certified May 14, 1814. A.D.S.: Robert S. Stephens, secretary. 1p. and end. Pertain to Ebenezer Hazard's retirement as secretary. FILM 234 FRAME 29

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<b>Presbyterian church in the U.S. General assembly</b>	May 18, 1804	7 1/2" x 9 1/2"
30 Extract from record of meeting		

A.D.S: Nath. Irwin, clk. 1p. and end. Resolution appointing Ashbel Green and Ebenezer Hazard to write the history of the Presbyterian church. FILM234 FRAME30

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<b>Meigs, Return Jonathan, 1740-1823</b>	April 5, 1805	8" x 13"
31 Letter to Ebenezer Hazzard (sic)		

Southwest Point, A.L.S. 3p. and end. Pertains to the education of the Cherokee Indians. Freeman Guide 627. FILM 234 FRAME 31

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<b>Miller, Samuel, 1769-1850</b>	Oct. 24, 1810	7 3/4" x 9 3/4"
32 Letter to Ebenezer Hazard		

New-York, A.L.S. 1p. and add. Notifies him of election to honorary membership in the New York historical society. This letter is on the inside of a printed address of the New York historical society, Sept. 15, 1809. FILM 234 FRAME 32

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<b>Presbyterian church in the U.S. General assembly</b>	May 21, 1813	7 1/2" x 4 3/4"
Extract from minutes of A.D.S.		

Papers

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John E. Latta. pert clerk. 1p. and end. (see Hazard collection, no.33) Thanks to Mr. Hazard for making the index for V.2 of the printed extracts. FILM 234 FRAME 33

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