

Paper

If quills and ink, aside from some ingredients, were homemade products, paper was another matter: it had to be purchased. Edwards regularly sought to purchase paper, either by corresponding with the sellers or by procuring it himself when he went to Boston or elsewhere. Invoices from December 1742 and January 1743, when he was busy writing his lengthiest and most ambitious treatise to date, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*, show that he purchased one quire (about twenty-five sheets) each month at a cost of four shillings and sixpence each. In July 1744 he acquired a quarter ream (125 sheets, there being 500 sheets to a ream) of the “best fools Cap,” at a cost of five shillings and ninepence, and a quarter ream of “Pott,” which was an inferior grade of paper, coarser and darker than foolscap, at three shillings and sixpence.¹ Edwards used foolscap in his sent letters, in his permanent notebooks, and in early sermons, though later only as covers or wrappers (i.e., outside sheets) for sermons. To meet his ongoing need for paper, he also used the services of acquaintances who were visiting Boston for one reason or another, giving them his list and a sum of money. In 1747, for instance, he “sent to Boston by Kiah Wright for Paper & Chocolate 4£-0-0-,” chocolate being a favorite confection of the Edwards family, usually served as a drink in the morning.² Doubtless Edwards was not the only person who asked Wright for such a favor on her journey, since news of a person going to Boston, New York, or Newport would bring many neighbors to her door with their wish lists. And in 1752 Edwards recorded what was probably one of many times in which his protégé Samuel Hopkins purchased paper or other items for him: “Mr Hopkins of sheffield for a Quire of very good Paper.”³

Edwards, like nearly all New Englanders of his time, used paper that came from European mills. A number of paper factories had been a feature of the Philadelphia area since the late seventeenth century, and a mill had been established in 1728 in Milton, Massachusetts; but the latter produced only sporadically, and the quality of the paper was rather poor. There is no evidence that Edwards purchased any paper from colonial manufacturers. As Thomas A. Schafer discovered in his extensive study of Edwards's manuscripts through the late 1720s, the majority of the paper that Edwards used, as indicated in the watermarks, was Dutch and Flemish. The dominance of English, specifically London, watermarks in his papers beginning around 1729 or 1730 reflects the growth of the English paper trade after the first decade of the eighteenth century.⁴ This transition is illustrated in his sermon corpus, in which his last batch of Amsterdam paper was exhausted by mid-1728.

When it came to stationery ingredients and supplies, Edwards tended to rely on a mix of local and foreign products. None of his few surviving financial records or bills of goods from

¹ Receipts in Edwards's manuscript sermons on Eph. 6:11–13 (no. 750, July 1744, quotations) and Matt. 7:15 (no. 696, January 1743), Edwards Papers, Gen. Mss. 151, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

² Edwards, “Account Book,” entry for Oct. 20, 1747, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online (WJEO)*, vol. 40, <http://edwards.yale.edu/research/browse>. Keziah Wright, born in 1702, was at the time an unmarried Northampton parishioner; she married Daniel Lewis in 1753. See James Russell Trumbull, “History of Northampton: Northampton Genealogies,” (unpublished typescript), 513, Forbes Library, Northampton, Mass.

³ Account fragment, n.d. [ca. 1752], Forbes Library.

⁴ On Thomas A. Schafer's dating methodology, see *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13, *The “Miscellanies,”* (Entry Nos. a–z, aa–zz, 1–500) (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 60–90; for chronological parallels for the period 1720–31, *ibid.*, 13: 91–109; and for paper, *ibid.*, 13: 61. On watermarks, see W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper in Holland, England, France, Etc., in the XVII and XVIII Centuries and Their Interconnection* (Amsterdam, 1935); Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hilversum, Holland, 1950); Thomas L. Gravell and George Miller, *A Catalogue of Foreign Watermarks Found on Paper Used in America, 1700–1835* (New York, 1983). On watermarks in the Edwards manuscripts, see *Works*, 13: 558–61; Schafer, “Watermark Tracings” (unpublished notebook, n.d.), Thomas A. Schafer Papers, Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

merchants mentions quills, inks, or ingredients thereof—indicating that he remained rooted in traditional, home-based technologies for writing implements, despite the growing availability of such products, which were imported from outside the colonies and even outside the British Empire and sold by Boston merchants beginning in the mid-1730s. He fell in with general colonial consumer trends in purchasing paper made in England, though as time went on he apparently did not have much choice in where it was made and seems not to have been concerned about that, so long as it was the quality he desired. In these respects, at least, Edwards did not wholly participate in the “consumer modernity” of his more urban colonial peers.⁵

⁵ On the increasingly foreign sources of writing utensils and related products in the British colonies, see Konstantin Dierks, “Letter Writing, Stationery Supplies, and Consumer Modernity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *Early American Literature* 41, no. 3 (2006): 473–94. Among the earliest advertisements for writing supplies in a Boston newspaper (aside from estate sales) is that in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, Apr. 25–May 2, 1734, [2], where merchant John Phillips, “*next Door to Mr Dolbear’s the Braziers*,” listed a variety of household goods, including “writing & printing Paper, Ink, Quills.” The inventory of the Edwards household in 1759 reveals that if the study was not a focus of refinement, the bodies of its inhabitants, as well as other rooms in the house, exhibited a provincially unostentatious, “evangelical” gentility. The inventory lists clothing and accessories ranging from a beaver hat, silk vest, silver knee buckles, and cane for Edwards; chintz dresses and a silver engraved patch box for his wife, Sarah Pierpont Edwards; and household items including a tea service, china plates and cups, damask tablecloths and napkins, looking glasses, and hanging pictures. E[dwards] A[masa] P[ark], ed., “Jonathan Edwards’s Last Will, and the Inventory of his Estate,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July 1876, 438–47, esp., 444–45.