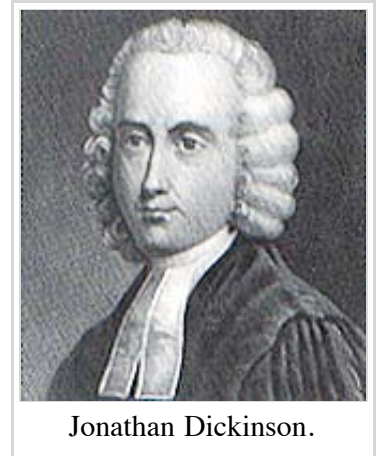


Jonathan Dickinson (New Jersey)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jonathan Dickinson (1688–1747) was a Congregational, later Presbyterian, minister, a leader in the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s, and a co-founder and first president of the College of New Jersey, which later became Princeton University. Born in Hatfield, Massachusetts on 22 April 1688, Dickinson studied theology at the Collegiate School of Connecticut, which later changed its name to Yale College, graduating in 1706. In 1709 Dickinson was ordained minister of the Congregational church in Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

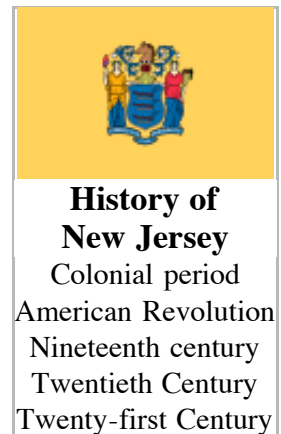
Dickinson became concerned about the attempts of the established Church of England to suppress dissenters in New Jersey. Seeing a need for more coordination among dissenting churches, in 1717 Dickinson persuaded his congregation to join the Presbytery of Philadelphia. He became an active and influential participant in the affairs of the Presbyterians, and was twice elected moderator of the Synod of Philadelphia. As a former Congregationalist, Dickinson was part of the *New England* faction of Presbyterians who opposed the strict doctrinal requirements favored by the *Scots-Irish* faction. Dickinson was a strong supporter of Presbyterianism, earning a reputation as a leading defender of Calvinism in America. His book *Familiar Letters to a Gentleman, upon a Variety of Seasonable and Important Subjects in Religion* was reprinted a number of times in America and elsewhere.



Jonathan Dickinson.

The Great Awakening that started in the 1730s profoundly changed religion in the American colonies. The Presbyterians were divided into "New Sides" and "Old Sides", supporters and opponents, respectively, of the great revival meetings and the fervent preaching that accompanied them. Dickinson was a moderate "New Sider", supporting the revivals while opposing their more violent excess. In 1738, Dickinson joined with other "New Siders" to form the Presbytery of New York. When the Presbytery of New Brunswick was expelled from the Synod of Philadelphia over its support for the more extreme "New Siders" in 1741, Dickinson and others tried to negotiate a reconciliation. In 1745 the Presbytery of New York withdrew from the Synod of Philadelphia and joined with the Presbytery of New Brunswick to form the Synod of New York. Dickson was elected the first moderator of the new synod.

Dickinson had long been interested in starting a new college to serve the middle colonies. When he saw that the existing colleges in New England were hostile to the "New Siders", he returned to the project of establishing a college. A group that included Dickinson, Aaron Burr, Sr. and Peter Van Brugh Livingston, among others, received a charter for a college from the governor of New Jersey in 1746. In April, 1747 the trustees appointed Dickinson first president of the College of New Jersey, which eventually became Princeton University. Classes in the new college started in May 1747, meeting in the parsonage of Dickinson's church. Less than five months later, Jonathan Dickinson died suddenly on October 7, 1747 due to complications related to smallpox.



History of New Jersey

Colonial period
American Revolution
Nineteenth century
Twentieth Century
Twenty-first Century

References

- Extract from: Alexander Leitch. (1978) *A Princeton Companion*. Princeton University Press. (http://etcweb1.princeton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/dickinson_jonathan.html) Accessed November 19, 2005

External links

- The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia article on Jonathan Dickinson (<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0815449.html>)
- Jonathan Dickinson and the Subscription Controversy (<http://www.etsjets.org/jets/journal/41/41-3/41-3-pp455-467-JETS.pdf>)

Academic offices		
Preceded by none	President of the College of New Jersey 1747	Succeeded by Aaron Burr, Sr.

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