RICHARD MATHER (1596-1669), 1853/54

George F. Wright (1828-1881)
        copy after cat. #82
oil on canvas
30 1/4 x 35 (76.84 x 88.90)
Gift of George Mather Randle, 1943
Weis 82
Hewes Number: 83

Ex. Coll.: 'a man' in New London, Connecticut, Mr. Armstrong purchased at auction of 'a man,' given in 1890 to donor.[1]

Publications:
Franklin Cole, Mather Books and Portraits (Portland, Me.: Casco Printing, 1978), 25.

In December 1853, the American Antiquarian Society granted permission to the artist George F. Wright to copy their original portrait of Richard Mather. Wright, who was born in Washington, Connecticut, changed the position of the book in Mather's left hand and included a pair of wire frame glasses in the sitter's right, a detail not included in the original canvas. Wright gave the copy to the Connecticut Historical Society in 1854. His work was evidently regarded as successful and Wright may have painted multiple versions of the Richard Mather portrait, including a copy for J. P. C. Mather, the Secretary of State of Connecticut, and the image now owned by the American Antiquarian Society.[2]

        Wright had worked as the custodian of the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut, before moving to New York City in 1848 to study art at the National Academy of Design. He exhibited several portraits at the Academy in 1851 and 1852 including images of living clergymen. In 1857 he travelled to Europe, visiting Italy, England and Germany.[3]

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[1] George Mather Randle to Clarence W. Brigham, October 28, 1936, American Antiquarian Society Archives.

[2] The verso of the American Antiquarian Society's portrait bears the canvas stamp of William Schaus, a dealer in artist's materials in New York from 1850 to after 1880. The address given in the stamp is 289 Broadway, Schaus's address in 1853. Thompson R. Harlow, Librarian of the Connecticut

Historical Society to Clarence S. Brigham, August 28, 1941, American

Antiquarian Society Archives.

[3] George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, <u>The New York Historical Society's</u>

<u>Dictionary of Artist's in America 1564-1860</u> (New Haven: Yale University

Press, 1957), 704-5.