

2004

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Recommended Citation

Winiarski, Douglas L. "The Education of Joseph Prince: Reading Adolescent Culture in Eighteenth-Century New England." In *The Worlds of Children, 1620-1920*, edited by Peter Benes, 42-64. Vol. 27. Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife. Boston: Boston University, 2004.

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The Education of Joseph Prince: Reading Adolescent Culture in Eighteenth-Century New England

Douglas L. Winiarski

Young Joseph Prince spent the warm spring days of April 1712 carting dung and reading. For the seventeen-year-old farm boy, the seemingly odd juxtaposition of daily drudgery and intellectual inquiry was commonplace. His days were filled with toil in the fields and salt marshes that comprised his father's extensive landholdings in the tiny farming hamlet of Rochester, Massachusetts. Evenings and rainy days, however, were devoted to study. The manuscript commonplace book in which he recorded both forms of daily labor—along with religious meditations, sermon notes, family correspondence, and reading extracts—affords a rare opportunity to view the colonial family through the eyes of a precocious New England youth.¹

Over the past three decades, historians have engaged in a series of rancorous debates over the lives of early modern adolescents. Building upon the work of French historian Philippe Ariès, John Demos has argued that New England youths experienced no significant lifecourse transition from childhood to adulthood; adolescence, as it is known today, was a nineteenth-century social construction.² Dissenting scholars have challenged this interpretation by reconstructing a vibrant "adolescent culture" of night-walking, tavern-haunting New England youths. Drawing on data culled from seventeenth-century court records, historians Ross W. Beales Jr., N. Ray Hiner, and Roger

1. Joseph Prince, "Diary and Commonplace book," MS copy, in Frederick W. Prince Papers (Ms 310, 1/C/3/2). R. Stanton Avery Special Collections Department, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass., [p. 13]. At the turn of the twentieth century, Mary Hall Leonard examined the original commonplace book in preparation for writing *Mattapoisett and Old Rochester, Massachusetts*, 3d ed. (1907; reprint, Mattapoisett, Mass., 1950), pp. 108–9. She described the document as a "little book of seventeen leaves, stitched together." The nineteenth-century copy at the New England Historic Genealogical Society conforms closely to the excerpts included in Leonard's study. The author wishes to thank Roark Atkinson, Robert Gross, Edward Larkin, Mark Valeri, and Michael Winship for their comments and suggestions.

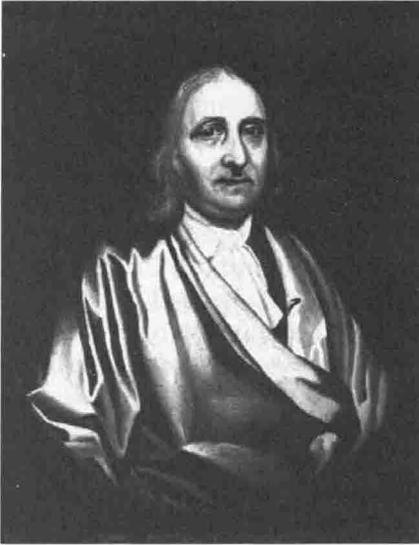
2. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 145–50; Demos, "The Rise and Fall of Adolescence," in *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 92–113; see also Joseph R. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1971): 283–98.

Thompson have successfully documented the emergence of a distinctive Puritan subculture in which young people chafing under an oppressively long period of family dependence escaped to fields, barns, and deserted mills in search of clandestine entertainments.³

Among the earliest extant manuscripts composed by a New England adolescent, Prince's commonplace book both confirms and modifies existing studies of the transition from childhood to adulthood in early America. Unlike the night-walking youths who appear in revisionist scholarship, Prince never was haled before the Plymouth County court to answer charges of "frolicking" with his cronies. Instead, this dutiful scion of a wealthy and politically powerful southeastern Massachusetts clan spent most of his free time perusing the books in his father's extensive library. Yet the very act of reading held subversive potential. While his parents sought to hone his religious sensibilities and prepare him for a career as a gentleman planter and civil magistrate, Prince devoted a considerable amount of time to reading books that his elders may well have considered frivolous—and in a few cases, illicit. These included sensational accounts of portentous celestial wonders, arcane astrological treatises, and bawdy jestbooks containing salacious epigrams. Chronicling the education of an early-eighteenth-century farm boy, Prince's commonplace book simultaneously illustrates the process though which adults in provincial New England attempted to socialize their children *and* discloses the subtly rebellious acts of reading though which young people resisted such efforts.

Born and baptized in the Cape Cod village of Sandwich in 1695, Joseph hailed from an elite New England family. He was the fourth son of Samuel Prince (*Figure 1*)—a respected and prosperous merchant and lawyer, as well as an aspiring yeoman patriarch. Following the death of his first wife in 1684, the elder Prince relocated to the Cape and married Mercy Hinckley (*Figure 2*), daughter of the last governor of Plymouth Colony. By the mid-1690s, he ranked as the wealthiest man in town. In the decade following Joseph's birth, the peripatetic trader liquidated his Sandwich land holdings and began purchasing property further west in the neighboring town of Rochester. In 1710 he began work on "Whitehall," a stately country manor named for the family's ancestral seat in England. Transformed from merchant to "gentleman" planter, Samuel emerged as one of the largest landholders in the Old Colony and an influential force in local politics. For nearly two

3. Ross W. Beales Jr., "In Search of the Historical Child: Miniature Adulthood and Youth in Colonial New England," *American Quarterly* 27 (1975): 379-98; N. Ray Hiner, "Adolescence in Eighteenth-Century America," *History of Childhood Quarterly* 3 (1975): 253-80; Roger Thompson, "Adolescent Culture in Colonial Massachusetts," *Journal of Family History* 9 (1984): 127-44; Thompson, *Sex in Middlesex: Popular Mores in a Massachusetts County, 1659-1699* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), pp. 83-96; Gloria L. Main, *Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Cultures in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 156-64.



Left: Figure 1. SAMUEL PRINCE (1649–1728) by an unknown artist, possibly Peter Pelham. Grisaille on panel, 13 x 14 in. Image courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Right: Figure 2. MERCY HINCKLEY PRINCE (1663–1736) by an unknown artist, possibly Peter Pelham. Grisaille on panel, 13 x 10 in. Image courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts. Information on both portraits may be found in Andrew Oliver, Ann Millspaugh Huff, and Edward N. Hanson, *Portraits in the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1988), pp. 80–81.

decades prior to his death in 1728, he served the community as a justice of the peace and a representative to the General Court. An anonymous newspaper obituary memorialized him as a man “healthy & strong in body, of a vigorous and active spirit, of a thoughtful & penetrating mind, religious from his youth, much improved of Scripture knowledge, esteemed for his Abilities & gifts & especially his powers of arguing.”⁴

In domestic matters Joseph’s father was renowned for being “pretty severe in Governing his Family.”⁵ Yet when it came to educating and settling his children, Samuel’s behavior was typical of elite New England patriarchs. His decision to relocate to Rochester was part of a broader family strategy in which he amassed the requisite amount of

4. *New England Weekly Journal*, 15 July 1728; “Some Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Prince,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 5 (1851): 375–84; “Sandwich Rate Bill, 1696” and “Minister’s Rate Bill 1698,” Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; Leonard, *Mattapoisett and Old Rochester*, pp. 42, 56, 58–60, 73, 114; Robert J. Dunkle, transcripitor, *Records of Barnstable, Massachusetts*, CD-ROM, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass.; John B. Prince, *The Prince Family of Hull and Boston, Mass.* (Moncton, N.B.: The Author, 1976).

5. *New England Weekly Journal*, 15 July 1728.

property to place his children on comfortable farms. That he was successful in his endeavors was due in no small part to the stable of strong and productive teenage sons who lived under his watchful eye: Enoch, John, Moses, Nathan, and Joseph. The first two died before the end of the decade, but in the summer of 1711—at the time that Joseph began recording his daily activities in his commonplace book—Samuel was looking forward to a prosperous yeoman retirement. These were halcyon years for the Prince family during which Samuel was busy purchasing woodlots, meadows, uplands, and salt marshes for his growing family. And with the accumulation of property came patriarchal power—Samuel's power to control the lives of his sons and daughters through the promise of an inheritance that would one day launch their adult lives. Growing up in this "little commonwealth," Joseph quickly learned to defer to the social expectations of a powerful father.⁶

The development of a family farm frequently impinged on the educational fortunes of adolescents, who were expected to work side-by-side with their fathers. The feverish round of seasonal tasks left little time for formal learning.⁷ This tension is evident in the diary section of Joseph's commonplace book. Throughout the summer and fall of 1711, he spent the majority of his days mowing, raking, and stacking saltwater hay at Cromeset—an isolated corner of Rochester located on the shores of Buzzard's Bay. He lived away from home and returned to Whitehall once each week on the evening before the Sabbath. Working abroad on the margins of his father's property—on lands that he later

6. John Demos, "Notes on Life in Plymouth County," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 22 (1965): 274–75; Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 119; Philip J. Greven Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 72–99; John J. Waters, "The Traditional World of the New England Peasants: A View from Seventeenth-Century Barnstable," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 130 (1976): 15–16; Waters, "Patrimony, Succession, and Social Stability: Guilford, Connecticut, in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 10 (1976): 156–57; Thomas R. Cole, "Family, Settlement, and Migration in Southeastern Massachusetts, 1650–1805: The Case for Regional Analysis," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 132 (1978): 181–82; Waters, "Family, Inheritance, and Migration in Colonial New England: The Evidence from Guilford, Connecticut," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 39 (1982): 77–86; Jackson T. Main, "Standards of Living and the Life Cycle in Colonial Connecticut," *Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983): 159–65; Jackson T. Main, *Society and Economy in Colonial Connecticut* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 374–75; Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630–1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 64–77.

7. Ross W. Beales Jr., "Boys' Work on an Eighteenth-Century New England Farm," in *The American Family: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Jean E. Hunter and Paul T. Mason (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1991), pp. 75–89. Prince's farm labors closely mirrored the seasonal work cycle described by Robert Blair St. George, "'Set Thine House in Order': The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England," in *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*, eds. Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 2: 175–76, and Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen*, pp. 50–51.

inherited—Joseph enjoyed a modicum of independence. At the same time, his educational pursuits suffered in direct proportion to the distance he traveled from Whitehall each week. Over a period of more than six months, Joseph noted only four occasions on which he engaged in reading; entries relating to writing and ciphering were even more sporadic (*Table 1*).⁸

Month	Reading	Writing	Ciphering
August	2	1	0
September	0	1	1
October	1	1	1
November	1	0	0
December	0	0	0
January	0	1	0
February	—	—	—
March	—	—	—
April	25	1	0
May	26	1	0
June	23	3	1
July	23	1	0
Totals	101	10	3

Table 1. Educational activities of Joseph Prince: August 1711–July 1712 (in days). Source: Joseph Prince, “Diary, 1711,” MS copy, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass., [pp. 1–7, 13–17].

On his seventeenth birthday, 4 April 1712, Joseph returned to his diary after a two-month break. He appears to have crossed a major life-course threshold during the interim. Whereas in previous years he had led the team of oxen while an older brother worked the plow, now he noted—perhaps with some degree of pride—that he could “hold [the] Plow” himself. Indeed, the remaining diary entries suggest that Joseph’s family responsibilities had shifted decisively from tending animals and working in the salt marshes to more adult work routines. He continued to plant and hill corn, cart brush and manure, mend fences, and work in the family vegetable garden—tasks appropriate for younger children—yet Joseph also engaged in important carpentry work on his father’s behalf. Over time, Whitehall became one of Rochester’s most visible landmarks, but in 1712 there was much work to be done on the family estate. Joseph spent his days milling boards, building staircases, laying the foundation for a new barn, and supervising the construction of a bridge across Trout Creek on the main road between Rochester and Wareham.⁹ These tasks required advanced arti-

8. Prince, “Diary,” [pp. 1–7]. During the second decade of the eighteenth century, Jane Masshell and John Myers taught school seasonally in different quarters of Rochester, including Samuel Prince’s Whitehall estate (Leonard, *Mattapoisett and Old Rochester*, pp. 109–10). But Joseph made no mention of formal studies in his diary.

sanal skills, concerted planning, independent thought, and leadership. At the same time, the new work routines kept him close to home—and close to his father's large library.

The impact on his educational pursuits was striking. From April through August 1712 Joseph spent an astonishing nine out of every ten weeknights reading; he practiced writing and ciphering more often as well. These were the peak months of the agricultural cycle in which he was busy laboring in the fields or working on his father's new mansion. And it was during this period that Prince began to compile an "Acompt of books that I red out" (*Appendix*). Spanning nearly a decade, the list of more than four dozen titles was impressive—especially for an adolescent farmhand (*Table 2*).

Subject	Quartile				Totals	
	1st	2d	3d	4th	N	%
Religious	10	10	4	3	27	55.10
Wonder/Occult/Astrology	2	0	2	1	5	10.20
Natural Philosophy	0	0	1	4	5	10.20
World History	0	1	0	3	4	8.16
Law	0	0	3	0	3	6.12
Rhetoric	0	0	1	1	2	4.08
Grammar/Spelling/Latin	0	0	1	1	2	4.08
Conduct Manual	0	1	0	0	1	2.04

Table 2. Books listed on Prince's 1712 "Acompt," grouped by subject and arranged by quartile. Source: Joseph Prince, "Diary, 1711," MS copy, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass., [p. 11].

Where did these books come from? Joseph drew upon the considerable resources of his extended family for his own education. Many of the books that he listed on his "Acompt" or excerpted in his commonplace book had filtered down to the young laborer from the estate of his deceased maternal grandfather, Governor Thomas Hinckley. Others were available through the Boston book market, and it is possible that Joseph may have used some of his own money to purchase a pamphlet or two. A few were gifts from his older brother, Thomas, a student at Harvard College and the future minister of Boston's prestigious Old South Church. But the majority of books to which he had access undoubtedly were drawn from his father's private library. A wealthy merchant-turned-magistrate, Samuel owned dozens of books on a wide variety of topics. Like the featherbeds, leather chairs, brass

9. Prince, "Diary," [pp. 13–17].

andirons, iron candlesticks, and other consumer amenities that graced the stately rooms at Whitehall, the elder Prince's books were luxury items—signs of his elite status within the community. At the same time, the volumes in Samuel's library were the tools of his trade as a civil magistrate and the building blocks of his sons' education.¹⁰

Like most private libraries in colonial New England, Samuel Prince's collection was heavily weighted toward seventeenth-century sermons and devotional tracts.¹¹ This fact alone explains why more than half of the titles listed on Joseph's "Acompt"—and virtually all of the books that he read between 1712 and 1715—were religious in nature. But a closer look at the evidence suggests an additional factor shaping his reading selections: the influence of Joseph's mother. Both parents were full church members, but Mercy Prince seems to have taken charge of her sons' religious education. At least one book in the renowned Prince collection at the Boston Public Library bears the inscription "Tho Prince His Book 1697 By his mother." Likewise, a 1705 letter that Mercy sent to Joseph while he was living with a Boston family illustrates the special role that women played in the religious education of their children.¹² After instructing her ten-year-old son to attend to some minor business affairs on behalf of his father, Mercy closed her epistle with a pious exhortation. "[Be] you a good boy," she admonished Joseph, "and mind what you have to Doe[.] Comb your head and Read as you have oportunity...[.] But above all take cair of your soul don't Live like a wicked boy without prayer whier ever you bee." Joseph considered this pious maternal advice important enough to warrant copying the letter into his commonplace book nearly a decade later.¹³

10. George Ernest Bowman, ed., "Governor Thomas Hinckley's Will and Inventory," *Mayflower Descendant* 5 (1903): 243, 246; Prince, "Diary," [p. 24]; Boston Public Library, *The Prince Library* (Boston: A. Mudge, 1870), p. vi. At the time of his death in 1728, Samuel Prince owned a "Chest of Books" valued at over thirteen pounds. The collection may have included several hundred volumes, though the only book mentioned by title in the inventory (besides his "Great Bible") was Samuel Clark's *A Survey of the Bible: Or, An Analytical Account of the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1693). On book ownership and class status in early New England, see Gloria L. Main, "The Standard of Living in Southern New England, 1640–1773," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 45 (1988): 129; Bruce P. Stark, "Personal Libraries in Lebanon, Connecticut, 1702–1789," *Connecticut History* 26 (1985): 1–18; Jackson T. Main, *Society and Economy*, pp. 337–38.

11. On the predominance of religious books in private libraries, see Gloria L. Main, "The Standard of Living," p. 129; Stark, "Personal Libraries in Lebanon," pp. 5–9; David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Knopf, 1989), pp. 50–52, 247–49; Hall, "Readers and Writers in Early New England," in *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, eds. Hugh Amory and Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 125.

12. Gerald F. Moran, "'The Hidden Ones': Women and Religion in Puritan New England," in *Triumph over Silence: Women in Protestant History*, ed. Richard L. Greaves (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 125–49; Douglas L. Winiarski, "All Manner of Error and Delusion: Josiah Cotton and the Religious Transformation of Southeastern New England, 1700–1770" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2000), pp. 129–31.

In 1710 Mercy presented Joseph with a Bible, and she gave a second copy to him two years later. Prince read the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation twice during the next decade, along with numerous works of Puritan practical divinity and hagiographies of notable English dissenters and divines. His impressive "Acompt" ranged from steady selling seventeenth-century devotional classics, such as Thomas Shepard's *The Sincere Convert* and William Gurnall's *The Christian in Compleat Armour*, to recent sermon collections by John Flavel and the Mathers. At the same time, Prince dutifully attended worship meetings each Sabbath during the period covered in his diary, and on most occasions he noted the minister's sermon text and doctrine. The adolescent farm boy, moreover, embroidered his commonplace book with the remnants of his occasional secret, or "closet," meditations. "Lord Keepe me from mispending my P[r]esious Time," he wrote one Tuesday in the spring of 1712; the following month he prayed, "Prepair us O Lord for the Sabath aproching." Another meditation was voiced in the hope that God would "Sanctifie me, throughout, in Spirit Soul and Body," and this notation was followed by subheadings on each of the three topics.¹⁴

A brief comparison with his contemporaries suggests that Prince was, on balance, a modestly pious adolescent. The few private rituals that he recorded in the commonplace book paled in comparison to the precocious devotional routines of the young Joseph Sewall, son of the prominent Boston judge and a future ministerial colleague of Prince's brother Thomas. Kept while studying at Harvard during the second decade of the eighteenth century, Sewall's private diaries reveal an adolescence spent in constant meditation, prayer, private ritual, and theological inquiry. Nor were Joseph's preoccupations concerned with the spiritual and physical health of family members—as were pious Puritan diarists like Cape Cod resident John Paine and the Boston gentlewoman Lydia Prout, whose pious mediations on the births and deaths of their children reflected their status as young parents. Nor was the Rochester laborer preoccupied with preparing for death and eternal judgment. His commonplace book references none of the anxieties that plagued the elderly Boston housewright John Barnard, for example, who prayed constantly in his last days for assurance of salvation.¹⁵

Instead, Joseph's private piety bore the stamp of the "reformation of manners"—a moral reform campaign initiated by Puritan ministers in the late seventeenth century. Whereas previous generations of Puritan diarists wrangled over the state of their sinful souls, the adolescent laborer filled his commonplace book with a variety of moral plati-

13. *The Prince Library*, p. vi; Prince, "Diary," [pp. 19, 24].

14. Prince, "Diary," [pp. 9, 13–15, 24]; Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, pp. 21–70; Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 136–93.

tudes: "Ingratitude is the Groth of Every Clime/And of all sins the most accursed Crime"; "Be Cairfull In thy Conversation with all Persons That it Doth Not Begin In Iniquity Continu with Flattery & End with Treachery"; "Raw and Rackles [Reckless] Choosing maketh faint Persuing." And while he read John Flavel's *The Reasonableness of Personal Reformation and the Necessity of Conversion*, the extracts that he copied into his commonplace book focused only on the physical dangers of drinking to excess, not soteriology.¹⁶

While Joseph's "Dear" mother prayed earnestly for the salvation of his soul and implored her son to pray and perform his religious devotions, his "Honored" father labored to prepare him for a career in public service. During the second decade of the eighteenth century, Joseph's reading activities increasingly gravitated to secular topics. Several volumes listed on his "Acompt" were grammar school textbooks used by instructors such as Ezekiel Cheever, the venerable seventeenth-century master of Boston's famed Latin School. These included an unidentified Latin nomenclature and classic works of Greco-Roman rhetoric and literature such as Cicero's *de Officiis* and Ovid's *de Tristibus*. Joseph also broadened his horizons through the study of world history. He copied passages relating to the "seven Wonders of the World" and the virtues of "the seven Wise men of Greece" from François Pomey's *The Pantheon, Representing the Fabulous Histories of the Heathen Gods*, and he may have read early English histories by Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Hearne.¹⁷ Geography, too, figured into his study routines in the form of Patrick Gordon's "Geographical Gramer," a handsome volume of maps presented to him by his elder brother.¹⁸

15. For comparisons between Prince and his contemporaries, see Joseph Sewall, "Diary, 1711–1716," Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; John Barnard, "Notebook of Religious Exercises, 1716–1719," John Barnard Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; Erik R. Seeman, "The Spiritual Labour of John Barnard: An Eighteenth-Century Artisan Constructs His Piety," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 5 (1995): 181–215; Seeman, *Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 15–43; "Deacon John Paine's Journal," *Mayflower Descendant* 8 (1906): 180–84, 227–31; 9 (1907): 49–51, 97–99, 136–40; Lydia Prout, "Spiritual Journal, 1708–1716," MS copy, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass.

16. Prince, "Diary," [pp. 18, 20–21]; Richard P. Gildrie, *The Profane, the Civil, and the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679–1749* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), passim; Winiarski, "All Manner of Error and Delusion," pp. 38–159.

17. Prince, "Diary," [pp. 10, 18, 24]; Kenneth B. Murdock, "The Teaching of Latin and Greek at the Boston Latin School in 1712," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 27 (1927–30): 21–29; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 86–112.

18. Patrick Gordon's *Geography Anatomiz'd, Or, The Compleat Geographical Grammar* (London, 1699) is not listed on Prince's "Acompt," but it is probably the "Geographical Gramer...which I have still" that he cited on his "account of Sundry Gifts from Sundry Persons sence 1710" (Prince, "Diary," [p. 24]).

Other titles reflected Samuel's desire for his son to follow in his footsteps as a community leader and civil magistrate. While his Harvard-educated brothers Thomas, Nathan, and Moses pored over theological tracts in Cambridge, Joseph appears to have been preparing for a career in law. The "Acompt" indicates that he read the second and third parts of Edward Coke's *Institutes of the Laws of England* and studied William Lambarde's *Eirenarcha*, a practical handbook designed for country justices of the peace. Extracts copied into the commonplace book recorded his struggles to master basic legal terms such as "De Jure" and "De Facto" and elementary rules of logic ("That two Contridictions Can Never be both Either True or fauls att one and the same time"). He memorized basic procedural concepts ("He that standeth mute is not Convict of the Ofence") and even noted a sophisticated "Point in Law" regarding the high crime of piracy, an obscure technical issue that a local magistrate like his father would never have encountered.¹⁹

No elite provincial education would have been complete without training in the polite arts of rhetoric, writing, and gentlemanly behavior, and Joseph's "Acompt" included several titles in these areas as well. Last on the list was John Seddon's *The Ingenious Youth's Companion*, a slim pamphlet that provided a series of penmanship samples "Adorned with Curious Figures and Flourishes." He read Richard Allestree's popular courtesy manual, *The Ladies Calling*, as well as overtly Christian conduct literature such as William Struther's *Christian Observations and Resolutions*. Equally essential in the education of an aspiring country gentleman was Pierre Ortigue de Vaumorière's *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation*, a handbook for genteel discourse that contained rules for storytelling, table manners, witty sayings, and instructions for conversing in mixed company and on religious topics. "Young Persons, who are not yet acquainted with the World," the preface promised, "will find here such Directions, as will keep them from committing a thousand Absurdities; and procure 'em the Esteem and Affection of those whose good Opinion they must value." Perusing each of these works, the young Prince stood upon the threshold of a new era of "refinement" in early America, an aristocratic world in which aspiring social and cultural families paid close attention to polite modes of speech, dress, and comportment.²⁰

19. Prince, "Diary," [pp. 21, 24]; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), chaps. 9, 13; David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 178.

20. John Seddon, *The Ingenious Youth's Companion* (London, 1690?), p. [1]; M. de [Pierre Ortigue] Vaumorière, *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation* (London, 1691) p. [2]; Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), pp. 30–99.

But if the young farm boy had internalized the piety, work ethic, and social mores of his parents, his commonplace book also discloses important ruptures in the socialization process. Prince's educational training occasionally provided opportunities for youthful deviance. And no issue revealed this trend better than Joseph's fascination with what he called "Sights or Signs and Wonders." Early New Englanders typically interpreted comets, eclipses, and other celestial anomalies as wondrous or remarkable providences of God; ministers and layfolk alike viewed these events as tokens of divine displeasure and portents of impending misfortune. But by the turn of the eighteenth-century such ideas rapidly were becoming old-fashioned—at least among well-educated segments of the population. Increasingly, colonial and European astronomers discerned patterns within the movements of heavenly bodies, and, as a result, they questioned conventional wisdom that suggested that comets and other celestial anomalies were agents of divinely mandated natural calamities.²¹

In the vanguard of this new generation of "natural philosophers" was Thomas Robie, a well-respected almanac publisher, astronomer, future Royal Society fellow, and Harvard tutor. Following the appearance of a meteor in the skies over New England in 1719, he published a scathing indictment of the traditional lore of wonders. "As to Prognostications from it," he noted bitterly, "I utterly abhor and detest 'em all, and look upon these to be but the Effect of Ignorance and Fancy."²² A decade earlier—just one year before Joseph began writing in his commonplace book—Robie was hired to serve as the Sandwich schoolmaster, and he boarded with Samuel's family. Living under the same roof with one of New England's leading intellectuals, Joseph and his brothers undoubtedly learned about the latest discoveries in astronomy. Indeed, a diary that Robie kept while living in Sandwich included daily astronomical observations. The future Harvard tutor's influence is evident in Joseph's "Acompt" as well. Halfway down the list are entries for Increase Mather's *Komatographia*—yet another treatise that raised questions about the providential significance of celestial phenomena—and a pair of works penned by the prominent English natural philosophers Robert Boyle and William Derham.²³

21. David D. Hall explores comets and the "lore of wonders" in Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, pp. 71–116 (esp. pp. 106–10). On the decline of this tradition, see Michael P. Winship, *Seers of God: Puritan Providentialism in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 124–52.

22. [Thomas Robie,] *A Letter to a Certain Gentleman...* (Boston, 1719), p. 8. On Robie's career, see Frederick G. Kilgour, "Thomas Robie (1689–1729): Colonial Scientist and Physician," *Isis* 30 (1939): 473–90.

23. Robie arrived in Sandwich on 9 February 1710, and he "came to live at Mr. Princes' eleven days later. He began to "keep school" in Sandwich the following month and spent a week visiting with the Princes at Whitehall later that spring (Thomas Robie, "Diary, 1710," American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.).



Figure 3. Frontispiece of Nathaniel Crouch [R. B., pseud.], *Surprizing Miracles of Nature and Art*, 2d ed. (London, 1685). Courtesy of the Archives and Special Collections, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

And yet, Joseph seems to have retained his youthful interest in celestial wonders well into his adolescent years—despite training with one of New England's most promising intellectuals. Following Robie's departure from Sandwich, the young farm laborer read a pair of notable works of popular wonder literature: Cotton Mather's controversial account of the Salem witchcraft trials, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, and Nathaniel Crouch's *Surprizing Miracles of Nature and Art* (Figure 3). The latter volume was a breezy 222-page "history" that chronicled "*Strange Signs and Prodigious Aspects and Appearances in the Heavens*" from antiquity to the present. Penned pseudonymously by a notorious London hack writer, *Surprizing Miracles* was one in a series of wildly popular, inexpensive books that addressed sensational subjects ranging from wondrous omens to ghostly specters. Crouch's work also aroused the ire of New England clergymen; it was designed more to entertain readers with shocking stories of natural disasters than to provide moral edification.²⁴

As if to underscore his adolescent curiosity in wonders and prodigies, Prince doodled a series of celestial images on one page of his commonplace book (Figure 4). The crude figures included a "Sun Kiler" (solar eclipse) and a diagram of the "sun dogs" (vertical shafts of light that appeared in the winter night skies when moonlight reflected off ice particles suspended in the atmosphere). Nearby, Prince appears to have copied a shooting star directly from the frontispiece of Crouch's *Surprizing Miracles*. The young scholar, to be sure, followed these cartoonish sketches with a pious disclaimer in which he affirmed that "there is a mor Sure word of Prophisue...Contained in the scriptures of the old and new testament." But the incongruous juxtaposition of scriptural authority and popular wonder lore only served to highlight the tensions inherent in early-eighteenth-century folk traditions—old-fashioned popular superstitions that Prince should have learned to dismiss after his lessons with Thomas Robie.²⁵

Instead, the adolescent's growing interest in celestial sights and signs blossomed into a full-blown fascination with astrology—yet another branch of the lore of wonders that was undergoing a dramatic restructuring at the turn of the eighteenth century. Like most New England farming families, the Princes inhabited an animate cosmos in which the movements of celestial bodies were believed to affect the weather, the productivity of the soil, and the health of the human body. Despite concerted efforts by New England ministers and other educated groups to differentiate "natural" from "judicial," or predictive, astrology, provincial New Englanders continued to employ occult techniques that blurred the line separating licit from illicit celestial

24. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, pp. 52–53, 55, 112–14.

25. Prince, "Diary," [p. 8].

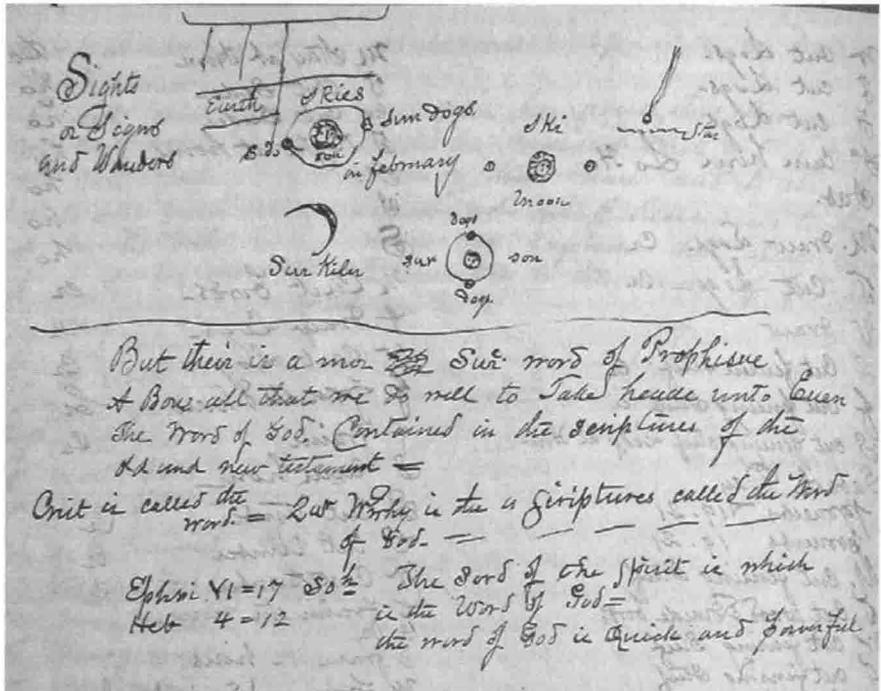


Figure 4. Detail from a nineteenth-century manuscript copy of Joseph Prince's commonplace book showing his diagrams of "Sights or Signs and Wonders." Note the similarities between Prince's shooting star image and the "Five Blazing Stars" depicted in Figure 3. Courtesy of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

inquiries.²⁶ Such boundaries were even more difficult to police in the seaport towns and hinterland hamlets of southeastern New England, where a thriving supernatural economy persisted well into the eighteenth century. It was here, in one of the darkest corners of the Bible commonwealth, that lay people (as well as a surprising number of clergymen) took precise account of the date, time, and "Plantery hour" of a child's birth; copied carefully into a family Bible or personal diary, such notations provided the essential data for casting nativities that

26. Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 112–45. For general discussions of attitudes toward astrology in early modern Europe and the American colonies, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1971), chaps. 10–12; Herbert Leventhal, *In the Shadow of the Enlightenment: Occultism and Renaissance Science in Eighteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), pp. 13–65; Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 122–52; Michael P. Winship, "Cotton Mather, Astrologer," *New England Quarterly* 63 (1990): 308–14, and Winship, *Seers of God*, pp. 112–14.

would predict the fortunes of infant children. Regional mariners frequently sought to gauge the weather by purchasing horoscopes from local “conjurers” and “cunning folk” before embarking on voyages. And one prominent civil magistrate from Bristol, Rhode Island, even developed an “Artificiall Divination by Number” scheme using stones and kernels of corn. Indeed, southeastern New England harbored an impressive array of astrologers, palmists, fortunetellers, diviners, and folk healers. “[I]t is too Common a Practice In these parts,” summarized one concerned Old Colony pundit, “to repair to a Certain Diviner among Us to recover lost Goods, & to any Pretender English or Indian to know Our Fortunes.”²⁷

Prince’s penchant for dabbling in astrology appears in several places in his commonplace book. On one leaf the young farm boy copied the signs of the zodiac from “Aryes: the head” to the “legs” of Pisces. His list followed the precise order depicted on the “Man of Signs” illustration that appeared in most colonial almanacs. In addition to his interest in the heavenly bodies that governed the human anatomy, Prince also designed an elaborate “Table shuing what Planits Rules Evry Hour of the Day and Night” (Figure 5). He prefaced this unique diagram with personal astrological information. “Sol is supposed to Govern the Hour of my Nativity and the Geminine Properties to her belonging,” he noted above the day and night tables, and he followed this statement with elementary data for casting his nativity: “Joseph Prince was Born Aprill the 1st. 1695 on Munday night at ten of the clock.” To be sure, these entries reveal only a rudimentary understanding of judicial astrology. Prince was no folk magician. Yet his commonplace book reveals the author’s persistent—and, by some standards, illicit—fascination with the occult; and the astrological information that he recorded on its pages may well have been used by a local conjurer to cast predictive horoscopes on his behalf.²⁸

27. John D. Champlin Jr., “Belief in Astrology in New England,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 35 (1881): 227; Seeman, *Pious Persuasions*, pp. 121–22; Patricia Ann Watson, *The Angelical Conjunction: The Preacher-Physicians of Colonial New England* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), pp. 88–95; George C. Mason, “The African Slave Trade in Colonial Times,” *The American Historical Record* 1 (1872): 319; Caroline Hazard, ed., *John Saffin, His Book (1665–1708): A Collection of Various Matters of Divinity Law and State Affairs Epitomiz’d Both in Verse and Prose* (New York: Harbor Press, 1928), p. 190; John L. Brooke, “‘The True Spiritual Seed’: Sectarian Religion and the Persistence of the Occult in Eighteenth-Century New England,” in *Wonders of the Invisible World, 1600–1900: 1992 Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife* (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 1995), pp. 107–26; Peter Benes, “Fortune Tellers, Wise-Men, and Magical Healers in New England, 1644–1850,” in *Wonders of the Invisible World*, pp. 127–48; Josiah Cotton, “Account of the Cotton Family, 1727–1755,” MS Am II65, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., p. 247; Douglas L. Winiarski, “‘Pale Blewish Lights’ and a Dead Man’s Groan: Tales of the Supernatural from Eighteenth-Century Plymouth, Massachusetts,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 55 (1998): 497–530.

28. Prince, “Diary,” [pp. 10, 22].

Even more intriguing is the reference to a book called "The Art how to Know a man" near the end of his 1712 "Acompt." Marinus Cureau de la Chambre's dense treatise provided detailed information on the arts of physiognomy, chiromancy, and metoposcopy. A century earlier, divining fortunes from the lines on a palm or the wrinkles on a forehead was considered a dangerous occult activity—a usurpation of the divine prerogative. Palmists, diviners, and other cunning folk frequently appeared before the magistrates to answer charges of witchcraft.²⁹ But in the heady and more tolerant atmosphere of the early enlightenment, such techniques often were considered "sublime" forms of scientific inquiry. La Chambre's treatise promised to unlock the very "secrets" of the human soul, its inclinations and proclivities. In fact, the author suggested that the acquisition of this hidden, or occult knowledge, would elevate the "spirit of Man... to the Sovereign Creator of the Universe" himself. Typically found in the libraries of Anglican ministers and gentry planters in Virginia, the remarkable presence of La Chambre's arcane divination treatise on Joseph's "Acompt" testified to the persistent desires of provincial New England youths to plumb the depths of the invisible world.³⁰

By 1715 Prince's reading habits had changed in subtle, but significant ways (*Table 2*). Grown to physical maturity and in the twilight of his adolescence, yet still suffering through a period of protracted family dependence, Joseph turned his attention to a broader range of subjects. The early titles on his reading list were exclusively religious in subject matter, but the second half of the "Acompt" included numerous works of natural philosophy, world history, rhetoric, and law. Extracts that he copied into the commonplace book had grown more secular as well, as Joseph's meditations increasingly turned to the attributes of the fairer sex. He began copying courtly love poems into his commonplace book. The extracts included verses by John Oldham and poems relating to the failed romances of famous English courtesans such as Jane Shore and the "Fair Rosamond."³¹

Joseph may have been working to develop a romantic vocabulary that was consistent with his father's genteel aspirations. Yet the works that he studied meshed unevenly with his pious upbringing. Oldham's satirical poetry was coarse and frequently verged on the bawdy. And one book that Prince perused, an unidentified volume on "Court

29. John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 80–84; Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion*, pp. 24–54.

30. On La Chambre, see Jon Butler, "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage, 1600–1760," *American Historical Review* 84 (1979): 328; Butler, "Thomas Teackle's 333 Books: A Great Library on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1697," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 49 (1992): 459; Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 77–79.

31. Prince, "Diary," [p. 23].

*sol is supposed to Govern the Hours of my Nativity
and the feminine Proportion to her belonging.*

*I left Prince was Born April the 1st 1695 on
Monday night at ten of the clock =*

*A Table shewing what Planets Rules Evry Hour of the Day
and Night.*

DAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		So	Ve	me	sa	de	ie	me				
<i>This Table shews the Day</i>	Sunday	0	2	8	2	7	2	6	0	2	8	2
Monday	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8
Tuesday	2	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7
Wednesday	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2
Thursday	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7
Friday	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0
Saturday	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2
	Sunday		ie	me	de	ve	me	sa	de			
<i>This Table shews the Night</i>	NIGHT	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2
Monday	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0
Tuesday	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2
Wednesday	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4
Thursday	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8
Friday	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2
Saturday	4	0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7
		0	2	8	2	7	4	0	2	8	2	7

*These Planets
Govern the
severall Hours
after
Sun Rising.*

*and these
Govern the
severall Hours
of Sun setting.*

Figure 5. Prince's astrological tables "shewing what Planets Rules Evry Hour of the Day and Night." Courtesy of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Arts," included thinly veiled misogynistic verses that attempted to explain "Woman's Natuer" through the astrological categories of the "slippery fish," Pisces.³² Even more instructive was the "Witty Epigram on the Effects of the Love of Venus" that Prince copied into the manuscript: "Cupid is V[ul]can's Son Venus his wife/No wonder then He gott Lain all his Life."³³ By 1700 dozens of bawdy and pornographic works had filtered into Puritan New England through the Boston book market. More than one Harvard scholar copied obscene verses into their own commonplace books. In fact, Prince's younger brother,

32. Prince, "Diary," [p. 10].

33. Prince "Diary," [p. 21]. The author has been unable to identify the source of this extract, but similar (though perhaps less objectionable) verses on Venus, Vulcan, and Cupid appear regularly in period jestbooks such as *Wit's Recreations* (London, 1640).

Nathan, sought to "gain insight" into matters of human sexuality by studying more than two dozen dirty books, including suspect volumes such as *History of the Whores and Whoredoms...of Rome*, *The English Rogue*, and *The London Jilt*.³⁴ Joseph's decision to copy one such crude verse into his commonplace book provides a final example of his occasionally rebellious reading habits.

Born to prosperous and pious parents, schooled in the genteel arts of fine conversation and polite comportment, proficient in carpentry, farming, and animal husbandry, yet prepared for a professional career as a civil magistrate—Joseph had been groomed to assume his father's place as master of Whitehall, a Puritan patriarch, and a father of the town. As he entered his twenties, the adolescent farm boy certainly understood what was expected of him. "A Gentleman," Joseph wrote toward the end of his commonplace book, "is one that springs from famous & Renown Ancestors and Degenerates not from their Probity & Honour."³⁵ Still, the younger Prince often turned his education to distinctly adolescent and individualistic purposes. This pattern of subtle rebellion against the socialization schemes of his parents persisted well into adulthood.

For a time after he closed the pages of the slim manuscript in 1720, Joseph remained in Rochester, living and working on his father's property at Cromeset. His name appeared occasionally in the town records, and he even joined the Sandwich church in full membership. In fact, he was one of only a few young, unmarried men to do so prior to the Great Awakening revivals of the 1740s.³⁶ But Joseph was far from being an independent householder. In 1719 Samuel bequeathed a portion of the Cromeset farm to him, along with a share of future undivided proprietary lands in Rochester; but in return for this "Gift," Joseph agreed to conduct a formal survey of his father's remaining properties. The transaction was yet another attempt by the Prince patriarch to leverage his adult children through careful management of the family patrimony, and it may have caused friction between the wealthy magistrate and his rapidly maturing son. Joseph listed the agreement in an "acount of Sundry Gifts from Sundry Persons" that he had received since 1710, and he followed the entry with a pious word

34. Roger Thompson, "The Puritans and Prurience: Aspects of the Restoration Book Trade," in *Contrast and Connection: Bicentennial Essays in Anglo-American History*, eds. H. C. Allen and Roger Thompson (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 36–65; Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene, and Bawdy Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979).

35. Prince, "Diary," [p. 21].

36. Caroline L. Kardell and Russell A. Lovell, comp., *Vital Records of Sandwich, Massachusetts, to 1885*, 3 vols. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1996), p. 1371; "Sandwich Church-Book of Records 1749," New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Mass. For statistical information on church affiliation patterns in Sandwich, see Winiarski, "All Manner of Error and Delusion," pp. 417, 420–21, 426.

of appreciation: "I have Cause of thankfullnes In all ways that I am athis Side the Grave and Do Injoy so many favours when others are Deprived of the same." Subsequent events made it clear that he was anything but content with the yeoman lifestyle that his father had so carefully prepared for him.³⁷

Joseph's life changed dramatically following Samuel's death in 1728. The elder Prince's will confirmed the 1719 gift and deeded to his son additional lands at Cromeset. At the age of thirty-two, Joseph finally had come of age. But in an unusual move for an aspiring gentleman-planter, he abruptly sold "All my Right Estate Title Interest Inheritance Share & Proportion which I ever had...or ought to have...of my...Deceased Father" to his younger brother, Moses, and invested the profits in a merchant sloop, the *Hannah*.³⁸ By the mid-1730s, he had relocated to the distant seaport community of Stratford, Connecticut, and started a family of his own. The one-time farm laborer was one among thousands of ambitious provincial youths who chose to wrest their living from the sea rather than the land.

Prior to his untimely death in 1747, "Captain" Joseph Prince plied the waters from Long Island Sound to Boston Harbor, trading in corn, wheat, beef, furs, and a variety of merchantable commodities. Though his father had begun his adult life as a packet trader between Sandwich and Boston, Samuel undoubtedly would have frowned upon his son's vocational decision.³⁹ A seafaring life was a difficult and dangerous one—especially during the war years of the 1740s. Joseph occasionally noted in a later diary that he returned from his voyages "In Good Helth Through the Goodnes of God," and on two occasions he inscribed a classic bedtime prayer on its pages: "now i lay me down to slep i pray the Lord my soul to cape and ef i shal di before i wake i pray the Lord my soul to cape." The inclusion of this formal prayer signaled an important shift in Joseph's religious sensibilities. Indeed, during the Great Awakening revivals of the 1740s, Prince was one of several wealthy middle-of-the-road Protestant critics who disavowed their Puritan heritage altogether and affiliated with Stratford's Episcopal church. By then he ranked near the top of Connecticut's social hierarchy. Living in a large house surrounded by powerful symbols of

37. Prince, "Diary," [p. 24].

38. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, Plymouth, Mass., 31:131; John L. Loud, "Letter of the Rev. Thomas Prince Concerning His Father's Estate," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 34 (1880): 58.

39. Compare the reaction of Samuel Prince's neighbor and contemporary, Josiah Cotton of Plymouth, Mass.: "In June [1737], Our Son Theophilus took a Voyage to Sea (the thoughts whereof were at first very disagreeable). His Voyage was to North Carolina, & [He] Returned in Safety.... Oh that He & We may be duely thankfull, So that Our Preserver may go on still to Protect him, Who is again gone off to Barbadoes on the 20 of December & that he may return Satisfied with Such a Roving Unsettled Life." [Cotton, "Account of the Cotton Family," p. 277].

gentlemanly refinement—a “house clock,” wall hangings depicting Solomon’s Temple and a “map of the world,” looking glasses, a “Japan Tea Table,” calico quilts, his parents’ portraits, and, of course, £37.15.0 worth of “Books, Some of Law, History, & Divinity”—Joseph appears to have traded his adolescent fascination with wonders, judicial astrology, and dirty books for a more liberal, enlightened worldview.⁴⁰

Today the mortal remains of the one-time farm laborer lie buried in the Stratford town graveyard. Inscribed with the Prince family coat of arms, the headstone attests to Joseph’s prestigious family pedigree.⁴¹ Yet the grave stands more than one hundred miles away from his father’s plot in Plymouth County, and the distance between the two serves as a tangible reminder that the socialization of New England children—even seemingly dutiful sons like Joseph Prince—was never complete. The best laid plans of landed Puritan patriarchs often went awry. The quest for independence that eventually brought Joseph to a distant Connecticut seaport began on the pages of a commonplace book that he kept while working in the isolated fields and salt marshes of southeastern New England.⁴²

Appendix.

“Acompt of the books that I red out” (1712–ca. 1720). The following bibliography builds upon the format established by Jon Butler in “Thomas Teackle’s 333 Books: A Great Library on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, 1697,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 49 (1992): 449–91. First editions of each book are cited and, where appropriate, noted editions published in New England before 1720. Additional notations refer to titles appearing on Boston book trade invoices or in Prince-Hinckley private library inventories—sources that may have been available to Joseph Prince during the first decade of the eighteenth century.

“The bibel 2 1719”
Edition unidentified.

“Time and the end of time”
Fox, John. *Time and the End of Time*. London, 1670. Evans 973; Ford 85, 88, 114, 124, 155; Prince 15.50; Wing F2023.

“Contemplation on Mortality”
Dashfield, John. *A Contemplation of Mans Mortalitie*. London, 1649. Wing D279A.

“Surprising miracals of nature of heavens. earth and water”
Crouch, Nathaniel [R. B., pseud.]. *Surprizing Miracles of Nature and Art*. London: 1683. Thompson 75; Wing C7349.

40. Joseph Prince, “Diaries, 1736–1741,” Prince Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.; Samuel Orcutt, *A History of the Old Town of Stratford and the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut* (New Haven, Conn.: Tuttle Morehouse, and Taylor, 1886), pp. 347–52, 1274; Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Prince, Connecticut Probate Records, Fairfield District, 1648–1880, docket #5065, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn.

41. Prince, *The Prince Family*, p. 215.

42. Thomas Cole has noted that while mobility was common among Sandwich families, few individuals before 1805 moved more than a day’s ride from the towns of their birth [Cole, “Family, Settlement, and Migration,” pp. 174–76].

"The Joy of faith"

Lee, Samuel. *Chara Tes Pisteos. The Joy of Faith, or A Treatise Opening the True Nature of Faith*. Boston, 1687. Evans 429; Ford 170.

"Sin is the greatest evil"

Mather, Increase. *A Discourse Concerning Earthquakes*. Boston, 1706. Evans 1268; Prince 23.30. Text also includes "two sermons shewing that sin is the greatest evil."

"good things propounded"

Mather, Cotton. *Optanda. Good Men Described*. Boston, 1692. Wing M1133; Evans 623.

"A discors of Hardness of hearts"

Mather, Increase. *Two Plain and Practical Discourses*. London, 1699. Wing M1258. The first discourse concerns "Hardness of heart."

"Consolations to opening souls"

Unidentified.

"Now or never the time to be saved"

Wadsworth, Benjamin. *Now or Never the Time to Be Saved*. Boston, 1707. Evans 39458.

"The poor doughting Cristian drawn to Christ"

Hooker, Thomas. *The Poore Doubting Christian Drawne to Christ*. London, 1635. Ford 101, 120, 126, 141; STC 13726.2; Wing H2651B.

"The Godly man is a praying man"

Mather, Increase. *Practical Truths Tending to Promote the Power of Godliness*. Boston, 1682. Wing M1237; Evans 322, 1182; Prince 23.19. The first sermon in the series bears the title cited by Prince.

"Roman forgorys"

Comber, Thomas. *Roman Forgeries in the Councils during the First Four Centuries*. London, 1689. Wing C5490.

Traherne, Thomas. *Roman Forgeries, or A True Account of False Records*. London, 1673. Wing T2021.

"The foly of Sining"

Mather, Increase. *The Folly of Sinning*. Boston, 1699. Evans 879; Ford, 174, 182; Wing M1212.

"The governmente of thoughts"

[Sharp, John]. *The Government of the Thoughts*. London, [1694]. Wing S2977A.

"The Caractuer and trial of a real christian"

Showers, John. *Some Account of the Holy Life and Death of Mr. Henry Gearing*. London, 1694. Wing S3691; Evans 1194; Prince 24.59. Full title includes the phrase used by Prince.

"The Sencear Convert"

Shepard, Thomas. *The Sincere Convert Discovering the Paucity of True Believers*. London, 1640. STC 22404.7; Evans 93; Ford, 92, 122; Prince 24.35, 47.

"The Allmost Christian discovered or the fals prophesor tryed and caste"

Mead, Matthew. *Εὐολίγο Χριστιανοῦς. The Almost-Christian Discovered*. London, 1662. Ford 85, 88, 123; Wing M1546; Prince 57.13.

"A preparation for Sufering in an evil day"

Polhil, Edward. *Armatvra Dei, or A Preparation for Suffering in an Evil Day*. London, 1682. Wing P2750.

"Christs prayer the Saints Se Porte"

Cotton, John. *The Saints Support*. London, 1658. Wing C6454.

Gouge, William. *The Saints Support*. London, 1642. Wing G1397.

Palmer, Thomas. *The Saints Support*. London, 1644. Wing P255.

"Spiritual War fair"

Gray, Andrew. *The Spiritual Warfare*. Edinburgh, 1672. Ford 155; Wing G1619A.

"The Ladies calling of piety"

Alestree, Richard. *The Ladies Calling*. Oxford, 1673. Wing A1141.

"The mortification of Sin in belevers"

Owen, John. *Of the Mortification of Sinne in Believers*. Oxford, 1656. Wing O785.

"The great Cair of a Cristian"

Mather, Cotton. *The Serious Christian, or Three Great Points of Practical Christianity*. London, 1699. Holmes 347; Prince 13.25. Part I bears exact title cited by Prince.

"A discors Concerning Comets"

Mather, Increase. *Κομητογραφία, or A Discourse Concerning Comets*. Boston, 1683. Wing M1224; Evans 352; Prince 23.24.

"Presious Remedyes against Satan's Devices"

Brooks, Thomas. *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*. London, 1652. Ford 84, 95; Wing B4953A.

"The Wonders of the invisabel world"

Mather, Cotton. *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. Boston, 1693. Wing M1172; Evans 657. Prince 23.8.

"The use foolnes of natrul felosophy"

Boyle, Robert. *Some Considerations Touching the Vsefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy*. Oxford, 1663. Wing B4029.

"The best mach or the Sols espousel to christ"

Pearse, Edward. *The Best Match, or The Souls Espousal to Christ*. London, 1673. Wing P971.

"Nomen Cator"

Edition unidentified. Ford, 86, 126, 150, 169, lists various nomenclatures imported to Boston during the late seventeenth century.

"Cooke Institutes 2 Parte"

Coke, Edward. *The Second Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England*. London, 1642. Thompson 67; Wing B4948.

"Cooke 3 Parte of the Institutes"

Coke, Edward. *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England*. London, 1644. Thompson, 76; Wing 4960.

"James Janeways acquaintance with god"

Janeway, James. *Invisibles, Realities, Demonstrated in the Holy Life and Triumphant Death of Mr. John Janeway fellow of Kings Colledge in Cambridge*. London, 1673. Wing J470; Evans 39393.

Janeway, James. *Mr. James Janeway's Legacy*. London, 1674. Wing J473.

Janeway, James. *A Token for Children*. London, 1679. Ford 86, 127; Wing J479.

"1 Parte of Tulleys Offices"

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Tully's Offices*. London, 1681. Ford 143, 175; Thompson 74; Wing C4309.

"Lambord's Direction to Justices"

Lambarde, William. *Eirenarcha, or Of the Office of the Justices of Peace, in Two Bookes*. London, 1581. STC 15163.

"orphants Legasey"

Godolphin, John. *The Orphans Legacy*. London, 1674. Thompson 76; Wing G946.

"Behold I stand at the door & nock (J. Flavill)"

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"The Theory of Siances"

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"The Pantheon or tabel of the Heathen gods"

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"Durham Physico-Theology"

Durham, William. *Physico-Theology, or A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God from His Works of Creation*. London, 1713. ESTC 135377.

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"a short Compendium of universal History"

Hearne, Thomas. *Ductor Historicus, or A Short System of Universal History*. London, 1698. Wing H1309.

"Pleasing Conversation"

Vaumorière, M. de [Pierre Ortigue]. *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation*. London, 1691. Wing V161A.

"the Reasonableness of Personall Reformation"

Flavel, John. *The Reasonableness of Personal Reformation*. Boston, 1720. Evans, 2634. Flavel's popular treatise on moral reformation originally was published in London (1691), but the excerpts that Prince copied into his commonplace book ("Diary," [p. 21]) confirm that he had read the first American edition.

"Ingenious Youth's Companion"

Seddon, John. *The Ingenious Youth's Companion*. [London, 1690?]. Wing S2356.

Abbreviations:

ESTC: *The English Short Title Catalog, 1473–1800*, CD-ROM. London: British Library, 1998.

Ford: Worthington Chauncey Ford, *The Boston Book Market, 1679–1700* (Boston: Club of Odd Volumes, 1917).

Hinckley: George Ernest Bowman, ed., "Governor Thomas Hinckley's Will and Inventory," *Mayflower Descendant* 5 (1903): 243.

Holmes: Thomas James Holmes, *Cotton Mather: A Bibliography of His Works*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).

Prince: *The Prince Library* (Boston: A. Mudge, 1870). Numbers correspond to BPL shelving system.

STC: W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1986).

Thompson: Roger Thompson, "Worthington Chauncey Ford's *Boston Book Market, 1679–1700*: Some Corrections and Additions," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 76 (1974): 67–78.

Wing: Donald G. Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641–1700*, rev. ed., 3 vols. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1972–1988).