

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**Name of collection:**

Prince Family, Papers, 1724-1822

**Location:**

Octavo volumes "P"  
Misc. mss. boxes "P"

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**Size of collection:**

6 octavo volumes  
1 folder (7 items)

**N.U.C.M.C. number:**

**RLIN id:** MAAR92-A137

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**Sources of information on collection:**

For biography of Thomas Prince, see DAB, vol. 15, pp. 232-22. For biographical information on other family members, see S. Appleton, A Register of the Prince Family (Boston: n.p., 1869).

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**Source of collection:**

Octavo volume six the gift of R. W. G. Vail, 1931

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**Collection description:**

Thomas Prince (1687-1758), theologian, scholar, historian, and bibliophile, was pastor of the Old South Church in Boston, Mass. from 1718 to 1758, author of *A Chronological History of New England* (1736), and owner of one of the finest colonial libraries of the era. The Prince library contained many books pertaining to the civil and religious history of New England, and was later incorporated into the Boston Public Library. Thomas Prince was also an extensive landowner, including a section that later became the town of Princeton, Mass. Prince was a member of a large family numbering many cousins, including Joseph Prince (1694-1758), a Boston sea captain and trader, and Jonathan Prince (1707?-1753), one of the first resident physicians of Salem Village (Danvers), Mass.

The collection consists of six octavo volumes and one folder covering the period 1724 to 1822. The folder contains biographical notes on Thomas Prince and genealogical information on his grandfather Elder John Prince (1610-1676) of the Church of Hull, Mass., compiled by several descendants; a lengthy biographical newsclipping on Thomas Prince; and two original items: a letter dated 1728 to his father Samuel Prince (1649-1728) concerning a court hearing on the executorship of a will; and an account booklet, originally written in 1671, in which Thomas Prince entered memoranda concerning religious notes and biblical charts, calculations, and maps of his landholdings.

Three octavo volumes also pertain to Thomas Prince. There is a diary for 1737, written in Nathaniel Ames' Almanack, containing brief entries concerning cash accounts, visits, preachings, the presentation of his Chronological History to the General Court, funerals, family events, and references to his friend Samuel Mather (1706-1785). An account book for his Rutland, Mass. land holdings, 1733-1778, contains signed receipts for tax payments, calculations on the accounts of Rutland taxes voted by the proprietors from 1714 to 1743, a list of his rights in the proprietors' section of Rutland, and account lists of the interest and taxes in Rutland of his brother-in-law Samuel Denny (1689-1772). A third volume contains undated sermons by Thomas Prince concerning death and dying.

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**Collection description (continued):**

Joseph Prince, cousin of Thomas Prince, kept a series of diaries in Ames' Almanacks, bound together, from 1736 to 1741. Prince was a sea captain sailing out of Boston on board the sloop "Hannah." The entries are marginal notes concerning cash accounts, calculations, and brief daily references to his arrivals and departures from various ports.

Dr. Jonathan Prince's diary/almanac, for the period 1724 to 1730, contains brief entries referring to his occasionally "keeping school" in Salem Village, his accounts of paper-selling, cash accounts, quotations of proverbs, notes in Latin concerning medicinal prescriptions, and references to the earthquake of 1727.

The collection also includes a volume written by John D. Prince ( - ) entitled "Chemical Receipts," 1805-1822, which contains many detailed recipes for the dyeing and staining of cloth into specific colors, with references to the handling of different fabric types, bleaching processes, recipes for cleaning and blacking boots, and the use of such items as "British gum." Included are several fabric samples pasted on the leaves.

23 November 1976  
revised 4 March 2010

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Contents List

Octavo Volumes:

- 1 Thomas Prince, Rutland accounts, 1733-1778
- 2 Thomas Prince, Diary, 1737
- 3 Thomas Prince, Sermons on death and dying, n.d.
- 4 Jonathan Prince, Diary, 1724-1730
- 5 Joseph Prince, Diary, 1736-1741
- 6 John D. Prince, Chemical Receipts, 1805-1822