

PRINCE, JOHN.

John Prince papers, 1803-1811

Emory University
Pitts Theology Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Prince, John.
Title: John Prince papers, 1803-1811
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 209
Extent: 0.2 cubic ft. (2 folders)
Abstract: Consists of letters written to the Reverend John Prince while he was the chaplain of Magdalen Hospital.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Citation

[after identification of item(s)], John Prince Papers, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Anne Graham, 2001.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

The Reverend John Prince was the chaplain of Magdalen Hospital in London during the period covered in the letters, 1803-1811. Established in 1758, Magdalen Hospital was a charity organization for the rehabilitation of "fallen women." Initially, only prostitutes were accepted, but as early as 1778 the scope was broadened to include victims of seduction. Applicants were to be under the age of thirty, not pregnant, and must undergo questioning by the board of governors

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to assure the sincerity of her reformation. Preference was given to the youngest and those who had the least experience in prostitution. Once admitted, the women attended training in needlework and laundry work, as well as religious services twice daily. Its main proponent was merchant and philanthropist Jonas Hanway (1712-1786), who with the architect, Robert Dingley (1708?-1781), established Magdalen House in 1758. In 1769, the charity was incorporated by an act of Parliament. At this time, it was moved from Prescott Street to St. George's Fields and renamed Magdalen Hospital. In 1869, the hospital moved to Streatham and was open at this location as late as 1888. Prince was also a vicar in Endford Parish, Wiltshire, where he spent the summer months with his wife and family. The dates of Rev. Prince's birth and death are unknown.

Mrs. E. Cocks wrote from Saffron Walden, Essex. Her nephew, Sal. [sic] Yorke, lived with his wife in Ely, Cambridgeshire and assisted in her charitable work. The date of her birth is unknown, although at the time her letters were written her "age is great." She died between June 1807 and 1808.

Margaret Smith continued the philanthropic works of Mrs. Cocks on her death. She wrote primarily from her home of Shortgrove in Saffron Walden, Essex as well as from Hereford Street and Bryanston Square in London. She was married and gave birth to a son in 1809. Another son, William, attended Mr. Horne's school in Chiswick. The years of Margaret Smith's birth and death are unknown.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is comprised of letters written to the Reverend John Prince while he was the chaplain of Magdalen Hospital. The first series of nine letters was written by Mrs. E. Cocks from 1803 to 1807 and details her charitable contributions to Magdalen Hospital, as well as other altruism. Cocks discusses her nephew, Sal. [sic] Yorke, and the well-being of a clergyman (referred to as Mr. Bell) and his family.

The second series of nine letters and one fragment were written by Mrs. Margaret Smith from 1808 to 1811. She began her correspondence with Reverend Prince shortly after the death of her friend, Mrs. Cocks. Smith continued Cocks' annual £50 donation. She asks Prince to distribute various donations for her anonymously to Magdalen as well two other charity organizations, the Refuge for the Destitute and the Westminster New Lying In Hospital on York Road, Lambeth. Smith's letters continue the saga of the Bell family. Overall, the letters provide insight into Victorian attitudes about charity.

Container List

| Box | Folder | Content |
|------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Letters from Mrs. E. Cocks, 1803-1807 |
| 1 | 2 | Letters from Mrs. Margaret Smith, 1808-1811 |
