PRINCE, JOHN.
John Prince papers, 1803-1811

Emory University
Pitts Theology Library
1531 Dickey Drive, Suite 560
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-4166

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
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

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

Processing

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.
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 Prescot 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

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<td>1</td>
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<td>Letters from Mrs. E. Cocks, 1803-1807</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Letters from Mrs. Margaret Smith, 1808-1811</td>
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