

Prince Family Papers, (1783-1888)

MSS: # 024

Processed by: Lily Mysona Dec. 2016

Volume: 1 box

Abstract: These papers were produced by the Prince family from 1783 through 1888. The Prince family was prominent along the North Shore. Though most of these records were created by Princes residing in Beverly, some records came from family members, friends, and business associates located in Salem, Ipswich, Cambridge, New Bedford, Washington, DC, and Virginia. George Prince, a young man sent to fight in the Civil War, wrote an abundance of letters home to his father, mother, brother, sisters, friends, and wife. Andrew Prince made quite an effort to buy up large swathes of land in Beverly.

Collection Creator: Lydia Prince; Joanna Prince; John Prince; Warren Prince; Andrew Prince; George Prince

Provenance: Unknown

Conservation/Processor's Note:

Most documents are in good condition. Some are extremely worn and crumbling and require conservation efforts.

Copyright: Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Curator of Collections in the Cabot House of Historic Beverly.

Preferred Citation:

Title of Document, Collection Title, Historic Beverly, 117 Cabot Street, Beverly, MA 01915.

Biographical or Historical Note:

The Princes were a wealthy family, mostly settled in Beverly, that was well known along the North Shore. Some of its female members, including Joanna, seemed to be independent and well respected in their own right. The men also seemed to have held their wives, daughters, and sisters in high regard. Several last will and testaments are included, and in most the deceased left his estate to his wife and/or daughter. The Prince wealth was made and used in different ways. Several of the men, including John and Warren, were merchants who sailed trade routes and brought back imports including coffee and sugar. Documents in their folders include many ledgers, bills, and scraps of paper with sums written on them. Andrew used his fortune to buy up neighboring plots of land in Beverly, creating a large estate that included farmland. When he died, he left some money to his grandsons, and the rest of his estate to his wife, Abigail, and daughter, Joanna L. Foster. Joanna, following Andrew's death, purchased from Abigail all that he had left her. Even Joanna, who was named executrix of her husband's estate following his

death, spent a lot of time and energy trying to collect outstanding debts owed from men with whom her husband had done business. George Prince is the notable exception; his papers contain almost no mention of earning, collecting, or spending money. Instead, he chronicles, in about 100 letters, his time serving in the Beverly Light Infantry for the Union Army during the Civil War. According to his letters he did not see much conflict, but he did mention issues that the soldiers have with their officers. He sometimes included drawings of his often changing setting. George displayed the clearest sense of humor in the collection.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection consists of letters, will and testaments, ledgers, bills, and deeds (of sale, quitclaim, etc.) that were created by the Prince family, including Andrew, George, Joanna, John, Lydia, and Warren. Materials that were not created by the Prince family were created by people who knew them, and those documents are about or addressed to a Prince family member. The dates of the papers range from 1783 to 1863. There are many undated documents, including all of Series 5, subseries 3 (Warren Prince). Topics include land purchases, money owed and paid, and the Civil War. Relationships are also discussed, including familial, friendships, and marital.

Series List:

This collection is arranged into 8 series:

Series I: Prince, Lydia, *1783-1854*

Series II: Prince Family *1789-1888*

Series III: Prince, Joanna *1802-1856*

Series IV: Prince, John *1804-1819*

Series V: Prince, Warren

 Subseries I: Ledger *1838*

 Subseries II: Correspondence *1840-1886*

 Subseries III: Notes for Memoir *Undated*

Series VI: Prince, Andrew *1848-1874*

Series VII: Prince, George

 Subseries I: Civil War Correspondence *1861-1862* [folder 1]

 Subseries II: Civil War Correspondence *1863* [folder 2]

Series VIII: Prince -- Club Paper *Undated*

Container List:

Series I: **Prince, Lydia, 1783-1854**

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains letters either written by Lydia to her mother or written to Lydia by her niece and cousin. It also includes a deed that Lydia witnessed.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
CHMV-Unit 3 Shelf 4	1	1	Correspondence to and from Lydia	1783-1854

Series II: Prince Family, 1789-1888

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains documents on several members of the Prince family, none of whom had other documents about or by them. Family members mentioned include Joshua Prince, Josiah B. Prince, Joseph H. Prince, Ann P. Safford, and William Prince. Some of the documents can't be attributed to anyone. The predominant topic is money: debts owed, purchases made, loans, and surplus revenue, and land sales.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	2		1789-1888

Series III: Prince, Joanna, 1802-1856

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains a record of events following the death of Joanna's husband. Topics include donations made to her to ease the troubles of widowhood, condolences, and bills for items purchased from different vendors. There is a good deal of correspondence between Joanna and Job Nelson, who apparently acted as her solicitor. There are also several letters between Joanna and her friend, Allen Melville.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	3		1802-1856

Series IV: Prince, John, 1804-1819

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains bills and receipts for goods and supplies bought or transported by John, a ship captain and/or owner.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	4		1804-1819

Series V: Prince, Warren, 1838-1886

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. This series is split into three subseries. The first contains a ledger kept by Warren Prince. The second contains a collection of letters written to and by Warren. The bulk of these letters were written by Wilson Flagg, a friend of Warren's and the Prince family. The third contains undated notes for a memoir that Warren intended to write. Topics of this subseries include prominent people, well known places, and Warren's childhood in Beverly, MA.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	5	Subseries 1, Ledger [folder 1]	1838
	1	6	Subseries 2, Correspondence [folder 2]	1840-1886
	1	7	Subseries 3, Notes for Memoir [folder 3]	Undated

Series VI: Prince, Andrew, 1848-1874

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains deeds detailing Andrew Prince's purchase of land in Beverly, MA. It also contains Andrew's last will and testament, in which he leaves much of his land, buildings, personal effects, and money to his second wife Abigail F. Prince, and fair amount of his money and belongings to his daughter, Joanna L. Foster. The final document in the series is a quitclaim deed wherein Abigail turns everything the late Andrew left her, including right of homestead, over to Joanna.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	8		1848-1874

Series VII: Prince, George, 1861-1863

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains letters written by George Prince to his family members while he was serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. The series is divided into two subseries; one contains letters written between 1861 and 1862, the other contains letters written in 1863. Most of George's letters were written to his father. Fewer were written to his mother, but with those letters he took more care with his penmanship, spelling, and diction. There are also letters to his brother, sisters, a couple friends, and eventually his wife. Some of his letters contain drawings. He had a sense of humor that is very present in his letters.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	9	Subseries 1, Civil War Correspondence [folder 1]	1861-1862
	1	10	Subseries 2, Civil War Correspondence [folder 2]	1863

Series VIII: Prince--Club Paper, Undated

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged chronologically. Contains a report that recommends dissolving a club that may have been started by the Princes, or of which several Princes were members.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
	1	11		Undated