

Christopher Prince Papers

A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Naval
Historical Foundation Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by Harry G. Heiss



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2009

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

Finding aid encoded by Library of
Congress Manuscript Division, 2009

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Collection Summary

Title: Christopher Prince Papers

Span Dates: 1806-1891

ID No.: MSS84124

Creator: Prince, Christopher, 1751-1832

Extent: 3 items; 1 container; 0.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Sailor and activist in the seamen's religious movement. Manuscript autobiography containing accounts of seafaring life in colonial New England, maritime events of the Revolutionary War, Prince's employment by agents of George Washington, his enlistment in the Connecticut navy, the close of the war, and his conversion to Christianity shortly thereafter.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Personal Names

Allen, Ethan, 1738-1789.

Prince family.

Prince, Christopher, 1751-1832.

Prince, Hezekiah, 1771-1840.

Prince, Isabella Coombs.

Washington, George, 1732-1799.

Organizations

Gaspée (Brigantine)

Great Britain. Royal Navy.

Oliver Cromwell (Ship)

United States. Continental Navy.

Subjects

Christianity.

Conversion--Christianity.

Sailors--Religious life--New England.

Seafaring life--New England--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775.

Locations

Connecticut--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.

Hudson River (N.Y. and N.J.)

Hudson River Valley (N.Y. and N.J.)--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.

Maine--History.

Massachusetts--Social life and customs.

Montréal (Québec)--History--Siege, 1775.

Spencer (Mass.)

Thomaston (Me.)

United States--History, Naval.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Amphibious operations.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Naval operations.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Peace.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Prisoners and prisons.

Occupations

Religious activists.
Sailors.

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Christopher Prince, sailor and activist in the seamen's religious movement, were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1997 and converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History:

The papers of Christopher Prince were arranged and described in 1998. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Copyright Status:

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Christopher Prince in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions:

The papers of Christopher Prince are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Christopher Prince Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Christopher Prince (1751-1732) span the years 1806-1891 and include a manuscript and typewritten transcript of Prince's autobiography and a booklet on a gathering of the Prince family.

Written in 1806, the autobiography provides a firsthand look into the life of colonial New England seafarers. It also contains Prince's eyewitness accounts of several maritime events of the Revolutionary War, including the imprisonment of Ethan Allen aboard the *Gaspée* (brigantine) in the fall of 1775 and the amphibious withdrawal of the British from Montréal later that year. The autobiography recounts Prince's employment by agents of George Washington in 1776 to sink four ships in the Hudson River to impede the British and Prince's enlistment as a landsman and steward aboard a Connecticut navy warship, the *Oliver Cromwell*. The memoir, which may be a nineteenth-century copy of the original, concludes with the ending of the war and an account of Prince's religious conversion to Christianity shortly thereafter. Sometime before 1817, Prince moved to New York, having retired from the sea because of rheumatism. Residing near the wharves, he spent the remainder of his life actively involved in the seamen's religious movement.

The other document in the collection is a souvenir booklet from a gathering of the descendants of Hezekiah and Isabella Coombs Prince of Thomaston, Maine, at Spencer, Massachusetts, in August 1891.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Autobiography
BOX 1	Manuscript, 1806 (4 folders)
BOX 1	Transcript, undated
BOX 1	<i>A Gathering of Descendants of Hezekiah and Isabella Prince of Thomaston, Maine, 1891</i>