



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Lucy Terry Prince collection

1967-1973

Sc MG 28

Processed by A. Aleins, S. Sharlin, and D. Carter, August 1977. The necessary staff and supplies for this program were made available through a combination of funds and services provided by the Research Libraries, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the State of New York.

Summary

Creator: Prince, Lucy Terry, approximately 1730-1821

Title: Lucy Terry Prince collection

Date: 1967-1973

Size: 0.19 linear feet (3 reels)

Source: Gift of Janathan Katz, 1974.

Abstract: Lucy Terry Prince is considered the earliest Black American poet, a sample of whose work still exists; she was also a formerly enslaved person. This collection consists of material related to Bernard and Jonathan Katz's book, *Black Woman: A Fictionalized Biography of Lucy Terry Prince* (1973).

Preferred citation: [Item], Lucy Terry Prince collection, Sc MG 28, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

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Creator History

Lucy Terry Prince, a Black pioneer woman, was born in Africa in 1730. At the age of five she was brought to Newport, Rhode Island, by the Malbone brothers, slave traders and rummakers, and sold to Ebenezer Wells for sixty pounds. For the next twenty years, she lived with the Wells family in Deerfield, Massachusetts, working as a domestic servant.

In 1756, Lucy Terry married Abijah Prince, a Black soldier and formerly enslaved person. Although the couple had met in 1746, it took ten years for Prince, freed upon his master's death in 1748, to earn the

money to buy Lucy's freedom from Ebenezer Wells. For the next fourteen years, Lucy and Abijah Prince continued to live in Deerfield and raise their six children.

Upon the death of his master, Abijah Prince inherited his land in Northfield, Massachusetts. Over a period of time, he acquired additional land in Guilford and Sunderland, Vermont (Sunderland was then in New Hampshire territory), making Prince one of the original founders of Sunderland. In 1770, the Prince family moved to Guilford where they lived until 1803, when they lost the Guilford land and moved to their Sunderland property. Abijah Prince died in 1794.

Throughout her life, Lucy Terry Prince distinguished herself as a woman of intelligence and determination. In 1746, at the age of sixteen, she wrote a poetic ballad commemorating the Indian attack on a Deerfield haying party. As a result of this poem, Lucy Terry Prince is considered the earliest Black American poet, a sample of whose work still exists.

On two occasions, she fought and won legal battles over land disputes. In 1785, she went before the Governor of New Hampshire's Council to protest harassment of her property and family by the wealthy Noyes family. In the 1790s, Colonel Eli Brownson, the Prince's neighbor in Sunderland, claimed part of the Prince land. The case was tried before Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase on circuit in Vermont. Although she had a lawyer, Isaac Tichenor, Lucy Prince presented her own argument before the judge and won the case. In the early 1770s, Lucy Prince also attempted, without success, to have her son admitted to Williams College. Lucy Terry Prince died in 1821 at the age of ninety-one.

The details in this biography were taken largely from the Katz book, *Black Woman: A Fictionalized Biography of Lucy Terry Prince*. Bernard Katz, born in New York City in 1901, had a longstanding interest in the history of Black oppression and resistance. He also had an interest in jazz and published a work on music entitled *The Social Implication of Early Negro Music in the United States* (Arno Press, 1969). Katz had done the research and finished part of the manuscript for the Prince biography when he died in 1970. His son, Jonathan Katz, revised and completed the manuscript, which was published by Pantheon in 1973.

Jonathan Katz was born in New York City in 1938. He attended Antioch College and the City College of New York, and currently works as a writer in New York City. He inherited his father's avid interest in Black studies and also specializes in American women's history. Katz is also the author of *Resistance at Christiana: The Fugitive Slave Rebellion, Christiana, Pennsylvania, September 11, 1851; a Documentary Account* (Crowell, 1974); *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (Crowell, 1976); *Coming Out! A Documentary Play about Gay Life and Liberation in the U.S.A.* (Arno, 1975) ed.; and *Homosexuality: Lesbians and Gay Men in Society, History and Literature* (Arno Press reprint series).

Scope and Content Note

The Lucy Terry Prince collection, 1967-1973, consisting of manuscript drafts and research materials on the Black pioneer, Lucy Terry Prince, was assembled by writers Bernard and Jonathan Katz as supporting documentation for their book, *Black Woman: A Fictionalized Biography of Lucy Terry Prince* (Pantheon, 1973). The collection documents not only the life and activities of Lucy and Abijah Prince but also includes a great deal of background information on eighteenth century New England history. In addition, the collection provides insight into the research methods of the authors, Bernard and Jonathan Katz.

The collection itself consists of manuscript drafts; correspondence between the Katzes and various

sources of relevant information; research notes from both published works and archival sources; and copies of pertinent documentation and printed material.

Arrangement: Organized into three series: I. Manuscript drafts; II. Research files; and III. Research notes

Key Terms

Subjects

African American women poets
African Americans -- History
Slavery -- United States -- Fiction
Slaves--Emancipation
Women slaves -- Massachusetts

Names

Katz, Bernard, 1901-1970
Katz, Jonathan, 1938-
Prince, Abijah, 1705 or 1706-1794
Prince, Lucy Terry, approximately 1730-1821

Container List

Manuscript drafts

This series includes three complete and two partial drafts of the Prince biography. The drafts are mostly typescripts with considerable handwritten annotation.

- r. 1 Rough Manuscript
 - Original Manuscript - Unrevised
 - Typescript
- r. 1 Part I
- r. 1 Part II
 - Typescript Manuscript
- r. 1 Pages 1-60
- r. 1 Pages 61-130
- r. 1 Pages 131-191
 - Carbon Manuscript - Revised
- r. 1 Pages 1-60
- r. 1 Pages 61-130
- r. 1 Pages 131-197
- r. 1 Revised Manuscript (Partial)

Research file 1967-1973

This series consists of an alphabetical subject file of research material. The topics covered range from specific incidents, such as "Abijah's Death"; research on individual subjects, including "Deerfield Research"; and correspondence with publishers and sources of information. Of particular note are the letters exchanged between the Katzes and Mary Adams Ball of Deerfield; Martha Wright of Northampton, Massachusetts; James M. McCabe, who was a research assistant for the Katzes; James K. Owens, archivist at the Federal Records Center in Waltham, Massachusetts; and Charles Hallam, librarian of the Library of the U.S. Supreme Court.

- r. 1 Abijah's Death n.d.
- r. 1 Bibliography - Prince Research 1967-1972, n.d.
 - Brownson Case
- r. 1 Court Notes n.d.
- r. 1 Documents n.d.
- r. 1 Manuscripts n.d.
- r. 1 Research Notes n.d.
- r. 1 Sources n.d.
- r. 1 Chronology - Lucy Terry Prince n.d.
- r. 1-2 Clippings Relevant To Lucy Terry Prince 1970-1973, n.d.
 - Correspondence
- r. 2 Ball, Mary Adams 1967-1970, n.d.
- r. 2 Book 1967-1972, n.d.
- r. 2 Katz, Jonathan 1970-1973, n.d.
- r. 2 McCabe, James M 1967-1972, n.d.
- r. 2 Merriam, Robert L 1967-1969, n.d.
- r. 2 Publishers 1970-1973

Research file (cont.)

Correspondence (cont.)

- r. 2 United States Supreme Court 1967-1972, n.d.
- r. 2 Wright, Martha 1969-1972, n.d.
- r. 2 Council Dispute n.d.
- r. 2 Deerfield - Research n.d.
- Governor's Council
- r. 2 Manuscript n.d.
- r. 2 Research n.d.
- r. 2 Guilford - Manuscript n.d.
- r. 2 Guilford/Sunderland - Research And Notes n.d.
- r. 2 Katz, Bernard - Ben's Article - A Second Version Of Lucy Terry's Early Ballad? n.d.
- r. 2 Katz, Jonathan - Notes On Readings (Deerfield) n.d.
- r. 2 Maps 1969-1970, n.d.
- r. 2 Miscellaneous 1973, n.d.
- r. 2 Notes And Bibliography n.d.
- r. 2 Prince, Lucy Terry - Fact And Fiction n.d.
- r. 2 Printed Material 1965-1969, n.d.
- r. 2 Progress Notes - Lucy Terry Prince n.d.
- r. 2 Revisions - Lucy Terry Prince Post-1969
- r. 2 Revisions - Notes n.d.
- Williams College
- r. 2 Manuscript n.d.
- r. 2 Notes n.d.
- r. 2 Years Of Conflict - Notes n.d.

Research notes

this series is composed of two subseries of catalog cards containing notes on particular topics and citations to both primary and secondary sources. Each series of cards is arranged in alphabetical order by subject. Within each subject, the original order of the cards has been retained.

File 1

- r. 3 Background
- r. 3 Bibliography - Miscellaneous
- r. 3 Chronology
- r. 3 Guilford
- r. 3 People
- r. 3 Prince Family
- r. 3 Revolution
- r. 3 Sources
- r. 3 Sources - Brownson Suit
- r. 3 Sources - Vermont Council
- r. 3 Sources - Williams College
- r. 3 Subjects

Research notes (cont.)

File 1 (cont.)

- r. 3 To Research Sometime
- r. 3 Towns
- r. 3 Vermont
- r. 3 Williams College
- r. 3 Years Of Conflict

File 2

- r. 3 Bars Fight
- r. 3 Court - Brownson-Prince
- r. 3 Deerfield
- r. 3 French - Indian
- r. 3 Life - Deerfield
- r. 3 New York University Law Library
- r. 3 Places - Deerfield
- r. 3 People - Deerfield
- r. 3 Noyes Family
- r. 3 Research - People
- r. 3 Sunderland Chronology
- r. 3 To Research First