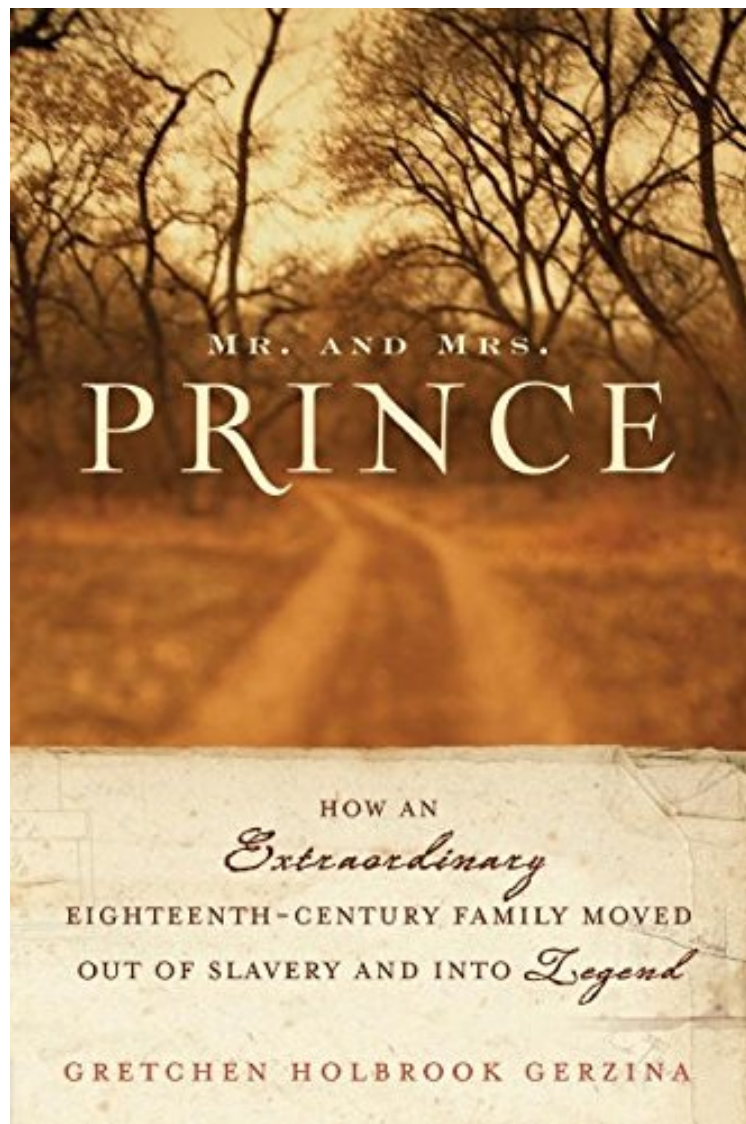


[FREE] Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and into Legend

Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and into Legend

Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina

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#1374652 in Books 2008-01-22 2008-01-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x .93 x 5.50l, #File Name: 0060510730272 pages | File size: 15.Mb

Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina : Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and into Legend before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and into Legend:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. fascinating interwoven storiesBy skatinglibrarianWritten by an historian who formerly lived in the small Vermont community of Guilford, "Mr. and Mrs. Prince" tells two stories. The Princes of the title were African Americans who were slaves in northern Massachusetts up until the period between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. First Abijah Prince managed to buy his freedom thanks to years of taking on extra jobs and his military service, and later he freed Lucy, who would become his wife. Unlike slaves in the South, they had learned to read and write, both had the math skills needed to work in a store or other business, and there was a community of African Americans around them which included free men and women as well as slaves. Lucy was known as a superb storyteller, and is believed to be the first African American woman to write poetry in the US. Gretchen Gerzina, the author, and her husband spent years trying to separate myth from fact. Their detective work took them to dozens of libraries, courthouses, genealogical societies, and archives. As they unraveled the story they also came to a deeper understanding of life and society on the New England frontier. As a librarian and family historian I found both their search and their deepening appreciation for the courage of the Princes fascinating. For when settlers began to move north into Vermont after the wars with the Native Americans ceased, the Prince family acquired a homestead in Guilford and slowly cleared land for farming and built a modest home. Sadly a wealthy neighbor from Connecticut, envious of their somewhat better land and a racist to boot, hired men to attack the Princes and their farm. The Princes defended themselves legally and although successful with the Selectmen, judges, and legislature, the frontier government had no way to actually protect them. Gerzina followed their story and that of their grown children and in the process illuminated everyday rural life in the young republic. As a resident of Guilford myself, I particularly appreciate the chance to read serious, well researched history that took place in what is still a very rural corner of the world. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Vermont Black HistoryBy Terry MartinWOW, talk about history in my own backyard and places I have been, people I know who helped in the research. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and history surrounding the struggles that early American blacks faced, again right in my backyard. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great HistoryBy jparsonsGreat book for New England history

Merging comprehensive research and grand storytelling, Mr. and Mrs. Prince reveals the true story of a remarkable pre-Civil War African-American family, as well as the challenges that faced African-Americans who lived in the North versus the slaves who lived in the South. Both accomplished people, Lucy Terry was a devoted wife and mother, and the first known African-American poet. Abijah Prince, her husband, was a veteran of the French and Indian Wars and an entrepreneur. Together they pursued what would become the cornerstone of the American dream—having a family and owning property where they could live, grow, and prosper. Owning land in both Vermont and Massachusetts, they were well on their way to settling in when bigoted neighbors tried to run them off. Rather than fleeing, they asserted their rights, as they would do many times, in court. Here is a story that not only demonstrates the contours of slavery in New England but also unravels the most complete history of a pre-Civil War black family known to exist. Illuminating and inspiring, Mr. and Mrs. Prince uncovers the lives of those who could have been forgotten and brings to light a history that's intrigued but eluded many until now.

From BooklistAbijah and Lucy Prince defied all the conventions of their pre-Civil War era by buying themselves out of slavery and going on to become landowners and influential members of their communities in Vermont and Massachusetts. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War; she was the first published African American poet; both were skilled entrepreneurs who faced down every challenge to their efforts. They stood up to those who tried to force them off their land, mounting court challenges and taking full advantage of their rights. Historian Gerzina intersperses their story—one of devotion and determination—with her own obvious love of genealogy and research. In the course of her work, aided by her husband, who became captivated and competitive in finding defining resources, Gerzina discovered a connection between her mixed-race family and the Princes. She is meticulous and joyous in this look at the Princes and the social and political landscape of enslaved and free black communities in New England. --Vanessa BushAbout the AuthorGretchen Holbrook Gerzina is the author and editor of several books, including Carrington; Black London (a New York Times notable book); Black Victorians, Black Victoriana; Frances Hodgson Burnett; and others. She is the Kathe Tappe Vernon Professor in Biography at Dartmouth College, where she also chairs the English Department, the first African-American woman to do so in the Ivy League. She has won grants from Fulbright and the National Endowment for Humanities and hosts The Book Show, a nationally syndicated weekly radio program that airs on ninety stations across the country, interviewing current authors of literary fiction, biography, and history.