

**BURT FRANKLIN: RESEARCH AND  
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SOCIETY, III. WOOD'S NEW  
ENGLAND'S PROSPECT**

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Wood's New England's Prospect by Various

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(AMERICAN CLASSICS IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE #2)

Publications of the Prince Society,

III



WOOD'S NEW ENGLAND'S PROSPECT.



WOOD'S  
NEW-ENGLAND'S PROSPECT.



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## PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

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**N**EW ENGLAND'S PROSPECT, of which an exact reprint from the first edition is here furnished, may be esteemed the earliest topographical account, worthy to be so entitled, of the Massachusetts Colony. The writer, an intelligent, and apparently an educated man, here embodies, in vigorous and idiomatic English, the results of his observation and experience in the country, during a residence in it of about four years. In the address "To the Reader," he says, "I have laid downe the nature of the Country, without any partiall respect unto it, as being my dwelling place where I have lived these soure years; and intend, God willing, to return shortly againe." A glance at the table of contents will show that the author aims to embrace in his book every subject on which information would be sought by those interested in emigration to this part of the new world; and a desire for truth appears to have guided his pen. Doubtless the work contains some inaccuracies. On some subjects the writer needed further information; as, for instance, where he says, "Concerning Lyons I will not

say that I ever saw any my selfe, but some affirme that they have seene a Lyon at Cape Anne, which is not above six leagues from Boston." Cotton Mather might have believed the following, and have been at no loss as to the agency employed in thus affrighting our early colonists: "Some likewise being lost in woods, have heard such terrible roarings, as have made them much agast; which must eyther be Devill's or Lyons," &c. But, as a whole, we think the book may be taken as an accurate picture or description of the Massachusetts Colony, at the period of which it treats. "As the end of my travell," he says, "was observation, so I desire the end of my observation may tend to the information of others. As I have observed what I have seene, and written what I have observed, so doe I desire to publish what I have written, desiring it may be beneficiall to posterity; and if any man desire to fill himselfe at that fountaine from whence this cup was taken, his owne experience shall tell him as much as I have here related."

We have noticed two contemporaneous references to this book. One, inscribed on the latest edition of Smith's map of New England, as published four years after his death, in Hondy's "Historia Mundi or Mercator's Atlas," London, 1635, which is as follows: "He that desyres to know more of the Estate of new England lett him read a new Book of the prospecte of new England & ther he shall have satisfaction." The other is in Thomas Morton's "New English Canaan," Amsterdam, 1637, where the writer refers to a statement which his "Countryman Mr. Wood declares in his prospect."

*Preface to the Present Edition.* ix

A second edition of this tract was published in 1635, in London, and a third in 1639; each containing 83 pages, besides the appendix of Indian words. An edition, erroneously called the third, was printed in Boston by Thomas and John Fleet, in 1764, of 128 pages, omitting the prefatory addresses, but with a new introductory essay and foot notes, concerning the authorship of which there has, within a few years, been some discussion, which the curious reader may find in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for November, 1862. They were probably written by Nathaniel Rogers, Esq., of Boston, who was graduated at the University of Glasgow in 1755, received the degree of Master of Arts at Harvard College in 1762, and died in 1770. The text of all these editions is substantially the same. The introductory essay of the Boston edition has been here reprinted, and prefixed to the volume.

Of the writer of this book, William Wood, but little is known with certainty. He probably came over in 1629, and, as claimed by Lewis in his "History of Lynn," soon after settled in that place, of which, in his tenth chapter, under the name of "Saugus," he gives a full and particular description. In his third chapter, in speaking of the healthfulness of the country, he says, "Out of that Towne from whence I came, in three years and a half, there dyed but three." He sailed for England with Captain Thomas Graves, 15th August, 1633. Dr. Young thinks that he never returned here. But one William Wood, calling himself a husbandman, aged 27, came over, in 1635, in the "Hopewell," and is supposed by Lewis to be our author, and to be identical with him who was a repre-