

**COMMONPLACE-  
BOOK OF RICHARD  
PRATT OF LYNN, MASS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649397068

Commonplace-book of Richard Pratt of Lynn, Mass by Richard Pratt & Nathan M. Hawkes

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**RICHARD PRATT & NATHAN M. HAWKES**

**COMMONPLACE-  
BOOK OF RICHARD  
PRATT OF LYNN, MASS**





THE BOOK

©

COMMONPLACE-BOOK

OF

RICHARD PRATT

OF LYNN, MASS.

With Introduction and Notes by  
NATHAN M. HAWKES

(200 copies Printed — not Published — for MICAJAH PRATT CLOUGH)

---

LYNN, MASS.  
THE NICHOLS PRESS — THOS. P. NICHOLS  
1900

## INTRODUCTION.

---

ALONZO LEWIS, in the first edition of the *History of Lynn*, published in 1829, relating his sources of information says: "I have also found a journal kept daily for forty-four years by Mr. Zaccheus Collins; and another, for twenty years by Mr. Richard Pratt, in which they appear to have noticed everything remarkable during those long periods, and from which I have extracted many interesting particulars."

There ought to be many other such manuscripts in existence, illustrating the early days of Lynn. Mr. Lewis evidently did not find them. He styled those he had access to "Journals."

One of these so-called Journals is herein presented in fair type.

Mr. Richard Pratt prefaced the book, which is in his own handwriting, with the word "MEMORANDUM."

The name, "COMMONPLACE-BOOK," seems to be an appropriate title for it: ("A book in which things to be remembered are recorded." — *Webster*.)

The volume of the original manuscript is a folio, measuring about seven and a half inches in length, and six inches in width.

It is bound like the *Bradford History*, in parchment; once white, but now grimy and showing its age, as all things old will.

The cover is stout and strong yet, but the paper is cracked and decaying. If its contents were worth pre-

servicing, the time had arrived when it should be copied. Those interested, thought it advisable to transcribe its contents; hence, this printed reproduction.

The custodian of the manuscript, Mr. Gilbert Hawkes, who is a great-grandson of the author, has kindly loaned it to us for local historic research. He received it from his aunt, Miss Cynthia Pratt, who, like the author, was a Lynn school teacher.

Richard Pratt was the son of Grover Pratt, of Malden, who came to Lynn and married Rebecca Lewis, February 17, 1725-6.

The home of Richard Pratt, where he jotted down the matters that seemed to him important, for the twenty years prior to the Revolution, was upon Broad Street, where, in later years his grandson, Micajah C. Pratt, built the brick shoe factory which still stands. About it was the garden, in the sowing of the seeds and the gathering of the fruit of which he evidently delighted.

He was born November 27, 1728, and married, November 12, 1751, Rebecca Ingalls. He died April 25, 1816.

His "TEXTS PREACHED FROM," show that he was a constant attendant at the First Church, and the minuteness of his vital statistics indicate that he must have held some recording office in church or parish.

Quite a number of pages at the end of the old book are taken up with figures such as a schoolmaster would have occasion to use, as interest tables, examples in multiplication, weights and measures. These we have omitted as of no interest to the possible readers of the book, because they will presumably be beyond school years.

We have also avoided copying the entries by later members of the family, though some of them are of interest



as treating of the affairs of the Friends' Society, to which these subsequent users of the book had become attached.

The manuscript is legibly and neatly written, and no attempt has been made to modernize the orthography. It is not to be taken for granted that our diarist did not know how to spell because he did not spell as we do. For example, he uses the word "goal." The dictionaries of that period give the definition of "goal," adding, "also a gaol or jail." He uses the word "pease," which is still given in our dictionaries, though "peas" is now, perhaps, commonly in vogue. We write the name of the ancient Lynnfield minister "Sparhawk." He calls him "Sparrowhawk." In the Saxon tongue, "Sparrowhawk" and "Sparhawk" have the same meaning.

This may be a commonplace book in another sense than is intended by its title, inasmuch as it sets down and records, without rhetoric or sentiment, the things which came to the attention of a grave and clerkly man, who passed an uneventful life in the rural hamlet of Lynn nearly a century and a half ago.

Most of the important things (that is, important to anyone save the diarist and his kin) recorded therein were of events not happening on the soil of Lynn. But they reveal the fact that the pulse of our provincial life was in touch with the great world's affairs. Through almost all the period covered by this record, New England was harassed and drained of men and money by the French and Indian wars. It closes with the impending conflict with the Crown. Almost the last public event mentioned is the laconic entry, "1775 April 19. General Gage's army marched out to Concord and began hostilities." The very last public event recorded, under date, "1775 May 27," is

the "Fight at Winnissimet," which, though not as important as Lexington or Bunker Hill, occurred nearer Lynn. Between the above two recorded entries he writes under date, 1775 April 25. "I began to keep the school." After that, either the school or the clash of arms, or some other good reason, dried the ink on Mr. Pratt's quill, for he ceased to write of affairs and left his pages blank. His descendants in Lynn and elsewhere are numerous and respectable. A great-grandson, Sidney Bowne Pratt, out of a modest competency bequeathed to the Lynn Public Library (its first bequest) the sum of ten thousand dollars, and thus led the way for others to follow.

This book has been printed (not published) by the thoughtful liberality of Mr. Micajah Pratt Clough, a great-grandson of Mr. Richard Pratt. The introduction and notes are the tribute of another great-grandson.

A time-stained bit of paper, indorsed, "A Worthy Man's Character," written at the time of Mr. Pratt's death, has been preserved in his family all these years — almost a century.

Perhaps these imperfect reasons for putting this old manuscript in type may conclude by reciting the words then written:—

"At Lynn, Mr. Richard Pratt, aged LXXXVII. A man who justly sustained the character which entitles old age to the appellation of 'Honorable.' He was a firm friend to the Republican Institutions of his country, which he perceived naturally grew out of that 'Brotherly Equality' guaranteed to all men by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He met death with that fortitude and trust in the mercy of God which may remind us of that most comfortable truth, 'Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord.' — *Rev. xiv: 13.*"

*COMMONPLACE-BOOK*  
*OF*  
*RICHARD PRATT.*