

BOWNE HOUSE ARCHIVES



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BOWNE FAMILY PAPERS OF FLUSHING, L.I.

BFP #2018.1.02-01 (PDF copy)

Letter of John Swinton from Newgate Prison

Date: circa 6th month (August) 1660 Old Style

Citation:

Letter of John Swinton from Newgate Prison, circa August 1660 (O.S.), BFP #2018.1.02-01, Bowne Family Papers of Flushing, Long Island, AC# 2018.1, Bowne House Archives, Flushing, NY.

Original document appears on next page

NOTES ON 17TH- AND 18TH-CENTURY DOCUMENTS

Dates:

1. Quaker dates: early Quakers used the numbers, not the names, of the months and the days of the week. (Note that the numbering of the months was different in the Old Style calendar—i.e., their "seventh month" is September, not July.)
2. Old Style ("O.S.") vs. New Style (N.S.): Prior to 1752, English people mostly used "Old Style" dating, which followed the Julian calendar and began the New Year on March 25. However, the Dutch and many other European countries followed the "New Style" calendar in use today. By the 17th century, the Old Style calendar had fallen ten days behind the New Style.
3. Dual dating: because the New Style calendar began the year on January 1 and the Old Style began it on March 25, dates that fall in between are sometimes given in a format like 1663/4 or 1663-4.

Common abbreviations:

y ^e = the or thee	y ^m = them
y ^t = that	w th = with
y ⁿ = than or then	w ^{ch} = which

Note: words like "ye" are spelled with the Old English character thorn, which looks like the letter "y" but is pronounced "-th."

Money is denominated in pounds, shillings, and pence, in columns as follows: £ : s : d

Reading 17th- and 18th-century handwriting:

Transcriptions are already available for some of the Colonial-era documents from the Bowne House Archives; transcription of the rest of our collection is an ongoing project. We recommend the following resources for those who would like to learn how to read early modern handwriting for themselves:

Kip Sperry, *Reading Early American Handwriting* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 2009) - book available from Amazon.com and other online retailers

Library of Congress Research Guide: "Paleography: Interpreting Handwriting in Genealogical Research" - <https://guides.loc.gov/paleography/early-american-handwriting>

Online tutorial from Harvard's Beinecke Library: "Quarantine Reading: Learn to Read Secretary Hand" - <https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/article/quarantine-reading-learn-read-secretary-hand>

John Swinton

Faded handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the paper. The text is illegible due to fading and damage.