

The Settlement of the Poor and the Rise of the Form in England c.1662–1780

On the 27th of May 1762 James Carr, a husbandman, must have breathed a sigh of relief. The settlement certificate naming himself and his family members was formally endorsed: two Justices of the Peace signed it, and two witnesses attested that the preceding seals and signatures were true. James Carr had not gone far. Originally from the township of Scarisbrick in the parish of Ormskirk, Lancashire, he and his family moved to the neighbouring township of Aughton. Demographers would describe this as ‘short-’ or ‘medium-distance migration’, the most typical form of labour movement in the eighteenth century.¹ But even such a move of six or seven miles could necessitate formal certification. Since the previous century, each English person had to have a parish to which they legally ‘belonged’, and which could underwrite claims for poor relief. James the husbandman was evidently not wealthy enough to acquire legal settlement in his new home, Aughton, and so he needed the township of Scarisbrick to declare its commitment to him. This was not always easily obtained, for local authorities could create obstacles. In any event certification required time, money, and multilateral co-operation. James and his family must have felt reassured when their form was signed, and delivered. In the spring of that year, 1762, in the Sussex county town of Lewes, 264 miles to the south-east, the members of the Trimby family probably experienced a similar feeling. James Trimby, Susanna and their four children had relocated from one parish in Lewes to another. They too needed a form to attest their settlement, and they too were no doubt pleased to have had it ‘allowed’ by the local Justices of the Peace, signed and sealed.²

¹ For example, Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987); Ian D. Whyte, *Migration and Society in Britain, 1550–1830* (Basingstoke, 2000), esp. 57–62. See Lancashire Archives, Preston, (hereafter LA) PR 3019/6/2.

² East Sussex Record Office, The Keep, Brighton (hereafter ESRO), PAR 414/32/1/68, 17 Apr. 1762.

Had the Carr and Trimby families met, they probably would have immediately recognized that they shared important characteristics. Both belonged to the ranks of those collectively called ‘the poor’, whose numbers had been growing since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The processes of social restructuring and polarization that had affected English society since the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – to quote Keith Wrightson – left more than half the English population landless, with nothing to sell except labour and skills.³ While in good times such people could thrive, in bad times their existence was precarious. Illness and bereavement could easily plunge families from relative comfort to destitution, and desperately affect those already struggling; likewise trade-slumps, bad harvests, and wars. Within the ranks of the poor, the Carrs and Trimbys formed part of the large and increasing numbers of second-class inhabitants, ‘certificate persons’ as they were called, who could never fully belong to the communities in which they resided.⁴ While they did not meet the qualifying property or rental thresholds for settlement or bear public office, they were unlikely to participate in the politics of the parish vestry or to vote;⁵ and they were exposed more than their settled neighbours to the vagaries of local patronage. Finally, had the Carrs and the Trimbys met, they might also have recognized that they shared a similar sense of dignity. Evidently each family was determined to stick together and to make ends meet in its place of habitation – one in the north-west, the other in the south-east – while claiming independence, and without resorting to relief, as their certificates indicated.

³ Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580–1680*, new edn (London and New York, 2003), esp. 222–8; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven, 2000), esp. chs. 1, 2, 8; and see, for example, the classification of the poor as ‘those that labour to live’: Michael Dalton, *The Country Justice: Containing the Practices of the Justices of the Peace Out of their Sessions. Gathered for the Better Help of Such Justices of Peace, as Have Not Been Much Conversant in the Study of the Laws of this Realm*, new edn (London, 1677), 142.

⁴ ‘Certificate man’ for male, ‘certificate person’ for female: Richard Burn, *The Justice of the Peace, and Parish Officer*, new edn, 3 vols. (London, 1758), iii, 19, 35, 64, 69, 75–6, 79, 95–7.

⁵ See changing regulations: *Ibid.*, esp. ii, 445–7, iii, 11–14, 60–79, also reflecting gender norms. Application varied locally.

However, in addition to such structural and circumstantial similarities, the Carr and Trimby families had something else in common, which, had they met, they might not have realized, and which concerns us here. That was a certain Mr Coles. Both obtained settlement certificates printed for, and sold by Mr John Coles of 21 Fleet Street, London: large sheets of durable linen-rag paper, about 40cm long and 26cm wide. The clear layout conveyed the document's purpose. Blank spaces were marked for filling in the names of the parties concerned. Ample space in the left margin cleverly allowed the officers involved to fold the document lengthwise and use the left margin as a flap to cover the whole, while writing on it the names of the parties concerned to facilitate carriage and filing. The figure '18' on the top left (see Plate 1) indicated that this was the eighteenth in a larger catalogue of forms, namely the 'Certificates for acknowledging Inhabitants legally settled'. In Coles's catalogue the 'Blanks relating to Justices of the Peace and their Clerks' totalled sixty-two.⁶ And so the lion and the unicorn towered majestically beside the Hanoverian coat of arms; wreaths of Tudor roses and thistles floated by their curly tails. The royal emblem read: 'Dieu et mon Droit' right above the designation of the parish officers and parishes. In the opening phrase 'We the Church Wardens and Overseers of the Poor' (the parties who first executed the form), the initial 'W' was lavishly adorned. With these splendid documents signed and sealed, the Carrs and Trimbys could no doubt feel secure.

And so could Mr Coles, who by 1762 had behind him fifty-two years of considerable achievement, and ahead – as we now know – twelve more years of professional success and affluent retirement, as he made his way from the uppermost ranks of the London citizenry into those of the landed gentry. But who was Mr Coles, and what was his business? Who devised his form no. 18, or any other similar document he produced, and how did they come

⁶ A surviving copy of Coles's *Catalogue* (London, 1750?), *Catalogue of Blanks, and Other Stationary Wares* (London, 1750?), British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings, T215878, The British Library; see also Burn, *Justice of the Peace* (1755), ii, advertisement at the back with 103 forms, about 32 relating to poor law administration.

to be used in Lancashire and in Sussex? What was the significance of this paperwork in the contemporary state, centrally or locally? How did it emerge, and what was its history?

The eighteenth-century print culture is widely studied; increasingly, researchers appreciate not only the production of books, but the large-scale printing of ephemera, forms, and all manner of small ‘jobbing’ items.⁷ At the same time, a great deal has been written about the treatment of the poor and its role in local government: a crucial aspect of the growth of the state in early modern England, where governance was vested in annually elected or selected lay parish officers from the reign of Elizabeth.⁸ Yet not enough is known about the possible interconnections between the uses of print, the governance of the poor, and their combined relation to processes of state formation. Arguments, moreover, sometimes focus on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so developments taking place in the late decades of the seventeenth century and the early and middle decades of the eighteenth century are not always fully explored.

The 1662 legislation concerning the settlement of the poor, and especially its subsequent amendments, as this article shows, had a decisive impact on the consolidation of a

⁷ See specially innovative work by James Raven, *Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2014); Sarah Lloyd, ‘Ticketing the British eighteenth century: “a thing ... never heard before”’, *Journal of Social History* 46 (2012–13); Michael Twyman, ‘Printed Ephemera’, in Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Vol. 5, 1695–1830*, (Cambridge, 2009).

⁸ 43 Eliz. I, c. 2 (1601), with important preceding legislation. For the state, note especially, for example: Sydney and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government*, 11 vols. (London, 1963); David Eastwood, *Governing Rural England: Tradition and Transformation in Local Government, 1780–1840* (Oxford, 1994); Joanna Innes, ‘The State and the Poor: Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective’, in John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth (eds.), *Rethinking Leviathan: the Eighteenth-Century State in Britain and Germany* (Oxford and London, 1999); ‘Keith Wrightson, ‘The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England’, in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996); Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1560–1640*, new edn (Basingstoke, 2000); Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England c.1550–1600* (Cambridge, 2000); Mark Goldie, ‘The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England’, in Tim Harris (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500–1850* (Basingstoke, 2001); and for poverty and policy, for example: Philip Styles, ‘The Evolution of the Law of Settlement’, *Birmingham Historical Journal* ix (1963); Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London and New York, 1988); Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Law and the People, 1700–1948* (Cambridge, 1998); Tim Hitchcock, Peter King, and Pamela Sharpe (eds.), *Chronicling Poverty: the Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640–1840* (Basingstoke, 1996); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: the Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c.1550–1750* (Oxford, 2004); K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity, and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge, 2006); Steven King and Anne Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement and Belonging in Europe 1500–1930s* (New York and Oxford, 2013).

culture of administrative forms, which became by the 1760s a bureaucratic apparatus in its own right, and an important aspect of the material culture of local government. The forms could be employed, as will be seen, in both print and script formats: two media distinct yet interconnected that continued to coexist for a long time (as historians of medieval and early modern societies increasingly appreciate).⁹ The alignment of literacy and state administration, well-known since antiquity, thus continued, and the impact of print, however great, was not radical: three hundred years after movable type had reached England, much of the business of governance could be done in script. Yet with the aid of both script and print, form culture grew massively to affect the government of the poor, and the ways in which authority was both exerted and experienced. Diverse processes that hitherto had been unstructured, subject to negotiation, or non-existent were now prescribed by dedicated forms, which only increased and multiplied over time (as all will know who see the collections of forms relating to settlement in provincial archives). In due course the new administration further affected how the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century state developed. Primary legislation and cumulative amendments propelled the transformations charted here, alerting us to the capacity of the law to shape historical circumstances and to mould cultures, often with important unintended consequences. Yet the forces of production and consumption also played a role, for Coles's form no. 18 – like many other materials examined here – was commercially produced and marketed.¹⁰ James Stephen Taylor, in a much cited article, has commented that the most

⁹ For example, Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993); Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998); Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700* (Cambridge, 2004), esp. introduction, ‘Script, Print and History’, and Anthony Musson, ‘Law and Text: Legal Authority and Judicial Accessibility in the Late Middle Ages’; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge, 2005); Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago and London, 2007), ch. 5; Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), 238–46.

¹⁰ For the forces of consumption and production, see, for example, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1983); Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1984); John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of*

numerous administrative records regarding settlement, such as the certificates, are also the least useful for the historian.¹¹ But these documents, too, have a story to tell.

The arguments presented here are based on a study of settlement materials in two counties in particular, chosen to represent two different and distant corners of England: Sussex in the south-east and Lancashire in the north-west. The Lancashire sample includes most known settlement documents for the county, for relatively few parish and township collections survive; yet those examined display diverse geographies and economies.¹² Quarter Session materials were also investigated, which in Lancashire survive well, although they include only a part of the settlement materials originally created. Most notably the settlement certificates, produced for migrants and deposited in parish and township chests, or simply carried by their bearers, reached the courts only if a dispute arose, while until the middle decades of the eighteenth century removal documents were not necessarily recorded by Quarter Sessions. The same applies to supplementary accounts, passes, examinations, etc., representing routine handling rather than legal disagreement. In comparison, the Sussex local settlement materials are abundant and meticulously conserved.¹³ The coastal, Wealden, urban and rural parishes studied, in the eastern and western divisions of the county, were selected to represent variety, and for their relevance to some of the themes investigated here.¹⁴ The

Goods (London and New York, 1993); Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture, 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text* (London and New York, 1995); and above, n. 7.

¹¹ James Stephen Taylor, ‘The Impact of Pauper Settlement, 1691–1834’, *Past and Present*, no. 73 (Nov. 1976), 46.

¹² Including Aughton, Billington, Bickerstaffe, Blackburn, Bretherton, Burscough, Cronton, Culcheth, Downholland, Easington, Fishwick, Great Harwood, Halewood, Kirkham and Poulton-le-Fylde. See also Jonathan Healey, *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire, 1620–1730* (Woodbridge, 2014).

¹³ See also Norma Poulton and Ian Nelson (eds.), *Mid-Sussex Poor Law Records, 1601–1835* (Sussex Record Society, lxxxiii, Lewes, 2001), 11–15. Parishes were more likely to file certificates received than copies of certificates issued, while many certificates must have been taken by their bearers.

¹⁴ Including Ashburnham; Brede; Burwash; East Hoathly; All Saints and St Clement, Hastings; Heathfield; Hellingly; Henfield; St Michael, Lewes; Pulborough; Steyning; Wadhurst; and Winchelsea. These were mostly ‘open’ parishes: *Mid-Sussex Poor Law Records*, ed. Pilbeam and Nelson, 9, 12–13.

documents explored also include materials from metropolitan London, and from a range of counties connected through migration.

This article starts with the emergence of the printed form in England and its development in the seventeenth century in relation to the settlement of the poor, and the leading figures in the production and distribution of forms: the masters of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, such as Mr Coles. It investigates Coles's life and work and notes features common to him and to other form-producing stationers. The second section examines the production and cost of the settlement forms, technical issues important for understanding their administration.¹⁵ It also explores the continued use of script in the settlement documents and the relationship between script and print, while observing local and regional profiles. The third and concluding section considers the triumph of the printed form as over time local authorities were increasingly served not by London but by provincial stationers, while the number of dedicated forms – produced for specific localities and uses – proliferated. The English state had evolved from the end of the seventeenth century to c.1780 through processes of decentralization and reconfiguration, manifested not least in the administration of the poor laws.¹⁶ Although by the latter decades of the seventeenth century levels of acute poverty had declined, the governance of the poor tightened.¹⁷ Yet it continued to be handled mostly by lay officers, while state ventures relied on 'middlemen' to the point

¹⁵ Though much is written about settlement we know little about document production and sometimes there is lack of clarity, for example whether the settlement certificates were expensive and reluctantly issued by parishes seeking to avoid long-term commitment, or readily provided in the hope that the recipients would not return, and to what extent they comprised a unified corpus of bureaucratic documents: for example, Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, for instance, 99, 129–30; K.D.M. Snell, 'Settlement, Poor Law, and the Rural Historian: New Approaches and Opportunities', *Rural History* ii (1992), 159; Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690–1800* (Cambridge, 2015), 48; Edward Higgs, *Identifying the English: a History of Personal Identification, 1500 to the Present* (London and New York, 2011), esp. 82–3.

¹⁶ For example, Eastwood, *Governing Rural England*, esp. chs. 1–2; Braddick, *State Formation*, ch. 3; Innes, 'The State and the Poor'; Joanna Innes, 'Forms of "Government Growth", 1780–1830', in David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (eds.), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011); Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689–1798* (Oxford, 1991), esp. 156–8, ch. 4.

¹⁷ For example, Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 188–192; Braddick, *State Formation*, 116–17.

that the bureaucratic structures themselves could appear as ‘an adjunct to, or a product of ... popular participation’.¹⁸ This article aims to illuminate a distinctive aspect of the working of the state in the period, showing how the gaps between the legislation, and local implementation were filled by agents and entrepreneurs, who collectively produced a flourishing culture of forms, with a lasting impact on the evolving state. By the late eighteenth century, when the creation of the Home Office marked a new era,¹⁹ the forms pertaining to settlement had been internalized by the central state authorities. Concepts of ‘settlement’ continued to appear in the British welfare administration well into the twentieth century, and have echoes today.

The processes outlined here will thus contribute both to our understanding of print culture in England during a formative period, and to our knowledge of the governance of the poor in a critical era of state formation. Yet they may also interest theorists and social scientists, for print, script, and the formation of state bureaucracy preoccupy researchers in a range of disciplines. The founding fathers of social thought highlighted the impact of industrialization and urbanization on the making of modern administrative regimes. More recently many scholars addressed the relationships between knowledge and power, and state uses of information and technology (ideas influentially developed by Max Weber, and explored by an array of thinkers from Marshall McLuhan and Edward Shils to Michel Foucault, to name but a few).²⁰ Present-day investigators of ‘the information state’ stress the

¹⁸ Aaron Graham, *Corruption, Party, and Government in Britain, 1702–1713* (Oxford, 2015), 21; Roger Knight and Martin Wilcox, *Sustaining the Fleet, 1793–1815: War, the British Navy and the Contractor State* (Woodbridge, 2010), 37–8.

¹⁹ Eastwood, *Governing Rural England*, especially 18–9, 107; see also Hugh Barty-King, *Her Majesty’s Stationery Office: the Story of the First 200 Years, 1786–1986* (London, 1986).

²⁰ For example, works by ‘founding fathers’ such as: Henry S. Maine, *Ancient Law: its Connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas*, new edn (London, 1905); Ferdinand Tönnies, *Fundamental Concepts in Sociology [Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft]* (1887), ed. and trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York, 1940); Max Weber, *Economy and Society, an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. and trans. Günther Roth and Claus Wittlich, new edn, 2 vols. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1978); more recently, for example, Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: the Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto, 1962); Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago, 1975), on diffusion of state symbols; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, 1977).

need to consider the relationships ‘between the theoretical carriage and the empirical horses’ in view of current research of the early modern period.²¹ For the increasing use of the administrative form, we should indeed turn to the period prior to industrialisation, and to the small-scale urban and rural settings where most English people lived.²² However paradigms emphasising state control and the passive conceptualization of the subject may prove insufficient. Major processes examined here were propelled not only by state laws, but by the market, where Mr Coles and his fellow stationers – alongside numerous scribes, clerks, magistrates, parish officers, and ordinary people – partook in the development of a new culture of forms that amounted to a step-change in the making of bureaucracy in England, and in the experiences of authority.

I. The rise of the form and the career of Mr Coles

When Mr Coles started producing his form no. 18, he was hardly a pioneer. The demands of the state had been reflected in a growth of formulaic documents since Tudor times.²³ The Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (1563), for example, required labourers to carry a written testimonial as they moved around, while the laws for the control of vagrancy introduced

²¹ To use the words of Edward Higgs, *The Information State in England: the Central Collection of Information on Citizens, 1500–2000* (Houndsill and New York, 2004), 204–5. See also, for example D.V. Glass, *Numbering the People: the Eighteenth-Century Population Controversy and the Development of Census and Vital Statistics in Britain* (Farnborough, 1973); C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge, 1996), especially methodological points in the introduction; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Conditions to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, 1998); Steve Hindle, ‘Technologies of Identification under the Old Poor Law’, *The Local Historian*, xxxvi (2006), especially 228–9; Ogborn, *Indian Ink*; Higgs, *Identifying the English*; important arguments in Paul Griffiths, ‘Local Arithmetic: Information Cultures in Early Modern England’, in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds.), *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), ch. 5; and incisive points on investigations of the ‘Big Brother state’: Raven, *Publishing Business*, 13.

²² This hardly fitted a *Gemeinschaft* model, as Higgs explains, *Information State*, 31, 204–5.

²³ Musson, ‘Law and Text’, especially 110–11; Bertha Haven Putnam, *Early Treatises on the Practice of the Justices of the Peace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1924). See guidebooks such as: Anthony Fitzherbert, *The Boke for a Iustyce of Peace Neuer So Wel and Dylgently Set Forthe* (London, 1538), at least thirty editions thereafter; Dalton, *The Country Justice* (1618), numerous editions thereafter.

passports for conveying those defined as ‘rogues’.²⁴ Such documents appeared in blank formats in guides for scribes and local administrators.²⁵ By 1633, for example, the City of London was issuing printed vagrants’ passports.²⁶ In the county of Suffolk blanks for alehouse keepers were employed by c.1625.²⁷ As early as 1563 wages set by Justices of the Peace were published in a printed form.²⁸ During the seventeenth century, however, the printing of blank forms became increasingly common. In particular, the revolutionary 1640s and 1650s saw the dismantling of traditional institutions of government alongside an unprecedented spread of print and also new initiatives in form production.²⁹ No sooner had the siege of Oxford ended, for example, than General Fairfax issued blank forms to enable defeated royalists to leave the town.³⁰ By 1649 the recently established Excise was requiring the production of weekly accounts on printed forms.³¹ By the late 1650s, forms were commercially supplied for state officials, and dispatched to the provinces to serve as organizational tools, while thousands of tickets were printed in London each year to arrange the meetings of parliamentary committees.³² Meanwhile, scribal blank forms continued to circulate, and were also traded for a variety of uses: from private contracts to keeping the

²⁴ Already in the 13th century those wandering outside their village benefited from carrying an identifying document – M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* 2nd edn (Oxford, 1993), 49.

²⁵ The certificates for rogues, for example, replaced the earlier testimonials allowing begging: Fitzherbert, *Iustice of Peace* (1535), fo. 15^v; Lambarde, *The Duties of Constables, Borsholders, Tythingmen, and Such Other Lowe and Lay Ministers of the Peace... According to the Last Statutes of the 39 Yeare of the Raigne of our Most Gracious Soueraigne Queene Elizabeth*, revised edn (London, 1601), 41, reflecting 39 Eliz. I, c. 4, and repeated with some variations in the 1631 edn, 36, and 1671 edn, 26–7; *An Ease for Overseers of the Poore: Abstracts from the Statutes ... and a Patterne for Poore Men to Provoke Them to Labour* ([London?], 1601), 337; and various editions of Dalton’s guidebook.

²⁶ 6,000 printed that year: Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 94, 108.

²⁷ ‘Suff. ss. memorandum that the [blank] day of [blank] anno Dom. [blank] ...’ (London, 1625). See also Charles Robert Rivington, *The Records of the Worshipful Company of Stationers* (London, 1883), 39: authorization by James I to produce licenses for ‘Ale-house and Vintners’ and ‘other things printed on one side’.

²⁸ *The Seuerall Rates and Taxations for Wages, Made [and] Set Forth by the Justices of Peace of the Countie of Rutland* (London, 1563); *The Seuall Rates and Taxations for Wages ... Set Forth by the Justices of Peace, of the Countye of Northumpton* (London, 1566).

²⁹ ‘The bureaucratisation of print’: Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 334–8.

³⁰ Surrender Certificates issued to the bearers, 24 June 1646: Papers of the Secretaries of State up to 1782, Committee for Compounding Delinquents: Books of Papers, Particulars of Estates and Fines Thereon, 2nd Series, vol. 23, 1646–7, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), State Papers, SP 23/196/147, 183, 191.

³¹ Michael J. Braddick, *Parliamentary Taxation in Seventeenth-Century England: Local Administration and Responses* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY, 1994), 172 and n. 23.

³² Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 334–7.

peace. Historians highlight how the post-Restoration regime retained – if not developed – practices promoted under parliamentary rule.³³ When it came to the production of forms, the latter decades of the seventeenth century saw considerable expansion.

The regulations of the Stationers' Company, which until 1695 required careful notation of every print venture, enable us to consider how post-Restoration blank forms were printed.³⁴ On 28 April 1673, for example, after the passing of the 'Act for Preventing Dangers which May happen from Popish Recusants', ('the Test Act'), the stationer master Ambrose Isted entered his copyright to produce 'blank certificates for taking of the Sacrament, according to the late Act of Parliament'.³⁵ Less than a month later, another stationer, John Bellinger (who no doubt knew Isted well since they had been apprenticed by the same master) entered his right to produce blanks for the 'Testimoniall', noting the full text of the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, to be sworn by individuals before the quarter sessions.³⁶ By 1678, Bellinger entered 'his copie' for producing a certificate of burial in woollen (testifying that the deceased was buried in English pure woollen shrouds, as legislated to protect home production). The full formula of the form was cited here too, with blanks for entering the names of the persons concerned, thereby securing the stationer's copyright according to the guild's rules.³⁷ Following the same pattern, the periodic levying of the Hearth Tax from 1666 led to production of forms. Church administration, likewise, moved

³³ For example, the excise initiated in 1643 by John Pym and greatly developed thereafter: n. 32, above.

³⁴ See especially 14 Car. II, c. 33 (1662) requiring registration by the guild of all but acts of parliament, proclamations, etc. and including a section on forms. The legislation lapsed 1674–85, was revived until 1695, but was irregularly enforced, for example: Michael Treadwell, 'The Stationers and the Printing Acts at the End of the Seventeenth Century', in John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, iv, 1557–1695* (Cambridge, 2002), 765–6.

³⁵ 25 Car. II, c. 2; and see: Stationers' Company, London, *Registers or Entry Books of Copies, 1554–1842* [Microfilm copy], 28 Apr 1673; [G. E. B. Eyre (ed.)], *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers 1640–1708* (London, 1913–14), ii, 459. For Ambrose Isted, see: D. F. McKenzie *Stationers' Company Apprentices 1641–1700* (Oxford Bibliographical Society, new ser., xvii, Oxford, 1974), 168. Entries for him and for other stationers can be found in 'The London Book Trades: a Bibliographical and Documentary Resource', http://lbt.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mediawiki/index.php/Main_Page (accessed in May 2016).

³⁶ Stationers' Company, 'Registers', 23 May 1673, with detailed reproduction of the form. For Bellinger, see McKenzie, *Stationers' Company Apprentices, 1641–1700*, 168.

³⁷ Stationer's Company, 'Registers', 26 July 1678, and, for example 30 March, 30 Aug. 1678.

towards the use of printed forms. By the 1630s, for instance, the scribal pattern of marriage bonds was already set. In 1664, the first printed marriage bonds were issued by the Diocese of Chester, and by 1667 the form was broadly standardized, in a format employed for decades, with blank slots for inserting the name of the parties concerned.³⁸ By the 1680s, as James Raven explains, customs duties, receipts, and bills all appeared in printed forms.³⁹

The production of printed forms during these later decades of the seventeenth century was marked by a number of characteristic features that remained noticeable in the course of the next century, and during the working life of Mr Coles, and help us to understand the development of the forms concerning the settlement of the poor. First, form production was usually handled by stationers specializing in the field, who undertook the making and distribution of forms time and time again. John Bellinger (b. 1630), for example, started dealing with forms soon after his apprenticeship and by the 1650s was supplying printed blanks to counties as far afield as Cambridgeshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire.⁴⁰ Although he dealt with other printed matter, much of his business probably involved the production of forms.⁴¹ A generation later, a stationer such as Mr Coles hardly entered the book market at all.⁴² Second, form production attracted enterprising young men, who must have identified a niche in the market and wanted to expand. Bellinger, like Coles in due course, gravitated towards the wholesale making and selling of forms early in his career. Third, form production tended to be handled by well-connected and in time eminent stationers, several of whom did very well from that business. Bellinger, operating partly under a royal charter from 1684, was elected upper warden of the Stationers' Company in 1685 and the next year became master.

³⁸ Marriage Bonds, Archdeaconry of Richmond, Diocese of Chester: LA, ARR11; see also, for example, LA DDDTO/293, Diocese of Lincoln (Latin, printed on parchment), 1616; and note that as early as 1480 Pope Pius IV was offering indulgences with the use of printed blank forms.

³⁹ James Raven, *The Publishing Business*.

⁴⁰ Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 335.

⁴¹ For his book production, see, for example, John Brydall, *Jus imaginis apud Anglos: or The Laws of England Relating to the Nobility & Gentry. Faithfully Collected, and Methodically Digested for Common Benefit* (London, 1675).

⁴² However see his production of a Poll Book and a marriage-register book, below.

His under-warden had been Ambrose Isted, the same stationer who had produced the Test Act certificates in 1673 (and was trained by the same master); by 1689 Isted was upper warden, and in 1690 he was elected master.⁴³ These were distinguished roles not only in the guild but more broadly, for the Company's heads played a part in metropolitan politics and even reached the position of lord mayor.⁴⁴ Form-production thus led to profit and status within the corporation, while leading masters evidently secured for themselves the lucrative production of forms.

The fourth characteristic was that several of the stationers specializing in forms had not only metropolitan but also landed connections, either from birth, or built up during their lives: a cut above many of their fellow citizens and colleagues in the guild. For example, when Bellinger died, he bequeathed to his family real estate in the counties of Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Middlesex and Surrey, in addition to Stationers' Company stock.⁴⁵ Ambrose Isted, son of Richard Isted, gentleman, had strong connections to Sussex and its county town, Lewes.⁴⁶ Fifth, the gentlemen dealing with the making and selling of forms also had an interest in the law, including possible links to the nearby Inns of Court and Inns of Chancery.⁴⁷ Sixth, many of these stationers were also connected to each other: whether by friendship, patronage, cooperation and competition, apprenticeship, shared residence and kinship, and neighbourly ties; and they had links with a landed hinterland, not least, it appears, with Sussex, from where several stationers' families emerged. The interpersonal

⁴³ See also Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: a History, 1403–1959* (Stanford, 1960), 198, 201, describing how Bellinger and Isted acted together to undertake the trade printing of the University of Oxford.

⁴⁴ For example, Francis Gosling, master of the Stationers' Company, 1756, and alderman and lord mayor, knighted for his service. Robert Gosling, probably his heir, was mentioned as trustee in Coles's will, described as 'friend': TNA, PROB/11/1003/292; Coles's testimony concerning a will contested by the Gosling family, and the wills of Robert and Sir Francis Gosling: TNA, E/134/10Geo3/Mich15; PROB 11/107/104; 11/945/38.

⁴⁵ Bellinger's will: TNA, PROB 11/421/349.

⁴⁶ Where he was a substantial gentleman, residing on the High Street and engaged with the legal profession. His family was connected to the Sussex elite, including the Fuller family, with whom Coles had many contacts, see below.

⁴⁷ Not unlike the scriveners, who needed knowledge of the law to interpret legislation and formulate forms: Beal, *Praise of Scribes*, and for example descriptions in appendix 1.

relationships among our historical actors remain beyond our grasp, as the evidence is lacking; however, recurring links suggest that several of our stationers had strong and overlapping ties, which influenced the development of their business and the marketing of forms.⁴⁸ Finally, at every turn, individual initiatives, networks, and market pressures mattered. Studies of the making of state administrations sometimes adopt a paradigm whereby power is a cardinal factor, and is seen to flow from above, or to be co-ordinated in systemic networks assisting state control.⁴⁹ In the growth of printed forms – as already indicated, and as discussed below – important initiatives started from the bottom up, and were driven by individuals acting creatively in commercial markets, such as Bellinger, Isted and, not least, Mr John Coles, albeit in response to the legal framework as set by the state.

Bearing all these characteristics in mind, we turn to the next phase in our history of form production, leading to the rise of Mr Coles. By 1689, as John Bellinger reached old age, his former apprentice Robert Vincent, now twenty-four, entered the business world, selling forms. On 3 January 1689/90, it was Vincent who registered his right to produce: ‘Blanck warrants’ for the receiver-general and tax-collectors.⁵⁰ In 1691 he went into partnership with another stationer, Christopher Coningsby: about the same age, with similar interests in the law, and likewise based in Fleet Street.⁵¹ The two together produced an array of printed forms: from blanks for tax collection⁵² to certificates for poor prisoners entitled to relief.⁵³ By

⁴⁸ For kinship, patronage and household residence, and their role in business, see: Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), esp. ch. 5; Naomi Tadmor, ‘Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and Change’, *Continuity and Change* 25 (2010).

⁴⁹ P. 9 above.

⁵⁰ Stationers’ Company, ‘Registers’, 3 Jan. 1689/90; see also 30 Mar., 10 May, 26 Oct. 1689; 26 Apr., 14 May 1690. Here, and while citing archival documents below, I record the Old Style calendar, as before 1752 in England and Wales the year started on 25 March.

⁵¹ Probably Christopher Coningsby (or Conningsby) baptized in Mary-le-Bow, London, 6 Aug. 1664; based by 1687 at the Golden Key and by 1691 at the Ink bottle, Fleet Street: Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1668 to 1725* (London, 1922), 79.

⁵² Stationers’ Company, ‘Registers’, for example 14 Nov. 1690, 4 Feb., 4 Mar. 1691/2, , 6 Oct. 1693.

⁵³ Stationers’ Company, ‘Registers’, 26 Apr. 1694.

1694, they had branched out: Coningsby started printing magazines, law books, and Latin Grammars, whereas Vincent undertook the printing of not only law books but comedies.⁵⁴

An important turning point took place in 1695, when the House of Commons refused to renew the Licensing Act, despite urgent petitions by the London stationers. The production of all printed matter then became much more challenging for the metropolitan guild members, including the lucrative making of forms; before long competing presses were set up in the provinces.⁵⁵ However, amendment of the settlement laws in 1697 that prevented the removal of poor migrants in possession of a structured certificate presented to Vincent and Coningsby an opportunity to launch a new line of forms.⁵⁶ Moreover, the cumulative effects of the poor relief legislation of 1692 were becoming apparent, as parish settlement could now be earned according to defined criteria, ascertainable by law, inheritable, and easily expressed in a form.⁵⁷ Both Coningsby and Vincent thus proceeded to devise new printed forms, which they marketed separately to meet the rising demand for settlement certificates. In doing so, they drew on their experience in producing not only texts but images: Coningsby, who had published engraved plates since 1687 adorned his settlement

⁵⁴ See Thomas Wright's comedy, *The Female Virtuosos*, published by Vincent, 1693: Plomer, *Dictionary*, 297; Edward Arber (ed.), *The Term catalogues, 1668-1709 AD: with a Number for Easter Term, 1711 AD. A Contemporary Bibliography of English Literature in the Reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and Anne*, 3 vols. (London, 1903–6), iii, 515.

⁵⁵ In 1695, William Bonney petitioned in Bristol to establish a press; in Shrewsbury and in Exeter presses started 1696–8; by 1701–10 ‘some thirteen towns claimed their own printer’: Raven, *The Publishing Business*, 37, and see also, for example, 75–9, and local ventures, below. Note that when copyright legislation was re-issued, 8 Anne, c. 19, it applied to book licensing only.

⁵⁶ 8 & 9 Will. III, c. 30 (1696–7, with effect from 1697); 9 & 10 Will. III, c. 11, explaining the former; see also David Feldman, ‘Settlement and the Law in the Seventeenth Century’, in King and Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement and Belonging*, 29–53. While the Act for the Better Relief of the Poor of this Kingdom 13 & 14 Car. II, c. 12 (1662), mentioned certification for migrant labourers, the 1697 legislation emphasised habitation and specified a structured process of witnessing and endorsement, including signed declarations by local officers, JPs, and witnesses and a declaration of legal settlement; see also Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, 46–51; Taylor, ‘The impact of pauper settlement’.

⁵⁷ 3 Will. & M., c. 11: a full years’ service by an unmarried childless person, indentured apprenticeship while residing in a town, and parish office and tax payment earn settlement, but no ‘Soldier, &c. to have Settlement’ while in service. The details of the householder’s family, required since 1685, are to be recorded: 1 Jac. II, c. 17. See also 4 Will. & M. c. 24 (1692). The certificate’s application to the bearer’s family is mentioned more explicitly in 8 & 9 Will. III, c. 30. This considerably clarified procedures evident in Sussex, for example, from 1650s.

form with a very large and finely etched royal coat of arms of William III (see Plate 2),⁵⁸ whereas Vincent's model, initially modest, rapidly improved. (This may have stood him in good stead as in 1713 he undertook the mass production of lottery tickets, printed under the Great Seal to serve the growing national debt).⁵⁹ In any case, these two businessmen successfully devised their forms and marketed them far and wide. As the seventeenth century ended, Vincent's forms reached as far as the Lancashire townships of Burscough, Lathom, Halsall, Downholland, and Aughton.⁶⁰ In the next decade, they arrived at the Sussex parishes of Heathfield, Henfield, Wadhurst, Ewhurst, Warbleton, Herstmonceux, and St Michael, Lewes, amongst many others.⁶¹ Coningsby used similar dissemination routes, from the Turk's Head and the Ink Bottle in Fleet Street, where he was based, to the parish chests of Ormskirk and Sefton in south-western Lancashire.⁶²

As these new settlement forms spread in the provinces, competition arose. Typically, it emerged from among neighbours, fellow stationers, countrymen, and even former apprentices and household members. One such competitor was young John Lenthall, son of

⁵⁸ See W. Elder, *Enchiridion Calligraphiae, a Series of Engraved Plates*, produced by Coningsby soon after his apprenticeship: Plomer, *Dictionary of the Booksellers*, 79; Coningsby's *Merchant's Magazine, or the Tradesman's Treasury*, starting in 1694, was 'adorned with curious copper Cuts': Arber, (ed.), *Term Catalogues*, ii, 534.

⁵⁹ Stationers' Company, 'Registers', 28 Sept. 1713, 5 July 1714; and advertisements for lottery tickets by Vincent: *London Gazette*, 2 Jan. 1713, 25 Dec. 1714. See also continuing advertisements for taxation forms by Coningsby and Vincent, for example: *London Gazette*, 29 Jan. 1711; 12 May 1713; the last in 26 Feb. 1720; and the last by Vincent and son, 21 Feb. 1726.

⁶⁰ For example, certificates from Lathom and Knowsley, 1698/9–1699, deposited in Burscough: LA, PR 1263; with a missing imprint, from Halsall, most probably by Vincent, 1699/1700, and others 1705–20, in Downholland: PR 2956/3/6; two by Vincent, 1697–9, Aughton: PR 3019/6/2; and others from Halsall to Billinge, 1706: PR 2734, and from Lathom to Kirkham, 1711, PR 828/3.

⁶¹ For example, a certificate from Trenderden, Kent, no imprint, as in n. 61, 1699/1700, filed in Wadhurst: PAR 498/32/1/14; and with Vincent's imprint from Warbleton, 1707, Ewhurst, 1708, and Herstmonceux, 1714, in Heathfield: ESRO, PAR 372/32/1/7–9; from Willingdon, 1703/4 and Southover, 1705, in St Michael, Lewes: PAR 414/32/1/6, 8; from St Giles-in-the-Fields, Middlesex, 1707, in Winchelsea: PAR 511/32/1/2; from St Thomas in the Cliffe, Lewes, 1702/3, in Henfield, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester (hereafter WSRO) Par 100/32/1/2. Certificates by Vincent were also the first to reach Painswick, Gloucestershire, 1700, and Stratford, Warwickshire, 1701, and continued to be used in both: Styles, 'Law of Settlement', 55, and n. 78; see also, for example, Essex Record Office, Chelmsford (hereafter ERO), D/B/2/PAR4/5, by Vincent, deposited in Saffron Walden, 1701.

⁶² For example, three certificates, 1700–1, Burscough: LA, PR 1263; 1700, Downholland: PR 2956/3/6; 1700–2, Aughton: PR 3019/6/2; 1706–7, 1709–14: ESRO, PAR 414/32/1/10–11, 13, 15–17, 20–24, 26.

an Essex gentleman, connected to the Inner Temple, who by 1716, soon after his apprenticeship, started selling forms from his nearby base ‘at the Talbot against St Dunstan’s Church’, Fleet Street, ‘Where’, as he advertised, ‘are sold all sorts of Blanks’.⁶³ Another was one of Coningsby’s own apprentices, Phillip Barrett, son of a Sussex clerk, who also started to deal in forms not long after establishing his business in the nearby Mitre ‘against St Dunstan’s Church’ in Fleet Street.⁶⁴ Although his trade, unlike Vincent’s and Coningsby’s, did not extend as far as Lancashire, he managed to conquer chunks of the Sussex market, perhaps drawing on his family connections there. His forms sold in batches large enough to circulate still after his premature death in 1726.⁶⁵ Thus, with Barrett’s business closing down, after his death; and the powerful stationer Vincent ageing (he capitalized on his success with landed estates in Essex and Middlesex and ensured the future of his family with substantial legacies),⁶⁶ one of Barrett’s former apprentices, the young John Coles, was in a good position to enter the market and take over.⁶⁷ Let us continue, then, to investigate the rise of the form, and its relationship to the governance of the poor, exploring the life and work of Mr Coles.

John Coles (like his master, Barrett, or the leading stationer, Isted), came from an established Sussex family.⁶⁸ Married in Lincoln’s Inn chapel, he must have spent time during

⁶³ For example, All Saints, Hastings, ESRO, PAR 361/32/1/4. See details about him: McKenzie, *Apprentices, 1641–1700*, 174.

⁶⁴ Freed 1698: McKenzie, *Apprentices, 1641–1700*, 36. He came from the parish of Pycombe, Sussex, where Coningsby, his master, probably also had links.

⁶⁵ In Heathfield, Sussex, forms by Barrett were still used in 1740–1. I have so far found only two certificate by him in LA, 1725, Burscough: LA, PR 1263. See, for example, his forms in Essex: ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/79, 83, 95; and Barrett’s will, listing properties in Street and Pulborough, Sussex, and Stationers’ Company stock: TNA, Prob/11/607/86.

⁶⁶ Vincent’s will, 1738: TNA, Prob/11/688/110, with bequests for his children, grandchildren, sister, nephew and other relations, including a dowry of £2,500 for his daughter Anne.

⁶⁷ D. F. McKenzie, *Stationers’ Company Apprentices, 1701–1800* (Oxford Bibliographical Society, new ser. xix, Oxford, 1978), 21, 81; <http://lbt.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mediawiki/index.php/LBT/16093> (accessed May 2016). See also Rivington, *Records*, 52, where Coles’s name is listed, and note that it does not appear in works such as Plomer, *Dictionary of the Booksellers*; Blagden, *Stationers’ Company*; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, new edn (London and New York, 1996); and Suarez and Turner (eds.), *Cambridge History of the Book*, v.

⁶⁸ Baptism register, Pulborough, 1696, where John’s father is described as ‘gent.’, kindly shown to me by the rector, Paul Welsh. Coles was apprenticed in 1710, freed 1717: McKenzie, *Stationers’ Company Apprentices, 1701–1800*, 21.

his professional training to gain legal knowledge. Educated, well connected, and enterprising, he was suitably positioned for making his way in the business world, although breaking into the print market could not have been easy. In 1723, he no doubt drew on his family ties to supply his earliest surviving form (so far known) to his native parish, Pulborough.⁶⁹ This crudely produced certificate with its awkward image of the royal arms (see Plate 3) contrasts with the fine artefacts marketed at that time by Coningsby and Vincent. But soon Coles refined the image, the layout, the ornamental fonts employed, and the quality and size of the paper. His removal forms were used in Quarter Sessions while his certificates sold as far away as Downholland, Lancashire, and Sevenoaks, Kent.⁷⁰ When Robert Vincent died, Coles (who administered Vincent's will) further enhanced his form production.

Coles's career, from the very beginning thus followed a common pattern, but exhibited singular creativity and ingenuity that had a lasting impact on the making of administrative forms in England, particularly on the documents relating to the management of the poor. First, already in the 1720s, as Coles expanded his business, he started – innovatively – cataloguing his series of forms. Alongside his settlement certificates (such as no. 18), he listed forms concerning legal processes connected to settlement, such as his form no. 13: 'Warrant to remove to the last Place of Settlement', employed in Wadhurst, Sussex in 1728; or no. 38, 'Summons to answer a Complaint' concerning removal. His legal skills enabled him to conceptualize the procedures relating to the poor laws, in line with the current advice literature, and to produce a form for every eventuality and to suit an array of consumers – whether the justice's clerk, wanting to save the cost of writing; lay parishioners anxious to

⁶⁹ WSRO, Par 153/32/1/1/4, dated July 1723, for a Chichester family. Coles was based then at the Sun and Mitre near Temple Bar.

⁷⁰ See removal forms starting from ESRO QR/378/28, Dec. 1723; and, for example, QR/382/24–6, 1724; Holborn, London, 1727:

<https://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?div=LMSMPS50248PS502480099&terms=Coles&verbar:Fleet#highlight> (accessed May 2016).

ensure they were using the right form; and even the poor bearers, sometimes paying for their certificates and perhaps preferring particular designs. More than a third of Coles's catalogued blanks related to matters of settlement and removal, and twenty-two additional blank forms he produced concerned the business of the sessional courts, which frequently involved settlement.⁷¹ Second, Coles paid attention to the layout of his forms and their design. Early settlement documents were printed on quarto sheets. Coles was the first to enlarge the format, probably to increase commercial attraction and totemic value; by the 1730s he had standardized the large certificate that remained impressive – as evident from his form no. 18 – confirming the settlements of the Trimby and Carr families. The new format also assisted carriage and filing: its design was replicated in pirated forms, and even in scribal forms.⁷² Other products by Coles reveal his care over design, such as his form no. 15, 'Passes for Vagrants from County to County', printed on a large sheet, folded, with spaces for different stages of the removal procedure, and (in line with the 1744 legislation) for the local officials to acknowledge receipt of the vagrant along the way.⁷³ Third, Coles did not miss an opportunity to identify a business venture. When a new Recruiting Act was passed, he hastened to advertise a new set of forms;⁷⁴ and once the Hardwicke marriage Act came into force, his was the first marriage register with specially designed leaves 'pursuant to the late Act', purchased by parishes far and wide.⁷⁵ Fourth, Coles not only used bold and repeat

⁷¹ Coles, *Catalogue of Blanks*. The remaining blanks included bonds, releases, etc..

⁷² Above, p. 3. See, for example, large removal forms by Coles, 1724: ESRO QR/382/24–6; a large certificate by Vincent, 1732, PAR 414/32/1/46; and by Coles, for example: 1735/6, 1738: PAR 414/32/1/48, LA PR 1263; and large scribal forms, 1741, 1747, 1768: ESRO PAR 498/32/1/69, 74, 86; 1761: LA, PR 828/56, and at Blackburn: PR 1560/1/136, 160, 162, 168. See discussion of pirated forms, below; and note the use of large sheets in French correspondence, indicating respect: Giora Sternberg, 'Epistolary Ceremonial: Corresponding Status at the Time of Louis XIV', *Past and Present*, no. 204 (Aug. 2009), 40–1, 67. Large sheets were often also employed in scribal forms by writing on one half and using the other as a cover.

⁷³ For example, LA, PR 1559/4/4; see the similar form by E. Owen in Hand Court near Great Turnstile, Holborn, from St Paul, Covent Garden, 1768: ESRO, PAR 414/32/3/9; and removal procedures in 17 Geo. II, c. 5, see also 13 Geo. II, c. 24, further discussed below; see an earlier process, for example: [Giles, Jacob], *The Complete Parish Officer* (London, 1719), 58.

⁷⁴ 18 Geo. II c. 10 (1744), followed by advertisements by Coles in the papers.

⁷⁵ For example, advertisements in *London Evening Post* 2 Feb., 21–23 Mar. 1754, including an advertisement by a competitor; *Public Advertiser* 22 Feb. 1754, and note Coles's design of the register 'so contrived as to prevent

advertisements but cunning marketing techniques. When Richard Burn's influential guidebook *The Justice of the Peace, and Parish Officer* was published in 1755, for example, he partnered with the leading bookseller Andrew Millar, Burn's publisher.⁷⁶ Advertisements then appeared in the main papers for 'precedents of Blank-Warrants, Summons, orders, certificates' etc. settled by 'Richard Burn, Clerk', and sold by Coles. Many of Coles's poor law forms were stamped from that time onwards with the initials 'R. B.', or the name 'Ri. Burn', suggesting they were composed by the renowned author. The discerning customer might have suspected that 'Richard Burn, Clerk' (as far as he was known by that designation) was perhaps not the famous magistrate; and Coles's forms were indeed not necessarily identical to Burn's. The Lincolnshire Justice, Mr Reynardson who mastered Burn's work (as his copious marginalia in Burn's volumes reveal), crossed out the initials 'R.B.' in Coles's form no. 26 used by him (and which did not reflect Burn's formula: see Plate 4).⁷⁷ It is probably no coincidence that in Westmorland, Burn's county, the dedication 'Ri. Burn' was also struck out.⁷⁸ Yet the initiative worked, and Coles's 'Burn' forms sold far and wide. Finally, while he diversified and updated his products, Coles cultivated continuity. His typical image of the royal coat of arms, seen in form no. 18, remained in use for decades, as a

effectually any razor or interposition'; for example, West Bergholt marriage register, 1754–90: ERO, D/P 59/1/6, produced by Coles.

⁷⁶ 'Millar, Andrew', *Oxford DNB*. He published works by Fielding, Hume, Johnson, and others. Numerous titles appear under his name in the *Index of Titles and Proprietors of Books Entered in the Book of Registry of the Stationers' Company (Pursuant to 8 Anne c. 19, from 28th April 1710 to 30th December 1773)* (London, 1910), 129–30, but Burn's bestselling manual is not among them.

⁷⁷ Coles's form filed with Richard Burn, *The Justice of the Peace* (London, 1755), interleaved and enlarged to 4 vols., profusely annotated by the original owner Mr Berch [Berch crossed out] Reynardson, J. P. of Holywell Stamford, with special reference to Lincolnshire documents and Kesteven, Squire Law Library, Cambridge. Burn's precedent can be found at i, 130, of the 1755 edn, following 6 Geo. II, c. 31. Many thanks to Sir John Baker for directing my attention to this extraordinary copy. Note that in early editions the title 'Clerk' is applied to Burn, indicating that he was a clergyman, alongside his title 'Justice of the Peace'; but in this context, and without the designation 'Justice of the Peace', the impression could arise that this was a judicial clerk. See, for example, 1755 title page, and pp. 41, 97, 98; cf. 'Richard Burn L.L.D' in post-1762 editions.

⁷⁸ Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal (hereafter WRO), WPR 19/7/3/1/83: Coles's form no. 38, 'Ri Burn' crossed out, 8 Jan. 1761, by Kirkby Lonsdale.

distinctive emblem, which established authority, and secured branding, while saving the cost of changing the design.⁷⁹

Thus Mr Coles managed to penetrate the provincial form market and to remain a key supplier for a long time, shipping his forms to the south-east and to the north-west, where they were purchased for the Carr and Trimby families. He was the only printer in my sample to establish himself nationally in such a sustained way. When his son Charles completed his apprenticeship, he set up in business with him, marketing as ‘John Coles and Son’; and when John died, Charles continued to sell forms in partnership with others.⁸⁰ In Sussex, Coles’s forms remained dominant throughout most of the eighteenth century. In East Hoathly parish, for example, nearly all the settlement certificates lodged between the 1740s and the 1780s were by Coles, or by him in partnership with his son and others, including a number of issues of his form no. 18. The densely populated parish of St Michael, Lewes received settlement certificates by Coles as early as 1728, and until the 1780s, when the local printer, Lee, started absorbing some of the demand. When Lancashire townships made use of London forms to execute the poor laws, these too were often produced by Mr Coles; for example, Kirkham and Aughton filed Coles’s certificates, issued by other townships. The demand for printed removal forms was particularly high, as these had to be worded with utmost accuracy, conforming to current regulations, and Coles’s printed pro formas were evidently trusted. The Wigan Epiphany quarter session in 1730/1, for example, recorded Coles’s summons.⁸¹ By 1766, although Wigan was producing its own forms, eight by Coles were filed in the Epiphany quarter session (including forms no. 13, 38 and 39), and only one by Wigan. In

⁷⁹ Alongside several other images that came into use over time.

⁸⁰ Selling as ‘Coles and Evans’ and subsequently ‘Coles, Dunn and Knight, Stationers, No 21 Fleet Street’, and eventually as ‘Coles and Galpin’: ‘The London Book Trades 1775–1800: a Preliminary Checklist of Members. Names C’, <http://bookhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2007/01/london-1775-1800-c.html> (accessed May 2016).

⁸¹ LA, QSP 1327/20.

Kendal, Westmorland, the same forms were used.⁸² By 1784, a removal form by Charles Coles made its way from Warwickshire to Lancashire. Numbered '71', it shows that the catalogue had grown since Coles's c.1750 catalogue with sixty-two numbered forms. This large and dedicated form for removing vagrants from county to county passed with its bearer to Blackburn, while along the way the authorities acknowledged receipt, no doubt viewing the imprint: Coles, Stationers, 21 Fleet Street.⁸³

As he devised his forms and distributed them far and wide, Mr Coles bettered himself, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the leading form-producing stationers. Drawing on his Sussex networks, he supplied not only certificates for the poor but fine stationery for the highest orders, as the accounts of Petworth House and affluent Fuller family reveal.⁸⁴ As early as 1734 he printed the Sussex poll book, where the election of Henry Pelham secured his return as a knight of the shire (running against John Fuller, another loyal customer).⁸⁵ Clearly Coles had good political connections, essential in the mid eighteenth-century business world, for Sussex was a Whig stronghold, the home of two prime ministers from 1743 to 1762, where economic transactions were invariably linked to political patronage.⁸⁶ In 1744, Coles assisted the same Henry Pelham, by that time prime minister, in a land transaction, whereby Pelham purchased property in Laughton, Sussex, adjoining lands of the Duke of Newcastle (Prime Minister, 1754).⁸⁷ He developed a personal friendship with a

⁸² Cumbria Archive Centre, WPR 19/17/3/1/83, above; WPR 19/17/3/3/2, 18 Oct. 1786; and see, for example, Coles's 'R.B.' forms: ERO, D/B//2/PAR5, c.1770–90.

⁸³ LA, PR 1559/4/4/15; see also PR 1559/4/4, from Essex to Blackburn, above n. 73, and for example ESRO, PAR 414/32/3/31, 1789.

⁸⁴ For example, WSRO: Petworth House Archives, Accounts – Household and Cellar, PHA/6643, 6648, 6649; and receipted bills from London tradesmen to Thomas Elder, agent to the Second Earl of Egremont. For the Fuller family, see, for example, ESRO, SAS/RF/15/27, Journal marked 34, Ledger of Accounts, fo. 285^v, 'Accounts with Coles Stationer Temple Barr', paper and poll books, 1734.

⁸⁵ *A Poll Taken by Henry Montague Esq (Sheriff of the County of Sussex) at the City of Chichester* (London, 1734), printed for John Coles, Stationer, near Temple Bar, Fleet Street; the Fuller Ledgers (see n. 84). Henry Pelham was first elected for Sussex in 1722.

⁸⁶ Tadmor, *Family and friends*, ch. 6.

⁸⁷ Conveyance between Thomas Payne of Brighton, gent and Henry Pelham esq, Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer, William Granston (or Cranston) of St Dunstan's in the West, London, gent, and John Coles, citizen and stationer of London: ESRO, 3 CHR/3/17/1–3.

Pelham family agent, exchanging visits and transacting business.⁸⁸ Coles's success and influence were recognized by his peers, not unlike the previous form-producing stationers, Bellinger and Isted. In 1754 he was elected deputy to the alderman of his London Ward, Farringdon Without, having previously served as a common councilman. A press report described him as an 'eminent stationer'.⁸⁹ In 1762 (the same year as his form no. 18 reached the Carr and the Trimby families), Coles was elected as the master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, the highest accolade.⁹⁰ Evidently, he was thriving. The proceeds of his business were augmented by real estate in Suffolk, Middlesex and Sussex.⁹¹ Christ's Hospital enjoyed his charity. His three daughters married with considerable portions (£2,000 each), while his son became a partner in the firm.⁹² The stationery business enabled an ambitious and enterprising businessman such as Coles to do well. By 1766 – four years after his certificates were supplied to the Carr and Trimby families, and three years after he had completed his tenure as the master of his guild – Coles had established himself in a family estate on the Sussex–Hampshire border.⁹³

The life and career of Mr Coles thus offer us a rare view of the development of an important and little-studied aspect of the print industry from the late seventeenth century and through the eighteenth century, in direct relation to the contemporary legal framework and the rising needs of local government, for both print-licensing and poor-law administration

⁸⁸ For example, New Year celebrations, business deals and a visit, 1742:letters belonging to John Collier of Hastings, draft transcripts, kindly shown to me by Christopher Whittick, ESRO; and, for example, land transaction: East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Local Studies Service, DDCL/2008, papers belonging to Clark and Co, Solicitors, Snaith. Coles acted as a nominal trustee alongside Cranston, brother-in-law and business partner of the prominent Pelham agent, Collier. In 1767, Coles's daughter married into the Cranston family. See Charles Coles and John Cranston: lands previously belonging to the Fuller family, ESRO, SAS/RF/1/371.

⁸⁹ *Whitehall Evening Post, or, London Intelligencer*, 12 Feb. 1754; *Public Advertiser*, 6 March, 1754; and *General Advertiser*, 22 Apr. 1752, reporting his election as 'common-Council-Man'.

⁹⁰ Rivington, *Records*, 52.

⁹¹ Coles's will: TNA, Prob/11/1003/292.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ He inherited the estate from a cousin, whose will he had executed, and after another relation happened to have died: ESRO: Shiffner Archive, SHR/1/1/5/625, probate of the will of Richard Cowper of Ditcham, Hampshire.

changed considerably during that time. These developments highlight the ventures of the leading stationers, who innovatively launched their forms in a competitive market. One can hardly describe such entrepreneurs as agents of a microtechnology, acting on behalf of the sovereign state, not least after the lapse of print licensing (taking either a Weberian or a Foucault inspired model, or viewing them as instruments of the state's 'centre').⁹⁴ If their initiatives were loosely coordinated by a guild, which had lost its monopoly and increasingly failed to control the trade, there is no evidence that they were coordinated by the central state (beyond the legal framework), and they were only marginally or partly so by local authorities, whose administrations allowed for a variety of media and formats. The promotion of state order through dedicated paperwork may have been the goal of some of our historical actors, but their main motivation – as far as the sources allow us to judge – entailed business considerations, while interacting with colleagues, clients, relations, competitors, patrons, and friends. The next section pursues the dissemination and execution of the printed settlement forms, and the continued use of scribal forms, to examine developments in the material culture of government during this period and to explain how it was moulded by state legislation, yet also by market-oriented production, and grass-roots competition and demand – all of which, in turn, further enable us to view the work of our form-producing stationers in social contexts.

II. Settlement administration, print and script

Well before the passing of the 1662 settlement legislation, towns and parishes throughout the realm found means to protect themselves against future relief claims from poor migrants. The

⁹⁴ For example, Weber, *Economy and Society*, i, 220–3, ii, 956–1005, highlights the impersonal aspects of the state's bureaucracy while according to Foucault – in *Discipline and Punish*, ch. 3, for example – the epitome of state order in the eighteenth century was its profound effects on the souls of those behind the 'faceless gaze of state administration' and disciplinary mechanisms.

practice of taking securities from the newcomers ‘to prevent them from becoming a financial burden’ on the parish was regulated at Quarter Sessions from the 1640s.⁹⁵ An important legal mechanism at that time – and which continued after 1662 – was the indemnity bond, given to the parish to protect it against any future claims. In 1675, for example, a bond made for William Purchase of Southampton and his family had two sureties, four additional signatories and a guarantee of £100 for any charge that might be incurred by Purchase or his family as they inhabited the borough of Hastings, to which they had moved, all following a conventional bond format with a Latin formulation.⁹⁶

Such an arrangement would have been beyond the reach of many. With the increase in settlement certification, however (following the 1697 legislation; coupled with the lapse of print licensing in 1695 that enabled individual stationers to take new initiatives), the settlement indemnity bonds dwindled to a mere few, or entirely disappeared.⁹⁷ The number of settlement certificates produced from around that time onwards – to judge from the sample examined here – far exceeded the number of known settlement bonds, or any other early form of certification. In the parish of All Saints, Hastings, for example, the first surviving settlement bond recorded was dated 1656, the second 1675, whereas the first settlement certificate, dated 1708, was succeeded by 115 (by 1793).⁹⁸ In the large parish of St Michael, Lewes, the only known settlement bond was dated 1670; the first settlement certificate appeared in 1698/9, followed by 91 until 1794 (at least 41 produced by Coles). In Hellingly

⁹⁵ Hindle, *On the Parish?*, esp. 316–8; Whyte, *Migration and Society*, 57, and quotation there; Styles, ‘Law of Settlement’; Feldman, ‘Settlement’.

⁹⁶ ESRO, PAR 361/32/1/2.

⁹⁷ See also Styles, ‘Law of settlement’, 40, showing 81 of 137 Stratford bonds, 1613–1714 signed before 1662; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, 316–18; and the occasional continued use of bonds, for example in Henfield, WSRO, Par 100/32/1/16; Halewood: LA, PR 2727/18. Note that bonds continued to be regularly used in bastardy cases, which of course involved settlement; and see the shady use of bonds alongside certificates, for example: ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/159.

⁹⁸ ESRO, PAR 361/32/1/1–2, followed by 3–118, with one indemnity agreement, 1772; and, for example, the larger parish of St Clement, Hastings, with over 240 certificates, 1699–1780, preceded by one bond, 1694. Global figures here and below, including originals and copies of settlement documents given to other parishes.

and Heathfield the first surviving settlement certificates are from 1699 and 1700/1, with no known preceding bonds.⁹⁹ In Burwash the first settlement certificate was dated 1675, followed by another, 1677,¹⁰⁰ while in Steyning the 1658 and 1693 bonds were followed by over 70 certificates between 1697 and 1794. The profiles in Lancashire townships are suggestively similar despite greater variation in survival. In Aughton the first certificate appeared in 1693, in Great Harwood in 1699, and in Downholland in 1698. In the township of Poulton-le-Fylde, the first appeared in 1699, in Halewood in 1705, and in Bickerstaffe in 1700/1, with a handful of preceding bonds.¹⁰¹ In Blackburn the first settlement certificate was filed in 1699, and 133 followed by 1750.¹⁰² In 1666 thirty-seven settlement cases were heard before the Lancashire Quarter Sessions; in 1694 sixty-two; in 1700 122 (to mention but random dates); by 1742, the number of settlement matters reaching the local courts amounted to 162, with an additional forty-six in the first three months of 1743.¹⁰³ Evidently, the settlement system had become widely implemented in our localities, and with it the use of forms.

A snapshot of the use of settlement certificates in ten parishes and townships in Sussex, Lancashire, and Westmorland between c.1660 and c.1790 allows us to consider more closely the system's application (see Figure). The rise in the use of settlement certificates, following the changing seventeenth-century legislation, is evident in all cases, as is the

⁹⁹ However note three bastardy bonds: ESRO, PAR 372/32/2/1–3, 1736–69.

¹⁰⁰ ESRO, P 284/12/1–2, and see also 4 and 6, by Vincent. Only nineteen are recorded for Burwash, the last dated 1778. However, the settlement activity in that parish is evident from the trove discovered in 2014, in a local solicitors' attic, of 896 voluntary examinations of unwed pregnant women and mothers, 1793–1834: ESRO, AAB/2/1–896, mostly on forms by Charles Coles and partners, nos. 26 and 24; see also Plate 4.

¹⁰¹ Aughton, 1693, small format, signed by fourteen inhabitants and the township officers: LA PR 3019/6/2; Great Harwood: PR 143; Downholland: PR 2956/3/6; Poulton-le-Fylde, bond, 1696, attached to a case arising 1726, and bond and certificate, 1699: PR 2024; for Halewood, disputed settlement, 1693/4, a bond, and a certificate dated 1705: PR 2727/1–5, 18; for Bickerstaffe, a bond, 1691, and a settlement certificate 1700/1: PR 434.

¹⁰² LA, PR 1560/1/1–134.

¹⁰³ I am grateful to David Tilsley of LA, for giving me a copy of his database, on the basis of which these figures are produced, including data for 1655/6, 1656; 1693/4, 1694; 1699/1700, 1700; 1741/2, 1742, and 1742/3.

overall rise in the early decades of the eighteenth century (despite the patchy survival).

Clearly these documents became an established aspect of local government, following their statutory institution, and continued to feature in the next two-to-three generations at least.

The forms were kept in parish and township chests, or with trusty clerks, sometimes in more than one copy, or were carried by their bearers, and could resurface in inter-parochial exchanges, or in court, decades after they were issued.¹⁰⁴ The data further enables us tentatively to speculate on impact. In a settlement of 100 households, even certification at a rate of one case per year would have cumulatively affected 10 percent of the households within a decade, with a disproportionately large impact among the poor. In a parish such as East Hoathly, for example, which in the 1801 census still numbered no more than 395 men, women, and children, the effect of the two settlement documents filed in 1757 was considerable.¹⁰⁵ The personal diary of the overseer of the poor enables us to judge that he spent at least 108 days partly or wholly that year on parish matters, frequently dealing with settlement (well beyond the complex handling of the two records above), and usually going about his business with other parishioners, while engaging with persons from other localities such as JPs, clerks, fellow overseers, churchwardens, witnesses, and complainants.¹⁰⁶ Even

¹⁰⁴ For example, in 1766 the overseers of the poor of Heathfield, Sussex relieved a woman and six children having identified her as the wife of a man named as a child in his father's certificate, 1729/30: ESRO PAR 372/32/1/41A, 41B; in 1796, a Manchester overseer of the poor complained about a pauper enclosing his settlement certificate, dated 1752: LA, PR 1560/1/170. As noted, however, parishes were more likely to store certificates given to them than copies of certificates sent. In East Hoathly, Sussex, for example, there is none among the settlement records; in Wadhurst, copies were kept until 1723, and hardly ever thereafter. In Lancashire, the division of roles between parishes and townships may have reduced survival, for although the townships were empowered to act as parishes for the purposes of the poor law, parishes sometimes played a role, which meant that documents could be stored in either place, or in neither. Paupers who held on to their certificates sometimes passed them as family heirlooms: Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 101–2; K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1987), 72; Lorie Charlesworth, *Welfare's Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law* (Abingdon, 2011), 55. For the integration of the settlement regulations in popular culture see, for example, Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 89–93 and Thomas Sokoll (ed.), *Pauper Letters, 1731–1837*, (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁰⁵ ESRO, PAR 378/32/14–15, including a certificate no. 18 by Coles; For the population figures: *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754–65*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984), xxviii.

¹⁰⁶ Naomi Tadmor, 'Where Was Mrs Turner? Governance and Gender in an Eighteenth-Century English Village', in Hindle, Shepard and Walter (eds.), *Remaking English Society*, 108. In 1746, the overseer of the poor of Downholland, Lancashire, for example, reported seven consecutive entries 'for my journey', including a forty-two-mile journey to Blackburn to get copies of orders, no doubt relating to settlement, journeys costing 4s. 2d. to 14s. 2d.: Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor, LA, PR 2956/3/1.

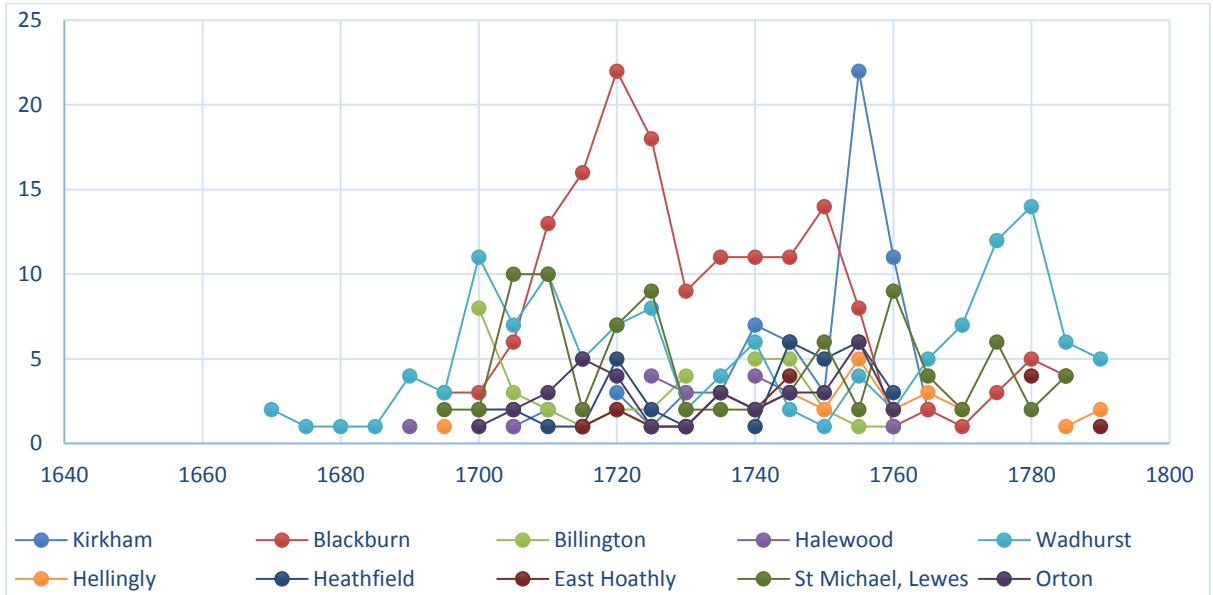
the simplest case required six-to-eight signatories and at least two addressees (in addition to the bearer and his or her family), which meant that the impact rippled. In places such as Kirkham, Lancashire, and Wadhurst, Sussex, where certification sometimes reached four to nine cases per year, the social impact of settlement therefore must have been large; while in Blackburn, around the early decades of the eighteenth century, where the population still numbered no more than about 3,000, the sixty-one cases recorded for the 1720s and 1730s, say, would have affected roughly 10 percent of the households, and disproportionately more among the poor.¹⁰⁷ If we take into account that the surviving evidence is incomplete, and that this illustration does not touch upon removal and examination, it is possible to surmise that the impact was greater.¹⁰⁸ A notional estimate of one settlement document per year per parish, and one removal document for each of the approximately 15,000 parishes and townships in England and Wales would thus yield a paper trail of 30,000 documents per year, or roughly 1.5m during the working life of Mr Coles – probably not an unreasonable benchmark in view of the 400,000 settlement documents estimated by Tate to have survived in provincial archives.¹⁰⁹

Surviving settlement certificates from ten parishes and townships in Sussex, Lancashire and Westmorland until c.1790, data in five-year intervals.

¹⁰⁷ Blackburn's population grew from 1,053 in 1644 to about 4,500 c.1775, and between 1717 and 1778 it probably more than doubled, while average household size is estimated by Walton at 4.57, resulting in a notional figure of 631 households per 3,000: John K. Walton, *Lancashire: a Social History, 1558–1939* (Manchester, 1985), 65, 77; Jon Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North-West England, c.1700–60* (Manchester, 2004), 37. Nearly all these Blackburn certificates were awarded to married men whose settlement extended to their wives, children and apprentices.

¹⁰⁸ In St Martin in the Fields, Westminster, for example, the ten settlement certificates issued in 1719 were accompanied by 419 examinations; the five certificates issued in 1731 were accompanied by 441, and 14 to 15 per cent of those examined were removed: Jeremy Boulton, 'Double deterrence: settlement and practice in London's West End, 1525–1824', in King and Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement, and Belonging*, 66; see also, for example, Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, 49; and Norma Landau, 'The Laws of Settlement and the Surveillance of Immigration in Eighteenth-Century Kent', *Continuity and Change* 3 1988, 402.

¹⁰⁹ See the number of 'parishes or places separately relieving their own paupers' in: Webbs, *English Local Government i, The Parish and the County*, 3; W. E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (1946; Cambridge, 2011), 202; and see also, for example, the c.240,000 documents in 'London Lives' <https://www.londonlives.org/#> based on eight archives and fifteen datasets, including three parish archives and sessions' records.



The profiles of script and print, displayed in our records, further permit us to understand how the system worked, and to consider the enterprises of the form-producing stationers in broader contexts. Although the printed settlement certificates first appeared in our provinces around 1699 (supplied by Vincent and Coningsby, as seen, and subsequently by Barrett, Coles, and others),¹¹⁰ the available evidence includes numerous handwritten documents, which continued to be produced throughout our period. In Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, no printed settlement certificates were lodged at all during most of the eighteenth century; of the 64 settlement documents filed in Great Harwood, 1699–1759 all but four were by hand, while the large collection of Blackburn certificates is overwhelmingly handwritten.¹¹¹ Nor was the use of script necessarily declining in the face of the mass-produced forms. In the parish of Wadhurst, Sussex, for example, handwritten settlement forms returned to dominate from the

¹¹⁰ Note also the presence of forms with no imprint, either because it was cut, or because these were locally produced, or pirated forms, or simply because it was omitted.

¹¹¹ Note the printed ‘R. B.’ form no. 45, 1790, closely resembling Coles’s in Poulton-le-Fylde: LA, PR 2024; for Great Harwood, see printed certificates, 1733–1736/7, and a Lancashire certificate, 1753: PR 143/25, 16, 38, 54; PR 1560/1/1–174.

1760s;¹¹² as happened in Burwash from the 1750s.¹¹³ From 1779 poor families of militia men became irremovable, and provision was made for their relief;¹¹⁴ in 1793, the removal of members of friendly societies was proscribed,¹¹⁵ and from 1795, the removal of the poor on the mere apprehension that they might become chargeable was altogether forbidden by law, which directly affected certification.¹¹⁶ Yet evidently, around these decades, and even earlier, as parishes engaged in reciprocal arrangements regarding settlement, much correspondence continued by hand, in the form of memoranda, notes, and letters regarding settlement, and the use of the printed certificates declined in diverse localities.¹¹⁷ To judge from the current sample, the printed settlement certificates were more commonly employed in Sussex than in Lancashire, and more in south-western Lancashire than elsewhere in the county, around the well-connected Liverpool area; while from the early years of the eighteenth century in both the south-east and the north-west matters relating to removal were increasingly handled with the aid of printed forms, albeit alongside numerous scribal documents (as late as c.1720 it

¹¹² Having been used almost exclusively until 1723: ESRO, PAR 498/32/1–50, all but one handwritten, and 80–131 once more handwritten in diverse formats, except the printed ‘R.B.’ certificate no. 45, 1774, torn, probably by Coles. The first certificate bearing the formula ‘inhabitant legally settled’ appeared in Wadhurst in 1697, following eight documents all promising support for migrant parishioners, starting 1671/2: PAR 498/32/1/1–11. The first printed certificate appeared in 1699/1700, the last document in the file is dated 1795.

¹¹³ Though far fewer survive: ESRO, PAR 284/32/1/1–19, including a memorandum, scribal certificate, Coles certificate, and eight handwritten memoranda 1764–78, none endorsed by JPs; see also memoranda, Brede, from 1771: PAR 253/32/1/43–5, 51–3, 55–65; and East Hoathly, PAR 378/32/1/20–3, the last dated 1794; and, for example, 1757, to indemnify St Thomas the Apostle, Winchelsea removal and taxation charges of non-settled inhabitants: PAR 511/32/1/27–9, and see n. 148, below.

¹¹⁴ 19 Geo. III, c. 72; see also Richard Burn, *A Digest of the Militia Laws to the End of the Last Session of Parliament in the 19 Geo. III* (London, 1979), esp., 112; 22 Geo. II, c. 44; 3 Geo. III, c. 8.

¹¹⁵ 33 Geo. III, c. 54. See Joanna Innes, ‘The Domestic Face of the Fiscal-Military State’, in Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2009), 72.

¹¹⁶ 35 Geo. III, c. 101. The removal of needy individuals could continue, however, and the settlement of single mothers and their children was regulated with dedicated forms.

¹¹⁷ Although the ‘steep decline’ recorded in Northamptonshire after 1750 was not sustained throughout: Christine Mary Vialls, *The Laws of Settlement: Their Impact on the Poor Inhabitants of the Daventry Area of Northamptonshire 1750–1834*, Univ. of Leicester Ph.D. thesis, 1998, cited by Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 99; see also 98–9, 102, and for example Snell, ‘Settlement, Poor Law, and the Rural Historian’, 154, 159, on the decline of certification and ‘ineffectual’ use by 1795; Steven King, ‘Poor Relief, Settlement and Belonging in England, 1780–1840’, in King and Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement, and Belonging*, especially 98–9, explaining decreased settlement activity in the north-west from 1780s; Taylor, ‘The Impact of Pauper Settlement’, 55; and note memoranda and incomplete certificates above and below, nn. 112–13. For regular correspondence among parishes, see, for example, *Pauper Letters*, ed. Sokoll.

was possible for no printed matter to be employed through several Lancashire and Sussex Quarter Sessions).¹¹⁸

The use of the scribal forms thus continued in our period although – significantly – it could increase the documents' cost. In 1747, for example, one Thomas Fisher of the township of Preesall with Hackensall, Lancashire, wheelwright, was charged by the local officer 1s. 'for the making' of his scribal certificate; 4s. for 'the assigning', and 1s. 6d. for the journey to Preston to swear the certificate's execution, plus additional expenses, as detailed on the back of his form with an itemized bill saying: 'Fisher is charged'.¹¹⁹ The overall cost of a certificate from Pontefract, filed in Blackburn in 1728, may have also mounted up through signing fees and carriage, yet the initial cost of this plainly printed document was one penny only, as noted on the sheet.¹²⁰ In the London parish of St Botolph Aldgate, a total charge of 2s. per certificate was recorded in the parish accounts in 1723, probably relying on nearby Justices, printed forms and readily available stock.¹²¹ In 1756, the overseer of the poor of East Hoathly, Sussex, paid 3s. for 'the certificate and signing' (doubtless using a printed form), and 1s. for the trouble of the person who went around obtaining the signatures.¹²² However, on another occasion the same fee of 4s. was charged not to the parish but to the poor migrant, who had relocated and asked for the form.¹²³ In that case the certificate was authorized following unanimous agreement by the vestry, and the man himself had arrived for the

¹¹⁸ In 1715–1716/17, for example, LA QSP 1077–1108 contained no printed material, except a section from the *London Gazette*; see also 1716, 1719/20, 1722, ESRO QR/349, 362, 371–2. See, for example, printed forms: LA QSP 871/1–29, doc. 19; 879/1–42, docs. 5, 33; 915/1–43, and doc. 13 from 'Black-Friars near Waterside'; 1168–1191, 1720–2, including Lancashire printed forms. As evident from QSP 1274–1291, by 1727–8, the use of printed forms in Lancashire was widely spread.

¹¹⁹ Kirkham: LA PR 828/23.

¹²⁰ LA, PR 1560/1/72, 1728. See a comparison of the cost of script and print: Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 244–5.

¹²¹ St Botolph Aldgate, Overseers' Account Book, image and transcription:

<http://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?div=GLAAC10003AC100030188>. This was a 'normal cost': Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, 48.

¹²² *Diary of Thomas Turner*, Thomas Turner Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, 28 Aug., 1756. The certificate to Wittersham, Isle of Oxney, Kent, did not survive; see also 4 July 1757. In 1764 the same sum was given to the person 'attesting' and 'the Justice's clerk's fees'.

¹²³ *Diary*, 30 Oct. 1756.

occasion. Once the decision was made, the overseer wrote to the man's parish of residence, acknowledging settlement until the formal certificate could be prepared; he then received from the man four shillings for the document, and hosted him for dinner.¹²⁴ In some cases, therefore, our parishes and townships were evidently happy to award certificates, absorbing the customary or locally set costs, whether to aid the migrants or in the hope that they would not return, while in others they passed the costs to the recipients. But although the starting cost of the scribal form could be relatively high, the charges of any certificate increased while obtaining the six or eight signatures commonly required, travelling to the JPs, and remunerating the witnesses (from the reign of George II, an independent witness was legally obliged to carry the certificate from place to place, and to swear that he saw the relevant officers sign the document, so as to prevent fraud).¹²⁵ It is therefore not surprising that the costs of certification in the large parishes of Lancashire, or in rural Sussex, could be higher than in London, regardless of the medium employed.¹²⁶

In contrast, the costing of the removal forms was regulated at county level, especially from the reign of George II, when the justices were required to fix the price of different

¹²⁴ See also 17–8 Apr. 1757, 3s received for the signing costs, which was insufficient; and Anon., *Reasons Humbly Submitted to the Honourable Members of both Houses of Parliament for Introducing a Law to Prevent Unnecessary and Vexatious Removal of the Poor; Thereby to Reduce Parish Expenses, by Letting the Poor Live Where They Can Best Earn their Bread* (London, 1774), 4, where certification cost is described as no 'less than the value of a poor man's week's labour'.

¹²⁵ 3 Geo. II, c. 29. The very few cases of forged certificates revealed through TNA electronic searches suggest that this may have been a preventive or declarative measure rather than a response to a real threat; nor are there references to 'forge', 'forgery' in, for example: *A Collection of Decisions of the Court of King's Bench upon the Poor's Laws, down to the Present Time. In Which Are Contained Many Cases Never before Published; Extracted from the Notes of a Very Eminent Barrister Deceased* (London, 1770?). In contrast the conveying of vagrants prompted fraudulent activity such as the production of forged passes by constables and claiming false sums for journeys: for example, Justices' Working Document, Middlesex, 1722

<http://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?div=LMSMPS50203PS502030071&submit.x=53&submit.y=5&s>
ubmit=Search (accessed May 2016), and thanks to Tim Hitchcock for this point; for an earlier period: Hindle, 'Technologies of Identification'.

¹²⁶ Note the possible hidden costs when a certificate was awarded against an indemnity bond, which had to be handwritten and stamped, and could present a large expense if the named person/s in case of non-compliance: n. 97 above. The practice was not recommended in the advice literature.

orders in a General Quarter Session, to be ratified by Assize judges.¹²⁷ In this case, the flat rates did not differentiate between the scribal and printed media. In 1754, the cost of a ‘Paupers removal order’, for example, was set in Lancashire at 3s., and 1s. for issuing a copy (evidently regardless of how these documents were to be produced, yet including their execution by signing).¹²⁸ A signed Sussex removal order was charged at 5s. in 1757.¹²⁹ Any removal payments were added to the initial sum, as the handwritten accounts on the back of the filed orders, or the overseers’ records sometimes reveal.

The printed settlement forms were ostensibly marketed by a wholesale supplier such as Coles for the use of the Justices of the Peace and their clerks.¹³⁰ Some correlation between the batches employed, and JPs’ signatures, suggests that they or their clerks indeed held forms, and sold them to parishes upon demand. For example, four forms by Barrett, 1726–9, deposited in Wadhurst, Sussex, were also signed by the same magistrates.¹³¹ Yet the samples are too small and irregular to be conclusive, and no doubt some parishes held a small supply of forms.¹³² Different printed batches circulated at the same time, indicating decentralized dissemination and sales, while documents apparently belonging to the same batch could be signed by different hands. In some places the policies of the bench made a difference. In Yorkshire, for example, the Leeds quarter session passed its own initiative, giving a local printer, John Hirst, the right to produce blank settlement certificates and to sell them in his printing house, ‘and by all the booksellers in the West-Riding of the County of York’ (which

¹²⁷ 26 Geo. II, c. 14; 27 Geo. II, c. 66, fixing a separate table for Middlesex; the Lancashire bench responding to the requirement: LA, DDX/1209/1, fols. 2–3; a printed Middlesex table, filed: Burn, *Justice of the Peace*, Squire Law Library copy; and, for example, 2 Will. III & M., c. 20, concerning fees.

¹²⁸ LA, DDX 1209/1, fol 3^v.

¹²⁹ For example, *Diary*, 25 Oct., 1757.

¹³⁰ As listed in catalogues, n. 6, above.

¹³¹ ESRO, PAR 498/32/2/20, 24, 29, 31, signed by Humphrey Fowle and George Courthope, and see also nos. 18, 21 signed by Fowle and John Newnham, and 17 and 19, by Vincent, signed by Fowle, Newnham and Courthope; however see, for example, PAR 378/32/1/13–14, 16, signed by the same magistrates, supplied by Coles, yet from three different batches, with identical images in two but different brackets around ‘no. 18’, and the third with a different representation of the royal arms.

¹³² Tate, *Parish Chest*, 202.

suggests they simply could be locally bought, as they doubtless were in London).¹³³ The relatively frequent use of printed settlement certificates in some Lancashire localities (such as Ormskirk, Aughton, and Halsall) suggests preference, if not direction. The concentration of Coles's forms in his native parish, Pulborough, indicates that the receiving parish might also have had a say in the choice of form. Evidently, the system allowed for considerable variation.

The making of the scribal settlement certificates, however, and the completion of the printed certificates were closely tied to the governance of the 'middling sort' in their localities. The documents could be written – or completed – by a tradesman, a clergyman, or any educated and trusty person acting as a scribe, and using a precedent, or copying an existing form. In East Hoathly, Sussex, for example, the local shopkeeper performed the task and diverse documents in his neat hand are kept in the archives of his parish. As his diary reveals, he often assisted his neighbours by writing wills, petitions, and so on (freely or for a charge); he also handled the parish accounts and held parish offices.¹³⁴ In a Yorkshire township it was also a local tradesman who copied the settlement certificate's precedent in his notebook, alongside remedies and cures;¹³⁵ and in the vast and sparsely populated township of Underwood, Cumberland, a local yeoman handled the scribal forms and served as overseer of the poor (notwithstanding his nonconformist Quaker faith).¹³⁶ When experienced scribes could not be found, less proficient writers sometimes copied the precedent on pre-ruled paper, carefully forming their letters; sometimes scribal blanks may

¹³³ LA, PR 1560/1/72.

¹³⁴ See also documents by the same hands in Gloucestershire, Styles, 'Law of Settlement', 55.

¹³⁵ The private collection of Sir John Baker.

¹³⁶ *The Diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, Cumberland, 1756–1781*, ed. Angus J. L. Winchester (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society Extra Series xxvii, Stroud, 1994), for example, preparing and executing certificates, discussion in the vestry where the man 'had not much to say', appearing an 'honest, sincere man', and by the 'town', reaching no agreement: *ibid.*, 77, 139, 124, 296; Susan E. Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660–1800* (Oxford, 2009), 82, 115–16, including examples of Roger Lowe (d. 1679, Lancashire) and John Cannon (d. 1733, Somerset); Griffiths, 'Local Arithmetic'.

have been purchased from clerks. Only in the urban parishes, where parish governance was a large scale business, were professional scribes and clerks systematically employed. In the large and populous parish of St Martin in the Fields, Westminster, for example, two paid clerks and their deputies churned out the poor law documents, as Jeremy Boulton explains.¹³⁷ And of course, when the courts were in session, skilled clerks and scribes were regularly employed.

With these profiles in mind, it is possible to reflect further on how the printed and scribal settlement forms may have been perceived by those involved, and on the cultural value that may have been ascribed to them – which, in turn helps us understand the market pressures facing stationers such as Mr Coles and the social contexts in which they operated. Linguistically, the printed and scribal artefacts were at that time still undifferentiated: today's sense of the word 'form', as 'formulary document with blanks for the insertion of particulars', had not yet emerged. Rather, the word meant 'a form of words for religious or legal purposes', which could appear in either print or script.¹³⁸ In the contemporary cultural vocabulary, then, the script and print forms were essentially two versions of the same thing. Nor can we assume that they were easily distinguishable by their holders. Although popular literacy had greatly increased since the sixteenth century (between 1754 and 1784 reaching 95 percent among shopkeepers and 41 percent even among labourers and servants, and relatively high among males and in urban settings), many of the migrants requiring certification had no more than basic reading skills, and even some of the parish officers could only inscribe a cross by their names.¹³⁹ People such as these would have judged the

¹³⁷ Boulton, 'Double Deterrence', 58.

¹³⁸ OED (online), s.v. 'form': 'I can give you plenty of forms to fill up', quoting Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (London, 1857).

¹³⁹ See especially Roger Schofield, 'Dimensions of Illiteracy in England 1750–1850', *Explorations in Economic History*, iv (1972–3); figures and references in David Cressy, 'Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measurement in Early Modern England' in Brewer and Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods*, 317; R. A. Houston, 'The Development of Literacy: Northern England, 1640–1750', *Economic History Review* 2nd ser., 35 (1982), 199, 204, 214; Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in Gerd Baumann

difference between the scribal and printed forms on the basis of their outward appearance alone. In this respect, it is not inconceivable that at least some users may have preferred the handwritten form, which perhaps appealed to them as the real thing, as did scribal texts in the seventeenth century, whereas print could seem as an imitation. The poet John Donne (1572–1631), for example, apologized for having used the press, and Marvell (1621–1678) scorned it.¹⁴⁰ Some legal documents were even printed so as to imitate script, such as conditional bonds, commonly used to enforce agreements, and warrants employed in removal cases between c.1720 and c.1730.¹⁴¹ Certainly, stationers such as Coningsby, Vincent, and Coles had to design their mass-produced forms with care, to inspire trust, positioning the text under prominent coats of arms, using large formats, and highlighting the numerous signatures and seals, as seen above in the case of Coles's form no.18. The patently plain and minimalistic appearance of some of the locally printed certificates from Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire (see, for example, Plate 5) might also suggest why the scribal certificate may have continued to appeal to users – whether parish officers, clerks, or even the migrants themselves, if they could express a preference as to the format.

Skilled and local scribes do indeed seem to have employed subtle means to give the handwritten certificate added weight, and to underscore the very act of writing. A handwritten certificate from Treales, Roseacre and Wharles, Lancashire (1741), for example, radiated authority with the use of the expensive and prestigious writing material: parchment.¹⁴² Others were inscribed on beautiful sheets of imported writing paper, with

(ed.), *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford, 1986); Adam Fox 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing', in Griffiths, Fox and Hindle (eds.), *Experience of Authority*, esp. 111, and note the woman's mark, Plate 4.

¹⁴⁰ Crick and Walsham (eds.), *Script and Print*, intro., 8.

¹⁴¹ For example, 1725–6, 1730/1, 1733: ESRO, QR/386/18, 389/16, 408/9, 417/13–14; notes printed for the Bank of England, for example, also contained lettering designed to look like script, which remained a convention, as can be seen from the images from 1699 onwards, at the end of <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive/Documents/historicpubs/qb/1969/qb69q2211222.pdf>, after p. 218 (accessed May 2016). Generally, engraving was used for authentication: Raven, *Publishing Business*, 99.

¹⁴² LA, PR 828/15.

magnificent watermarks.¹⁴³ It is suggestive that although print was widely prevalent in settlement documentation in London, certificates dispatched from the metropolis continued to be written by hand, conveying authority and personal obligation, like the scribal document sent in 1719 from St Leonard, Shoreditch, Middlesex, to Blackburn, Lancashire, or the expertly produced scribal certificate from St James, Westminster, dispatched to Hastings, Sussex, in 1739 (which of course also meant employment for the local clerks).¹⁴⁴ The handwritten form evidently continued to appeal to users, particularly for the settlement certificate, which was, after all, a contract on behalf of known individuals, from particular localities, worded so as to invoke the contemporary discourse of trust: ‘We, the churchwardens and overseers of the poor … do hereby certify … witness our hands and seals’.¹⁴⁵

Beyond that, the scribal forms were no doubt convenient as they enabled parish officers to act directly, without travelling to obtain the forms, and if necessary to negotiate specific circumstances.¹⁴⁶ Scribal certificates could include details on the reasons for relocation,¹⁴⁷ highlight the responsibilities of the parish or township, and even identify ‘principal inhabitants’. Some early settlement documents were written in the form of personal letters, starting with the address ‘Sir’, or ‘Gentlemen’, suggesting individual obligation and trust; by the 1770s and 80s, letter type certifications increasingly reappeared, as already noted, alongside memoranda and notes, and in diverse cases the informal format evidently

¹⁴³ For example, 1739, 1744, 1750 from Treales, Roseacre and Wharles, Ormskirk and Carlton, LA, PR 828/13, 20, 27.

¹⁴⁴ See LA, PR 1560/1/39; ESRO, PAR 361/32/1/10, signed by seven parish officers; and, for example, ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/125, 2 Apr. 1752, handwritten, St Andrew Undershaft, London.

¹⁴⁵ For example, LA, PR 828/6, 1723; Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998).

¹⁴⁶ For example, LA, PR 828/2, 1710/11, to Kirkham, by Chipping parish and the overseers of the poor of Thornley.

¹⁴⁷ For example, the ‘urgent reasons’ that necessitated the relocation of Thomas Blackhurst and his family from Longton, Penwortham parish, attested by the officers, and their ‘promise’ to ‘accept and receive again and provide for the same’ should they return: LA, PR 828/14, 1740.

sufficed.¹⁴⁸ By 1762, therefore, as the Carr and the Trimby families had their certificates ‘allowed’ on Coles’s large and ornamental form no. 18, the printed format had already been widely employed for decades, and no doubt commanded authority. Yet despite the widespread use of the printed forms – and the fact that the scribal and printed forms were essentially two versions of the same thing – the use of script continued, at least for some, or according to received traditions, while stationers such as Mr Coles had continually to innovate to keep their hold on the market.

The considerations examined so far might lead us to conclude that the culture of the printed form was on the whole more advanced in the south-eastern county of Sussex than in the north-west, at least with regard to use of the printed settlement certificate; but before confirming this conclusion three additional factors need to be taken into count. First, not only had the cultural distinction between the printed and scribal forms not yet emerged, the two being versions of the same thing, but that the script and print forms developed in tandem, with many reciprocal influences, while drawing on the same advice literature and the language of the law. The first settlement certificates varied considerably in their formulation: they could be addressed as a letter, a bond, a memorandum, and even without mention of the keyword ‘settlement’. Yet soon after the printed certificates came into use, the handwritten documents started replicating their layout, as manifested throughout our sample, with a set declaration at the top by the issuing officers and the county or borough designation; the witnesses’ signatures to the left, and the officers’ signatures and seals to the right; followed by another textual block and the endorsement by the Justices of the Peace, with their signatures (see, for example, the scribal settlement certificate, Plate 6). As the law changed to

¹⁴⁸ Above, p. 30, and for example letters and memoranda: from Burwash, Sussex, 1765, Frant, 1766, 1774, Brenchley (Kent), 1767, Lamberhurst, 1774, filed in Wadhurst: ESRO, PAR 498/32/1/82–84, 92–93; Willingdon, 1779: PAR 414/32/1/84; ‘Wilshire’, signed by four, witnessed, no endorsement, 1779, and St George Hanover Square, 1781: PR 1560/1/159, 163; Haverhill, Suffolk, 1780: ERO, D/B 2/PAR9/2. Evidently these were used although they would not necessarily stand in court: for example, *Collection of Decisions*, 83–4.

require strict witnessing, both the script and print documents adjusted their formats.¹⁴⁹ The close relation between the script and print media was also evident in the advice literature. The model set in 1724 in the manual, *Poor Laws*, for example, must have helped local scribes and stationers; yet it already mirrored the form as popularized in print in early certificates by Vincent and Coningsby.¹⁵⁰ Bestsellers such as Burn's guidebook (1755, nineteenth editions by 1800) were also intended to provide models for scribes, based on the author's own experience in the northern county of Westmorland; yet this model was soon reflected in metropolitan forms by Coles (including true and alleged 'R.B.' forms).¹⁵¹ At the same time, those who devised forms employed scribal conventions, such as the use of curly brackets to group signatures, conventionally manifested in scribal certificates from around the 1690s, and appearing in printed settlement certificates as late as the 1820s.¹⁵² Finally, the printed forms were routinely personalized with scribal comments and notes, and diverse pen-strokes, which conflated the print and script media, while many forms included entire sections in script and print. Such hybrid formats, inherent in the genre of the form, were very common.

A second factor relevant to the local profiles is the strength of local production. Sussex's proximity to the London printing and wholesale centres no doubt accounted for the prevalence of printed settlement certificates there, while in south-western Lancashire nearby transport routes and urban centres probably assisted the spread of the London forms. The family connections of printers such as Barrett and Coles may have helped, as did any political ties. But remoteness from London could stimulate local production.¹⁵³ As early as the 1720s,

¹⁴⁹ 3 Geo. II, c.29; above p. 32; and, for example, Joseph Shaw, *Parish Law* (London, 1733), 179–80; Coles's swift response marketing the updated certificate, pursuant to the Act: *Evening Post*, 4 June, 2 July 1730.

¹⁵⁰ Anon., *Poor Laws: or, The Laws and Statutes Relating to the Settling, Maintenance, and Employment of the Poor ... of Use to All Justices of Peace, Ministers, Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor, and other Inhabitants of Parishes, to Know their Duty Herein. Written in a New Alphabetical Method* (London, 1724), 35; see also [Jacob], *Complete Parish Officer*, 108, with slightly different formulations.

¹⁵¹ P. 20 above.

¹⁵² For example, ESRO, PAR 498/32/1/2, 4–9; LA, PR 828/67 (printed); PR 3019/6/3 (printed, removal).

¹⁵³ A point made by scholars studying London's economic and demographic impact, especially: E.A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy, 1650–1750', *Past and*

locally printed settlement certificates began to be deposited in the Lancashire parishes examined here, such as the plain certificate from the township of Horridge, filed in Aughton, 1724, or the certificate from Cheshire, entered at Blackburn, 1729 (Plate 5).¹⁵⁴ In contrast, only from around the 1780s were the first settlement certificates clearly bearing local imprints deposited in the chests of Sussex parishes such as All Saints, Hastings and St Michael, Lewes – a locally produced certificate by Lee of Lewes was first filed in St Michael in 1791 and in All Saints in 1792; subsequently forms by Baxter of Lewes and by Katte of Battle started reaching the chests of rural parishes such as Ashburnham and Brede.¹⁵⁵ By the nineteenth century, many local printers were in operation in Sussex, yet the London forms continued to circulate. Thus, although the printed forms by Vincent, Coningsby, and Coles arrived in Lancashire around the same time as they did in Sussex, they evidently did not continue travelling there at the same rate. In Lancashire local production emerged early, and remained strong, in the form of both scribal documents and locally printed settlement and removal forms. From 1727 the removal documents deposited at Blackburn (a total of 146, during the period 1706–1806), for example, were almost entirely printed, including their copies, with several archetypal forms typified by ornamental lettering (also seen elsewhere in the north-west), and a distinct northern nomenclature referring to townships and parishes, as opposed to parishes only, suggesting local production.¹⁵⁶ The Borough of Liverpool printed its own forms, signed by the mayor.¹⁵⁷ In Manchester township distinctive blanks appeared.

Present 37 (July, 1967); F. J. Fisher, *London and the English Economy*, ed. P. J. Corfield and N. B. Harte, (London, 1990), ch. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Aughton, LA PR 3019/6/2; Blackburn: PR 1560/1/77.

¹⁵⁵ For example: ESRO, PAR 414/32/1/90–92; PAR 361/32/1/117, first by Lee, after over 100 metropolitan forms; PAR 233/32/2/38–9, 41, 50, 55–6, 59–60 by Lee, and Katte and Austin of Battle, alongside metropolitan forms, and following many by Coles; and PAR 253/32/2/ 28–9, 32, 41–5, by Lee from 1791. There is however a varying number of forms in each parish with no imprint, possibly being either locally produced or imports.

¹⁵⁶ As well as several batches of Lancashire-dedicated and locally printed forms from centres such as Manchester and Liverpool. After 1727, six documents only in this collection were handwritten: LA, PR 1559/2/18–20, 63–4, and 74 (a copy); see also the appearance of Gloucester-dedicated forms in Painswick, Gloucestershire, from the 1730s, and Wiltshire orders from 1739, printed in Birmingham: Styles, ‘Law of Settlement’, 55; Raven, *Publishing Business*, esp. 75–7.

¹⁵⁷ LA, PR 829/1/11, for example.

Such forms did not usually bear the names of stationers, so their identification cannot be conclusive, but they are easily recognizable by their dedicated headings bearing the county name, their local use, and northern nomenclature, which all point to local production.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, locally printed removal forms, specifically intended for settlement cases were employed in Sussex, typified by their repeated batches and the printed county dedication (although, with no imprint, provenance cannot be ascertained), and at the same time imported forms by Coles and others were very commonly used.

The final factor to take into account in ascertaining the local profiles is the reproduction and even the pirating of forms. By the start of the eighteenth century, the London stationers were divided into the printers, and the more socially prestigious booksellers and publishers.¹⁵⁹ Wholesale stationers such as Coningsby and Vincent presented themselves as both the publishers and distributors of forms, whereas Coles only indicated that he sold the forms, although he must have been engaged in printing directly, or by commission. Subtle differences between the batches of Coles's forms suggest that they originated from different presses, and were marketed by him exclusively as 'Sold by J. Coles'. Be that as it may, the commercial success of such metropolitan forms encouraged provincial printers to follow suit, by importing metropolitan batches bearing different sellers' names, by marketing virtually identical forms without an imprint (which survive in considerable numbers), or by creating similar though sometimes inferior imitations and selling them under the names of local producers. As early as 1726, for example, forms similar to those of Barrett were sold in Sussex under the name of St Laurent Reading. By the early 1750s, forms very similar to Coles's were disseminated by one Micklewright in Reading, and

¹⁵⁸ See also Feather, *The Provincial Book: Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1985), 19, identifying the 1730s as a turning point in provincial paper-making, reflected in printing.

¹⁵⁹ Feather, *British Publishing*, 39–42, 62–3; Feather, *Provincial Book Trade*, 59–62; Michael Treadwell, 'London Trade Publishers 1675–1750', *Library* (1982) 4 (2); R. W. Chapman, 'Eighteenth-Century Imprints', *Library* 4th ser., xi (1930–31), 503, explaining that printers' imprints were increasingly exceptional.

employed in diverse Sussex parishes.¹⁶⁰ In Preston, the distinctive elongated and floral image of the royal coat of arms was crudely copied by the stationer W. Stuart, and affixed to a locally produced settlement certificate.¹⁶¹ The early surviving northern printed settlement certificates deposited in the Lancashire Archives were plain, as already noted, and clearly cheaply produced. Yet subsequent local producers in Preston and Liverpool evidently sought to replicate the well-known London brand, and directly copied it.¹⁶² Lancashire county removal forms were crowned by 1780s with an image of the royal coat of arms, resembling earlier forms by Coles. And when a Chichester stationer started producing his own line of forms, he did exactly the same, and reproduced Coles's image of the royal arms, with the typical wreaths of flowers surrounding the lion and unicorn's tails, and the familiar layout, while adding below a new imprint, making this his own form 'no. 1'.¹⁶³ Coles thus not only conquered strongholds in the national market by virtue of his well-designed and successfully marketed forms, but also served as a model for local producers, both in the north and in the south. His brand set a national standard, and his impact continued after his death.

Thus our southern and northern counties developed a culture of administrative forms from the late seventeenth century, and through the early and middle decades of the eighteenth century, in response to the settlement legislation, market conditions, individual enterprise, and local and regional consumption. This was to be a step-change in the use of administrative forms in England and in the material culture of governance. While printed blanks were increasingly employed from the 1640s and after the Restoration – for taxation, bills, tickets,

¹⁶⁰ For example, 1758, ESRO, 498/32/1/79, almost identical to Coles's 'R.B.' no. 45 with very slight textual differences; see also similar certificates by Fletcher and Hodson, Cambridge, 1755, from Suffolk: ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/166; Northamptonshire, 1768: ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/167; David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press*, ii, *Scholarship and Commerce, 1698–1872* (Cambridge, 1988), 170, on Fletcher and Hodson's enterprises; and forms similar to Coles's no. 18 produced in Cambridge c.1750 by Francis Hopkin and Brookbank: ERO, D/B/2/PAR4/116–17, 119–20.

¹⁶¹ LA, PR 3019/6/2, Aughton, 1773, with a note dated 1781.

¹⁶² LA, PR 3019, above, and for example: PR 2858/3, 1760; PR 1559/2/79, 84, 93.

¹⁶³ WSRO, Par 183/23/63, printed and sold by D. Jaques of Chichester, 1786.

formal oaths, and so on, as seen – and while the restriction of poor people's mobility had a long history, it was only with the widespread use of settlement documentation that ordinary migrants, men, women, and children, had to equip themselves with standardized certificates to establish residence, or conversely stood the risk of being removed with a paper trail of bureaucratic forms. Legal arrangements such as these remained in use for centuries, while in the course of time both local and central administrations further developed the use of forms. The material culture of the form thereby became an indispensable part of English local government, bridging the gap between the word of the law and customary practices: a significant yet little-explored aspect of the evolving state, where the administration of the poor laws played a central part in processes of state formation.¹⁶⁴ Scholars studying the making of modern bureaucracies often highlight the state's agency, including surveillance and control by the state. What we have seen so far is the emergence of administrative mechanisms from below, from the bottom up, in response to the legal framework, yet initiated by businessmen, local officers, and even poor migrants, who all played a part – and contributed to – the contemporary culture of settlement and the rise of the form. The forms could be scribal or printed, locally or centrally produced, with many mutual influences over time. The use of scribal documents continued, and sometimes increased, and certainly had distinct advantages – quite removed from the radical cognitive impact sometimes ascribed to print by historians and sociologists of knowledge. Yet eventually it was the medium of print which triumphed, and which left a distinctive mark on the evolving state.

III. The triumph of the printed form

¹⁶⁴ For the poor laws and English state formation, see especially nn. 8, 11, 15–16, 18 above.

From the 1770s, the annual expenditure on matters relating to inter-parochial litigation was mounting: from £35,000 in 1776, it reached £287,000 in 1815. Constables in parishes on main roads sometimes spent their whole time transporting individuals from county to county, to their places of legal settlement, while matters relating to settlement dominated the business of the local courts.¹⁶⁵ By then the culture of forms had spread throughout the land. The requirement for a ‘certificate’, prescribed in the seventeenth-century poor-relief legislation, had resulted in a structured body of administrative forms, including not only a dedicated document for proving ‘settlement’, but numerous warrants, passes and other documents: ‘touching the Place of Settlement’; to remove ‘to the last legal Settlement’; to remove so as to ‘bring a Certificate’; to remove those returning ‘from the Place they were removed to’; and so on. Alongside these were ‘Passes for poor travellers’, and at least four different types of Vagrants’ Passes applicable within England, Scotland and Ireland. ‘For most English people’ throughout the eighteenth century, David Eastwood explains, ‘their only contact with the world of officialdom and their only experience of political authority’ remained the ‘parish state’¹⁶⁶ – alongside its culture of forms.

By 1762, when the Carr and the Trimby families had their settlement certificates ‘allowed’ on Coles’s form no. 18 in Lancashire and in Sussex; and when Mr Coles himself had completed his role as the master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and was taking possession of his landed estate on the Sussex–Hampshire border, the culture of forms registered yet another advance: the social reformer Jonas Hanway and MP Rose Fuller (with whose Sussex family Coles had long-standing connections) introduced a parliamentary Bill

¹⁶⁵ Tate, *Parish Chest*, 200; see networks of contractors for removing vagrants, based on ‘The Mendicity Report’, 1815: Dorothy Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century: a Study in Social and Administrative History* (London, 1926), 243–4. Vagrants’ removal costs were covered by the county, but evidently a great deal of removal was done following parochial complaints for breach of settlement.

¹⁶⁶ Eastwood, *Government and Community*, 47; quoting John Clare, *The Parish, a Satire* [written c.1823–27] ed. E. Robinson (Harmondsworth, 1985), 63, line 1289.

requiring the processing of information regarding pauper children, with two schedules of printed forms attached; when the law was renewed four years later the number of forms doubled.¹⁶⁷ By 1776, parish officers were obliged to report on their expenditure using a formulaic questionnaire: printed, disseminated, and centrally collated.¹⁶⁸ By the 1780s, the recently improved culture of forms – massively employed in the localities, and familiar to all who visit local record offices – was fully internalized by the legislature. If the 1740 Vagrancy Act had expanded to include two fully-worded precedents (while noting other documents pertaining to settlement and how they should be processed), the 1782 Act for the Better Relief and Employment of the Poor, for example – issued around the same time as the creation of the Home Office spelled out new centralization – had a schedule of fifteen forms attached.¹⁶⁹ The 1792 act concerning parish apprentices had a schedule of five.¹⁷⁰ The removal forms typical of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, employed by local authorities to send away individuals to places of legal settlement, grew to occupy four sides, with slots for the initial order, for any delay occurring, and for resuming the process.¹⁷¹ Further specific forms were produced for the settlement of females bearing illegitimate children, who greatly concerned the local authorities.¹⁷² Cities, towns, and even small villages now devised their own forms: the tiny county town of Appleby, for example, in sparsely

¹⁶⁷ 2 Geo. III, c. 22, with Schedules A and B, and four improved schedules in 1766: such forms were produced by the printer and engraver T. Major, trading from 3 Tavistock Row, Covent Garden, and ‘on the paved stones, St Martin’s Lane’.

¹⁶⁸ 16 Geo. III, c. 40.

¹⁶⁹ 22 Geo. III, c. 83; two embedded precedents and procedures: 13 Geo. II, c. 24, 17 Geo. II, c. 5; cf. 39 Eliz. I, c. 4, specifying a written testimonial and registration in a local ‘booke’, and the 1662 legislation (see n. 56 above), mentioning only a ‘certificate’. See also, for example, schedules attached to the African Company Act: 25 Geo., II c. 40 (1751); the British Museum Act: 12 & 13 Will. III, c. 7 (1700), and the Additional Act for the Better Improvement and Advancing the Receipts of the Excise and New Imports, June 1657: C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (London, 1911), 1186–1223.

¹⁷⁰ 32 Geo. III, c. 57; Tate, *Parish Chest*, 195, for another act.

¹⁷¹ Delay was usually on the grounds of ill health, and the forms specified both the illness and recovery.

¹⁷² For example, Ormskirk sessions: LA, QSP 1689/1–16, 1753, including filiation, maintenance, and removal orders involving single women; see also QSP 1748/6, 1757. In the Wigan Epiphany sessions, 1766, 57 documents were filed including ten bastardy cases, seventeen removals for single women and widows, some with children, fifteen removals for families, and three only for men: LA, QSP 1885; eighteen bastardy cases in Michaelmas; and see the parish officers’ preoccupation with issues to do with female fertility in Tadmor, *Where Was Mrs Turner?*

populated Westmorland, started producing its own dedicated forms for dealing with the settlement of unwed mothers and their offspring. So did the ‘antient Borough of Rye’, where the printer B. Coleman issued his own ‘Bastard no. 3’ form, employed for determining the settlement of illegitimate children in ‘the Ancient Town of Winchelsea’.¹⁷³ The removal order produced in Salisbury in 1781 was catalogued by its local printer as ‘no 50’. By 1800 even a village such as Biddenden, Kent, had its own Mr Weston, producing forms. In the county town of Lewes the printers Lee, Baxter, and Brown all competed for business. At the same time, London imports of settlement and removal forms continued to circulate in the provinces, and more and more competitors entered the scene. By the 1770s, even the Printer to the King joined the entrepreneurial wagon, as he developed his own side-business of settlement forms, grouped in an independent catalogue, closely resembling those produced by his predecessor, Coles. As late as 1907, the care of ‘pauper lunatics’ was determined in the Lancashire Quarter Sessions as a matter of settlement, while appeals were made for adjudicating the settlement of paupers.¹⁷⁴ Only in 1948 did the National Assistance Act terminate the poor law and provide ‘in lieu thereof’ relief on a national basis, in conjunction with local authorities. Yet even in this modern incarnation, concepts of ‘settlement’ and ‘removal’ remained, with yet more accompanying forms: the direct continuation of the culture of settlement charted here.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ ESRO, PAR 511/34/1/19–22; and, for example, similar forms 7, 12, 17, 24, and 37 in this file including ‘R.B.’ forms numbered according to different catalogues.

¹⁷⁴ For example, LA, QSP 4784/21, Ormskirk, Lancashire, 1907; QSP4803/10, 1907, from Cheshire, and three cases, 1903, including adjudication.

¹⁷⁵ For example: ‘Where any right of a local authority to recover any sum from another local authority depends upon the determination under the ... Poor Law Act, 1930, of any question as to settlement, removal or chargeability of any person pending at the appointed day, section one hundred and five of the said Act of 1930 (which provides for the recovery of the cost of relief by one council from another) shall continue to apply, but as if for proviso (b) to subsection (1) thereof (which excludes the provisions of that section where a removal order is refused on grounds of irremovability)’, <http://legislation.data.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/11-12/29/schedule/SIXTH/data.htm?wrap=true> (accessed May 2016)

Historians, sociologists and cultural critics have long debated what caused the emergence of complex systems of state administration. Agency has been ascribed to the impact of industrialization and urbanization, an innate drive for modern systemization, the impact of print, or the state's desire for institutional and bureaucratic control.¹⁷⁶ The research undertaken here suggests we should focus on the century or so before industrialization, and on two cardinal factors: the law, and the market. The law evidently played a central role in shaping the material culture of the form. Before the 1662 legislation, as Hindle clarifies, 'settlement itself went undefined'. Neither 'magistrates nor parish officers were legally entitled to remove the poor from any parish simply on the grounds of their destitution, still less if they were merely likely to become chargeable'.¹⁷⁷ It was the Act of 1662 that crystallized the legal concept of 'settlement', and subsequent amendments added exact criteria for its application. In 1691–2, the 1662 legislation was continued and reinforced. However, it was the 1697 amendment, establishing the right of the migrants to dwell any locality under the protection of an appropriately produced certificate, which presented an opportunity for enterprising stationers, such as those identified here, to develop a new body of forms. The cumulative effects of the 1662–97 legislation, which before long became apparent to local officers, magistrates, clerks, and labouring people, happened moreover to coincide with yet another legal change: the lifting of restrictions on print production, as the Licensing Act expired in 1695. The legal framework, however haphazardly developed, thus structured the realms of the possible, and engendered new social circumstances, and new needs, opening the door to economic opportunities, even if some of its most notable impacts can retrospectively be described as at best a series of unintended consequences. Moreover, for most of the period studied here, administrative documents were used in diverse formats

¹⁷⁶ See especially n. 20 above.

¹⁷⁷ Hindle, *On the Parish?*, 316.

and media, which continued to shape the market for forms. The growing control of the state may have been an outcome of the initiatives of the stationers, who developed and marketed their forms, yet it can hardly be described as their motivation, which as far we can see was rooted in business considerations and the cultivation of social networks.

State legislation thus created a field for entrepreneurs to launch their initiatives, but from that point onwards the developments in the form business were a matter of supply and demand. The achievement of entrepreneurs as Robert Vincent, Christopher Coningsby and Phillip Barrett, whose lives and work have been uncovered here, was that they not only satisfied demand, but also shaped the market. Their forms sold from the South Coast to Morecambe Bay, and further north, including the capital along the way. In each place, the forms were not only employed, but also used as models for further production, which had both administrative and cultural implications. The gaps between the word of the law, and its implementation, were filled – and shaped by – the rapidly developing material culture of forms. Yet it was our protagonist, Mr John Coles, who made a particular impact on this print culture. Coles not only devised numerous forms and sold them far and wide, thereby both satisfying and creating demand, but also diversified and synthesized the production, collating different forms in catalogues, with a numbered pro forma for every eventuality, showing an astute grasp of the administrative processes, while continually updating his production as the legislation changed. This article has shown how he seized every opportunity to expand his business (including riding on the success of the legal author, Richard Burn, so as to benefit from his prestige). Coles, like his fellow stationers, worked in a community where neighbours, friends, masters and apprentices, lenders and borrowers, all closely interacted. His success was acknowledged by his peers, who elected him to positions of leadership, and by the Whig elite. Well before he inherited a landed estate, John Coles had become a rich

man, directing his interest also to commercial and metropolitan politics, charitable causes and landed wealth, while securing the comfort and status of himself and his family.

Certainly, throughout the period explored scribal production continued. The making of handwritten forms persisted, whether by professional scribes, or by trusty neighbours of the ‘middling sort’, and even increased, for in particular contexts, or for some users, the handwritten documents carried weight and had distinct advantages. Moreover, in a culture where individual credit mattered, the signed and sealed word of hand remained important, whereas print could sometimes appear as a cheap imitation: the settlement certificates printed in the north of England *c.1720–50*, for example, were minimalistic, while stationers such as Vincent, Coningsby and Coles deployed an array of visual means to inspire trust. Like their sixteenth- and seventeenth-century predecessors, even best-selling guidebooks, such as Burn’s *The Justice of Peace, and Parish Officer*, were intended for audiences accustomed to manuscript record-keeping. Yet, once the printed forms came into circulation, the scribal documents started copying their formats. At the same time printed materials replicated script conventions, and both drew on the same advice literature and the words of the law. The print and script media thus developed in symbiosis, while a stationer such as Coles had to work hard to fend off competition: from scribes, from fellow metropolitan stationers, and from provincial competitors who did not hesitate to pirate and plagiarize his brand, whether in Chichester or in Liverpool and Preston.

Metropolitan production, scribal dissemination, and the provincial print industry were thus all aspects of the same historical process. The entrepreneurial masters of the Stationers’ Company, and not least Mr Coles, and those who worked with him and copied him, blazed a trail that changed an important aspect of state administration in England. As a result, the ways in which people experienced the growth of the state had changed significantly between say *c.1660*, and *c.1780* – which has required us to reflect on the relationships between the

‘theoretical cart, and the empirical horses’ of knowledge, technology and state power.¹⁷⁸

Evidently, the material culture and the administrative culture developed in tandem, as the law and economic opportunity propelled the rise of the form.

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¹⁷⁸ Higgs, *The Information State*, 204–5; see also n. 21 above.