

Walter Harte (1708/9-1774)

Description

The son of an Oxford educated, nonjuror father, Harte himself matriculated at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, in 1724. While at Oxford Harte was introduced to Alexander Pope—possibly by Joseph Spence—and the two became life-long supporters and friends. Harte took his MA degree in 1731, and, with Pope's help, became rector of Gosfield, Essex, in 1734. Harte was subsequently elected vice-principal of his alma mater in 1740 where he achieved an excellent reputation as a tutor. From 1746 through 1750, Harte served as tutor to Lord Chesterfield's son during the latter's grand tour of the continent. Upon his return, Chesterfield helped him to another ecclesiastical position, prebend of Windsor, which, with the addition of several other livings garnered over the next several years, set Harte up for life. He retired to Bath in 1759 where he died in 1774.

Harte's first publication, *Poems on Several Occasions*, appeared in 1727 while he was still an undergraduate at Oxford. The work was published by subscription with Bernard Lintot, Pope's publisher, and Pope was said to have helped Harte correct his poems for publication. Harte went on to publish other poems, including *Essay on Satire* (1731), in which he praised Pope, and a volume of religious poetry, *The Amaranth* (1767). "A Soliloquy, Occasion'd by the Chirping of a Grasshopper" began to appear in poetry miscellanies by the late eighteenth century, and was collected in various poetical primers and anthologies through the nineteenth century.