How did individuals write about their lives, before a modern tradition of diaries and autobiographies was established? Adam Smyth examines the kinds of texts that sixteenth- or seventeenth-century individuals produced to register their life, in the absence of these later, dominant templates. The book explores how readers responded to, and improvised with, four forms – the almanac, the financial account, the commonplace book and the parish register – to create written records of their lives. Early modern autobiography took place across these varied forms, often through a lengthy process of transmission and revision of written documents. *Autobiography in Early Modern England* brings a dynamic, surprising culture of life-writing to light for the first time, and will be of interest to anyone studying autobiography or early modern literature.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

ADAM SMYTH
For E, and also for E
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Illustrations

1 John Wyndham’s appropriation of a printed almanac (1687). (Somerset Record Office dd/wy/185.) By permission of the trustees of the Wyndham Estates

2 John Folds’s copy of Parker’s Ephemeris (1710). (Folger Shakespeare Library i82–i94q.) By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library

3 Matthew Page’s copy of Hopton’s New Almanacke (1613). (Bodleian Ash. 66.) By permission of the Bodleian Library

4 Nathaniel Brewer’s account book (1719). (Somerset Record Office dd/dr 70.) By permission of the Somerset Record Office

5 Isabella Twysden’s copy of John Booker’s Mercurius Coelicus (1647). (British Library Add MS 34169.) By permission of the British Library

6 Thomas Larkham’s diary. (British Library MS Loan 9.) By permission of the British Library

7 John Wade’s parish register notes. (Hammersmith and Fulham Archives dd71/1–2.) By permission of the Hammersmith and Fulham Archives and Local History Centre
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This book is dedicated to Eliane, and also to Ezra, who arrived just in time for this note.
Note on references


The place of publication for pre-1800 works is London unless otherwise noted.

The following abbreviations have been used throughout the notes:

Bodleian Bodleian Library, Oxford
BL The British Library, London
Folger Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC