

# Guide to the Pruden Family Papers

MS 406



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

October 1982

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P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
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(203) 432-7441  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 406

**CREATOR:** Pruden family

**TITLE:** Pruden family papers

**DATES:** 1572-1941

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The major figure in these papers is Russell G. Pruden who is represented by a war diary (1918-1919) and correspondence, largely from friends from Yale and the 27th U.S. Aero Squadron in which he served during World War I. His diary contains many photographs, a history of his squadron and other memorabilia. Also in the papers are fourteen letters written to his grandfather, Joseph S. Pruden by D.B. Thompson of Columbus, Georgia, on financial matters. A small manuscripts collection is included in the papers and contains one eighteenth century and two nineteenth century travel diaries, as well as documents and letters signed by John Quincy Adams, Horace Greeley, Andrew Jackson, James Monroe and kings Charles IX and Louis XVI of France.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0406>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0406>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Russell G. Pruden, 1939-1946, and of Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Prentis from the estate of Russell G. Pruden in 1949; ledger transferred from Berkeley College in 1977.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Pruden Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Russell Godine Pruden, B. A. 1906. Born October 20, 1883, New York City; died January 26, 1949, New Haven, Connecticut.

Father, William Edgar Pruden Hardware Company, hardware and wholesale automobile supplies, New York City; son of Joseph Strong and Annie Stewart (Orr) Pruden. Mother, Susan Allison (Godine) Pruden; daughter of Francis and Susan Cresswell (Brazier) Godine. Yale relatives include: Joseph McElroy, '88 (couson); Edmund A. Prentis, 3d (Class of 1945W) (nephew).

Hamilton Institute for Boys, New York City. Second colloquy appointment Senior year.

With William E. Pruden Company 1906-34 (General manager 1911-14, secretary 1914-29, vice-president 1929-34); associate curator Edward M. House Collection of War Literature 1939-49; author: *August Night*; with 27th U. S. Air Squadron, October 1917 until discharge with rank of Captain March 1919; overseas February 1918-March 1919; engagements in Toul sector and Champagne-Marne, and Oise-Aisne, St. Mihiel, Verdun, and Meuse-Argonne offensives; associate fellow Berkeley College (Yale University) 1934-37, fellow 1937-49; member St. Ignatius Church (Episcopal), New York City.

Unmarried.

Death due to cerebrovascular accident. Buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City. Survived by a sister, Mrs. Edmund Astley Prentis, Jr., of New York City.

(From *Yale University Obituary Record 1947-1949*. pp. 57-58)

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## Scope and Contents

The Pruden family papers are composed of three diverse parts. The first consists of fourteen letters written to Joseph S. Pruden during the years 1865-1866. The letters deal with financial problems and debts

owed to Pruden by D. B. Thompson of Columbus, Georgia. Some personal and family news is included in Thompson's letters.

Correspondence and other papers of Russell G. Pruden make up the second part. The letters are largely those of friends from Yale and from the 27th U.S. Aero Squadron, in which Pruden served as a captain during World War I, as well as several letters written by Pruden from Europe. The letters describe his friends' experiences before and during the war in training camps, at the front, in hospitals, and the feelings of those who remained in the U.S. during the war. One series of letters deals with attempts to identify the body of Lt. Ivan A. Roberts.

A particularly interesting item is Pruden's war diary, kept during his entire European tour of duty. Profusely illustrated with photographs, the diary also contains correspondence (removed and filed in Box 1, folder 11a), maps, general orders, a short history of the 27th Aero Squadron and rosters of its personnel, a circular letter from George V to American troops, and items such as French war-time currency, German camouflage fabric, propaganda leaflets, and so forth.

Also among Pruden's papers is a ledger with entries for a real estate account of Russell Pruden and his sister Daisy B. Prentis.

The third part of the Pruden family papers consists of a small manuscript collection. It contains documents and letters signed by John Quincy Adams, Horace Greeley, Andrew Jackson, Alfred Mahan, James Monroe, and kings Charles IX and Louis XVI of France. Also included are three travel journals, the first of which is an anonymous diary of a Frenchman's visit to London, describing his impressions of English social life, difficulties with the language, slang, and so forth. The next volume is a journal of three tours to France, the Netherlands, and Piedmont by Charles Abbot, first Baron Colchester. Abbot was traveling after the battle of Waterloo, and visited that and other battlefields. He also describes a visit with Wellington to a review of the troops by the King of Prussia. The last volume is a journal of a tour of France, Italy, and Holland by James Kendall, describing in detail, works of art and architecture.

The Pruden family papers were donated to Yale University by Russell G. Pruden between 1939 and 1946, and by Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Prentis from the estate of Russell G. Pruden in 1949. The ledger was transferred from Berkeley College in 1977.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1 - 2	Joseph S. Pruden: correspondence	1865-1866
	Russell G. Pruden	
b. 1, f. 3 - 11	Correspondence	1915-1919, 1929
b. 1, f. 11a	Correspondence removed from war diary	1919-1925
b. 2, f. 12	<a href="#">War diary</a>	1918-1919
b. 2, f. 12a	War diary typescript	1918-1919
b. 3, f. 13	Ledger	1917-1941
	Manuscript collection	
b. 3, f. 14	Anonymous diary of a Frenchman's visit to London	1835-1836
b. 3, f. 15	Colchester, Charles Abbot, 1stbaron: "Travels in France, Netherlands & Piedmont"	1815-1822
b. 3, f. 16	Greeley, Hoarce: ALS to Mrs. F. R. Stone	1850 September 8
b. 3, f. 17	Jackson, Andrew: Army provision return countersign; also signed by Col. John Coffee	1813 March 25
b. 3, f. 18	[Kendall, James]: journal of a tour in France, Italy, and Holland English	[1750?]
b. 3, f. 19	Mahan, Alfred Thayer: ALS to R. W. Neeser	1902 May 5
b. 4	Charles 9thof France: signed military commission	1572 September
b. 4	Louis 16thof France: signed military commission	1779 December 18
b. 4	Monroe, James: patent granted to John B. Brown and Jonathan Farmer; also signed by John Quincy Adams and William Wirt	1822 March 11

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Families  
Hardware stores  
Travelers -- England  
Travelers -- Europe  
World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives,  
American

### Geographic Names

Europe -- Description and travel  
France -- Description and travel  
London (England) -- Description and travel --  
1808-1900  
Netherlands -- Description and travel  
Piedmonte (Italy) -- Description and travel

### Genres / Formats

Account books  
Diaries

### Names

Abbot, Charles, Baron Colchester, 1757-1829  
Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848  
Charles, King of France, IX, 1550-1574  
Greeley, Horace, 1811-1872  
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845  
Louis, King of France, XVI, 1754-1793  
Mahan, A. T. (Alfred Thayer), 1840-1914  
Monroe, James, 1758-1831  
Pruden, Joseph Strong  
Pruden, Russell G.

### Families

Pruden family