

## Theodore M. Prudden Papers, 1924-1968

**Repository:** Hingham Public Library  
**Manuscript Number:** MSC #21  
**Creator:** Theodore M. Prudden  
**Quantity:** 6 document boxes  
**Processed by:** Stephanie McBain and Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in April of 2015.  
**Access:** Open for research.

### Provenance

These papers were created by Theodore Mitchell Prudden while he lived in Hingham, Mass. They were given to the library by an anonymous donor.

### Biographical Note

Theodore Mitchell Prudden was born in Chicago on February 1, 1891 to Theodore Philander Prudden and Margaret Bull Prudden. He grew up with five brothers and sisters, one of whom died at the age of four. After finishing high school Prudden attended Yale University, graduating in 1913 with a Ph.B. in Mechanical Engineering. During World War I, he served as in the Ordnance Department as a First Lieutenant at the Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia and then as the commanding officer of Company 15 in France. On September 29, 1917 he married Evelyn Converse, with whom he would have four sons.

Prudden and his wife lived in and around Boston until approximately 1927, when they moved to Hingham, Mass. Prudden had a varied career, obtaining positions as a general manufacturing worker and manager, cost department associate, and inventor. His patents included a sound absorbing structure, a paper drinking cup, and plastic lobster plugs. He also invented a method of using ball bearings with spinning and twister spindles. Prudden wrote multiple technical papers focusing on various fields of engineering, with subjects ranging from motor vehicles to the ball bearing spindle.

By the 1940s he was president of Kalix Mills and Kalix Corporation, which was located in Cambridge, Mass. He served as a boatswain's mate in the Coast Guard Reserve during World War II, and then left the Kalix Corporation to become a manufacturer of the plastic lobster plugs he had invented. In the 1960s Prudden also served on the Hingham Town Board of Assessors. He died in Hingham on April 7, 1968 and was buried in Hingham Cemetery.

### Scope and Content Note

This collection is largely comprised of typed manuscripts created by Prudden during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscripts are mainly plays and young adult novels, but also include some short stories and picture books. The collection also contains Prudden's handwritten notes, his correspondence with editors and publishers, newspaper clippings, and materials related to Prudden's research for his various manuscripts.

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into the following twelve series:

- Series I. Prudden Family Biographies and Genealogies, 1924-1968
- Series II. Published Works and Related Materials, 1961-1967
- Series III. Manuscripts and Related Materials, c. 1928-1968
  - Subseries I. Ishmael Hoy Writings, ca. 1928
  - Subseries II. *The Business of Inventing* Manuscripts, 1967
  - Subseries III. Joel Brown Series Manuscripts, 1964-1968
  - Subseries IV. Maritime Novels, 1964-1966
  - Subseries V. Picture Books, 1963-1967
  - Subseries VI. Plays, 1929-1952
  - Subseries VII. Research, 1963-1964
  - Subseries VIII. Short Stories and Essays, ca. 1962-1964
  - Subseries IX. Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1931-1965

### **Series I. Prudden Family Biographies and Genealogies, 1924-1968** **Box 1, Folder 1**

This series contains biographical and genealogical information on T.M. Prudden and his family. Included are a "historical and biographical sketch of the Prudden family" compiled by the United States Research Bureau; a biography of T. Mitchell Prudden, 1849-1924, reprinted from a 1924 edition of *Science*; and a short biography of T.M. Prudden and a copy of his 1968 obituary.

### **Series II. Published Works and Related Materials, 1961-1967** **Box 2, Folders 42-44; Box 1, Folders 9-10**

This series contains materials relating to Prudden's published books and articles. There are two books included in this series, the first of which is *About Lobsters*. Materials focusing on this book, which date between 1961 and 1963, include newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and letters. The clippings and articles include reviews of the book, advertisements, and information about Prudden. The letters were written by various organizations and individuals, such as the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Maine Lobstermen's Association, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, and Prudden's grandson. The subjects of these letters include... There are also materials relating to the young adult book *The Frigate Philadelphia*, including three letters from D. Van Nostrand Publishers, a fan letter from a 10-year-old boy, and various clippings publicizing the book.

The series also includes several articles written by Prudden in the 1960s. Two of these works were published in the newspaper of the National Fisherman combined with Maine Coast Fisherman. "Blue Lobsters" was included in the December 1961 issue and the two-part "So You Want to Be a Lobsterman?" was placed in the July and August 1963 issues. Finally, there are two copies of Prudden's manuscript *It Paid to Dig*, which was published in *Harper's Magazine*, as well as a 1967 editorial report sent to Prudden by N. R. Fryatt.

### **Series III. Manuscripts and Related Materials, c. 1928-1968**

#### **Suberies I. Ishmael Hoy Manuscripts, ca. 1928**

Box 1, folders 7-8

This series is made up of several short stories written by Prudden under the pen name Ishmael Hoy, as well as a rejection letter from *Adventure* and a 1928 letter from Mathilde Weil of the Writer's Workshop, Inc. providing Prudden with feedback.

Folder

7	"Romance Incorporated"
	"Romance by Proxy"
	"Glory, Not Romance"
8	"The Blot on the Blotter"
	"He Was a Man"
	"Tombstones"
	"Quicksand"

#### **Subseries II. *The Business of Inventing* Manuscripts, 1967**

Box 1, folders 2-6

This series contains five manuscript copies of *The Business of Inventing: A Hand-book for Inventors and Engineers*, in some versions called *A School for Engineers*. There are some changes between copies, and two include Prudden's handwritten notes. Folder 2 includes a 1967 letter from Doubleday Publishers.

#### **Subseries III. Joel Brown Series Manuscripts, 1964-1968**

Box 1, folders 11-19

During the 1960s, Prudden wrote and submitted several manuscripts intended for a young audience featuring the character of Joel Brown, a boy who becomes involved in the Revolutionary War. They were titled *The Guns of Ticonderoga* (in some versions called *The Trek from Ticonderoga*), *Joel Brown's Adventures in the South: A Revolutionary Tale*, and *Joel Brown: A Resourceful Rebel*. The stories in the collection are accompanied by letters from D. Van Nostrand Publishers, which either reject the manuscript or suggest edits, and several of the manuscript copies contain handwritten notes.

#### **Subseries IV. Maritime Novels, 1964-1966**

Box 1, folders 20-23

Prudden wrote three manuscripts featuring maritime themes: *Impressed*, *The Frigate Constitution Before Her Great Days*, and *Mary Celeste: The Last Word*. Also included in this series are rejection letters from publishers, a critical letter regarding *The Frigate Constitution* and Prudden's response, and recommendations from the Children's Book Council, Inc. on submitting a manuscript. Other materials relating to the *Mary Celeste* manuscript include critical letters, a cover page with the name Ishmael Hoy, a four-page "memorandum relative to the *Marie Celeste*," and notes on edits to be made.

### **Subseries V. Picture Books, 1963-1967**

Box 2, folders 25-28

This series includes the manuscripts of several picture books written and illustrated by Prudden. Various rejection letters from different publishers are also included, as well as 1963 letters from the Hingham Public Library's children's librarian relating the success of Prudden's stories at story hour. Folder 28 contains pages and handwritten notes from various picture books and a 1964 critical letter from *The Atlantic Monthly Press*.

Folder

25	"Debby's Boat"
	"Lolliping Liz"
26	"Gib the Fox"
	"Wumpee and Gib"
	"The Little Black Ant Who Did"
	"Little Sammy Who Said 'I Won't Wash'"
27	"The Great, Big, Hungry Whiz Fish"
	"The Whumpee"

### **Series VI. Plays, 1929-1952**

Box 2, folders 29-41

This series contains manuscript copies of various plays written by Prudden over a span of more than 20 years. Also included are hand-drawn and printed posters for a performance of *Impressed* at Loring Hall in June 1929 and a program from a 1931 performance of *The Mary Celeste* by the Hingham Players' Club, as well as a letter from Nicholas Kalman, Author's Representative; one from a friend saying they couldn't find anyone to read Prudden's play; and a rejection letter from The Writers' Workshop, Inc.

Folder

29	<i>Chimmy and Herbert</i>
30	<i>The Dormouse Runs Amuck: A Comedy in Three Acts</i>
31	<i>The Enlightened Age: A Tragedy</i>
32-33	<i>Impressed</i>
34-35	<i>Look Out for Squalls</i> , with lyrics by George Howland

Cox

36	<i>The Mary Celeste</i>
37	<i>One Million Dollars</i>
38	<i>Queer! Damned Queer!</i>
39	Radio play ( <i>Cap'n Sam and Patience</i> ) <i>Success: A Tragedy</i>
40	<i>Talent Inc.: A Farce</i>
41	<i>Times Squared</i> (a.k.a. <i>Inspiration Preferred</i> )

### **Series VII. Research, 1963-1964**

Box 2, folder 45

This series contains items relating to research done by Prudden for his various published and unpublished works, largely involving Fort Ticonderoga; the *Constitution*, the *Philadelphia*, and other ships; and sailors. It includes pages copied from books and images sent from various organizations, as well as letters to Prudden from Fort Ticonderoga, the National Life Insurance Company, Bowdoin College, the National Fisherman combined with Maine Coast Fisherman, *Yankee* magazine, the Bostonian Society, the United States Naval Institute, the Peabody Museum, and the New York Historical Society.

**Series VIII. Short Stories and Essays, ca. 1962-1964**

Box 2, folders 46-52

This series includes manuscript copies of various short stories and essays written by Prudden, as well as various rejection letters, Prudden's notes on automobiles, a photograph of a marionette, and an undated letter to *Reader's Digest* from Prudden's son.

Folder		
	46-49	"Personal Anecdotes" collection (a.k.a. "Army Vignettes")
	50	"Kekle-Pin Jake"
		"Liverpool Jarge"
	51	"The Female of the Species"
		"Looking Backwards at the Automobile"
		"As It Was in the Beginning"
	52	"Details of Naval Action in 1812"
		"The Rebuilding of the Frigate <i>Constitution</i> "
		Untitled story about Betty Coatsworth
		The Story of the First Christmas
		"The Most Unforgettable Character: Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford"
		"Salvage"

**Subseries IX. Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1931-1965**

Box 1, folder 24

This series includes many pages of handwritten notes relating to Prudden's various manuscripts. Also included are miscellaneous pages from unidentified works, as well as individual pages titled "Selling Anecdotes," "Mr. Gilling Grew Up," "Humor in Uniform," "Life in These United States," "Lesson 26 from 'Prudden's Manual on Polite Social Customs,'" and copies of "A Notable Lawsuit" by Franklin H. Head and "Amateurs All, or Why Rats Leave a Ship" by Andra W. Letters in the series include one from Alexander McKaig, Inc. dated 1931 regarding a manuscript and a 1965 letter from the United States Naval Institute regarding "Old Ironsides," as well as undated rejection letters from the *Ladies Home Journal* and Bill Brant Associates. Also included is a 1962 article from *The Patriot Ledger* on Cohasset author Sheldon Ripley and copies of Prudden's copyright registration cards from the Library of Congress.