

**PETER PRUDDEN; A STORY  
OF HIS  
LIFE AND NEW HAVEN  
AND MILFORD, CONN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649000203

Peter Prudden; a story of his life and New Haven and Milford, Conn by Lillian E. Prudden

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**LILLIAN E. PRUDDEN**

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THE MEMORIAL BRIDGE AT MILFORD.

# PETER PRUDDEN

A STORY OF HIS LIFE

AT

NEW HAVEN AND MILFORD, CONN.

WITH

The Genealogy of Some of His Descendants

AND

AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING COPIES OF OLD WILLS, RECORDS, LETTERS,  
AND PAPERS

BY LILLIAN E. PRUDDEN  
NEW HAVEN, CONN.  
AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY  
1901

BY

LILLIAN E. PRUDDEN

1901

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NEW HAVEN: CONN.

## PREFACE.

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In the leisure hours of a busy life Mr. Henry J. Prudden, of New Haven, Conn., collected material for a History of the Prudden family, and, had he lived to continue his investigations, he would doubtless have produced a complete and valuable book. The present volume is, largely, a compilation from his note books of the results of his careful researches into old records, papers and other sources of historical and genealogical information in this country and in England. It has been arranged in appreciation of his labor, and with the hope of stimulating some future family historian to carry the work further.

The characterization of the Rev. Peter Prudden is inserted as Mr. Henry J. Prudden gave it at the 250th anniversary of the First Church in Milford, Conn., when he presented, on behalf of the donor, Mrs. Susan Prudden Beardsley, a tablet in memory of its first Pastor. This is done because it is so clear a picture of the qualities that marked the man,



although it involves a measure of repetition in the more amplified sketch of Peter Prudden prepared for this book.

The genealogical lists are complete only in the line of descent which includes the writer's own family. Copies of such old wills, papers and tombstone inscriptions as it is of interest to preserve, but which have no place in the historical account, are found in the Appendix.

## PETER PRUDDEN.

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The veil which obscures the Prudden name prior to the time when the Rev. Peter Prudden came to this country in 1637, is lifted once in the chronicles of the latest Danish kings of England. Here we learn that in the year 1042, King Hardicanute died at a carousal in Lambeth Palace, where one of his nobles was celebrating the marriage of his daughter to "Tovi, surnamed Prudan, a noble and powerful Dane."\*

Most of the histories of that time spell the name of this person "Pruden," but by some it was written "Pruda." It is impossible now to say whether this name continued during the next three hundred years, or those who bore it were descendants of this "Tovi" or "Tobi" Prudan, or even, whether the "Pruddens" that began to be found in the sixteenth century are descendants of his. At different periods the English records so vary the manner of spelling the same name

\* Florence of Worcester's Chronicle. "Bohn's Library, p. 144, Manning & Pray," History of Surrey, Vol. III, p. 461.

that it would not be surprising if as time passed this one had been completely altered. A continuous line of descent may have followed down through the names of Prudde, Prudow, Prothowe, Proddehowe, Prudhon, and a dozen other similarly sounding names.\*

The derivation and meaning of the name is uncertain. One writer says it means the "proud." Another,† interpreting English Surnames, says, "We now talk of a 'prude' as one who exaggerates woman's innate modesty of demeanor. Formerly it denoted the virtue pure and untravested. The root of the Latin '*probus*,' excellent, still remains in our Prudhommes, with those more commonly corrupted forms, Pridham, Prudames or Prudens, a sobriquet which formerly referred simply to the honest and guileless uprightness of the owners."

The first distinct record of the name which has been found, since that of 1042, is in some early wills in Her Majesty's Court of Probate, in Somerset House in London, where it is spelled,

\* As an example of the transformation made in names, the following are nine different ways in which the same writer in the same paper has spelled the name of one Christopher Prewen—Prewne, Pruen, Pruene, Prowne, De Prune, Prunnen, Prowen and Prowyne.

† Bardsley's English Surnames.