

Octavius Longworth Pruden (29 Mar 1842 – 19 Apr 1902)

The Washington Post, July 3, 1878, p. 4

City Personals

Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, Secretary Sherman, Attorney-General Devens, Messrs. Webb and Buchard Hayes, and Mr. O.L. Pruden, Mr. Hayes' assistant secretary, left yesterday morning at 10 o'clock by the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, to attend the Wyoming massacre centennial, which occurs on the 4th instant. The party stopped at Harrisburg at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, where they remained until 12. They were the guests of Gov. Hartranfe, who tendered them an official reception at the Governor's mansion. At 12 the party left Harrisonburg for Wilkesbarre, which is near the scene of the celebration. The return next Friday.



EXECUTIVE SECRETARY PRUDEN CARRYING
THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.

The Washington Post, February 26, 1879, p. 1

A Snobbish Reception

Mr. Hayes Initiates The Court Manners Of Europe

The Newspaper Profession Corralled In The Vestibule –

A Brilliant Affair – The Elaborate Decorations Fully Described –

The Countries Represented – The Ministers There

A neatly engraved card of invitation admitted the holder to the reception to the diplomatic corps at the White House last night.

They were given to the members of the Cabinet, to the members of both houses of Congress, the more prominent army and navy officers and the heads of the various bureaus. To the correspondents here of the New York and Western papers and of the local press, however, the following was addressed:

Executive Mansion, Washington

Admit bearer to vestibule Tuesday, February 26, 1879.

Thos. Lincoln Casey Col. U.S.A.

The Post, however, alone was fortunate enough to have in its possession an autograph card of Mr. Hayes' private secretary, reading as follows: "Admit bearer to the Executive Mansion this evening. W.K. Roger." In the dignity of a dress suit, our reporter accordingly marched up to the door of the White House, and presented the card. The attending lackey, with a gentle wave of hand, signified to the representative to pass into the vestibule. Here were assembled the colored footmen of the guests and the Marine band, and one lady correspondent. Rather astonished at being made to stand among the two former groups, the reporter sent his card up to Secretary Pruden, but this had no immediate avail. Mr. Pruden asked the doorkeeper what the orders were. The latter, pointing to the negroes, answered that all newspaper men must stand there. Then Mr. Pruden said that there were no representatives of the press inside, and none could go in. Then he left.

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The Washington Post, June 2, 1881, p. 4

The President's Secretary

Departure of Mr. J. Stanley Brown for England on Important Business

Mr. J. Stanley Brown, the private secretary of President Garfield, packed his gripsack last evening and quietly took passage on the owl train for New York. He gave but few of his friends an opportunity to shed tears or present farewell tokens. At noon today he will sail out of New York harbor on a steamer, bound for England. He carries with him a large amount of 3-1/2 percent, continuation bonds to be delivered to the American agency in London, established for the convenience of foreign bondholders. He will be absent from his post about six weeks, and during his absence his responsible place will be filled by Mr. O.L. Pruden, the assistant private secretary.

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The Washington Post, September 20, 1881, p. 1

Yesterday At Long Branch

Into the Valley and Shadow of Death at Last

...

The News In Washington

Scenes on the Streets and at the White House

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At the White House the strangest scene was presented. At the time of the reception of the news the House was deserted. Maj. Pruden, assistant secretary and his clerks, were all absent. Only a single policeman and a watchman were on duty. They sat on the portico at the main door and were both dozing when a telegraph boy rushed up with the message announcing the President's death. For a moment the two hesitate about opening it as it was addressed to Maj. Pruden, but their anxiety overcame their ideas of propriety and they opened it, and were, like many others, shocked by the news. The telegram was from Private Secretary Brown. Immediately Allen, the messenger, set out to find Secretary Pruden, leaving Policeman Burrows in charge of the Mansion, and though let alone, when Allen went away, it was not long before Burrows was besieged by anxious inquirers, who thronged the portico and asked all sort of question, but Burrows would tell them nothing. There was some difficulty in finding Secretary Pruden, and at 1 o'clock he had not arrived at the White House.

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At 3 a.m., owing to the absence of Assistant Secretary Pruden, no steps had been taken at the White House to pay respect to the memory of the President. A dispatch announcing the death was delivered to Pruden at his residence about midnight. In response to a question as to whether he would go to the White House, he announced indifferently that he did not see that he could be of any service by going there. The employees are at the house awaiting order.

The Washington Post, September 21, 1881, p. 1

Given Up to Grief

The National Sadly Mourning Its Martyred President

A Day of Sorrow Throughout the Whole Country –

How It Was Passed at Elberon

...

The Black-Draped City

Washington in Mourning from End to End – The People's Sorrow

...

At the White House Mr. Pruden was busy with his assistants assorting letters and documents and packing them in boxes ready to go to Mentor. He had heard nothing from Long Branch as to whether

the remains were to be brought to the White House or the Capitol, and from this, believed that they would be taken direct to the Capitol, a belief which the press dispatches confirmed. No catafalque has been erected in the East Room, as was at first intended. In the hotels the crowds lingered, idly talking, after the streets became cleared.

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The Washington Post, January 19, 1890, p. 9

Mr. Pruden's Little Mistake

The Only One on Record that the Executive Clerk Ever Made

Executive Clerk Pruden, who has acted as assistant to the private secretary of the President for many years, is a model of discretion. He never made but one mistake, so far as The Post knows, and that one so slight and so swiftly repaired as not to be of account.

Mr. Pruden has, among other things, the important duty of copying the President's list of nominations and communicating the same to the Senate. The importunate newspaper man is ever in pursuit of him, but without avail, except upon the day of the mishap in question. Upon that day Mr. Pruden was just entering the Senate Chamber with some important nominations – nominations in a fight of national scope. At the Senate threshold he encounter a correspondent for an Eastern evening paper apparently frantic to get the news in time. Mr. Pruden, conscious that the next two minutes would make the whole matter public property. Told the names and offices to the anxious correspondent. Upon that instant the Senate adjourned from the day, Thursday, to Monday.

Here was a "kettle of fish" for Mr. Pruden, to be sure. Government business, half transacted, advertised by him to the country. He overtook the correspondent and found what he had not observed before, that the representative of the press was, as was the occasion practice of the profession in that old time, indulging in a drink. With the volubility of a tipsy man the lucky correspondent turned, as soon as he was told the nominations, from his thirst for news to his thirst for the bottle, and while scuttling along toward the telegraph office had been diverted into a barroom.

Mr. Pruden's sharp and anxious cross-examination of the correspondent satisfied him that the happy fellow had entirely forgotten the nominations, and such proved the fact. So, while it is often the proud privilege of the press to exploit its professors for their numerous feats in enlightening the world, here is one at least in which the confession is forced, that the news was delayed by the weakness of the Mercury.

The Washington Post, January 31, 1892, p. 12

Seating The Cabinet

Finesse Required to Secure the Proper Precedence

A Labor of Great Mentality

The Subject Treated by Mr. O.L. Pruden as an Exact Science –

Advocacy of a Code of Official Etiquette to Avoid Heartburnings

The order of seating the Cabinet members and their ladies at a Cabinet dinner has been reduced by Mr. O.L. Pruden, assistant private secretary of the President, to almost an exact science. It has taken many years of severe mental labor to accomplish anything like a satisfactory rule that shall meet inexorably all contingencies. The system has been submitted for criticism to some of the finest jurists and formalists of the country. The late Secretary Frelinghuysen has left the impress of his indubitably correct sense of propriety and Heaven's first law upon it. A Cabinet dinner is a dinner at which the President and his wife, the Vice President and his wife, and the heads of the eight great Departments of the Government and their wives dine together. Some of these may be absent for cause, the wife sometimes goes without her husband, and the husband is on occasions unaccompanied by his wife. As

we have no official code, we will not comment upon this point, but all the members of the Cabinet should be included in the invitations for a Cabinet dinner. Other guests may be present besides the members of the Cabinet at a Cabinet dinner, and as the number often exceeds thirty, and even forty guests, there always are other distinguished persons at table, but they have no official precedence until the Cabinet members and their wives are placed. When a Cabinet dinner is eaten at the Executive Mansion it is called a state dinner. . . .

The Evening Star, October 23, 1893

Telephoning in Mr. Pruden's Name

Some excitement was created at the Senate last Tuesday by a telephone message purporting to come from Mr. Pruden, the assistant secretary to the President, and to be addressed to Senator Pepper, stating that the President did not want the nomination of Mr. Glick acted upon the, and requesting Senator Pepper to have it passed over. The message was sent over the telephone located in the business office of The Evening Star. Inquiry soon showed that Mr. Pruden had not sent it, and that it was sent by a man who entered The Star office during a busy time of the day, and going to the telephone which is in a public place, rang up the sergeant-at-arms' office and sent the message in question. It is claimed that the man who sent the message was a Kansas man named Thurston, who was desirous of defeating the Glick nomination. His plans, however, failed.

The Washington Post, February 11, 1897, p. 7

Maj. Pruden's Official Title

Several of the Canton correspondents, in their various allusions to Maj. Pruden, have slipped into the error of alluding to that gentleman as Executive Clerk Pruden. This is a mistake. Maj. Pruden is Assistant Secretary to the President and is so known and designated in all well-ordered directories. Nor is he a Colonel. He is only a Major. In 1861 he marched up Pennsylvania avenue, in front of where The Post Building now stands, with a knapsack on his back, travel-worn and dusty, but chock-a-block full of patriotism and enthusiasm.

The Washington Post, April 11, 1897, p. 18

White House Fixtures

Employees Who Served Under Many Administrations

Faithful Work Is Rewarded

Presidents Come and Go Quadrennially, but Half-a-dozen Tried and True

Attaches Remain at the Executive Mansion Through Succeeding Administrations –

Two of These Have Served a Full Generation, and Others a Score of Years

That this world isn't all a fleeting show is evidence by half a dozen people at the White House. You meet one of them at the big door as you enter, and he is made known to you as Capt. Thomas Pendel, chief doorkeeper. You meet the second in the person of Col. William Dubois, chief usher. If you succeed in getting past their vigilant eyes and take a sneak upstairs you will meet a third person of the military-looking gentleman who stands guard over the Cabinet room door and the door leading into the private part of the President's home. He is Maj. Loeffler. Up in that region you will find Col. Pruden, the White House Sphinx; Col. Crook, the all-around Generalissimo; Mr. Montgomery, through whom all the outside care and worry, the pleasant and the sad and sorry tidings comes to the White House; Mr. Young, and Albert Simmons. And last but not least you will find somewhere about the old mansion, whisking dust from a mirror, tidying up a discorded parlor, arranging plants, or shaking up some unfortunate young

attendant, "Jerry," the general factotum of the whole establishment. Jerry Smith was his full name once upon a time, but "they just calls me Jerry now," he says, with an unctuous laugh that all but shakes the chandeliers.

There are others, but these are the ones who, like Tennyson's brook, go on forever. . . .

Genial Maj. O.L. Pruden is another of the White House appurtenances which the incoming President has found checked over to him for nearly twenty-five years. His office, that of Chief Executive Clerk, comes next to that of the Secretary to the President in importance. Maj. Pruden has been called "the Administration Sphinx" ever since he assumed his duties at the desk. He knows a great many things and knows them very well, but he is one of the birds who can sing, and won't. But oh, what stories he could tell, if he only would. He came to Washington, "a boy in blue," from New Jersey, early in the war, and his splendid penmanship won him immediate recognition in the War Department. His regiment was ordered away, but he was held to be too valuable a penman to spoil his fingers handling a great big gun. In 1872 he was detailed to the White House, and was placed on the official staff by President Grant, and he has been there ever since.

Col. Pruden's duties are manifold, vexing, and perplexing, but he is jolly through it all. He puts into writing the history of every official transaction in the White House. Every nomination made by the President, from a Cabinet Minister to the appointment of a crossroads postmaster – "whose salary is 5 cents a year and furnish your own post-office building" – with the action of the Senate, is recorded by him in handwriting that rivals copper-plate. All the communications between the Executive Mansion and the Departments are entered in his books. He makes the copies of all the President's messages, and personally delivers them to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House.

The history of the documents which he has thus carried would make interesting reading, if he would give the inside facts away. But he won't. Some of those messages have been preceded by stormy Cabinet debates, and not infrequently there has been open revolt in party ranks, which the messages do not relate. Mr. Pruden could. Asked what was the most startling document he had ever carried to Congress, he said that once he carried one from Mr. Arthur, and when he started it, Mr. Frelinghuysen, the Secretary of State, said that it was one of the most momentous that had ever gone to Congress, but he really could not recall what message referred to. He thinks the Chilean message of Mr. Harrison caused as much flurry, perhaps for a short time as anything he ever carried. The two messages on Hawaii, one in the Harrison and the other at the beginning of the Cleveland administration, were thought to be rather exciting he says.

Maj. Pruden is social arbitrator of the administration also. Anybody who thinks that is easy should try it once. If he were not as wise as a serpent in the ways of society and the matter of precedence, he might involve this country in war with "The Powers" in less than no time. A world was counted well lost for a woman's smile in feudal days, but Maj. Pruden values his official position too much to lose it by a bit of feminine vanity. There have been awful stories of a certain legation lady getting incensed to the verge of hysterics and intemperate language, back in Buchanan's time, over the fact that some other legation lady of lesser light had usurped her place in "line," or back in some other President's time, ladies from beyond the seas got their places at the table mixed up, and to sit below the salt was a distinct insult that couldn't be endured, so one of them and her lordly husband packed up their duds and went home.

Such a thing couldn't be imagined under Col. Pruden's management. He sends out all the invitations for the White House functions, and he arranges every seat at the table, and the table for the seats so that no "below the salt" business will ever rise up to haunt him. Once on a time, so it is said, a man who had a great deal of wealth, and wanted to be quite swell, invited a score of people – Supreme Court, Senate, House, diplomats, and one or two from the common herd – to a dinner, not a mile from the Executive Mansion, where he had a fine residence. After bidding his guests, he

called to his aid in seating them at his table an old friend who knew pretty much everything about society. The friend looked over the list of guests, then turning to the would-be host, he said, firmly; "George, the best thing you can do is to go to bed, send for the doctor, and a messenger to recall your invitations."

"But why?" gasped the astonished millionaire.

"Because it would be suicidal to try to seat these people at one table. They would pull hair before the soup was served."

No such contretemps has ever occurred under Col. Pruden.

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The Washington Post, March 9, 1899, p. 2

Maj. Pruden to Be a Paymaster

Maj. O.L. Pruden, the veteran Assistant Secretary at the White House, will, it is said, be appointed to a paymastership in the army under the new army law. Few men possess a more extended acquaintance with public men than Maj. Pruden.

The Evening Star, April 29, 1901, p. 1

Now Major Pruden

Assistant Secretary to the President Commissioned

Made a Paymaster in the United States Army --

Sketch of His Career

The President, before leaving Washington today, signed the commission of Mr. O.L. Pruden, one of his assistant secretaries, to be a major and paymaster in the United States army.

The appointment of Mr. Pruden to this position will give gratification to a great many people in all parts of the country, and will be hailed with delight by citizens of Washington and public men generally. Probably no man holding a minor official position is so well known to public men as Major Pruden. He has been identified with the executive staff of the White House for nearly thirty years, and in that time has come in personal contact with the most prominent men of all parties in Congress and the various administrations.

Major Pruden has been trusted with the secrets of the White House since the days of Grant, and has received the confidence of every President. No one knows better than the newspaper men that Major Pruden has never betrayed the confidence, and yet he possesses the warm friendship of all the correspondents in the corps. He has always "played fair" with those who came for information and never misled an applicant for news.

In recent years Major Pruden has delivered the messages of the Presidents to Congress, and his figure has been a familiar one about the Capitol.

Major Pruden enlisted as a private in the 11th Regiment, New Jersey Volunteers, in August, 1862. He served about two years at brigade and department headquarters, when he was discharged from military service to accept a civil appointment in the office of the judge advocate general of the army. He remained in this office until December 1872, when the resignation of General Horace Porter made a vacancy in the office of the President.

March 4, 1873, the beginning of the second term of President Grant, he was appointed executive clerk to the President, and held this office until the beginning of President Hayes' administration, when he was appointed assistant secretary to the President, which place he has held up to the present time.

The Washington Post, April 30, 1901, p. 6

Mr. Pruden Made Major

The President Signs His Commission Just Before Leaving for the Pacific

President McKinley has appointed Mr. O.L. Pruden, one of the assistant secretaries to the President, to be a major and paymaster in the United States army. The commission was signed yesterday just before the President left the city on his western trip.

Mr. Pruden is one of the best-known public men in Washington. He has been attached to the White House executive staff for the past thirty years. In 1862 Mr. Pruden enlisted in the Union army as a member of the Eleventh New Jersey Volunteers, serving two years, chiefly in clerical capacities at brigade and department headquarters. In 1864 he was discharged from the military service to enable him to accept a civil appointment in the office of the Judge Advocate General of the army, where he remained until 1872, when he was transferred to the White House. In 1873, at the beginning of Grant's second administration, he was appointed executive clerk to the President, serving as such until the beginning of the Hayes administration, when he was made an assistant secretary.

President Grant and all his successors in office imposed implicit confidence in Mr. Pruden, and he has the universal respect of the hundreds of public men who through him have transacted business with the Executive. He is entirely without affectation, always courteous, and loyal to his duties.

The Evening Star, July 3, 1901, p. 2

Maj. Pruden Leaves the Army

The interesting announcement was made at the White House today that Major O.L. Pruden had resigned his position as assistant paymaster in the army and had been reappointed to his old position as assistant secretary to the President. Major Pruden will resume his duties at the White House without delay. His reappointment will be a general surprise.

When Major Pruden was appointed in the army and a vacancy was created at the White House the assistant secretaryship was offered to the late Adelbert Hay, who had accepted the offer. Mr. Hay's untimely death left the position unfilled and there was some pressure for it. As Major Pruden, for personal and business reasons, did not find the army to his liking he was appointed to fill the vacancy that had been made by himself.

Major Pruden's friends are congratulating him on his return to his old post which he filled so creditably for many years.

The Washington Post, July 4, 1901, p. 7

Maj. Pruden Back At White House

Resigns Commission in the Army and Returns to His Old Post

Maj. O.L. Pruden, the former assistant secretary to the President, who was appointed a paymaster in the regular army in May, has resigned his position in the army and has been reappointed to his old position of assistant secretary to the President.

This is the office to which the late Adelbert Hay was to have been appointed. Maj. Pruden has abandoned his career in the army on account of personal and business reasons to assume his former duties at the White House.

The Washington Post, March 27, 1902, p. 3

Place of Maj. Pruden's Son

The President has appointed Howard Pruden, of this city, son of Assistant Secretary to the President O.L. Pruden, superintendent of mail for Porto Rico at San Juan, to succeed Frederick Lesser, jr., who recently was appointed postmaster at Mayaguez, Porto Rico.

The Evening Star, April 8, 1902, p. 1

Maj. Pruden Ill

At Garfield Hospital Suffering From Organic Disease of Heart

Major O.L. Pruden, assistant secretary to the President of the United States, was removed today from his home, 604 Massachusetts avenue, to the Garfield Hospital. Major Pruden is suffering from an organic disease of the heart.

He is in a dangerous condition and it is believed by his friends that he cannot survive very long. He has been in poor health for several months and has steadfastly ignored the fact, and has remained away from his duties at the White House only during the last three or four days. This has greatly aggravated the original trouble.

The Washington Post, April 9, 1902, p. 2

Maj. Pruden Seriously Ill

Assistant Secretary to the President a Patient at Garfield Hospital

Mr. Oscar L. Pruden, assistant secretary to President Roosevelt, is dangerously ill with heart trouble at the Garfield hospital. For several months Major Pruden has been suffering with an affection of the heart and has been subject to fainting spells. Within the last few days he has been confined to his bed, and it was thought advisable to remove him yesterday from his quarters at the Arlington Hotel to Garfield Hospital.

After his removal to the hospital he slept for several hours, and early this morning it was announced that his condition was no worse than when he was taken there. Although the physicians say Maj. Pruden may improve, they fear he will never regain his health.

The Washington Post, April 13, 1902, p. 1

Maj. Pruden Not So Well

A Change for the Worse Took Place in His Condition Yesterday

There was a change for the worse in the condition of Maj. O.L. Pruden, assistant secretary to President Roosevelt, yesterday. During the afternoon he became very restless, and this condition continued into the night. The doctors at Garfield Hospital said that although Maj. Pruden is in a very serious condition, he will probably live some time.

He is suffering with organic heart trouble, which will not yield to treatment.

The Washington Post, April 14, 1902, p. 2

Maj. Pruden's Condition Unchanged

The condition of Maj. O.L. Pruden, who has been ill at Garfield Hospital for some time, was reported last night to be unchanged. He rested quietly throughout the day, and on the whole it was thought by the physicians in attendance that he continues to hold his own. No immediate change is apprehended.

Pruden. On Saturday morning, April 19, 1902 at Garfield Hospital of disease of the heart, Octavius L. Pruden in the 60th year of his age. Funeral service at Trinity Church, Monday April 21 at 3 p.m.

The Evening Star, April 19, 1902

Major Pruden Dead

Was Assistant Secretary to the President

Had Served at the White House for Twenty-Nine Years

Funeral to be Monday

Major Octavius L. Pruden, assistant secretary to the President, and a friend and adviser of many Presidents, all of whom liked and respected him, died at 3:12 o'clock this morning at Garfield Hospital, where he was taken about ten days ago. Death resulted from a complication of troubles, but the gravest was a heart affection. Major Pruden had not been in good health for several years, but declined to go away for a rest, although advised to do so by physicians and friends. He remained at his post at the White House up to about two weeks ago and performed his duties.

When he was taken sick he was rooming at the Arlington, but he was at once removed to the Garfield Hospital, where every care and attention was given him until the end came.

Mr. Chas. M. Hendley, his brother-in-law, came on from New York as soon as he received notice of the death and had the body removed to his house, 1216 L street northwest. Funeral services will be held at Trinity P.E. Church, corner 3d and C streets northwest, Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Rev. R.P. Williams, the rector, officiating.

Widespread Sorrow

The genuine sorrow caused by the death of Major Pruden will be felt outside of Washington. His years of service at the White House had made him thousands of friends away from this city, who remembered him with affection and pleasure. His kindly disposition, conservative manner and open-hearted friendship, not only made him hosts of friends, but endeared him to those who came in contact with him. At the White House this morning there was a feeling of profound sorrow among the staff of men with whom Major Pruden worked. There was a test of the man, and among those who knew him intimately and were acquainted with his whole life there is nothing but regret at his death. "He was a noble, big-hearted fellow, full of kindness, thoughtful and considerate," was the way one of the men spoke of him this morning, and all the others felt the same way. In and out of the building many times a day, passing and repassing his co-workers and comrades, there was always the same genial, gentle thoughtfulness of those around him. If he ever felt bitterness to another it was never expressed, and when he did not speak good of a fellow-man he said nothing. This attitude characterized him in his dealings outside of the White House. In his family and in the circle of friends beyond official life he was found to measure well up to the full requirements of life.

Major Pruden's confidential work at the White House for many years naturally gave to him a retiring disposition during his official hours that followed him to some extent in his private life, but it in no way obscured those characteristics that made and retained friends for him.

His Long and Active Career

Major Octavius Longworth Pruden was born in Dover, N.J., March 29, 1842. From boyhood he was a good penman and this was one reason that led to his selection by President Hayes, in 1877, as assistant secretary in the preparation of nominations, social programs, data, etc. At the outbreak of the civil war Major Pruden enlisted as a private in a New Jersey regiment. He was later given a commission in a colored regiment, but did not care to accept it. He was soon after placed in the judge advocate general's office of the War Department in a clerical position, serving there until 1873, when he was

detailed to the White House as a clerk. President Hayes, as stated, promoted him and assigned him regularly to the White House rolls as executive clerk. He had remained there ever since. He served four years in that capacity and twenty-five years as assistant secretary, and during all that period had taken to the Capitol the papers and messages of the Presidents. His was a familiar figure in the House and Senate. Until last December, Major Pruden had always copied the annual messages of the Presidents for presentation to Congress. His handwriting was so plain and perfect that so long as the custom existed of sending the President's message to the Senate in that form the work was done by Major Pruden. He copied and arranged the messages after they had been written by the Presidents.

Much of the social work of the White House--such as preparing the lists of guests to important functions, seating them at tables in the order of precedence, and such delicate things as this--was done by Major Pruden. Many a great dinner that required the most intimate knowledge of diplomatic etiquette and the precedence of seating at the table was arranged by Major Pruden. The cards at the plates bore the names in his handwriting. He did this for the dinner to Prince Henry given by president Roosevelt, and he did all these things, like everything else, well. Devotion and faithfulness to duty were among the virtues he possessed.

President McKinley appointed Major Pruden a paymaster in the regular army, with the rank of Major, in April of 1901, but because his duties would take him away from Washington, he declined the position and was reappointed to his old position, which he had vacated for only a short time.

Major Pruden's wife, who had been Miss Worrell of this city, died twelve years ago. He is survived by two children, Howard Pruden, his son, was recently appointed superintendent of mails in Porto Rico, and his daughter, Mrs. Eva Stratton, is a resident of this city.

The Washington Post, April 19, 1902, p. 1

Maj. O.L. Pruden Is Dead

Career of Veteran White House Attache Ended at Hospital

President Hayes Appointed Him Assistant Secretary and

He Served All Succeeding Presidents

Maj. O.L. Pruden, Assistant Secretary to the President of the United States, and one of the best-known officials of the Capital, died at 3:12 o'clock this morning at Garfield Hospital, where he had been lying in a serious condition for the past ten days. Mr. Henry Kays, a relative was at the bedside when the end came. A sudden change for the worse took place, and the patient sank rapidly after 2 o'clock.

Maj. Octavius Longworth Pruden was born at Dover, N.H., March 29, 1842. He was educated in the public schools of Dover and lived there until August of 1862, when he enlisted as a private in Company E, of the Eleventh New Jersey Infantry, and came to Alexandria, Va. He did not accompany his regiment to the front, but was made a clerk in the Judge Advocate General's Office. In 1873 he was made an executive clerk by President Grant, and was transferred from the War Department to the White House, where he remained ever since.

President Hayes made Maj. Pruden his Assistant Secretary, and he served in the same capacity during the administrations of Presidents Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, Harrison, McKinley, and Roosevelt. On April 29, 1901, Maj. Pruden was appointed an additional paymaster in the volunteer service, with the rank of major. Later in the year he was appointed a captain and paymaster in the regular army. He resigned this office July 1, 1901, as he preferred to continue his work at the White House.

Maj. Pruden married Miss Worrell, of Washington. For many years he lived in South Washington, and at the time of his wife's death twelve years ago he lived at the corner of Massachusetts avenue and Eighth street. He is survived by a son and daughter. His son, Howard, was recently appointed superintendent of mails in Porto Rico, and left for the island a few weeks ago. His daughter, Mrs. Eva Stratton, is a resident of Washington.

The Washington Post, April 20, 1902, p. 5

Funeral Of Major Pruden

Services Will Be Held at Trinity Church Monday Afternoon

Interment Will Be at the Congressional Cemetery,

Beside the Remains of His Wife and Children

Until this morning there will be no announcement of the names of the pall-bearers at the funeral of Maj. Octavius L. Pruden, late Assistant Secretary to the President. His remains lie in the home of his brother-in-law, Mr. Charles M. Hendley, 1216 L street northwest. A number of the pallbearers asked to officiate are out of the city, and telegrams are expected from them this morning. The funeral services will be held at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon in the Trinity Episcopal Church, at Third and C streets northwest. The rector, R.P. Williams, will officiate. His interment will be made in Congressional Cemetery, beside the remains of his wife and children.

Mr. Pruden will be sadly missed at the White House. Much of the social work at the Executive Mansion, such as preparing the lists of guests for important functions, the table seating, and the order of precedence was attended to for years by Maj. Pruden, with infinite tact and skill. The cards at the White House table upon state occasions bore the names in Maj. Pruden's handwriting, as they did at the dinner recently given to Prince Henry.

Devotion and faithfulness to duty were marked characteristics of the dead man. He was of a somewhat retiring nature, although genial and courteous to all with whom he was brought into contact. Maj. Pruden never forgot during his public career his old home in Dover, N.H., and almost yearly passed his vacation there.

The Evening Star, April 21, 1902

Funeral of O.L. Pruden

Remains Placed at Rest Today in Congressional Cemetery

The funeral services over the remains of Major Octavius L. Pruden, late assistant secretary to the President, were held at 3 o'clock this afternoon in Trinity Episcopal Church, corner of 3d and C streets northwest, Rev. Richard P. Williams, the rector, officiating. The services consisted of the full Episcopal burial rites, and were largely attended. Music was furnished by a quartet from the church choir under the direction of Mr. William A. Kirkpatrick.

The remains were interred in Congressional cemetery, being followed to the burial grounds by the relatives of the deceased and a number of friends. The following were the honorary pallbearers: Mr. J.S. Stoddard, Mr. William H. Crook, Mr. Warren S. Young, Mr. J.D. Franzoni and Mr. J.D. McChesney of Washington and Mr. Anson S.P. Segur of New York. Mr. Crook and Mr. Young were chosen from the White House staff. They had worked side by side with Maj. Pruden for many years.

There were many beautiful floral offerings, including pieces from the White House, one of the most elegant being from attaches of the executive mansion. The President also sent a magnificent wreath. There was a handsome wreath from Secretary and Mrs. Cortelyou, another from Col. Benjamin F. Bingham, floral tributes from Lafayette and Mount Vernon Masonic lodges and many others from private parties. The large piece from the attaches of the White House bore a card containing a photograph of the grounds as they looked when Major Pruden entered on duty at that place 29 years ago.

Mr. Howard M. Pruden, a son of the deceased, is superintendent of the mails at San Juan, Porto Rico, and owing to the unfortunate steamer service he could not reach Washington in time for the funeral.

The Washington Post, April 21, 1902, p. 2

Maj. Pruden's Funeral

Lit of Pallbearers for Late White House Attache Announced

Arrangements for the funeral this afternoon of Maj. Octavius L. Pruden, late assistant secretary to the President, were completed yesterday and the list of pallbearers was announced. They will be as follows: Mr. J.S. Stoddard, Mr. William H. Crook, Mr. Warren S. Young, and Mr. J.D. Franzoni, of Washington; Mr. John L. Smith, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Anson S.P. Segur, of New York. Mr. Crook and Mr. Warren were chosen from the White House staff, and the remaining gentlemen from the personal friends of the deceased officer.

The funeral services will be held at 3 o'clock this afternoon in the Trinity Episcopal Church at Third and C streets northwest. The rector, R.P. Williams, will officiate. The interment will be made at the convenience of the family in Congressional Cemetery, beside the remains of his wife and two children.

The Evening Star, April 30, 1902, p. 1

Major Pruden's Estate

Letters of Administration Issued to His Son

Justice Barnard, in the Probate Court, today ordered that letters of Administration on the estate of the late Major Octavius L. Pruden, who was one of the secretaries to the President, be issued to Howard M. Pruden, son of the deceased.

The court was informed in a petition for the issue of the letters, signed by Howard M. Pruden and his sister, Mrs. Eva E. Strattan, that Major Pruden, who died the 19th instant, did not leave a will. The estate, it is said, consists of personal effects and jewelry and a policy of life insurance for \$10,000. The heirs at law and next of kin are the son and daughter mentioned, they being of full age.

The Evening Star, July 13, 1903, p. 7

White House Posies

Floral Favorites of First Ladies of the Land

Cucumbers for Grant

Gardener Provided Them For Him at Christmas

Mrs. Andrew Johnson Loved Grapes--

Major Pruden a Painter of Exotics

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Maj. Pruden an Artist

The late Major O.L. Pruden, who was one of the assistant secretaries to the President and over whose grave in old Congressional cemetery summer plants in rich profusion bloom today, was an ardent lover of flowers and often lingered in the White House conservatory. Major Pruden was a water color artist of no slight merit and passed many hours in delineating on cardboard and canvas the flowers he loved best.

He had a taste for picturing even the simplest to the most ornate of beautiful blossoms, and excellent "counterfeit presentments" he produced. His fancy ran all the way from the modest golden dandelion to the embellished orchid. Both Mrs. Cleveland and Mrs. Harrison were ardent admirers of

Pruden's handiwork, and to both of these ladies he frequently made presents of finely delineated floral pictures in water color.