

The Long Road to Hanover Neck

By John Deep 3/1/2010

The story of Adoniram Prudden

1727-1778

The Adoniram Prudden House built in 1749 and surrounding forested property is located in The Township of East Hanover. It is located on the north end of Ridgedale Ave. An area once called "Hanover Neck"

The Journey of the Prudden Family

Robert Prudden was born June 27, 1561 in Luton, Bedford, England, and died November 16, 1617. His family had resided in Kings Walden, Hertfordshire, England since 1416. He had 5 children. Two of them, James and Peter left England for the New World in 1637 toward the end of "the Puritan exodus" of which 26,000 people reached New England. The cost was 5 pounds for you and 4 pounds for your belongings. The shortest time to cross the Atlantic was 6 weeks. Most ships during the Great Migration would carry between 50 to 100 passengers. By 1750 there were more than 1,500 transatlantic crossings from England annually to the colonies.

The brothers James and Peter Prudden left for the new world, spring, May 20, 1637. Two ships set sail for the New World on that day. One was the "Hector" the other the "Martin" The Prudden brothers James and Peter were aboard the "Martin", the larger of the two.

James Prudden was Born 1591 in Hertfordshire, England. He left and helped found the Milford Colony in Connecticut. He had 2 acres of land to plant. He died in 1648.

Peter Prudden was born 1601. In addition to being one of the founders of Milford CT he was also a founder of the colony of New Haven CT. He was pastor of the First Church 1639 at Milford, Ct. until his death in 1656. They were a colony of 45 free planters with families totaling about 200 people. The land was purchased from the Paugusset Indians and was originally named Wepawaug. 10 years after Peter's death, his followers of Milford led by Robert Treat left and founded New Ark (Newark) in 1666 as they looked to establish a conservative religious theocracy that had failed in Milford after New Haven and Milford colonies were merged into a more liberal Connecticut colony.

Peter's son John Prudden was born 1645 in Milford, CT. He graduated from the newly established Harvard College in 1668 with his good friend Abraham Pierson Jr who would become the first President of Yale College. John then became the 3rd Minister of Newark Presbyterian Church (The first church) selected by the congregation as a Milford Theocrat following the footsteps of his father Peter and his friends father from Milford, Abraham Pierson Sr who was the retiring Minister. He led The First Church which sat on 200 acres until his death at the age of 80 in 1729. This organization was the last attempt in the United States to establish a theocracy. 11 years after John's death the Reverend Aaron Burr became a Minister of the same first church of Newark. His son Aaron Burr Jr went on to become the Vice President of the United States and eventually dueled with Alexander Hamilton.

John's son Joseph was born in 1692 and would soon depart for his own new world, following the Passaic River with other settlers from Newark to the settlement of Hanover.

The land in the area was for centuries the Lenape Indians, during "the Little Ice age" which started in 1750 for 100 years, Native American corn crops failed and rivers froze, preventing fishing. Snow storms sent game into semi hibernation or made them difficult to find. Due to all the events that happened, Native Americans went to eastern Canada and others went to the Ohio Valley.

At that time, European settlement grew swiftly, settlers of Newark moved to Hanover as there was now land to be farmed and settled. This "100 year little ice age" was the same Cold weather system Washington endured that created 28 winter storms during "the hard winter" of 1779-1780 at Jockey Hollow, Morristown

As the Lenape moved on John's son Joseph Prudden moved in the early 1700's purchasing large tracts of land that stretched from the Whippany River to the Passaic River, one of the first of many families from Newark to move and settle past the great mountain Watchung (Now called the Orange Mountains) to Hanover and a section of the township called Hanover Neck.

Joseph passed away in 1776. A year before his death, at the age of 83, at the outbreak of the Revolutionary war in 1775, he served as a Minute Man to fight for freedom. He is buried at the first Presbyterian Church in Morristown where he was a Deacon and his son Adoniram and the patriot Peter Dickerson were members. He deeded his vast holdings in Hanover Neck to his 9 children of which Adoniram was the 3rd oldest.

Joseph's son Adoniram Prudden was born in 1727. He married Mehetable Guerin in 1752, they had 8 children and resided in the house he built in Hanover Neck. Adoniram joined the local militia, then enlisted in the Revolutionary War as a minute man. A Regiment was formed from New Jersey troops on Feb. 6, 1776, commanded by Colonial Elias Dayton of Elizabethtown (of which the city in Ohio is named after) Elias eventually would have 3 horses shot out from under him and became a confidant of George Washington.

Adoniram was close friends and neighbors with other patriots from Hanover Neck who also joined the cause. Aaron Kitchell (died 1820) a friend of Jefferson and Washington, David Tuttle (died 1810) and Timothy Mulford (died 1811) and many more. Dixons, Ball, Douglass, Osborne, Fairchild, all family names that are the foundation of Morris County. Families whose names intermingle from marriages through the many years and are the founding fathers of Morris County. Entire families fighting for the war of independence.

Adoniram enlisted in the 5th Company from Morristown, NJ. Commanded by Lt. Col. Peter Dickerson. Dickerson paid for all the equipment of this company with his own money and till this day, it is accounted for in Washington DC as an unpaid credit due him. Peter Dickerson was a carpenter by trade. He also operated Dickerson's Tavern on the corner of Spring and Water Streets in Morristown. It was at this tavern that a group of patriots met in the first days of May 1775 and decided to recruit a militia to help defend Morris County. The Regiment left Elizabethtown, NJ. April 29, 1776 for New York. On May 3, they sailed for Albany. They left Albany March 7, 1777, and returned and discharged on March 23 in Morristown, a year later.

Adoniram passed away the following year at the age of 51, Sep. 30, 1778, His wife passed away August 3rd 1811. The Executor of his estate was his friend Aaron Kitchell, A fierce protector of freedom who went on to become a US Congressman and Senator from the state of NJ. Adoniram's land in Hanover Neck was left to his sons Apollos and Elijah. He also had acquired land in Mendham and that was left to Elijah. His daughters Sarah, Ester, Abigail, Mary and Jemima were to receive money from his personal belongings. Adoniram also owned a Sawmill, on the Passaic River (Persiack River) as his property extended encompassed an area on the banks, the proceeds to go to his children. In 1790 his sons also received a bounty warrant as payment for their father's service in the army (a payment for military service contract) of 100 acres of land, to be selected in any of the designated districts the US Treasury had made available as payment to the soldiers of the Revolution.

The Prudden family lived in the house and owned the surrounding land until 1935 when it was sold.