A Finding Aid to the

Meyer L. Prentis Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 628
Biographical Sketch
Meyer Leon Prensky was born in Kovno, Lithuania in July, 1886. His parents brought him to the United States as a child and the family settled in St. Louis, Missouri. On September 16, 1923, Meyer L. Prensky officially changed his last name to Prentis.

Prentis' first job was as an accountant at Laclede Gas Light Company in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1911 he moved to Detroit and joined General Motors as an accountant. He was later promoted to the positions of Auditor (n.d.), Comptroller (1916) and Treasurer (1919), holding the latter position for thirty-two years. He became Director of General Motors of Canada in 1922. In 1929, he was named regent of General Motors Institute and became the director of General Motors Acceptance Corporation in 1949. Prentis retired from General Motors on August 21, 1951.

Prior to his retirement, Prentis became active in Detroit community activities, both in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. In 1928 he was named chairman of the steering committee of the Palestine Emergency Fund. In 1930 he was named chairman of the steering committee of the Allied Jewish Campaign. In 1934 he became honorary vice chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In 1946 he headed a businessman's advisory committee that was instrumental in the establishment of Wayne State's School of Business Administration.

Prentis remained active in community activities after his retirement. His service to the community was recognized in 1965 when the new University Hall on the campus of Wayne State University was renamed in honor of Meyer and Anna Prentis.

Series A. Business and Community Affairs, 1904-1952

Scope and Content Note
Consists of articles and correspondence that describe Prentis' career in business from his early days as an accountant to his later years as treasurer of General Motors. Included are articles and correspondence documenting his involvement with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in the Detroit area.

Box and Folder Listing
Box 1. Folder 2. Volume 2. General Motors, 1939-1952

Series B. Retirement, 1954-1980

Scope and Content Note
Consists of articles and correspondence describing Prentis' philanthropies and activities in the Detroit community from the time of his retirement in 1952 until his death in 1970. Included in this series are obituaries and memorialso written in his honor.

Box and Folder Listing

Series C. Genealogy, 1954-1989

Scope and Content Note
Consists of family group charts, a map, articles and notes describing the history of seven generations of the Prensky/Prentis family.

Box and Folder Listing