



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Meyer L. Prentis Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 628



Collection Summary

Title	Meyer L. Prentis Papers
Dates	1904-1989
Collection Number	MS-628
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Prentis, Meyer Leon, 1886-1970
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch Meyer Leon Prenskey 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. Prenskey 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.

Meyer Prentis married Anna S. Steinberg on June 23, 1914. They had four daughters. Meyer Leon Prentis died in Detroit, Michigan on July 15, 1970.

Scope and Content Papers include correspondence and articles concerning Prentis' association with General Motors, materials and correspondence pertaining to his involvement with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in the Detroit, Michigan, area, and family charts and notes describing seven generations of the Prenskey/Prentis family.

Arrangement This collection is arranged in three (3) series: A. Business and Community Affairs; B. Retirement; C. Genealogy.

Terms of Access The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Meyer L. Prentis Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-628. Meyer L. Prentis Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received from Mr. and Mrs. Lester Morris, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., 1990.

Processing Information Processed by Tammy Topper and Joseph Greer, July 1998.

Index Terms

Subjects	Jewish businesspeople / Jews -- Michigan -- Detroit
Personal Names	Prentis, Meyer Leon, 1886-1970

Corporate Names General Motors Corporation / Prentis family / Pretsky family

Media Family histories / Genealogical tables

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 1. Volume 1. Meyer L. Prentis, 1904-1936

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 memorials written in his honor.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 3. Volume 3. Meyer L. Prentis, 1954-1980

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 Prenskey/Prentis family.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 4. Volume 4. Prentis/Prenskey Family, 1954-1989