

**University of Toronto Archives  
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**A.P. Thornton fonds**

B2014-0033

Daniela Ansovini, June 2018

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## Biographical note

A.P. Thornton (1921- 2004) was former Chair of the Department of History at the University of Toronto and an internationally recognized scholar of imperial and Commonwealth history.

Prof. Thornton was born in Glasgow, Scotland and attended the University of Glasgow where he received his M.A. in 1947. During the Second World War and prior to his graduate work, he served in the British Army as a captain in the East Riding Imperial Yorkshire Yeomanry. Thornton was part of the Normandy landings and the North West Europe Campaign. At Trinity College at Oxford University he worked as a lecturer from 1948 to 1950 and following this, completed his D. Phil (1952) at the university. He went on to teach at the University of Aberdeen (1950 – 1957), and then at the University College of the West Indies he served as Professor and Chairman of History and Dean of Arts (1957-1960). It was during this period that Thornton published the influential text, *The Imperial idea and its enemies: a study in British power* (1959) that explored the impact of changing British attitudes towards the state's imperial interests.

Beginning in 1960, Prof. Thornton began teaching in the Department of History at the University of Toronto. He served as Chairman of the department from 1967 to 1972 and retired from the University in 1987. At various points through his career Thornton accepted visiting positions and fellowships, including as the Smuts Fellow at Cambridge University (1965-1966) and visiting fellow at the Sackler Institute at Tel Aviv University (1987).

Thornton published six books during his career in addition to numerous articles which established him as seminal author in the field. In 1986, a volume of essays were written in his honour and compiled for *Studies in British Imperial History: Essays in honour of A.P. Thornton*. He was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1977. Outside of his academic work, Thornton contributed editorials and reviews to the *Globe and Mail* and also authored various creative works and operettas.

### References:

*Obituary, Archibald Paton Thornton 1921-2004*. Michiel Horn, FRSC (See subject file)

## Scope and content

**Date range:** 1921-2004

**Extent:** 1.56m (# of boxes) of textual records  
0.03m of graphic material  
1 audio cassette  
3 files of oversized textual material

Fonds consists of the professional and personal records of Prof. A.P. Thornton, historian and former Chair of the UofT's Department of History. Records document some of his publishing activity, academic work presenting and teaching, as well as aspects of his personal life including creative writing and family history. While Prof. Thornton's administrative role at the University is not significantly reflected in the records, the material contains documentation of the professor's work with the Presidential Advisory Board in the mid-1980's related to divestment in South Africa. Other records include family photographs, correspondence, and genealogical research.

**Arrangement:** Records in this fonds follow an imposed order as no discernable original order could be identified.

**Access:** Files in Series 5 (References) are restricted for 30 years following. All other files are open.

- Series 5: B2014-0033/004 (01)-(05)

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/001 - /013  
B2014-0033/001P  
B2014-0033/001S

## Series 1: Personal and biographical

**Date range:** 1921-2000

**Extent:** 0.17m (4 boxes) of textual records and graphic material  
1 folder of oversized textual records

### Scope and content:

Series consists of biographical material documenting Prof. Thornton's career and family. Included are personal documents such as birth and marriage certificates, letters of condolence and Prof. Thornton's obituary, as well as his CV and bibliography. Also included is extensive family correspondence that covers genealogical research particularly related to military involvement. Portraits of Prof. Thornton and family, as well

as one image of his honours class at University College of the West Indies are the additional graphic material that make up the series.

**Arrangement:** General files are listed at the beginning of the series, followed by personal correspondence, and finally, photographic material.

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/001- /002

B2014-0033/013

B2014-0033/001P

## **Series 2: Professional correspondence**

**Date range:** 1955-2000

**Extent:** 0.9 (1 box) textual records

### **Scope and content**

Series consists of professional correspondence sent and received by Prof. Thornton. Material includes letters between Prof. Thornton and colleagues, as well publishing correspondence.

**Arrangement:** File are arranged chronologically

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/002(06) – (23)

## **Series 3: Presentations and addresses**

**Date range:** 1977-2000

**Extent:** 0.10m (1 box) of textual records

1 audio cassette

### **Scope and content**

Series consists of documentation of some of the presentations given by Prof. Thornton in both academic and community settings. Series also includes a recording of an address given by Thornton on the topic of war.

**Arrangement:** Files are arranged chronologically.

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/003(01) – (09)

## **Series 4: Teaching**

**Date range:** 1952-1986

**Extent:** 0.09m (2 boxes) of textual records

### **Scope and content**

Series consists of teaching material produced by A.P. Thornton at both the University of Toronto and the University of Aberdeen.

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/003(11)-(13)  
B2014-00033/004

## **Series 5: References**

**Date range:** 1976 – 2000

**Extent:** 0.07m (1 box) of textual records

### **Scope and content**

Series consists of correspondence primarily with colleagues and third parties regarding assessments and recommendations for faculty positions, grants, or fellowship applications.

**Arrangement:** Files are arranged chronologically.

**Access:** Files are restricted for 30 years from the latest date of file activity.

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/004(01) – (05)

## **Series 6: University of Toronto (Divestment)**

**Date range:** 1985 – 1987

**Extent:** 0.04m (4 files) of textual records

### **Scope and content**

Series consist of records related to Prof. Thornton's work with the Uoft's Presidential Advisory Board, specifically related to debates over the University's divestment in South Africa. Records include copy of the report written by A.P. Thornton, meeting notes, press clippings, and background material.

**Arrangement:** File are arranged chronologically. Access:

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/005(01) – (04)

## **Series 7: Research notes and publishing**

**Date range:** 1955 – 2003

**Extent:** 0.94m (8 boxes) of textual records

### **Scope and content**

Series consists records that document a sampling of Prof. Thornton's writing and research spanning from early in his career to 2003. Writing is comprised of predominantly academic articles, book chapters, and reviews on a range of topics including British imperial history, colonial states, power and individual rights. Material include typescripts, drafts, off-prints, and correspondence. Notes also cover similar areas of interest, though many are unidentified and partial.

**Arrangement:** Series includes two sections research notes, followed by publishing. Files in each section are arranged chronologically

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/005(05) - /012(05)

## **Series 8: Scripts**

**Date range:** 1979 - 1983

**Extent:** 0.06m (5 files) of textual records

**Scope and content:** Series consists of three scripts written by Prof. Thornton, two of which are operettas.

**Arrangement:** Files are arranged in chronological order

**Access:** Open

**Boxes:** B2014-0033/012(06) – (10)

## Appendix

### Series 1: Personal and biographical

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/001(01)	Obituary, birth and marriage certificates, letters of condolence [including letter from Ursula Franklin]	1921 – 2004
B2014-0033/001(02)	Typescripts, convocation address for the presentation of Bertie Wilkinson [also includes notes to Nancy]	1969 - [ca. 2000]
B2014-0033/001(03)	Passports	1974 – 1993
B2014-0033/013(01)	Diploma awarded by the Royal Society of Canada	1977
B2014-0033/001(04)	CV and bibliographies	1989 – 1993
B2014-0033/001(05)	Thornton Family genealogical research	1989
B2014-0033/001(06)	University of Toronto Service Award, diploma for Doctor of Military Science and convocation programme, Royal Military Roads College	1989 – 1990
B2014-0033/001(07)	Research report for Sgt. James Thornton of the 77 <sup>th</sup> Foot [grandfather of A.P. Thornton]	1991
B2014-0033/001(08)	Personal correspondence	1952 – 1999
B2014-0033/001(09)	Family correspondence	1984 – 1994
B2014-0033/001(10)	Correspondence [predominantly received from Nancy Thornton, photograph removed see	1986
B2014-0033/001(11)	Correspondence, Janet Thornton [file includes text, "On the periphery...Oxford 1950"]	Mar. 1988
B2014-0033/001(12)	Correspondence	1988-1996
B2014-0033/001(13)	Family correspondence [Joe and George]	1989
B2014-0033/002(01)	Professional and personal correspondence	1991 – 2000
B2014-0033/002(02)	Correspondence	1991 – 2002
B2014-0033/002(03)	Correspondence received from Joe Thornton [?]	[ca. 1994] – 1997
B2014-0033/002(04)	Correspondence	1994 – 1999
B2014-0033/002(05)	Greeting cards	[ca. 2001]
B2014-0033/001P(01)	Family photographs	[194-?] – 2001
B2014-0033/001P(02)	Group snapshot, graduating history honour class, University College of the West Indies	1957
B2014-0033/001P(03)	Family photographs	[196-?] – [198-?]



File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/001P(04)	Portrait, A.P. Thornton	[197-?]
B2014-0033/001P(05)	Portrait, A.P. Thornton [photograph removed from B2014-0033/007(01)]	[199-?]
B2014-0033/001P(06)	Snapshot, A.P. Thornton and dog	[199-?]

### Series 2: Professional correspondence

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/002(06)	Correspondence	1955-2002
B2014-0033/002(07)	Correspondence	1969 – 2002
B2014-0033/002(08)	Professional correspondence	1971 – 1990
B2014-0033/002(09)	Correspondence, Richard Seltzer	15 May 1977
B2014-0033/002(10)	Publishing correspondence	1977 – 1985
B2014-0033/002(11)	Correspondence, re: Hakluyt Society and Moorcroft's "Travels"	1978 – 1979
B2014-0033/002(12)	Correspondence, Alan Walton	1979 – 1980
B2014-0033/002(13)	Correspondence, Thomas J. Pressly re: AHA Session 121, "Imperialism and Role-Models, etc."	1979
B2014-0033/002(14)	Correspondence, James M. Ham re: University Tenure Appeal Committee	26 Aug. 1980
B2014-0033/002(15)	Correspondence, St. Martins Press and typescript, "report by A.P. Thornton on: Robert W. Shenton: Studies in Development of Northern Nigeria"	1982, 1985
B2014-0033/002(16)	Institute of Advanced Studies, Tel Aviv University	1983 – 1986
B2014-0033/002(17)	Correspondence, The International History Review	1985 – 1987
B2014-0033/002(18)	Professional correspondence	1986 – 1989
B2014-0033/002(19)	Correspondence, S.P. Mackenzie	22 Jan. 1988
B2014-0033/002(20)	Correspondence, Michael Howard	19 April 1989
B2014-0033/002(21)	Correspondence re: "The Oxford history of the British empire: Historiography"	1991 – 1998
B2014-0033/002(22)	Correspondence and presentation notes, "Another country"	[ca. 1997]
B2014-0033/002(23)	Correspondence, Keith Jeffery	1999 – 2000

### Series 3: Presentations and addresses

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/003(01)	Presentation notes on Winston Churchill, The Aesculapian Club	1977
B2014-0033/003(02)	Presentation notes [?], "The sound of running history"	[ca. 1980]
B2014-0033/003(03)	Presentation notes, "Scotland, 1789-1982: Problems of a political satellite" Symposium on Romanticism and Revolution	8 Jan. 1983
B2014-0033/003(04)	Presentation notes, "Rights: An anatomy" Symposium on Liberty and Liberation	19 Jan. 1989
B2014-0033/001S	Recorded presentation given by A.P. Thornton. Event introduced as three accounts of war from different generations. Thornton address appears to be academic in nature. [Audio difficult to hear in sections]	[199-?]
B2014-0033/003(05)	Presentation notes and correspondence, 17 <sup>th</sup> Military History Symposium	1990
B2014-0033/003(06)	Presentation notes., "The idea of rights as European export to the extra-European world", David Centre Seminar	25 Oct. 1991
B2014-0033/003(07)	"UC Symposium 15: Culture and ideology in the University: What do you think you are doing?"	1993
B2014-0033/013(02)	Presentation notes, "Balfour and Zionism"	21 Oct. 1998
B2014-0033/003(08)	"The realities of the period: Undertones of war/ dot.com. Symposium: Soldiers, states, and society in the modern world"	13 May 2000
B2014-0033/003(09)	Presentation notes, "History as it seems to have been: The view from beyond"	n.d.

#### Series 4: Teaching

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/003(10)	University of Aberdeen, exam questions various classes	1952-1955
B2014-0033/003(11)	Exam questions and syllabi [file also includes writings, "The Memory Bank" and operetta]	1962 – 1984
B2014-0033/003(12)	Course syllabi and exam questions	1964 – 1987
B2014-0033/003(13)	History 331 [file includes bibliography, offprints and operetta]	1984 – 1985

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/004(01)	HIS 1615 [includes bibliography and notes]	1985
B2014-0033/004(02)	History 232, 1 <sup>st</sup> term	1986
B2014-0033/004(03)	History 232 [includes typescripts, imperial history]	[ca. 1986]
B2014-0033/004(04)	Lecture notes	n.d.
B2014-0033/004(05)	Lectures on South Africa	n.d.

### Series 6: University of Toronto (Divestment)

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/005(01)	Meeting notes, Presidential Advisory Board, social and political aspects of University investments	1985 - 1987
B2014-0033/005(02)	Press clippings, Divestment and anti-apartheid protests, UofT	1987
B2014-0033/005(03)	South Africa, divestment issue	1987
B2014-0033/005(04)	Report to Governing Council, "South Africa: The Divestment Issue. A review of the current policy at the University of Toronto" [files also includes correspondence]	1987

### Series 7: Research notes and publishing

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/005(05)	Notes, Europe 1919-1940	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(06)	Notes [Zionism, Israel and Palestine]	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(07)	Research notes [various topics including English reformation]	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(08)-(09)	Research notes [two files]	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(10)	Notes	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(11)	Notes	n.d.
B2014-0033/005(12)	Notes, Norman conquest and colonization, syllabus for History 100	n.d.
B2014-0033/006(01)	Historiography I, II, III [notebooks and notes]	n.d.
B2014-0033/006(02)	Cue cards [Clarendon, Hobson, Klee, Laqueur]	n.d.
B2014-0033/006(03)	Notes, George Alfred Henty	1985

File number	File title	Date range
<b>Publishing</b>		
B2014-0033/006(04)	Off prints	1955 – 1984
B2014-0033/006(05)	Typescript, "The rights of men"	1960
B2014-0033/006(06)	Off prints	1963 – 1986
B2014-0033/006(07)	Correspondence and annotated publications [corrections?]	1964 – 1988
B2014-0033/006(08)	Typescript, "Doctrines of imperialism"	1965
B2014-0033/006(09 )	Book reviews	1965 – [198-?]
B2014-0033/007(01)	Notes, "The far side of empire. Imperialism in the twentieth century"	[1967?]
B2014-0033/007(02)	Typescript, "A context for the civilized" [review of "The Round Table" / Sir John Seeley]	16 Aug. 1969
B2014-0033/007(03) – (04)	Typescripts, book review and articles [2 files]	1969 – [ca. 1985]
B2014-0033/007(05)	Correspondence , contract and notes, "Far Side of Empire"	1969 - 1976
B2014-0033/007(06)	Typescript, book review of "Experiences" / Arnold Toynbee [Globe and Mail?]	10 Apr. 1969
B2014-0033/007(07)	Typescript, book review "Alexander Dalrymple (1737 – 1808) and the expansion of British trade" / by Howard T. Fry	1970
B2014-0033/007(08)	Typescript, "The imperial context of English history"	1970
B2014-0033/007(09)	Typescript with annotations, "Overseas empires"	1970
B2014-0033/007(10)	Typescript, "The sounds of running history"	1973
B2014-0033/007(11)	Typescript, "Imperialism in the twentieth century"	1973
B2014-0033/007(12)	Typescript, "With Wavell on to Simla and beyond"	1976
B2014-0033/007(13)	Notes, "Transfer of power, Vols. VI – XII"	[ca. 1976]
B2014-0033/007(14)	Typescript, "Imperialism in the twentieth century"	[ca. 1978]
B2014-0033/007(15)	Typescript, "The Memory Bank", published in UofT's The Gargoyle	11 Nov. 1978
B2014-0033/008(01)	Typescripts, book reviews	[ca. 1980]
B2014-0033/008(02)	Typescript, "Derring – do"	1981
B2014-0033/008(03) – (06)	UBC [typescripts] [4 files]	1981
B2014-0033/008(07)	Typescripts, "Riding off in all directions"	6 Apr. 1982

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/008(08)	Typescripts, book reviews	1982
B2014-0033/008(09)	Correspondence and typescript, "Scotland, 1789 – 1982: Problems of a political satellite"	1983
B2014-0033/008(10)	Correspondence and typescript, "Scotland, 1789 – 1982: Problems of a political satellite"	[ca. 1983]
B2014-0033/008(11)	Typescript, "The imperial idea and its enemies: A.P. Thornton: Introductory essay"	1984
B2014-0033/008(12)	Typescript, "The grammar of imperial history" [review]	[ca. 1985]
B2014-0033/008(13)	Correspondence and typescripts, "The transformation of the commonwealth and the 'special relationship'" / A.P. Thornton	1985
B2014-0033/008(14)	"Cycling and recycling" UofT Bulletin	15 Sept. 1986
B2014-0033/008(15)	Typescript, "Cycling and recycling"	July 1986
B2014-0033/009(01)	Notes and typescripts, India and Palestine	[ca. 1986]
B2014-0033/009(02)	Typescripts, including "Third thoughts on empire", "Great power and little wars – limits of power", and "Overseas empires"	[ca. 1988]
B2014-0033/009(03)	Typescript, "His life and our times: Nehru and the colonial world"	5 Mar. 1990
B2014-0033/009(04)	Typescript, "A summer crossing" and "Time and the verdicts of history" [file also includes correspondence and notes]	1992, 1994
B2014-0033/009(05)	Typescript, "Great powers and small wars. The limitations of power"	1992
B2014-0033/009(06)	Typescript, "The traveler's tale"	8 Dec. 1993
B2014-0033/009(07) – (08)	Rights [typescripts and notes including "Rights and European export"] [2 files]	[ca. 1994]
B2014-0033/010(01)	Typescript, "Rights. An anatomy"	[199-?]
B2014-0033/010(02)	Typescript, "Rights – A political anatomy. Views from above and below"	1993
B2014-0033/010(03)	"A summer crossing", Queen's Quarterly 101/3 (Fall 1994)	1994
B2014-0033/010(04)	Correspondence, Robin Winks, Roger Louis, and Aline Lowe [re: "The Oxford history of the British empire: Volume V: Historiography" ?]	1995 -1998
B2014-0033/010(05)	Typescript, "In the city of the heart"	5 Dec. 1996
B2014-0033/010(06)	Typescript, "The shaping of imperial history" in The Oxford History of the British Empire. V: Historiography	1997

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/010(07)	Typescript, "Sport and the imperial mentality"	31 Jan. 1997
B2014-0033/010(08)	Typescript, "Two views form the oasis"	11 Apr. 1997
B2014-0033/010(09)	Typescript, "Balfour and Zionism"	June, Aug. 1998
B2014-0033/010(10)	Typescript, "The past is another country"	1999
B2014-0033/010(11)	Typescript, "The realities of the period undertones of war/dot.com – Soldiers, states and society"	2000
B2014-0033/013(03)	Typescript, "The realities of the period: undertonesofwar/dot.com"	[ca. 2000]
B2014-0033/011(01)	Typescript, "The realities of the period undertones of war/dot.com – Soldiers, states and society"	2002
B2014-0033/011(02)	"The realities of the period: Some further undertones of war"	2002 - 2003
B2014-0033/011(03)	"The realities of the period: War, revisited and revised"	2003
B2014-0033/011(04)	Typescript, "Sir Keith Hancock and the British empire: The Pax Britannica and the Pax Americana"	3 Aug. 2003
B2014-0033/011(05)	'The idea of a university" University College of the West Indies, Jamaica, W.I.	n.d.
B2014-0033/011(06)	Transcript and notes re: WWI, inter-war period and British Commonwealth	n.d.
B2014-0033/011(07)	"Britain and the Middle East" [partial]	n.d.
B2014-0033/011(08)	Notes and typescript	n.d.
B2014-0033/011(09)	Typescripts [Toronto School of Theology?]	n.d.
B2014-0033/012(01)	Typescripts, [American economy, modern economy]	n.d.
B2014-0033/012(02)	Partial annotated typescripts	n.d.
B2014-0033/012(03)	Typescript, "India"	n.d.
B2014-0033/012(04)	Typescript, "Great Britain, Russia, and the Second Afghan War" [not published]	n.d.
B2014-0033/012(05)	Typescripts and notes, "Commonwealth and world organization"	n.d.

### Series 8: Scripts

File number	File title	Date range
B2014-0033/012(06)	"The department: An operetta in three acts"	1979
B2014-0033/012(07)	Script and score, "The department: An operetta in three acts"	1979
B2014-0033/012(08)	Script, "Me-time. An operetta in three acts"	1983
B2014-0033/012(09)	Notes, "Me-time"	[ca. 1983]
B2014-0033/012(10)	Script, "The heart's desire"	n.d.