

# University of Toronto Archives



## Alison Prentice Fonds

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**Alison Prentice Fonds**

**Biographical Note**

Dr. Alison Prentice is a well known and distinguished Canadian historian specializing in the study of the history of education and women's history. She was born in Delaware in 1934 and twenty years after her family immigrated to Canada, she became a Canadian citizen in 1959. Her undergraduate years were spent attending Smith College in Massachusetts where she obtained a B.A. in 1955. She graduated from the University of Toronto with her M.A. in 1958 and after years of periodic study, research and teaching, she graduated with a Ph.D. from the same institution in 1974. From 1972-1975, she held a teaching position at Atkinson College, York University, where she taught the first course in Canada on women's history. In 1975, Prof. Prentice joined the faculty at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Department of History and Philosophy, as the first female tenure-stream member. In 1983, she was appointed Professor. Upon her retirement from the University of Toronto in 1998, she was made Professor Emeritus.

Throughout her lengthy career, she established herself as a pioneer in both the study of the history of education and women's history often combining the two areas of research. She was instrumental in establishing the women's history program at OISE and in 1983 founded the Centre for Women's Studies in Education. Through the Canadian Women's History Project, she initiated the collective endeavour that produced the first university-level textbook in Canadian women's history, *Canadian Women: A History* (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1988 ; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1996). She has authored, co-authored, contributed and/or edited over 30 books and has published over 30 articles and reviews in addition to giving countless lectures, seminars and talks.

Prof. Prentice has received many honours and she has been awarded for her scholarly work. Throughout the years, specific works have received awards including the Founder's Prize for best women's studies article (1986) and again for best anthology on the history of education in Canada (1992), as well as the Hilda Neatby Prize for best article in Canadian women's history (1987). In 1992 her book *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* co-authored with Susan Houston won the Book Prize from the Canadian Association for Foundations in Education. She has received two honorary doctorates, one each from the University of Guelph in 1993 and the University of Western Ontario in 1998. Also in 1998, the year of her retirement from the University of Toronto, the Ontario Historical Society honoured her by creating the Alison Prentice prize for best book in women's history. In that same year, she was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 2013 she was awarded the Order of Canada.

Alison Prentice lives in Victoria, B.C..

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**Alison Prentice Fonds**  
**Scope and Content**

1951-2015

2.5 m

textual ; graphic; sound recordings

This fonds consists of two accessions which together give a fairly complete documentation of Prof. Prentice's career as a scholar, mentor and teacher. Extensive correspondence, memos, e-mails, research notes and manuscripts found in various series document her scholarly contributions. Correspondence with students, letters of recommendation and her leadership on associations and projects document her wide influence among historians. Since she was a pioneer in the teaching of women's history, her teaching files found in Series 9 are important resources in studying women's history as an emerging discipline in higher education.

Perhaps most importantly however, this fonds documents the network of Canadian academics, most of which were women, in the area of women's history, the history of education and women's studies in general. Many of Prof. Prentice projects and publications were collaborative and therefore the fonds documents her relationship with this network of women historians. It is also evident that through these collaborations, Prof. Prentice was not only at the centre of women's studies within her own generation but also influenced the next generation of scholars who have gone on to make their own contributions in history departments and women's studies programs throughout Canadian universities.

Prof Prentice is a pioneer in both teaching and researching women's history. As a result, these records will be of interest to anyone researching the evolution of women's history as a discipline, the teaching of the history of education and women's history as well the role of women in higher education.

**Accessions: B1998-0017, B2009-0010, B2015-0020.**

**Access:** Open except Restricted Access in Series 2 Correspondence and Series 4 Letters of Recommendation. See Series descriptions for detail.

**Terms Governing Use:** Permission from the Donor must be sought for extensive publication.

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**Alison Prentice Fonds**

**Series 1                      Biographical**

1975-2013                      0.08 m                      textual ; graphic

This series gives a good overview of Prof. Prentice's career. It includes biographies, C.V.s, correspondence on appointments, newspaper clippings, honours received and photographs.

B1998-0017/001  
B2009-0010/001  
B2015-0020/001 (01)  
For photographs see B1998-0017/001P

**Series 2                      Correspondence**

1971-2015                      0.75 m                      textual

This series contains mainly professional correspondence covering most of Prof. Prentice's career as a scholar of women's history. Included is correspondence regarding research projects, informal reviews of scholarly works, involvement on committees and attendance at meetings and conferences. The correspondence strongly documents the exchange of information, ideas and sources among colleagues in the developing fields of women's history, the history of education and women studies.

Correspondence is arranged by year with incoming correspondence filed separately from outgoing correspondence. After the chronological files, there are files arranged alphabetically by subject or name. These include correspondence files with many colleagues and past students throughout Canada, Australia and Japan.

**Access:** Restricted. Correspondence in B2009-0010/004 is closed until 2029. All other files are Open

B1998-0017/001                      Incoming and Outgoing, 1971-1982  
B1998-0017/002                      Incoming and Outgoing, 1983-1990  
B1998-0017/003                      Incoming and Outgoing, 1991-1993  
B1998-0017/003                      Correspondence by subject, 1978-1994

B2009-0010/002                      Incoming and Outgoing 1994-1999  
B2009-0010/003                      Incoming and Outgoing 2000-2008  
B2009-0010/004                      Correspondence by name 1982-2004

B2015-0020/001 (02)-(12)                      Incoming and Outgoing 2009-2015

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

### Alison Prentice Fonds

#### Series 3                      Memos

1978-1990                      0.03 m                      textual

This series is one file of memos mainly written by Prof. Prentice dealing with issues within the Department of History and Philosophy at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. Memos document Prentice's views on staffing, research direction, and courses being offered.

B1998-0017/003

#### Series 4                      Letters of Recommendation

1987-1995                      0.07 m                      textual

This series includes both requests received by Prof. Prentice for recommendations for former students and colleagues as well as her responses to these requests.

**Access:** Restricted for 20 years from date of correspondence.

B1998-0017/004

#### Series 5                      Associations and Activism

1969-2008                      0.1 m                      textual

Records documenting Prof. Prentice's participation in professional associations, at scholarly conferences and on committees. Files contain mainly correspondence and memos but can also contain agenda, minutes of meetings, constitutions, and announcements. Arrangement is more or less chronological.

B1998-0017 includes files regarding the establishment of the Ontario Women's History Network and the Canadian History of Education Association in which Prentice played a key role. There are also records documenting her participation the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Bucharest in 1979. There is also an early file documenting her contribution to an NDP Education Policy Committee

B2009-0010 contains a file that gives an outline of her activist activities that she prepared for an article she wrote for *The Canadian Friend* in 2008. There are also files on early political groups (Praxis and Association of Women Electors), the Canadian Historical Association and the Canadian Committee on Women's History.

B1998-0017/005

B20009-0010/005

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

### Alison Prentice Fonds

#### Series 6                      Talks

1974-2005                      0.16 m                      textual

This series includes many of the talks and lectures that Prof. Prentice gave throughout her career. The talks reflect the evolution of Prof. Prentice's research interest from her early interest in the history of education to her contributions to women's history especially in relation to teaching and higher education. Files are arranged chronologically.

B2009-0010/005 - /006

#### Series 7                      Publishing

1968-2008                      0.26 m                      textual

This series documents the publishing activities of Prof. Prentice in terms of book authored, edited, reviewed as well as the publications of papers in scholarly journals. Files contain correspondence, memos, notes, contracts relating to publishing much of the research documented in **Series 8 Research**. There are often drafts of articles or chapters submitted as well.

Some of the main publications documented in B1998-0017 include: *Pioneer and Gentlewomen of British North America* (1980) co-authored with Beth Light; *The Neglected Majority* (1977 Vol 1 and 1985 Vol 2), co-authored with Susan Mann Trofimenkoff; a collaborative textbook called *Canadian Women: A Reader* (1996); "Bluestockings, Feminists or Women Workers? A Preliminary Look at Women's Early Employment at the University of Toronto in the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1991). This accession also contains reviews of many of Prentice's publications as well as reviews that she published on other scholars' works. Finally, filed at the end, is a file containing unpublished articles.

While B2010-0010 contains a second file on *Canadian Women: A Reader* (1996), most of the publications documented are more recent contributions to books and journals. To list a few, they are: a paper on women in physics in *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Professional* (1999) which she co-edited with Elizabeth Smyth, Sandra Acker and Paula Bourne; several contributions on women and education history to *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History* (2001); a paper on faculty wives in the *Historical Identities: The Canadian Professoriate* (2006) by Lisa Panyotidis and Paul Stortz; a chapter on Canada in *A companion to Women's Historical Writing* edited by Mary Spongberg, Barbara Caine and Ann Curthoys (2005). Also included is Prof Prentice's paper written about her own experience as a feminist historian that was included in *Minds of Our Owns: Inventing Feminist Scholarship and Women's Studies in Canada 1965-1976* (2008).

B2015-0020 contained on published work *Michael Katz, 1939-2014: A Tribute* published in the *Historical Studies in Education*.

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

### Alison Prentice Fonds

#### Series 7 (cont'd) Publishing

For files relating to published works, arrangement is chronological. This is followed by reviews and unpublished works.

B1999-0017/006

B2009-0010/007

B2015-0020/001 (13)

#### Series 8 Research

1979 – 2005	0.52 m	textual; sound recordings
	15 cassettes	

This series contains a diverse set of records documenting many of the main research projects under taken by Prof. Prentice. Many resulted in publications of books and this series therefore relates to records found in **Series 7 Publishing**. Projects documented include:

- 1) the history of teachers, especially women in teaching – research was done for a book that was being prepared with Marta Danylewycz on teachers in Quebec, before her untimely death in 1985
- 2) women in physics including some oral histories in the form of written notes
- 3) studies on the status of women in the historical profession – prepared for a session organized for a Canadian Historical Association conference in 1990
- 4) research on women historians including taped interviews and correspondence on her co-edited book *Creating Historical Memory*
- 5) research undertaken as part of the Women and Professional Education Network that resulted in the co-edited book *Challenging Professions*. Also includes records relating to

There are also several other smaller research interests documented including research on faculty wives, women on University of Toronto campus, the feminization of teaching maps, as well as a file on the McQueen project undertaken with Margaret Conrad of the University of New Brunswick. Also included are oral histories transcripts and tapes for interviews with Elizabeth Allin, Charity Grant, Jean Burnet, and Bertha Houston. There are also several other interviews contained only on tape including Canadian women scholars Ursula Franklin, Margaret Prang, Debby Gorham as well as several of Prof. Prentice' graduate students, Australian educational historians and former faculty wives.

Files contain extensive correspondence and e-mail mainly among the research partners who were among the first generation of historians to focus on women's history. The correspondence gives a solid portrayal of the collaborative nature of this research. Also included are research notes and collected essays, drafts of papers and chapters, oral history tapes and transcripts, grant applications and at times correspondence relating to publishing.



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**Alison Prentice Fonds**

**Series 8 (con't)**

**Research**

- 2009-0010/008 History of Teachers, 1980-88; Women in Physics 2000-2005  
B2009-0010/009 Women in the historical profession 1976 - 1980,  
Women historians, 1994-2001  
B2009-0010/010 Women and Professional Education Network, 1995-2004  
B2009-0010/011 Miscellaneous 1972-2002  
B2009-0010/001S Oral History Tapes 1979-2001  
B2015-0020/001 (14) – (15) Diary, articles, correspondence and photos belonging to  
Marta Danylewycz,

For photos see, B2015-0020/001P

**Series 9**

**Teaching**

1973-1996 0.16 m textual

The bulk of this series is contained in accession B1998-0017 and includes lectures, notes, outlines and reading lists for courses taught by Prof. Prentice at OISE, mainly: 1421 History of Women and Education I and 3421 The History of Women and Education II; 1422 [History of the Family?]; 1411 Education and Social Change : The American Experience; 1426 Women in Education in Canada. Also included is a copy of the course description for first course on Women's history taught by Prof. Prentice at Atkinson College in 1973-74 entitled Women, The Family and Education in Canada.

B2009-0010 contains only one file on teaching documenting a 1996 OISE/UT course, the History of Women and Higher Education in Canada, that Prof. Prentice co-taught on-line with colleague Elizabeth Smyth.

Arrangement is by course number.

B1998-0017/007-/008  
B2009-0010/006

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**Alison Prentice Fonds**

**Series 10                      Student Days**

1951-1973                      0.17 m                      textual

This series documents Alison Prentice's days as a student at Smith College (B.A. 1955), while attending the Ontario College of Education ca. 1958 and during her Ph.D. studies in history at the University of Toronto.

B1999-0017 includes essays and papers written while a student at Smith College as well as field essays written as part of her Ph.D. comprehensive examinations at the University of Toronto. These are arranged chronologically.

B2009-0010 contains her correspondence home to her parents while a student at Smith College and during one year at the University of Geneva (1951-1955)

B1998-0017/008

B2009-0010/012