

**University of Toronto Archives and  
Records Management Services**



**Harold I. Nelson  
Fonds**

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March 2009  
Revised August 2014**

# University of Toronto Archives

## Harold I. Nelson Fonds

### Table of Content

Biographical Note .....	1
Scope and Content .....	2
Series 1 Professional Correspondence.....	3
Series 2 Letters of reference and recommendations .....	4
Series 3 Journals .....	4
Series 4 Books .....	5
Series 5 Talks, Addresses and Reviews.....	5
Series 6 Research Notes.....	6
Series 7 Lecture Notes .....	6
Series 8 Course Files .....	6
Sub Series 8.1 Marks and Comments on Student Work.....	7
Series 9 University of Toronto Administration .....	7
Series 10 Associations and Committees .....	8
Series 11 Canadian Institute of International Affairs .....	9
Series 12 Department of External Affairs.....	9
Series 13 Education .....	9

## University of Toronto Archives

### Harold I. Nelson Fonds

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Harold I. Nelson was born in 1919 in Brantford Ontario. After graduating with a B.A. in Modern History from the University of Toronto in 1941, he attended Cornell University where he obtained his Masters in 1942. Upon graduating, he briefly worked for Massey-Harris before taking up a position with the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa, where he worked from 1943-1945. From 1945-47, he was Public Education Secretary of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (C.I.I.A.) and then went off to pursue his doctoral studies in International Relations and Law at Columbia University from which he graduated with a Ph.D. in 1959. Throughout this decade, his association with the C.I.I.A. continued. He was editor of its main publication, *International Journal* from 1952-1959.

Prof. Nelson's career at the University of Toronto started in 1949 when he was hired as a lecturer in the Department of History. He rose through the ranks to full professor by 1964. After his retirement in 1984, he continued to teach and research into the 1990s. Throughout his career, he sat on various committees and consultative boards especially in the Department of History. His most important administrative position was that of Chair of the International Studies Program (I.S.P.) from 1971-1976. Prior to this appointment, he was chair of the International Relations Committee of I.S.P.

Prof. Nelson taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in Modern European history. His specialty was modern international history with a focus on peacemaking, conflict and cooperation in reference to the First World War and Anglo Russian Relations. His only book, *Land and Power: British and Allied Policy on Germany's Frontiers, 1916-1919*, published in 1963 won the American Historical Society's George Lewis Beer Prize. Prof. Nelson received a Nuffield Fellowship in 1956-60 in order to do research on the book.

Upon his retirement in 1984, he was appointed Professor Emeritus. For the next decade, he continued to teach and do research. Throughout most of the 1990s to 2004, he worked on a second book relating to the trial of a British women charged and found guilty of sedition in Russia in 1912. This book was never completed. Prof. Harold Nelson died on March 12 2007 at the age of 87.

University of Toronto Archives

Harold I. Nelson Fonds

SCOPE AND CONTENT

1938-2004

4.82 m.

textual

This fonds documents Prof. Nelson's career as a historian, teacher and scholar. While he was not a prolific writer, records in this fond indicate he was a detailed and meticulous researcher who sought to integrate his research into his course teachings. **Series 3 Journals, Series 6 Research Notes and Series 7 Lecture Notes**, give evidence to this amalgamation between research and classroom. As well, much of his correspondence found in **Series 1 Professional Correspondence**, and **Series 2 Letters of Reference and Recommendations** document his relationship with students both while he was their professor and later as these students graduated and applied for employment positions, grants, and/or admission to graduate school. Moreover, the extensive comments and evaluations of student work, documented again in **Series 2 Letters of Reference and Recommendations** as well as in **Sub-Series 8.1 Marks and Comments on Student Work**, show the care he took in evaluating and imparting his knowledge to students. The fact that many of his administrative positions and roles on committees tended to focus on curriculum and student experience, indicates how important Prof. Nelson considered his role as educator. These are documented in **Series 9 University of Toronto Administration** and **Series 10 Associations and Committees**.

It is important to note the records that were not kept as a result of processing this fonds. Research notes on both primary and secondary sources were only kept when the notes themselves showed some analysis of content. Since most of Prof. Nelson's research was done before computers and much of it before photocopiers were widely available, most of his research notes were transcriptions or summarized notes from sources. These were often typed up as well and/or written onto index cards and organized into topic. Most of these types of research notes were culled from the fonds.

Records that relate to his role as editor of the *International Journal* were not found among his papers and so are absent from this fonds. Removed from this fonds were his files as Chair of the International Studies Program. These were accessioned as University Records see - A2009-0006.

Related Accession: A1987-0034 Centre for International Studies  
A2009-0006 International Studies Programme

Access: Restricted:

All Series Open, - Except Series 2 and Sub-Series 8-1 are restricted. See series descriptions for details.

# University of Toronto Archives

## Harold I. Nelson Fonds

### **SERIES 1      PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE**

1940-2004      0.39 m

This series contains several different groups of incoming and outgoing correspondence. Half of the correspondence has been filed alphabetically by letter. For example, correspondence relating to the Canadian Historical Association is filed under “C”, while correspondence documenting visiting Argentinean Political Scientist José Nun is filed under “N”. This alphabetical correspondence documents everything from his relationships with colleagues and students at the University of Toronto, to invitations to speak, to advice on research topics and innumerable other activities and interests. The correspondence dates mainly from the mid 1960s to the early 1980s.

A second run of correspondence is filed chronologically. Most of his early correspondence prior to 1960 can be found in two files dating from the 1940s. Some files were marked “Personal Correspondence” but this is mainly interpreted to be professional correspondence related directly to Prof. Nelson’s appointments, assessments of his own work, pursuit of research grants, remuneration, etc.. These chronological files do not only contain correspondence but often have attached documents related to the correspondence. For example, correspondence relating to curriculum may have an annotated report attached or correspondence regarding attendance at a conference may have notes or program attached.

Finally, there are a few files with specific subject headings. Most deal with administrative matters relating to his research such as correspondence with research institutions and with the Nuffield Foundation. Of note is one file containing correspondence written by Prof. Nelson in 1966 commenting on changes in curriculum in the department of history and returned to him with reflections on that period in 1989. For further documentation on curriculum changes in the Department of History, see Series 9.

B2007-0023/001	Alphabetical series A-Q
B2007-0023/002 (01)-(05)	Alphabetical series R – Z
B2007-0023/002 (06)-(08)	Series by year – 1940s – 1976
B2007-0023/003 (01)-(09)	Series by year – 1970-2004
B2007-0023/003 (10)-(21)	Series by subject

## University of Toronto Archives

### Harold I. Nelson Fonds

#### **SERIES 2      LETTERS OF REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

195- - 2000                      1.3 m

This series consists of correspondence files that Prof. Nelson kept with many of his students, both graduate and undergraduates students, as well as some with colleagues. The bulk of the correspondence is made up of requests for references and the resulting response to the requestor and to third parties. Many files contain notes on the evaluation of the student's work or advice on research relating to their thesis. On occasion, student works are found in the files as well as works from other historians requesting comments or advice. It is clear from the extent of this type of correspondence that Prof. Nelson fostered life long relationships with some of his students that continued to request his help and direction long after they left the University of Toronto. Files are alphabetically arranged by surname.

Access: Restricted for 75 years from the latest date of file activity.

<u>Accession/Box</u>	<u>Alpha Files</u>	<u>Accession/ Box</u>	<u>Alpha Files</u>
B2007-0023/026	A – C	B2007-0023/032	P - R
B2007-0023/027	C – E	B2007-0023/033	R - S
B2007-0023/028	F – I	B2007-0023/034	S - T
B2007-0023/029	J – L	B2007-0023/035	U - Z
B2007-0023/030	M		
B2007-0023/031	M – O		

#### **SERIES 3      JOURNALS**

1941-1992      0.26 m

These “journals” as Prof. Nelson referred to them, were kept at different periods and for different reasons. There is a commentary on Canadian politics in 1961 and a journal kept during his trip to Russia in 1967. The majority of the journals however are made up of a collection of commentaries, reports, correspondence, draft notes amassed into a binder documenting his professional activities. There are three that cover the dates from 1941-1990. There is a fourth that mainly documents the time period from 1970-1976 including his time as chair as the International Studies Programme. Filed after these activity journals are four others that mainly document his research including his 1983 sabbatical.

While not a complete documentation, these journals give a good overview of Prof . Nelson's activities over a 40 year period.

B2007-0023/004 - /005

## University of Toronto Archives

### Harold I. Nelson Fonds

#### **SERIES 4 BOOKS**

1956-2004 0.46m

This series consists of two sets of files. The first set relates to Prof. Nelson's only published book *Land and Power: Britain and Allied Policy on Germany's Frontiers 1916-1919* (University of Toronto Press and Routledge, Keagan Paul, London, 1963). Included is a full typescript with revisions, as well as some earlier drafts. Some drafts are also interfiled with notes found in **Series 6 Research Notes**. This series also contains some correspondence with the publishers and a signed publication agreement. There is additional correspondence relating to permissions for use of materials. Finally there is a file of collected reviews of the book and informal comments. In 1963, this book shared the George Lewis Beer Prize given by the American Historical Society for 'outstanding work in the field of European international history since 1895'.

A second set of files relates to research Prof. Nelson undertook late in his career. It was a book on the trial and conviction of a British citizen, Miss Malecka, in 1912 in Russia on a charge of sedition. While one file of notes is dated 1983, records generally indicate that Prof. Nelson began researching the case in earnest in the early 1990s. He was studying it in reference to the question of 'nationality' and what it could reveal about Anglo Russian relations prior to WWI. Entitled simply *Malecka Case*, typescripts begin in 1993 and go through various drafts up to 2004. There is no evidence in the records that Prof. Nelson had sought out a publisher and it is clear the book was never published. These drafts, revisions, outlines and notes have been arranged chronologically.

B2007-0023/006 *Land and Power*

B2007-0023/011 - /013 *Malecka Case*

#### **SERIES 5 TALKS, ADDRESSES AND REVIEWS**

194-1962, 198- 0.07 m

This small series includes writings, talks and some reviews that Prof Nelson did mainly in his early career. Most of the articles and talks in the 1940s relate to his positions, first with the foreign service and secondly as public education officer with the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. There are a few copies of reviews he did of books, all dated before 1962. Finally there are two talks he gave about colleagues at their retirement in the 1980s.

B2007-0023/007

## University of Toronto Archives

### Harold I. Nelson Fonds

#### **SERIES 6      RESEARCH NOTES**

195- - 197-                      0.39 m

Research notes on various topics are arranged alphabetically. While Prof Nelson, kept copious amounts of detailed notes on the sources that he consulted, preserved here are only the notes that document some analysis of content. Sometimes analysis is in the form of drafts that either served as draft lectures or, in the case of materials on Anglo Russian Relations, drafts of his early writing for his book *Land and Power*. Other times, it is in the form of outlines, essays or summaries.

By far, the most extensive notes are those on Anglo Russian Relations and these directly relate to his book *Land and Power*. They have been filed at the front of the series and alphabetically arranged by their sub-topic (ie. Central Asia, Eastern question, Economics...) Filed after the Anglo Russian files are general themes on European history including such topics as Bismarck, Crimean War, French Revolution, International Relations, Peacemaking, Russian Trade and the World Wars.

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B2007-0023/008 - /010

#### **SERIES 7      LECTURE NOTES**

ca. 1960 -1990                      0.32 m

Lecture notes are filed by topic and were most likely used for various courses. They are similar to those notes found in **Series 6, Research Notes** and it may have been the case that Prof. Nelson took notes for the purpose of research and then reworked the notes into lectures. The broader topics include the World Wars, European history, Anglo Russian relations, international organizations, international relations, peace and peacemaking.

B2007-0023/014 - /015 and /016 (01)-(06)

#### **SERIES 8      COURSE FILES**

1955-1989      0.2 m

This series documents the courses taught by Prof. Nelson in the Department of History. Documents include course outlines, seminar topics, essay topics, exam questions, lecture schedules and reading lists. Less common are statistics on course attendance, discussions on curriculum and course development.



University of Toronto Archives

Harold I. Nelson Fonds

**SERIES 8 (CONT'D)**

The main courses that Prof. Nelson taught were:

Hist 1620 The First World War: Origins, Course, Consequence

Hist 344 International Relations

Hist 443 Peacemakers and Peacemaking: The Quest for Peace 1814, 1919, 1945.

Arrangement is by course number.

B2007-0023/016 (07)-(17) and /017

**SUB SERIES 8.1 MARKS AND COMMENTS ON STUDENT WORK**

1968-1990 0.26 m

Related and often severed from the course files described above, this sub-series includes evaluations of students filed by course. These files often include the student's full name and marks as well as detailed comments or criticisms of the work submitted. It can also contain correspondence with students, usually about their course work.

Access: Restricted – Consult University Archivist

B2007-0024/018 and /019

**SERIES 9 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ADMINISTRATION**

1945 – 1984 0.59 m

This series documents Prof. Nelson's role in various administrative committees within the University of Toronto as well as his active involvement as a faculty member in the Department of History. Correspondence, notes, papers, memos, statistics and minutes relate mainly to curriculum in Department of History. Especially significant is a file documenting the curriculum debate in 1966 that led to the dissolution of the honours course, a change that Prof. Nelson opposed.

Other committees, on which Prof. Nelson played some role, include: the Social Science Committee of a Joint University Board Committee (1960-1961), the curriculum committee of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies (1963), Library Council (1963-64), the Faculty of Art's Committee to Study Elsewhere (1971-1981), and the Centre for International Studies (CIS) (1975-1984). Files contain reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence and notes. In the case of the CIS most files relate to conferences and colloquia organized by the Centre.

## University of Toronto Archives

### Harold I. Nelson Fonds

#### **SERIES 9 (CONT'D)**

Two important administrative positions not documented in this fonds, are Prof. Nelson's positions in the International Studies Program (ISP), first as Chair of the International Relations Committee (1967-1971) and finally as Chair of ISP from 1971-1976. These records can be found in records of the International Studies Program A2009-0006. However, there is a journal found in **Series 7 Journals**, that contains records that document his role at Chair of ISP.

B2007-0023/020 and B2014-0014/001 - Department of History

B2007-0023/021 - various committees

B2007-0023/022 and B2014-0014/002 - Centre for International Studies

#### **SERIES 10 ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMITTEES**

1939-1975 0.13 m

This series consists of files for committee and clubs in which Prof. Nelson was an active member. Files relating to his days as a student show his involvement in the Modern History Club (1938) and the Historical Club (1939-40) at the University of Toronto. In the latter club, he held the position of secretary then president. From those early years, there is also a file documenting his work in the Eglinton Jr. Conservative Club (1939-1943). Files contain memorabilia, notes, minutes, membership lists and correspondence.

Later in his career, there are more professional types committees outside of the framework of the University of Toronto including the Atlantic Treaty Organization (1960-1964), a provincial body called the Ontario Curriculum Institute (1962-1964), as well as the Canada Council Academic Advisory Panel (1975). For all of these later committees, files contain original correspondence, agenda and minutes as well as reports and notes.

B2007-0023/023

University of Toronto Archives

Harold I. Nelson Fonds

**SERIES 11 CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

1945-1956 0.24m

This series documents Prof. Harold's involvement in the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, first as Public Education Officer (1945-1947) and later in various other positions. It does not however include his files as editor of its main publication, *International Journal*. Included is correspondence, reports, minutes, financial statements and publications. There is a copy of the pamphlet "Soviet Policy Abroad", which Harold Nelson wrote for the CIIA in 1947 as well as files documenting conferences he helped organize in 1951 and 1956.

B2007-0023/024 (01) – (12)  
B2014-0014/003

**SERIES 12 DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

1943-1945 0.02 m

From 1943-1945, Harold Nelson worked as a unit historian for the Department of External Affairs. This series of a few files, consists of his reports in 1943 and 1944 as well as some secret documents he saved as part of his job. Most of these are messages from Germany, France and Japan decoded and most likely sent to Nelson as Examination Unit Historian.

B2007-0023/024 (13 )-(14 )

**SERIES 13 EDUCATION**

1938-1960 0.13 m

This series mainly documents Prof. Nelson's graduate work. Included is a typescript of his M.A. Thesis (Cornell 1949) *British Dominions at the Paris Peace Conference 1919*. In addition to a copy of his Ph.D. Thesis (1959 Columbia University) *Britain and Germany's Frontiers: A Study of Official British Attitudes and Policies, 1916-1919*, there are also notes on revisions and related correspondence. One file of his undergraduate notes were retained since they seem to be notes taken for an Economics course taught by Harold Innis in 1938-39. Also preserved is a file of memorabilia collected as an undergraduate in history and a notice circulated on campus during the Underhill controversy.

B2007-0023/025