

Arthur J. Morris Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2000

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Collection Summary

Title: Arthur J. Morris Papers

Span Dates: 1888-1976

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1914-1960)

ID No.: MSS75924

Creator: Morris, Arthur J., 1881-1973

Extent: 5,800 items

Extent: 20 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 8.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81075924>

Summary: Lawyer and banker. Correspondence, writings, scrapbooks, reports, photographs, and printed matter relating to Morris's career as a banker and his development of consumer credit in the American banking industry.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Morris, Arthur J., 1881-1973.

Organizations

Financial General Corporation.

Industrial Acceptance Corporation.

Industrial Finance Corporation.

Morris Plan Corporation of America.

Morris Plan Insurance Society.

University of Virginia--Students.

Subjects

Banks and banking--United States.

Consumer credit--United States.

Credit--United States.

Universities and colleges--Virginia--Charlottesville.

Occupations

Bankers.

Lawyers.

Provenance

The papers of Arthur J. Morris, lawyer and banker, were given to the Library of Congress by his daughter, Virginia Kincaid, from 1978 to 1983.

Processing History

The papers of Arthur J. Morris were processed in 1980. Additional material was processed in 1989. The collection was revised and a new finding aid produced in 2000.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Arthur J. Morris Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Arthur J. Morris is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Arthur J. Morris are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Arthur J. Morris Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1881, Aug. 5	Born, Tarboro, N.C.
1899	B.A., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.
1901	LL.B., University of Virginia Law School, Charlottesville, Va. Began law practice, Norfolk, Va.
1905	Married Bertha Myers (died 1960)
1910	First Morris Plan Bank, Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., Norfolk, Va.
1912	Fidelity Corp. of America established
1914	Morris, Garnett and Cotten open office in New York, N.Y. Industrial Finance Corp. established "Morris Plan" name registered and copyrighted
1917	Morris Plan Insurance Society established
1918	Contract with Studebaker Corp. to finance wholesale and retail sales Industrial Acceptance Corp. established
1921	Trip to Europe to expand banking interest
1925	Morris Plan Corp. of America established
1927	Industrial Acceptance Corp. diversifies
1933	Morris Plan banks eligible for membership in Federal Reserve System
1934	Morris Plan banks granted membership in Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.
1950	Morris Plan Insurance Society becomes Banker's Security Life Insurance Society
1973, Nov. 19	Died, Ossining, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Arthur Joseph Morris (1881-1973) extend from 1888 to 1976 with the bulk of the collection concentrated in the period 1914-1960 and document his involvement in the development of consumer credit in the American banking industry. Morris's concept of "democratization of credit" saw fruition in the initiation of the Morris Plan and the subsequent establishment of Morris Plan banks throughout the United States. The issuance of personal liens secured by an applicant's character and earning power formed the basis of Morris's business. The collection contains [Correspondence](#), [Subject File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Addition](#), and an [Oversize](#) series.

The [Correspondence](#) series consists of family and general correspondence. The bulk of the family correspondence contains letters related to the illness of Morris's wife Bertha in 1958 and her death in 1960. Morris's letters to his daughter, Virginia Kincaid, pertain to both family and business matters. The general correspondence includes letters on a variety of topics.

The [Subject File](#), which constitutes the bulk of the collection, contains correspondence, financial statements, operation manuals, and assorted printed matter concerning Morris's institutional affiliations. The Morris financial empire included the Financial General Corporation, the Industrial Acceptance Corporation, the Industrial Finance Corporation, the Morris Plan, Morris Plan banks, the Morris Plan Corporation of America, and the Morris Plan Insurance Society. There are files on individuals closely associated with Morris and his business ventures and his career as a lawyer with the firms Morris, Garnett and Cotten and Hicks, Morris, Garnett and Tunstall from 1914 to 1917.

The [Miscellany](#) series contains newspaper clippings, printed matter, speeches and writings, and other material concerning institutions, such as the Morris Plan banks, Industrial Finance Corporation, and Financial General Corporation, as well as individuals associated with Morris. The series also contains Morris's notes as a law school student at the University of Virginia at the turn of the twentieth century and a transcript of an oral history interview transcript related to the fiftieth anniversary of the Morris Plan.

The [Addition](#) contains correspondence, printed matter, writings, and miscellaneous material concerning the banking industry, the Morris Plan, and legislation to break up the Financial General Corporation in 1965.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Correspondence, 1902-1973](#)
- [Subject File, 1902-1974](#)
- [Miscellany, 1888-1976](#)
- [Addition, 1899-1975](#)
- [Oversize, 1893-1970](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-2	<p><u>Correspondence, 1902-1973</u></p> <p>Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.</p>
BOX 3-11	<p><u>Subject File, 1902-1974</u></p> <p>Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically.</p>
BOX 11-17	<p><u>Miscellany, 1888-1976</u></p> <p>Clippings, printed matter, transcript of oral history interview, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and thereunder chronologically.</p>
BOX 18-20	<p><u>Addition, 1899-1975</u></p> <p>Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize, 1893-1970</u></p> <p>Awards, material concerning the Morris Plan Corp. of America and Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., photographs, and printed matter. Arranged and described according to series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2	Correspondence, 1902-1973 Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 1	Family 1913-1973, undated (2 folders) Condolences on death of Bertha Morris (wife), 1960 (3 folders)
BOX 2	Get well letters and cards, 1958 (2 folders) General, 1899-1971, undated (4 folders)
BOX 3-11	Subject File, 1902-1974 Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 3	American Bankers Association, 1932-1960, undated American Institute of Banking, 1922 Belco General Corp., 1955 Boushall, Thomas C., 1922-1960 Bradford Speed Packing and Development Corp., 1964-1965 Chesapeake Shares Corp., 1964 Consumer Banking, fiftieth anniversary, 1959-1960 (3 folders) Empire Shares Corp., 1964 Equitable Credit Corp., 1926 Fidelity Corp. of America, 1912-1914 Fidelity Mutual Savings and Trust Co., Atlanta, Ga., 1910, undated Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., 1910, 1914 <i>See also Oversize</i> Financial General Bankshares, 1970-1972 Financial General Corp. 1958, Dec.-1960, July 1960, Aug.-1967, May (6 folders)
BOX 4	1968, Jan.-1970, Apr., undated
BOX 5	General Contract Purchase Corp., 1929 General Motors Acceptance Corp., 1925-1927 Herndon Shares Corp., 1964 Hicks, Morris, Garnett and Tunstall, 1914-1916 Illinois Shares Corp., 1964

Subject File, 1902-1974

Container

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	Industrial Acceptance Corp., 1921-1968, undated (3 folders)
	Industrial Finance Corp. 1913-1923 (3 folders)
BOX 6	1924-1943, undated
	International Bank, 1963-1970, undated
	Investors Financial Corp., 1964
	Lexington Shares, Inc., 1964
	MacArthur Co., undated
	Morris, Arthur J., 1902-1973, undated (2 folders)
	Morris, Garnett and Cotten, 1912-1917
	Morris Plan 1911-1922 (2 folders)
BOX 7	1925-1944, undated (2 folders)
	Morris Plan Bankers Association, 1922-1946, undated (2 folders)
	<i>Morris Plan Bulletin</i> , 1915-1917 (3 vols.)
BOX 8	Morris Plan Corp. of America, 1925-1967 <i>See also Oversize</i>
	Morris Plan Co. Atlanta, Ga., 1912, 1932 Baltimore, Md. undated Boston, Mass., 1918-1934, undated Brockton, Mass., 1919 Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1959-1966 Chicago, Ill., 1917-1919, undated Cleveland, Ohio, 1915-1945, undated Dallas, Tex., 1918-1940, undated Denver, Colo., 1920 Detroit, Mich., 1917-1943, undated Homestead, Ill., 1913-1915 Indianapolis, Ind., 1926 Jacksonville, Fla., 1917 Kansas City, Mo., 1915 Knoxville, Tenn., 1941 Los Angeles, Calif., 1918-1920 Nashville, Tenn., 1914 New Haven, Conn., 1914-1918 New Jersey, 1914-1929 New Orleans, La., 1918 New York, N.Y. 1915-1939 (2 folders)

Subject File, 1902-1974

Container

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BOX 9	1940-1973, undated (3 folders) Oakland, Calif., 1934-1935, undated Oklahoma, 1931 Omaha, Neb., 1916 Philadelphia, Pa., 1913-1930, undated Rhode Island, 1915-1916 San Francisco, Calif., 1916-1966 Schenectady, N.Y., 1921 South Bend, Ind., 1913-1919, undated St. Louis, Mo., 1913 Stockton, Calif., 1935 Toledo, Ohio, 1914
BOX 10	Virginia, 1915-1971 (2 folders) Washington, 1925-1939, undated Wheeling, W. Va., 1966 Worcester, Mass., 1919-1925 Youngstown, Ohio, 1913 Morris Plan Insurance Society, 1917-1963 Morris Plan Insurance Society and Bankers Security Life Insurance Society, 1967-1974, undated Morris Plan Public Relations, 1943 Morris Plan Securities Corp., 1925 Morris Plan Trustees Association, 1918-1919 (2 folders)
BOX 11	National Association of Bank Auditors and Controllers, 1960 New York State Economic Council, 1933 North Virginia Shares, Inc., 1964 Olmstead, George, 1959-1970 Peninsular Motors Corp., 1926, 1928, undated Rockbridge Shares Corp., 1964 School of Consumer Banking, 1952 Security Trust Co. of Birmingham, 1965 Southeastern Shares Corp., 1964 Studebaker Corp., 1919-1924, undated U.T. Securities Corp., 1964
BOX 11-17	Miscellany, 1888-1976 Clippings, printed matter, transcript of oral history interview, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 11	Address and date books, 1913, 1925, 1927, 1955, undated
BOX 12	Awards, 1951, 1960, 1964 <i>See also Oversize</i> Calling cards, 1915-1916, 1925, 1946, undated Clippings Vol. I, 1915-1918

Miscellany, 1888-1976

Container

Contents

	Vol. II, 1918
	Vol. III, 1920-1940 (5 folders)
BOX 13	Vol. IV, 1927-1963 (5 folders) Deed of bargain and sale, 1898 Greeting cards, 1960 (2 folders) Invitations and programs, 1916-1966 Law license, 1916 <i>See Oversize</i> Law school notes, University of Virginia Law School, Charlottesville, Va., circa 1901 Memberships, 1914-1960, undated
BOX 14	Newspaper clippings, 1912-1973, undated (5 folders) Notes, 1916-1925, undated Passport, 1921 Printed matter <i>See also Oversize</i> 1888-1920 (2 folders)
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BOX 16	1965-1976, undated (3 folders) Satterlee, Ernest Knight, untitled writings, n. d. (3 folders)
BOX 17	Scrapbook, 1952 Speeches and writings, 1918-1960, undated (3 folders) Transcript of oral history interview with Morris, circa 1959, 1970 (2 folders) Unidentified papers and fragments, undated
BOX 18-20	Addition, 1899-1975 Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 18	Correspondence Family, 1921-1957, undated General, 1921-1969, undated (3 folders)
BOX 19	Miscellany Address books and notebooks, 1899-1939, undated Announcements, invitations, and programs, 1914-1959, undated Business cards and certificates, 1913-1954, undated Clippings, 1922-1975 (2 folders) Notes, memoranda, and receipts, 1915-1965, undated Patman Bill to break up Financial General Corp., 1965

Addition, 1899-1975

Container

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	Photographs, 1966, undated <i>See also Oversize</i>
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	(2 folders)
	School essay by Morris, 1899
	Speech by Morris, 1960
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1893-1970
	Awards, material concerning the Morris Plan Corp. of America and Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., photographs, and printed matter.
	Arranged and described according to series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Subject File
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	Awards, 1923-1970 (Container 12)
	Law license, 1916 (Container 13)
	Photographs, undated (Container 19)
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