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://lccn.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

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Arthur J. Morris is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1-2   | **Correspondence, 1902-1973**  
            |         | Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically. |
| 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 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 18-20 | **Addition, 1899-1975**  
            |         | Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder. |
| 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. |

Arthur J. Morris Papers 5
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-2</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence, 1902-1973</strong>&lt;br&gt;Family and general correspondence.&lt;br&gt;Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Family,&lt;br&gt;1913-1973, undated&lt;br&gt;(2 folders)&lt;br&gt;Conclosures on death of Bertha Morris (wife), 1960&lt;br&gt;(3 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>Get well letters and cards, 1958&lt;br&gt;(2 folders)&lt;br&gt;General, 1899-1971, undated&lt;br&gt;(4 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 3-11</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1902-1974</strong>&lt;br&gt;Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports.&lt;br&gt;Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>1960, Aug.-1967, May&lt;br&gt;(6 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container</td>
<td>Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| BOX 6     | Industrial Acceptance Corp., 1921-1968, undated  
            (3 folders)  
          | Industrial Finance Corp.  
                      1913-1923  
                      (3 folders)  
            Investors Financial Corp., 1964  
            Lexington Shares, Inc., 1964  
            MacArthur Co., undated  
            (2 folders)  
            Morris, Garnett and Cotten, 1912-1917  
            Morris Plan  
            1911-1922  
            (2 folders)  
          | BOX 7     | 1924-1943, undated  
            (2 folders)  
          | Morris Plan Bankers Association, 1922-1946, undated  
            (2 folders)  
          | Morris Plan Bulletin, 1915-1917  
            (3 vols.)  
          | BOX 8     | Morris Plan Corp. of America, 1925-1967 See also Oversize  
            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 | Contents
--- | ---

**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 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 See also Oversize
Calling cards, 1915-1916, 1925, 1946, undated
Clippings, Vol. I, 1915-1918
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 13    | Vol. II, 1918  
Vol. III, 1920-1940  
(5 folders)  
Deed of bargain and sale, 1898  
Greeting cards, 1960  
(2 folders)  
Invitations and programs, 1916-1966  
Law license, 1916 [See Oversize]  
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 [See also Oversize]  
1888-1920  
(2 folders)  |
| BOX 15    | 1921-1964  
(5 folders)  |
| 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 20    | Photographs, 1966, undated *See also Oversize*  
Printed matter  
1912-1929  
(3 folders)  
1930-1954, undated  
(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**  
Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., 1910 *(Container 3)*  
Morris Plan Corp. of America, 1965 *(Container 8)*  
Miscellany  
Awards, 1923-1970 *(Container 12)*  
Law license, 1916 (Container 13)  
Photographs, undated *(Container 19)*  
Printed matter, 1893, 1943 *(Container 14)* |