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

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

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81075924

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms003065

Prepared by Roslyn R. Wright and Paul D. Ledvina
Revised by John R. Monagle

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2003
Revised 2010 April
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>1901</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>1914</td>
<td>Industrial Finance Corp. established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</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>1918</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>Arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-2</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence, 1902-1973</strong></td>
<td>Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 3-11</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1902-1974</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 11-17</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1888-1976</strong></td>
<td>Clippings, printed matter, transcript of oral history interview, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and thereunder chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 18-20</td>
<td><strong>Addition, 1899-1975</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1893-1970</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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) |
| BOX 3     | 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 See also Oversize  
Financial General Bankshares, 1970-1972  
Financial General Corp.  
1958, Dec.-1960, July |
| BOX 4     | 1960, Aug.-1967, May  
(6 folders) |
| BOX 5     | 1968, Jan.-1970, Apr., undated  
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 6     | Industrial Acceptance Corp., 1921-1968, undated  
(3 folders) |
|           | Industrial Finance Corp.  
1913-1923  
(3 folders) |
| BOX 7     | International Bank, 1963-1970, undated |
|           | 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 8     | Morris Plan Bankers Association, 1922-1946, undated  
(2 folders) |
|           | Morris Plan Bulletin, 1915-1917  
(3 vols.) |
|           | 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) |
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 See also Oversize
Calling cards, 1915-1916, 1925, 1946, undated
Clippings,
Vol. I, 1915-1918
## Miscellany, 1888-1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | Vol. II, 1918  
|           | Vol. III, 1920-1940  
| BOX 13    | (5 folders)  
|           | 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 [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  

Arthur J. Morris Papers
## 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)* |