

Arthur J. Morris Papers

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<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm81075924>

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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 ; 20 containers plus 1 oversize ; 8.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

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.

Administrative Information

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Arthur J. Morris is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|---|
| 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

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Series</i> |
|------------------|--|
| BOX 1-2 | <u>Correspondence, 1902-1973</u> Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically. |
| BOX 3-11 | <u>Subject File, 1902-1974</u> Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically. |
| BOX 11-17 | <u>Miscellany, 1888-1976</u> 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 | <u>Addition, 1899-1975</u> Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder. |
| BOX OV 1 | <u>Oversize, 1893-1970</u> 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. |

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|---|
| 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 |
| 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

Container

Contents

- 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)
- 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 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

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) |
| 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

Container

Contents

| | |
|----------|---|
| | Photographs, 1966, undated <i>See also Oversize</i> |
| | Printed matter |
| | 1912-1929 |
| | (3 folders) |
| BOX 20 | 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) |