

# **Arthur J. Morris**

## **A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress**

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



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**Washington, D.C.**

**2000**

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress  
Manuscript Division, 2003**

**2004-07-19 converted from EAD 1.0 to EAD 2002**

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Papers of Arthur J. Morris

**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

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Abstract:** 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.

### Names:

Morris, Arthur J., 1881-1973

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.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Arthur J. Morris is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

### 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.

**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, n.d.](#)
- [Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.](#)
- [Miscellany, 1888-1976, n.d.](#)
- [Addition, 1899-1975, n.d.](#)
- [Oversize, 1893-1970, n.d.](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-2	<b><u>Correspondence, 1902-1973, n.d.</u></b> Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 3-11	<b><u>Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.</u></b> Correspondence, financial statements, notes, printed material, and reports. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization or by topic and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 12-17	<b><u>Miscellany, 1888-1976, n.d.</u></b> 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	<b><u>Addition, 1899-1975, n.d.</u></b> Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.
BOX OV 1	<b><u>Oversize, 1893-1970, n.d.</u></b> 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	<b>Correspondence, 1902-1973, n.d.</b> Family and general correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of correspondence and thereunder chronologically.
BOX 1	Family,  1913-1973, n.d. (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, n.d. (4 folders)
BOX 3-11	<b>Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.</b> 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, n.d.  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, n.d.

**Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.**

**Container**

**Contents**

---

	Fidelity Savings and Trust Co., 1910, 1914 <i>See also Oversize</i>
	Financial General Bankshares, 1970-1972
	Financial General Corp.
	1958, Dec.-1960, July
<b>BOX 4</b>	1960, Aug.-1967, May (6 folders)
<b>BOX 5</b>	1968, Jan.-1970, Apr., n.d.
	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
	Industrial Acceptance Corp., 1921-1968, n.d. (3 folders)
	Industrial Finance Corp.
	1913-1923 (3 folders)
<b>BOX 6</b>	1924-1943, n.d.
	International Bank, 1963-1970, n.d.
	Investors Financial Corp., 1964
	Lexington Shares, Inc., 1964
	MacArthur Co., n.d.
	Morris, Arthur J., 1902-1973, n.d. (2 folders)
	Morris, Garnett and Cotten, 1912-1917
	Morris Plan
	1911-1922 (2 folders)

**Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.**

*Container*                      *Contents*

---

<b>BOX 7</b>	1925-1944, n.d. (2 folders)
	Morris Plan Bankers Association, 1922-1946, n.d. (2 folders)
	<i>Morris Plan Bulletin</i> , 1915-1917 (3 vols.)
<b>BOX 8</b>	Morris Plan Corp. of America, 1925-1967 <i><u>See also Oversize</u></i>
	Morris Plan Co.
	Atlanta, Ga., 1912, 1932
	Baltimore, Md. n.d.
	Boston, Mass., 1918-1934, n.d.
	Brockton, Mass., 1919
	Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1959-1966
	Chicago, Ill., 1917-1919, n.d.
	Cleveland, Ohio, 1915-1945, n.d.
	Dallas, Tex., 1918-1940, n.d.
	Denver, Colo., 1920
	Detroit, Mich., 1917-1943, n.d.
	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

**Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.**

*Container*

*Contents*

---

	New Jersey, 1914-1929
	New Orleans, La., 1918
	New York, N.Y.
	1915-1939 (2 folders)
<b>BOX 9</b>	1940-1973, n.d. (3 folders)
	Oakland, Calif., 1934-1935, n.d.
	Oklahoma, 1931
	Omaha, Neb., 1916
	Philadelphia, Pa., 1913-1930, n.d.
	Rhode Island, 1915-1916
	San Francisco, Calif., 1916-1966
	Schenectady, N.Y., 1921
	South Bend, Ind., 1913-1919, n.d.
	St. Louis, Mo., 1913
	Stockton, Calif., 1935
	Toledo, Ohio, 1914
<b>BOX 10</b>	Virginia, 1915-1971 (2 folders)
	Washington, 1925-1939, n.d.
	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, n.d.

**Subject File, 1902-1974, n.d.**

**Container**

**Contents**

---

	Morris Plan Public Relations, 1943
	Morris Plan Securities Corp., 1925
	Morris Plan Trustees Association, 1918-1919 (2 folders)
<b>BOX 11</b>	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, n.d.
	Rockbridge Shares Corp., 1964
	School of Consumer Banking, 1952
	Security Trust Co. of Birmingham, 1965
	Southeastern Shares Corp., 1964
	Studebaker Corp., 1919-1924, n.d.
	U.T. Securities Corp., 1964
<b>BOX 12-17</b>	<b>Miscellany, 1888-1976, n.d.</b> Clippings, printed matter, transcript of oral history interview, and other material. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and thereunder chronologically.
<b>BOX 12</b>	Address and date books, 1913, 1925, 1927, 1955, n.d.
	Awards, 1951, 1960, 1964 <i>See also Oversize</i>
	Calling cards, 1915-1916, 1925, 1946, n.d.
	Clippings, Vol. I, 1915-1918 Vol. II, 1918 Vol. III, 1920-1940 (5 folders)
<b>BOX 13</b>	Vol. IV, 1927-1963 (5 folders)

**Miscellany, 1888-1976, n.d.**

**Container**

**Contents**

---

	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., ca. 1901
	Memberships, 1914-1960, n.d.
<b>BOX 14</b>	Newspaper clippings, 1912-1973, n.d. (5 folders)
	Notes, 1916-1925, n.d.
	Passport, 1921
	Printed matter <i>See also Oversize</i>
	1888-1920 (2 folders)
<b>BOX 15</b>	1921-1964 (5 folders)
<b>BOX 16</b>	1965-1976, n.d. (3 folders)
	Satterlee, Ernest Knight, untitled writings, n. d. (3 folders)
<b>BOX 17</b>	Scrapbook, 1952
	Speeches and writings, 1918-1960, n.d. (3 folders)
	Transcript of oral history interview with Morris, ca. 1959, 1970 (2 folders)
	Unidentified papers and fragments, n.d.
<b>BOX 18-20</b>	<b>Addition, 1899-1975, n.d.</b> Correspondence, photographs, printed matter, speeches, writings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.

**Addition, 1899-1975, n.d.**

**Container**

**Contents**

---

**BOX 18**

Correspondence

Family, 1921-1957, n.d.

General, 1921-1969, n.d.  
(3 folders)

**BOX 19**

Miscellany

Address books and notebooks, 1899-1939, n.d.

Announcements, invitations, and programs, 1914-1959, n.d.

Business cards and certificates, 1913-1954, n.d.

Clippings, 1922-1975  
(2 folders)

Notes, memoranda, and receipts, 1915-1965, n.d.

Patman Bill to break up Financial General Corp., 1965

Photographs, 1966, n.d. *See also Oversize*

Printed matter

1912-1929  
(3 folders)

**BOX 20**

1930-1954, n.d.  
(2 folders)

School essay by Morris, 1899

Speech by Morris, 1960

**BOX OV 1**

**Oversize, 1893-1970, n.d.**

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

**Oversize, 1893-1970, n.d.**

*Container*

*Contents*

---

Awards, 1923-1970 ([Container 12](#))

Law license, 1916 (Container 13)

Photographs, n.d. ([Container 19](#))

Printed matter, 1893, 1943 ([Container 14](#))