

A Guide to the Morris Family Papers

Morris Family Papers 1727-1931

1727-1931

A Collection in the Special Collections Department 38-79
Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library
1997

History

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A Guide to the Morris Family Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

38-79

Language

English

Extent

ca. 4100 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

These papers were purchased in 1936 and are not restricted.

Funding Note

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Scope and Content

The papers of the Morris family consist of ca. 4100 items (9 Hollinger boxes, ca. 3 linear feet), 1727-1931, mostly business and legal documents belonging to three generations of the family in Hanover and Louisa Counties, Virginia. Most of the early papers are those of Colonel Richard Morris (d. 1821), pertaining to business and legal matters in Hanover and Louisa. Richard Morris was the Commissary of Provisions for the state of Virginia during the Revolutionary War from the beginning through 1780.

Papers from about 1795 to 1820 are chiefly the business correspondence of Colonel Morris and his son, William O. Morris (d. 1819), relating to the sale of plantation products such as grain and tobacco and to Colonel Morris' interest in coal mining and candle manufacturing. Colonel Morris' chief correspondents are his business associates, Fontaine Maury and Orvis Paine; his cousin, William Winston; and his son, James Maury Morris.

Papers from 1820 to 1845 belong mainly to Dr. James Maury Morris (d. ca. 1845), son of Colonel Morris. James Morris' business correspondence is chiefly with associates William Anderson, J.P. Taylor, the Timberlake firm, Bernard Peyton, and the law firm of Bedford, Breedlove and Robison. James Morris' business interests include his medical practice and the business of the plantation. Of the few purely personal letters in the collection, most are from Ann Maury.

Most of the papers dated after 1845 belong to Richard O. Morris and pertain to dealings with various merchants and cotton and tobacco dealers.

Correspondence of special interest in the collection include several letters from Henry Clay dated 1822 February 26, 1828 September 27, 1828 October 25, 1829 January 8 and 1833 March 2. There are also photocopies of two bills endorsed by John Marshall, 1786 January 5 and 1797 March 24.

The collection also contains documents and maps outlining plots of land in the following areas: Camp Creek (1770 December 27), Louisa County (1772 October), Hanover County (1780 December 13), Kentucky (1808 November), Slate River (1816 October 3), Logan County, Kentucky (1825), Louisa County (1831 November), "Ionia," estate of George Watson, (1880 August), Roanoke (1894 April 19) and Stone Mountain (n.d.).

Wills contained in the collection include those of the following people: James Watson (1823 June 7), David Watson (1829 January 8), George Watson (1839 October 23), Elizabeth Shelton Watson (1863 September 7), Susan Dabney Morris (1883 July 18) and Richard Morris (1896 August 13).

Some other miscellaneous items of special interest are an inquisition taken at Meriweather and Garrett's mill (1797 February 11), a list of tenants on the plantation and the amount of rent paid by each (1814), a Confederate savings bond (1864 March 11) an account with the Confederacy for wheat (1865 March) and genealogical information (1885 November 27). A sketch of the Morris Family by John B. Dabney is located in the control folder for this collection.

Finally, there is a large amount of valuable slavery material, including annual lists of all taxable property

owned by the family. These documents list all slaves on the plantation by name. Includes: Bill of sale for woman, 1769 June 1; Bill of sale, 1769 Dec 29; Release of a mortgaged slave, 1770 July 6; Appraisal of Negro man, 1772 June 6; Payment per mile for return of runaway, 1773 May 27; Bill of Sale, 1773 Sep 11; Bill of sale for "Gilbert", 1776 Feb 8; Bill of sale, 1777 Sep 11; Bill of sale for blacksmith, 1778 May 31; Hire Agreement for family, 1784 Jan 1; Receipt for Taxes of 43 slaves, 1784 Mar 3; Bill of Sale for 3 slaves, 1784 Nov 6; Bill of Sale for 2 slaves, 1785 Jan 3; Bond for hire of slave, 1785 Jan 21; Bills for Taxes on 46 slaves, 1785 Feb 17-May 9; Bill of Sale, 1785 Apr 11; Certificate of Confinement of slave suspected of knowing who robbed Colonel Harvey's store, 1785 June 8; Bills for taxes on 26 slaves, 1786 Mar-June 5; Promissory Note for use of slave, 1786 Oct 24; Bill of Sale for woman, 1786 Nov 14; Bill for Taxes on 38 slaves, 1786; Receipts for 2 women, 1787 Jan 2; Bill for Taxes on 24 slaves, 1787 May 12; Bill of Sale for 2 men, 1787 Aug 8; Return of slave, 1791 Aug 1; Bill for Taxes on 34 slaves, 1791 Aug 13-1793 Oct 22; Receipt for Hire of slave for one year, 1792 Nov 18; Trade Agreement, 1794 Jan 24; Settlement of Account for 4 slaves bought in 1784, 1794 Feb 25; Bill of Sale, 1794 Dec 15; Bill of sale for boy, 1795 Sep 20; Bond for Hire of 7 men for one year, 1798 May 9; Memo of men hired, 1798 Dec 17; Purchase of blacksmith Cobb, 1799 Jan 7; Pick-up of runaway slave, 1799 Aug 1; List of Taxable Property, 1812; List of Taxable Property, 1813 Mar; Account with Orvis Paineregarding the hire of slaves, 1814 Jan 10; Morris to Sheriff of Louisa Countyre Slave Holdings, 1814 Sep 20; List of Taxable Property, 1814; Hire Agreement, 1815 Nov 20; List of Taxable Property, 1816; List of Taxable Property, 1818; List of Taxable Property, 1821; Newspaper ad concerning slaves for sale, 1821 Oct 23; Inventory of slave values, 1827 Jan 3; Hire Agreement, 1842 Sep 8 & 24; Hire Agreement, 1842 Sep 2; Receipt, 1845 Dec 3 & 5; Tax exemption for old slaves, 1846 Mar; Promissory note for the hire of Sam, 1846 Jan 12; Receipt, 1846 Jan 15; Affidavit re runaway slave John, 1846 Mar 20; Photograph of Harry Holmes, slave of Major James Watson(located in the Personal Papers folder), 1850; List of Taxable Property, 1854; List of Taxable Property, 1856; List of Taxable Property, 1857; Book listing the births of slaves, 1853-1865, ca. 1861- 1865; List of Taxable Property, 1862; Notice of impressment of a cooper, 1864 Nov 28; "List of Slaves Freed by Lincoln's Proclamation," 1892 Dec 10; Miscellaneous material, n.d.

Organization

The collection is divided into two series: I. Correspondence and II. Business and Legal Papers. The material is arranged chronologically. Documents of special interest are marked by inserts.

Container List

Series I: Correspondence

Correspondence

Unit Date 1776-1828

Container Box 1

Extent 8 folders

Correspondence

Unit Date 1829-1836

Container Box 2

Extent 4 folders

Correspondence

Unit Date 1837-1905, n.d.

Container Box 3

Extent 5 folders

Series II: Business and Legal Papers

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1727-1794

Container Box 4

Extent 12 folders

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1795-1813

Container Box 5

Extent 8 folders

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1814-1821

Container Box 6

Extent 5 folders

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1822-1831

Container Box 7

Extent 5 folders

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1832-1845

Container Box 8

Extent 7 folders

Business and Legal

Unit Date 1846-1915, n.d.

Container Box 9

Extent 6 folders

Personal Papers

Unit Date 1877-1895, n.d.

Container Box 9

Printed Material

Unit Date 1803-1931

Container Box 9

Morris Bound Journal & Daybook, Physician's Daily Records of Patients and His Accounts [Orange C.H.]

Unit Date 1910-1920

Container Box 9