Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania records


Last updated on August 23, 2013.
# Table of Contents

Summary Information .................................................................................................................................... 3  
Biography/History .......................................................................................................................................... 4  
Scope and Contents ....................................................................................................................................... 5  
Administrative Information ........................................................................................................................... 5  
Related Materials ........................................................................................................................................... 6  
Controlled Access Headings .......................................................................................................................... 6
### Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Repository</strong></th>
<th>Morris Arboretum Archives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creator</strong></td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania. Morris Arboretum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call number</strong></td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date [inclusive]</strong></td>
<td>1933-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent</strong></td>
<td>53 linear feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>The land that is now the Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania, the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was previously the private estate of Quaker siblings John Thompson Morris (1847-1915) and Lydia Thompson Morris (1849-1932). Bequeathed to the University of Pennsylvania in 1933, it was part of the University's Botany Department until, in 1975, it was established as a separate Interdisciplinary Resource Center. The Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania records, 1933-2013, include the office files of former directors, various administrative and financial records, correspondence, press clippings about the Arboretum, membership reports, programs and ephemera, publicity photographs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biography/History

"The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania began as Compton, the private estate of a Quaker brother and sister, John and Lydia Morris. The Morrises purchased farmland in 1887 in the northwest corner of Philadelphia and began planning a garden where art and science would thrive together, and where stewardship would extend to caring for both plants and people. Today, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is a 166-acre historic public garden and educational institution that is the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places."(Pape 1)

"Once the Arboretum became part of the University of Pennsylvania [in 1933 after Lydia's death], the focus shifted from that of an aesthetic landscape garden to more of a research and collections-based Arboretum. At the time, plants in the garden were arranged according to classification, and were often planted together more for the purpose of evaluation than for their integration into the landscape. Dr. Rodney H. True was selected as the first director, and specialists in plant diseases, ecology and physiology were hired. Dr. John M. Fogg, who later became director [1954-1967], was hired as taxonomist...In 1940, Dr. Henry T. Skinner, who later became the director of the U.S. National Arboretum, was selected as the first curator of the Morris Arboretum...By the end of the [1960s], however, the grounds of the Arboretum had begun to show signs of significant decline." (Pape 7-8)

"In 1972, one of the most influential people in the history of the Morris Arboretum, Dr. F. Otto Haas, assumed the position of Chair of the Advisory Board of Managers. In 1975, under his guidance, the Arboretum was transferred from the Botany department at the University to the Provost's office as one of several Interdisciplinary Resource Centers. The 1970s were a time of great change and progress at the Morris Arboretum. Additional staff was added, and Dr. William M. Klein, Jr. was hired as the first full-time director. Assisted by a new and enthusiastic staff, Dr. Klein launched a comprehensive master planning effort with the Philadelphia planning firm Andropogon Associates, a partnership which continues [as of 2010]. Research and education programs were expanded to include plant introduction, integrated pest management, and a renewed commitment to documenting and describing the flora of Pennsylvania." (Pape 8)

In 1978, the Morris Arboretum was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A decade later, it was designated by PA House Bill 1071 as the official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Bibliography:

Scope and Contents

This collection includes records of the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania from the two major periods in its history: the Botany Department Period and the Public Garden Period. The Botany Department Period, 1933-1974, spans the time when the Arboretum served as the University of Pennsylvania's Botany Department. The Public Garden Period, 1975-2013, dates from the point at which the Arboretum was established as a separate Interdisciplinary Resource Center.

Records from the Botany Department Period, 1933-1974, include various administrative and financial records, correspondence, and programs and ephemera. There are office files and correspondence from early directors Dr. Rodney H. True, Dr. Jacob R. Schramm, Dr. Henry T. Skinner, and Dr. John M. Fogg. A large amount of transfer correspondence, 1933-1953, relates to the transfer to the University of Pennsylvania and the establishment of the Morris Arboretum as well as general correspondence on donations, botany, plant acquisitions, and other topics. There is a small quantity of *Morris Arboretum Bulletin* editorial files, circa 1968-1975.

Records from the Public Garden Period, 1975-2013, include various administrative and financial records, correspondence, press clippings about the Arboretum, membership reports, programs and ephemera, and publicity photographs, as well as several audiocassette tapes. There is a large quantity of office files from former Arboretum director Dr. William Klein, 1972-1990.

Administrative Information

Morris Arboretum Archives

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact Morris Arboretum Archives for information about accessing this collection.
**Processing Information Note**

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Morris Arboretum Archives directly for more information.

---

**Related Materials**

**Related Archival Materials Note**

Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania - Morris Arboretum collection.

The Barnes Foundation Archives: John Milton Fogg Papers, 1931-1982, collection JMF.

University of Virginia Library Special Collections Department: Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner papers, 1932-1984, collection 10553-ad.

---

**Controlled Access Headings**

**Corporate Name(s)**

- University of Pennsylvania. Morris Arboretum

**Geographic Name(s)**

- Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia, Pa.)
• Montgomery County (Pa.)
• Philadelphia (Pa.)
• Springfield (Montgomery County, Pa.: Township)

**Personal Name(s)**

• Fogg, John M. (John Milton), 1898-1982
• Klein, William M.
• Schramm, Jacob R. (Jacob Richard), b. 1885
• Skinner, Henry T. (Henry Thomas), 1907-1984

**Subject(s)**

• Agriculture
• Arboretums
• Botany
• Universities and colleges