

Inventory of the

**John K. Morris**  
Chadwick, Illinois

Papers

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 161**

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. John K. Morris donated his papers to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on February 4, 1983. An addendum was added on November 28, 1989.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Northern Illinois Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 5  
Number of containers: 6  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 161

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The John K. Morris Papers contain documents related to Mr. Morris' career as a State Representative, chairman of the State Property Tax Appeal Board and farmer. The collection is arranged into three series, one for each aspect of his career. Papers in the collection date from 1919 to 1982. The collection contains biographical sketches of Morris' life. There are also some papers from his grade school and college days.

The first series contains material from Morris' career as a State Representative in the Illinois General Assembly, from 1946 to 1966. Material for elections includes letters of endorsement, campaign literature, and election returns. The amount of material varies for each election. Correspondence from his term in office follows the appropriate election year. This series also contains memorandums from the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council performed research for state officials to provide them with information on current topics of legislation.

The second series is the largest and contains most of the material in the collection. It spans the years Mr. Morris served as Chairman of the Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB), 1967-1980. The Board was appealed to by taxpayers who considered their assessments unfair. This series contains some of the Board's decisions for 1967-1970 and 1972-1974. These decisions are arranged by docket number. The docket number is a string of numbers indicating the year, the county, and the number of the docket. It is the second number in the string by which the decisions are arranged numerically. Morris created indexes to the 1967-1970 decisions, so that a decision can be found if one knows the Board's decision number. The Board had its own numbering system for appeal decisions. Although termed petitions for property assessment appeal, the 1972-1974 decisions contain the same information as the earlier decisions. If the taxpayer or the County Board were dissatisfied with the PTAB's decision, they could take the PTAB to court. Decisions defended in court which are in this series include, the

Commonwealth Edison dispute over the Zion Nuclear Power Plant. Also defended in court, was the decision on the Belvidere Chrysler plant assessment.

Material related to the Board's activities, such as farmland assessment and various bills, can, also, be found in this series. Personal papers of Mr. Morris' are included, too. These personal papers cover his correspondence with people asking for his help in bureaucratic matters and his correspondence with various state and federal officials on current political topics. Copies of letters he sent to President Carter are among this personal correspondence.

The third series concentrates on Morris' activities as a farmer. It contains farm account books, agriculture census forms and a few income tax returns. Awards that Mr. Morris received, some for non-farm related services, are included in this series. Also, two articles written about the Morris dairying enterprise can be found in this series.

The addendum dates 1970-1989 and includes the remainder of series III, Elmcrest Farm. While State Representative, Mr. Morris divided his time between Springfield and his farm in Chadwick. Great detail was needed in documenting the herd and their production because of Mr. Morris' absence from the farm. The series consists of records kept by Mr. Morris and his employees regarding the status of the herd. The records include herd health and production records, pedigree and performance evaluations, herd listings and registrations, computerized herd reports, and other material pertaining to the herd and the farm. There are also herd identification photographs. These photographs include vital statistics about the cattle. The series contain photographs of cattle sold or deceased and the reason behind such action.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

John K. Morris was born in Lanark on June 3, 1909. He attended the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois, receiving his B.S. degree in 1932. In 1937, he married Ealy Grobe and had two children, a son and a daughter. The son is deceased.

Morris served on the school board from 1934 to 1936, was Rock Creek Township's Justice of the Peace from 1936 to 1952 and was first elected to the State House of Representatives in 1946. He represented Stephenson, Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties. During his twenty years as a representative, Morris was Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee (1949-1952), a member of the State Fair Advisory Board (1949-1952), and Chairman of the House Revenue Committee (1959, 1961, 1965). Morris advocated the Farm to Market Road System, brucellosis vaccination for livestock, lowering assessed valuation of farmland from 100% to 55%, instituting a state income tax and abolishing the personal property tax.

In 1964, Morris received the second highest number of votes in the at-large election. This was on a state-wide basis. However, due to a district change because of reapportioning, Morris found himself running against another incumbent Democrat in 1966. He lost that election. The governor appointed him Chairman of the Property Tax Appeal Board in 1967.

Morris served as chairman until 1980, when he lost the position due to a changeover from a Democratic to a Republican administration. During his years as chairman, Morris continued to voice his opinions on legislation to political contacts he maintained.

Elmcrest Farm took its name from the old elm tree which stands in front of the Morris home. The Morris' run a dairy farm but, also, raise purebred Aberdeen-Angus cattle for show. In 1977, John Morris was named an Honorary Master Farmer by the Prairie Farmer publication. Morris retired in 1985 with a complete dispersal sale of stock on September 18, 1985. His daughter owns the farm and rents the property to a farmer in the area. At the time of the donation of his addendum to his papers, John and his wife Ealy still live in the farm house.

#### SUBJECT TRACINGS

Agriculture  
Assessment  
Chadwick  
Dairying  
Democratic Party  
General Assembly  
Legislators  
Livestock  
Morris, John K.  
Property Taxes

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	
Series I. House of Representatives			
1	1	Biographical Sketches, 1969-1978	
	2	Student Papers, 1919, 1928-1931	
	3	Politics and Elections, 1940-1941, 1948, 1950, 1955-1956	
	4	1946 Election	
	5-7	Correspondence, 1947-1953	
	8	1960 Election	
	9	1962 Election	
	10-11	Correspondence, 1963-1964	
	12	1964 Election	
	13	1966 Election	
	14	Legislative Council Memorandums, 1947-1963, 1968	
	15	Legislative Reports and Notes on Bills, 1951-1956	
	16	Tax Reform, 1957-1984	
	17	Speeches, 1947-1968	
	Series II. Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB)		
		18	PTAB Correspondence, 1967-1979
		19	PTAB Information and Regulations, 1968-1980
	20	Reappointment Correspondence, December 1978-October 1980	
	21	Index to 1967 Appeal Decisions	
	22-28	1967 Appeal Decisions, 68-1-R to 68-245-j-RF	
2	1	1967 Appeal Decisions, to 68-246-RF to 68-273-j-RF	
	2	Index to 1968 Appeal Decisions	
	2-6	1968 Appeal Decisions, 468-1-R <sup>1</sup> to 668-443-F-2	
	7	Index to 1969 Appeal Decisions	
	8-17	1969 Appeal Decisions, 569-6-RF-3 to 8269-772-R-4	
	18	Index to 1970 Appeal Decisions	
	9-20	1970 Appeal Decisions, 870-2-C-2 to 270-145-R-1	
3	1-4	1970 Appeal Decisions, 270-146-R-23 to 270-739-R-3	
	5-6	1972 Petitions for Property Assessment Appeal, 72-1602-1 to 72-1858-F-1	
	7-11	1973 Petitions for Property Assessment Appeal, 73-7-R-1 to 73-752-F1	

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	5
3	12-14	1974 Petitions for Property Assessment Appeal, 74-l-R-l to 74-537-R-l	
	15-16	Decisions Defended in Court, 1968-1978	
	17	Commonwealth Edison (1974-1980) and Chrysler (1972-1981) Cases	
	18-19	Shelby County Case, 1978-1980	
	20	A & P Case, 1979-1980	
4	1	Matthews-Bouton Farm and Stephenson County Cases, 1979	
	2	Lake County and Will County Cases, 1980	
	3	Assessing Farmland, 1968-1980	
	4	Dual Assessment of Farmland--Background Information, 1972, 1974, 1975	
	5	Dual Assessment of Farmland--Bill, Correspondence and Articles, 1976-1977	
	6	"Assessment/Sales Ratio Study," 1974	
		"Taxation: Federal, State and Local Systems," 1981	
	7	"Farmland Assessment," 1980	
		"Assessing Farmland in Illinois," 1982	
	8	Bills, 1949-1979	
	9	Discussion on House Bills 211 (March 1973, June 1976) and 1588 (June 1973)	
	10	Discussion on Senate Bill 493, April-June 1977	
	11	Constitutional Convention, 1970	
	12	Ethics Board, 1970, 1973-1980	
13	Governor Dan Walker--Correspondence, October 1972-July 1973		
14	Personal Correspondence, 1967-1980		
Series III. Elmcrest Farm			
	15	Awards, 1942, 1949, 1963, 1968, 1977	
	16	Farm Correspondence, 1951-1980	
	17	"Checkerboard News" article, 1942 "Kraftsman" article, 1945	
	18	Aberdeen-Angus Certificates, 1948-1968	
	19	Soil Conservation Project, 1938-1949	
	20	Farm Statistics, 1949, 1952, 1967, 1969, 1982	
	21	Financial Records, 1940-1963	
	22	Federal Home Administration Loan, February 1978-July 1978	
	23-30	Farm Account Books, 1935-1961	
	31	Farm Account Books (1962-1963) and Depreciation Schedules, (1948, 1954, 1966)	

ADDENDUM

## Series III. Elmcrest Farm

5	1	Annual Reports, 1966-1975
	2	Correspondence, 1980
	3	"Farming in the Flyways" by John Morris
	4	Morris Farm Dispersal Sales, 1981, 1985
	5	Herd Listing, 1977-1986
	6	Cow Listing by ID Number, n.d.
	7-9	Milledgeville Veterinary Clinic, Mastitis Herd Health Program, 1973-1984
	10	Brucellosis Calthood Vaccination Record, 1977-1985
	11	Individual Cow Life-Time Health Record, 1979-1985
	12	Lactation and Lifetime Production Record, 1969-1977
	13	Pedigree and Performance Evaluation, 1978-1985
	14	USDA-DHIA Cow Performance Index List, 1975-1979
	15	Herd Lactation Average, 1981-1983
	16	Milk Production Summary, 1977-1985
	17-18	Official Pedigree -- Holstein-Friesian Association on America, 1976-1983
	19	Identification Report -- Holstein-Friesian Association of America, 1977-1978, 1981-1982
	20	Herd Classification Certificates, 1976-1981
	21	Certificate of Registry -- Holstein-Friesian Association of American, 1974-1978
	22	Cow Registration Booklets, 1973-1985
	23	Record of Cow Transfer, 1973-1985
	24	Optional Dairy Management Reports, 1975-1978
	25	Record of Artificial Insemination and Breeding Receipts, 1981-1983
	26	Sire Summary, 1984, 1986-1988
	27	Corrective Breeding Service - Consultants, 1982
	28	Milk Reduction Plan, 1984
	29	Corn Storage Receipts and Summaries, 1984-1987
	30	Forage Analysis Report, 1983-1984
	31	Sales-Auction, 1979, 1981-1982
	33	Dairy Marketing Forum, Champaign, IL, February 15-16, 1978
	33	Bull Listing, 1981, 1985, n.d.
	34	Research Articles, (1974-1982), 1989
	35-36	Herd Identification Photographs, 1970-1982, (195)
	37-38	Herd Identification Photographs -- Sold or Deceased, 1975-1984, (222)

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	7
5	39	Herd Photographs, n.d., (4)	
6	1	Breeding Charts, 1984-1985	
	2	Classifier's Report of Herd Classification, 1977-1984	
	3	Replacement Females Inventory and Evaluation, 1985	
	4	Herd Ranking and Summary, 1978	
	5	Sample Day and Lactation Report, 1981-1985	
	6	Herd Summary -- Dairy Herd Improvement Record, 1981-1985	