

A Guide to the Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers

Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers 1932-1984
1932-1984

A Collection in the Special Collections Department 10553-ad
Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library
1997

History

Processed by: Special Collections Department Staff
Date Completed: 1997
Encoded by: Elizabeth Slomba

Title Statement

A Guide to the Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers

Subtitle: Skinner, Henry Thomas.

Collection: 10553-ad

Author: Processed by Special Collections Dept. staff; machine-readable finding aid created by Elizabeth Slomba

Sponsor: Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publication Statement

File size: 40 Kilobytes

Date: © 1997 By the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. All rights reserved.

Publisher: Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from WordPerfect. [Date of source: 1997.]

Language Usage: Description is in English.

Revision Description

Feb 18, 2004 PUBLIC "-//University of Virginia::Library::Special Collections Dept.//TEXT (US::ViU::viu01863::Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers)//EN" "viu01863.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

Feb 27, 2004 converted to conform to eadVIVA.dtd by vivastrict.xsl

Descriptive Summary

Collection Number
10553-ad

Language
English

Collector

Mrs. Skinner

Extent

2716 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

The Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers were given to the Library, without restrictions, by Mrs. Skinner of Hendersonville, North Carolina on May 6, 1987.

Funding Note

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

Preferred Citation

Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner Papers, Accession 10553-ad, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

Biographical Sketch

This biographical information was taken from Who's Who in America, Vol. II, 1974-1975, 38th edition, p. 2851.

Scope and Content

The papers of the noted botanist and former director of the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., Dr. Henry Thomas Skinner(1907-1984) of Hendersonville, North Carolina, consist of 2,716 items (10 Hollinger boxes, 3 linear feet), 1932-1984. This collection contains correspondence, printed material, articles, talks, photographs, newspaper clippings, and bound volumes, much of it pertaining to his life's work with ornamental plants (especially the azaleas native to North America), his memberships and activities in professional and horticultural organizations, and his directorship and continuing interest in the Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania, and the National Arboretum.

These are the personal files of Dr. Skinner, and do not contain any official files kept by him while an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture. Only a small quantity of his correspondence deals directly with his professional tenure at the Morris Arboretum or the National Arboretum. The majority of his letters are dated after his retirement in 1972 and include such general topics as: horticultural meetings, agendas, and programs; preservation of native flora and ecological systems; invitations to speak; requests for advice; awards given to Skinner; thank you's; requests to write government agencies in support of environmental issues; fundraising for various groups; plant identification, care, and propagation; and other plant-related topics.

Dr. Skinner conducted an extensive study and collection of wild species of azalea growing throughout the whole eastern part of the United States during the spring and summer of 1951. This resulted in his dissertation, *Character Patterns in the Early Flowering Azaleas of the Southern United States*(1952), written for the University of Pennsylvania. Other bound volumes in the collection pertaining to this research are two Southern collecting trip record books, an expense book, and a notebook regarding routes taken on the collecting trip. There are also two topical folders concerning native azaleas, one of which contains an article, "In Search of Native Azaleas," printed in the *Morris Arboretum Bulletin* in 1955.

A selective description of the contents and correspondents of the more important correspondence files is given below under each folder heading. For a complete list of all folder headings, consult the box listing at

the end of this guide.

A: American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta, Inc. and the location of papers for its history (1982 Oct. 31); Acacia Fraternity at Cornell; the University Botanical Gardens of Asheville, Inc.; Gregory Nace; invitation to do a talk for the Arthur Hoyt Scott Foundation (1980 Jan. 17); Jane Akers; Joseph Oppe; American Association of Nurserymen; Joe Adams; Historic Annapolis, Inc.; Mrs. Patrick Armsley; the Prince George Audubon Society; and "Arboreta -Some Thoughts on Their Significance and Possible Areas of Contribution" (1973 Feb. 20).

American Horticultural Society: seed program, the "new" AHS Azalea Handbook (1980 Jan. 4); symposiums; Donald Wyman and James Harlow, concerning the argument over the publication agreement concerning The Peonies (1961 & 1977-1978); Magnolia Checklist (1976 Jan. 5); Plant Science Data Center; and the "Bibliography of Cultivar Name Registration."

B: Bowman's Hill State Wildflower Preserve; Robert Barham; Janet Bowers Bothwell; Bowers Foundation; Alex Benisatto; Malcolm S. Barnes; Gordon A. Brandes (Filoli Center); Ray Brush; Hortus III; W. P. Bebbington & "Vascular Flora of Hitchcock Woods" (1976); Clarence F. Bent; Richard A. Brown; Hal Brace; "A Comment on Ivy," by Skinner (n.d.); Buildings of England Group; a gift of books to the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley; and biographical information on Clement Gray Bowers (1973 Jun. 6).

Boxwood Society: paragraph in honor of Edgar Anderson (1984 May 11); discussion of "Morris Dwarf" & "Morris Midget" (1981 Feb. 3); "Comments on Some of the Better Known Boxwood Varieties" by Skinner (1977 Sept. 29); boxwood registration form (1976 Jul. 3); "The Boxwoods of Birr Castle, Ireland" (1975 Sept. 14) and "Notes on Some Forms of Japanese Boxwood" (n.d.) both by Skinner.

C: list of former winners of the Norman Jay Coleman Award (1983 Oct.) and Skinner's recommendation that John Creech be given the award (1983 Dec. 20); Skinner's advice regarding the National Arboretum to Marc Cathey (1981 Jun. 12); William A.V. Cecil; and Dan Coleman.

Cornell Plantations: Ralph Curtis Memorial fundraising (1982-1984); "Inventory of Plant Materials" (1981 Aug. 11); Janet Bothwell (1980); and photograph of Cornell Class of 1936 (1976 Mar. 3).

D: James Deane, editor of Living Wilderness, regarding Martha Prince's manuscript about the Nantahala Forest controversy (1977 Apr. 7); and Francis DeVos.

E: Harold Epstein and the American Rock Garden Society talk (1975 Jan. 30).

F: Bill Flemer, III; Truman Fossum; Henry Fuller; William H. Frederick, Jr.; Lionel Fortescue; Rhododendron bakeri (1975 Jun. 3 & 17); "The Time Has Come," by Henry Fuller and other material about native azaleas (1974 Feb. 15, Mar. 25, & following).

G: Fred C. Galle; Kerume azaleas lists (1983); Garden Club of America; The Azalea Book (1980 Nov. 25); Mrs. Johnson's watercolor paintings of native azaleas (1978 Nov. 9); Gulf Stream Nursery and Bob Talley; Gary Gerlach; Roger Grounds and liriopogons (1975 Jan. 30, Feb. 22, Mar. 3, and Apr. 14); Mary A. Gamble and boxwoods (1974 Oct. 26); and "The Edgar Anderson Balkan Boxwoods" by Gamble (1974 Jan.).

H: Polly Hill; Herb Society of America; Arthur W. Holweg; Horticultural Tour of Eastern United States (1977 Oct.); Edward W. Hughes; Frederic Heutte; Harold Hillier & Sons; Walter Hodge and Hortus III (1974 Jun. 18); E. D. Hirsch, Jr., concerning a test garden for rhododendrons at the University of Virginia (1973 Nov. 4); dwarf conifers and Humphrey Welch (1973 Apr. 10 & 19); the Holly Society of America and the registration of "Lydia Morris" (1973).

International Dendrology Society: newsletters, minutes, & etc.; and a photograph of an IDS tour group (1975).

I-J: Marion Jull; Marion Johnston; and Lady Bird Johnson (1966 May 22, & 1973 Feb. 28).

K: Austin C. Kennell; Frank P. Knight; August Kehr; Steven Kristoph; John S. Sheppard and the use of rhododendrons for erosion control (1976 Aug. 29); and Joseph Kettinger.

L: Kathleen Lahr; Clarence E. Lewis; Elizabeth Lawrence concerning the "Morris Dwarf" vs. "Morris Midget" (1980); Lynn Lowrey; George Lee's death (1978 Apr.); Skinner's review and comments concerning the Recommended Plant List printout (1973 Aug. 15, & 1978 Jan. 12); Ladew Topiary Gardens; Bob Lederer; P. S. Leathart with Skinner's list of "Notable Exotics Grown in the United States" (1976 Apr. 5); Marion Flook regarding phloxes; Dick Lighty; the distribution of native azaleas (1975 Aug. 18); Skinner's Longwood Garden lecture; Adile Lovett; Richard M. Lewis; and Plant Questionnaire criticisms (1974 Jan. 3).

M: Betty Miller; Philip R. Milroy regarding the preservation of plants on the old "Meadows" estate of Fletcher, North Carolina (1982 May 10 & Jun. 3); Kenneth Knox; Champion Big Trees of North Carolina (1982 Jan.); Alfred S. Martin; Brian Mulligan; Skip March; Loy Marks; J.C. McDaniel regarding a Checklist of Cultivated Magnolias (1976 Jan. 5 & 15); book donations to Wisley Gardens (1974); International Dendrology Society tours; controversy over restaurants at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks Garden (1973).

Morris Arboretum: Paul W. Meyer; Plan for the Development of the Morris Arboretum; Fact sheet; J. J. Willaman; native azaleas; George L. McNew; and Gordon A. Brandes.

N: North Carolina Botanical Garden; Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society, Inc.; Dr. Frederick G. Meyer; and National Council of State Garden Clubs.

National Arboretum: Rhododendron japonicum(1984 May 9 & 16); Theodore R. Dudley; special plant distribution lists; seed lists; photograph of National Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting (1979 Jun. 14); and Skinner's comments regarding Dudley's Biota of North America Committee Rhododendron Listing (1978 Dec. 8).

O: Joseph W. Oppé; Rhododendron japonicum(1984 Jul. 29); Michael MacCaskey; and Ortho Books, Chevron Chemical Company.

P: Martha Prince; Ben Parry; Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden; Mateo Lettunich; J.B. Paton; Martha Prince's "To Save A Mountain" (1977 Oct. 1); the Nantahala National Forest clear cutting controversy (1976-1977); and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

R: Royal Society of Arts; the American Rhododendron Society; the American Rock Garden Society; the Republican National Committee; Martha K. Roane; and Allan H. Reid.

Royal Horticultural Society: John Cowell; plant name changes such as Rhododendron japonicum(1984 Sept. 6); Suzanne Lucas; Frances Perry; Veitch Memorial Medal(1983 Oct. 13); "The Royal Horticultural Society" by Suzanne Wolstenholme(1983 Mar.-Apr.); Chris Brickell; Chelsea Show; Lord Charles Aberconway; and John Hamer.

Rhododendron: Marshall Asher; Bill Tietjen and the seed exchange; Austin C. Kennell; William H. Gensel; Norton Booth; Dr. Donald Kellam, Jr.; and Phil Cofer.

S: Bess Shippy and her interest in ivies; Sutton Valence School; Stephen F. Smith; Harrison M. Symmes; Franklin Styer regarding the American Association of Nurserymen to Stabilize Nomenclature; Louise G. Smith; Brian Savage; Henri Schaepman concerning Shippy's book on ivies (1975); plant names and comments by Skinner (1974 Nov. 16); Russell Seibert; and J. R. Schramm.

T: Tryon Men's Garden Club; Pat and Tom Tinsley regarding landscaping his business (1977 Jan. 21); Time-Life Books Shade Gardens; Bob Talley; Jacques L. Legendre Garden(1974 May 13); and Margaretta Taylor regarding the Encyclopedia of Gardening(1978 Jan. 28).

V: Charles Van Ravenswaay, director of Winterthur; Skinner's comments regarding the Pine Checklist (1976 Aug. 9); Derk Visser; and the Winterthur Museum.

W: James Morton Smith; Winterthur Museum & Gardens; Gertrude and John Wister; Jim Wells; William Paca Garden(1980 May); Jim Harlow and The Peonies controversy (1978 Nov. 21); Conrad J. Wrzesinski; Anne Wood; W. G. Waters; Elfriede Walker; Robert Walpole; Helen H. Whiting; Williamsburg Garden Symposia; Thomas Wheeldon; Donald Wyman; Joseph A. Witt; Humphrey J. Welch; and Whitemarsh Park conservation (1972 Dec. 1).

Y-Z: Wilbur H. Youngman; David N. Yerkes; and Isabel Zucker.

Dr. Skinner's second series of files are topical and only the contents and correspondents of a few will be described here. The following folders furnish additional insight into Skinner's career: Awards, Biographical Sketches, Photographs, Publicity, the Scrapbook File, and Social Functions.

The Azalea Handbook of the American Horticultural Society folder contains correspondence from Fred Galle, Frederic P. Lee, Harlan P. Kelsey, Wendell H. Camp, and David Leach. The file on the Nantahala National Forest includes correspondence from Martha Prince, S. I. Hayakawa, Herman E. Talmadge, and George McGovern; and discusses the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation and the Southern Highlands Coalition.

Skinner's article, "In Search of Native Azaleas," is found in the Native Azaleas folder, together with the correspondence of W. H. Camp, W. P. Lemmon, and S. D. Coleman.

Dr. Skinner was chiefly responsible for the production of the United States Department of Agriculture's Plant Hardiness Zone Map, and the same folder also contains "The Geographic Charting of Plant Climatic Adaptability" by Skinner.

His interest in rhododendrons is represented by several folders pertaining to that plant. A "Guide to Dexter Rhododendrons" is found in Rhododendron and Azalea Varieties; Rhododendron japonicum contains correspondence from Dr. Edward Voss and R. K. Brummitt concerning the Botanical Code; and the American Rhododendron Society Quarterly Bulletin contains Martha Roane's article "The Species of Rhododendron Native to North America," with letters also from Edward C. Egan, Jim Wells, and King & Paton of Scotland.

Donald Voss, Edwin K. Parker, and Paul W. Meyer write concerning Rhododendron Registration, while Judy Young and Karen S. Gunderson correspond regarding the Rhododendron Species Foundation.

Dr. Skinner's Scrapbook File includes the following: Alfred S. Martin, Jack Brooks, Earl L. Butz, Karl Loevenich, John Mack Carter, Frederic P. Lee, John C. Wister, H. F. Du Pont, Ezra Taft Benson, Fred J. Chittenden, and Anthony Montague Rowe for Sir Winston Churchill.

The bound volumes of this collection include those connected with Skinner's native azalea collecting trip in

1951, several notebooks concerning rhododendrons and azaleas, and his thesis and dissertation.

Organization

Dr. Skinner's original folder arrangement, in reverse chronological order, and headings have been maintained as much as possible. The collection is organized into three series: 1) correspondence files; 2) topical files; and 3) bound volumes.

Container List

Series I: Correspondence

"A"

Unit Date 1973-1984

Container Box 1

American Horticultural Society

Unit Date 1961-1982

Container Box 1

"B"

Unit Date 1963, 1971-1983, n.d.

Container Box 1

Boxwood Society

Unit Date 1962-1984, n.d.

Container Box 1

"C"

Unit Date 1973-1983

Container Box 1

Camellia

Unit Date 1973-1981

Container Box 1

Cornell Plantations

Unit Date 1973-1984

Container Box 1

Extent (2 folders)

"D"

Unit Date 1973-1983

Container Box 2

"E"

Unit Date 1973-1977

Container Box 2

"F"

Unit Date 1972-1984

Container Box 2

"G"

Unit Date 1974-1984

Container Box 2

Extent (2 folders)

"H"

Unit Date 1961-1984

Container Box 2

International Dendrology Society

Unit Date 1974-1983

Container Box 2

Extent (2 folders)

"I-J"

Unit Date 1965-1981

Container Box 2

"K"

Unit Date 1973-1984

Container Box 2

"L"

Unit Date 1973-1984

Container Box 3

Extent (2 folders)

"M"

Unit Date 1970-1984

Container Box 3

Extent (2 folders)

Morris Arboretum

Unit Date 1972-1984

Container Box 3

Extent (2 folders)

"N"

Unit Date 1974-1983

Container Box 3

National Arboretum

Unit Date 1967-1984

Container Box 4

Extent (2 folders)

"O"

Unit Date 1972-1984

Container Box 4

"P"

Unit Date 1973-1984

Container Box 4

Extent (2 folders)

"R"

Unit Date 1970-1984

Container Box 4

Rhododendron

Unit Date 1971-1984

Container Box 4

Royal Horticultural Society

Unit Date 1972-1984

Container Box 5

"S"

Unit Date 1966-1983

Container Box 5

Extent (2 folders)

"T"

Unit Date 1971-1983

Container Box 5

"V"

Unit Date 1974-1982

Container Box 5

"W"

Unit Date 1973-1983

Container Box 5

Extent (2 folders)

"Y-Z"

Unit Date 1973-1978

Container Box 5

Series II: Topical

American Horticultural Society

Unit Date 1974-1975

Container Box 6

Articles by Henry T. Skinner

Unit Date 1937-1979, n.d.

Container Box 6

Awards of Henry T. Skinner

Unit Date 1961-1980

Container Box 6

Azalea Handbook

Unit Date 1951-1981

Container Box 6

Biographical Sketches

Unit Date 1973-1983

Container Box 6

Birds and Plants

Unit Date 1971

Container Box 6

Bonsai

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 6

Champion Tree Registry of Henderson County Committee

Unit Date 1978-1980

Container Box 6

Chrysanthemums

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 6

Dissertation of Dr. Skinner (extra copies)

Unit Date 1952

Container Box 6

Feasibility Study for a Tropical Botanical Garden in Hawaii

Unit Date 1963-1968

Container Box 6

Liriope, etc.

Unit Date 1965-1972

Container Box 6

Nantahala National Forest

Unit Date 1976-1979, n.d.

Container Box 6

Extent (2 folders)

Native Azaleas

Unit Date 1935-1979

Container Box 7

Extent (2 folders)

Photographs

Unit Date 1941-1971, n.d.

Container Box 7

Plant Culture

Unit Date 1979-1982

Container Box 7

Plant Hardiness Map

Unit Date 1965-1977

Container Box 7

Printed Material

Unit Date 1930-1976, n.d.

Container Box 7

Extent (2 folders)

Publicity Newsclippings & Photographs

Unit Date 1960-1977, n.d.

Container Box 7

Rhododendrons

Unit Date 1960-1976, n.d.

Container Box 7

Rhododendron and Azalea Varieties

Unit Date 1983 & n.d.

Container Box 8

Rhododendron japonicum

Unit Date 1983

Container Box 8

Rhododendron Quarterly Bulletin

Unit Date 1975-1983

Container Box 8

Rhododendron Registration

Unit Date 1971-1981

Container Box 8

Rhododendron Seed Exchange

Unit Date 1976-1984

Container Box 8

Rhododendron Species Foundation

Unit Date 1974-1984

Container Box 8

Extent (2 folders)

Rhododendron Study Group

Unit Date 1981-1984

Container Box 8

Scrapbook File

Unit Date 1936-1972

Container Box 8

Seton Belt Tract

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 8

Social Functions

Unit Date 1964-1977, n.d.

Container Box 8

"Systematics and Taxonomy of the Ericales..." A Lab Report by Henry T. Skinner, w/ notes

Unit Date 1951

Container Box 9

Talks

Unit Date 1931-1984, n.d.

Container Box 9

Extent (3 folders)

Time-Life Books Consultant

Unit Date 1979

Container Box 9

Winterthur Gardens & Grounds Advisory Committee

Unit Date 1975-1984

Container Box 9

Winterthur Museum

Unit Date 1978

Container Box 9

Series III: Bound Volumes

Record of Rhododendron Crosses (Partial)

Unit Date 1935-1972

Container Box 10

Thesis of Dr. Skinner entitled "Experiments in the Propagation of Rhododendrons and Other Ericaceous Plants by Cutting"

Unit Date 1938

Container Box 10

Rhododendron & Azalea Notes

Unit Date 1947-1948

Container Box 10

Southern Collecting Trip Record Book

Unit Date 1951

Container Box 10

Extent (2 volumes)

Southern Collecting Trip Expense Book

Unit Date 1951

Container Box 10

Notes of Southern Collecting Trip Routes

Unit Date 1951

Container Box 10

Dissertation of Dr. Skinner entitled Character Patterns in the Early Flowering Azaleas of the Southern U.S.

Unit Date 1952

