

**Harris County Archives  
Houston, Texas**

*Finding Aid*

**HARRIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER – PRECINCT 4  
Mercer Arboretum & Botanical Gardens Collection  
CR35  
(1979-1999)**

**Size:** .25 cubic feet

**Restrictions on Access:** None

**Restrictions on Use:** None

**Acquisition:** Harris County Records  
Management

**Accession Number:** 2004.008

**Processed by:** AnnElise Golden, 2008

**Citation:** [Identification of Item], Harris County Commissioner Precinct 4 - Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, Harris County Archives, Houston, Texas.

**Agency History:**

Avid horticulturalists Thelma and Charles Mercer purchased a 14.5 acre tract along Cypress Creek in the late 1940's to grow trees, plants, flowers, and to introduce new plant species to Harris County. In 1974, they sold the tract to Harris County with the condition that it becomes a horticultural and educational facility for the public. Between 1984 and 1993, Harris County purchased 238 additional acres of adjacent land. Other donations and purchases have brought the total acreage in 2008 to over 300 acres.

In 1985, Commissioner E. A. "Squatty" Lyons allocated three million dollars for development and expansion. Plans included educational facilities, picnic areas, and walking trails, auditoriums, a plant laboratory, outdoor classrooms, and a Harris County Branch Library dedicated to natural sciences.

After the initial purchase, a group of community horticulturalists with an interest in the development of Mercer as a Botanical Garden and as a scientific and educational facility formed the nonprofit group called the Mercer Arboretum Advisory Committee (MAAC), a 501c3 organization. In 2000, they changed their name to the Mercer Society with an endeavor to assist the growth of the Mercer through fund raising, volunteer recruitment, community awareness, and public education.

Directors of the Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens have included Eric Lautzenheiser 1977-1979, John Koros 1979-1991, LeeAnn Toles 1991-1992, Doug Williams 1993-1997, Pat Duncan 1998-2001, and Linda Gay 2001 to the present.

**Bibliography:** <http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/index.htm>

**Collection Summary:**

Newsletters, brochures, manuals, land surveys, guidebooks, and nonprofit affiliate records document the functions and fundraising events relating to the Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. The records are divided into two series: those created by the professional staff to assist volunteers and visitors and those records created and used by the nonprofit affiliates of Mercer.

## Inventory

Title	Date	Location
Administrative Records:		
Mercer Volunteer Newsletters	1998, 02-06	953-X-01
Master and Jr. Gardner's Brochures	1998	953-X-02
Tallerine Tour Guide Book	n.d.	953-X-03
Mercer Space Camp Manual	1998	953-X-04
Land Survey-Mercer	1999, 02	953-X-05
Mercer Nonprofit Affiliates:		
By-laws and History (Reference Binder):	1979-1999	953-X-06
Mercer Arboretum Foundation		
Mercer Arboretum Advisory Committee (MAAC)		
Mercer Partnership of Friends		
Mercer Arboretum Foundation: Correspondence and Minutes	1989, 04/25 - 1997	953-X-07
Mercer Arboretum Foundation: By-laws Revised	1990, 10/26	953-X-08
Mercer Arboretum Advisory Committee: Correspondence and Minutes	1987, 09/18 – 1992	953-X-09
Mercer Arboretum Advisory Committee 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President's Records		
Budgets	1997-1998	953-X-10
Notes and History of MAAC	1998-1999	953-X-11
Proceedings	1998-1999	953-X-12
Board Meetings and Membership List	1998-1999	953-X-13