

# **Morris W. Rannels Collection, 1952-1960: A Finding Aid**

Hoover Library  
McDaniel College  
January 2008

**REQUEST AS: 2008.01**

**Repository:** Hoover Library, McDaniel College  
**Creator:** Morris W. Rannels, 1915-2007  
**Title:** Morris W. Rannels Collection, 1952-1960  
**Quantity:** 7 file boxes (4.8 c.f.)

## **PROCESSING INFORMATION:**

**Processed:** January 2008  
**By:** Chad Arrington, Victoria Childs, Matthew Cowell, April Christina Curley, Susan Gordon, Brittany Maffei, Kristin Pavlovsky, Clayton Rosa, Kim Staub, Meredith Tucker, and Bryn Upton

## **ACQUISITION INFORMATION:**

**Accession numbers:** 2008.01  
This collection was given to McDaniel College by Morris W. Rannels in September 2007.

## **TERMS OF USE:**

Unrestricted

## **USE RESTRICTIONS:**

Unrestricted

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Morris Wolfe Rannels, affectionately known as "Slim" among friends, was born in Rowenna, Pennsylvania, on April 13, 1915, to Oscar Von and Minnie (Wolfe). He attended Maytown High School near Lancaster, PA from which he graduated in 1933 as the Senior Class President. He graduated in 1938 from Millersville University, also referred to as Millersville PA State Teaching College, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Mr. Rannels began teaching Mathematics at Annapolis High School in 1938 but he left the position in 1941 to enlist in the U.S. Navy. In the year of 1942, he married Norma (Jensen) and together, over the course of their 65 year marriage had six children, 22 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

In 1946, Mr. Rannels returned to teaching Mathematics at Annapolis High School. He received his Master's Degree in Education from the University of Maryland in 1948. It was also during this time that Mr. Rannels did advanced work at the University of Pittsburgh and Columbia University. Mr. Rannels took a position in Anne Arundel County as the Director of Transportation from 1948 to 1950, then as the supervisor of planning and purchasing from 1950 to 1952. Mr. Rannels took the position in 1952 as a Superintendent of Cecil County Public Schools where over the course of eight years he oversaw the construction of ten new schools. He left that position in 1960, moving to Ellicott City, and was appointed the Coordinator of Safety and Pupil Transportation of the Public Schools of Maryland until his retirement in 1978.

Mr. Rannels relocated to Clearwater, Florida, where he spent his time with his family and friends. He passed away September 25, 2007; he was 92.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The collection consists primarily of newspaper clippings and supplemented documents that chronicle Morris W. Rannels' term as superintendent in Cecil County, Maryland, from 1952 to 1960. Among the supplements of materials are photographs of building dedications; programs of graduations and school dedications; surveys of obsolete school buildings; and an evaluation of the county's financial needs.

The newspaper clippings were obtained mainly from the Cecil Democrat and the Cecil Whig. The articles chiefly describe Cecil County's financial needs to build new schools and renovate others and the issue of integration. Rannels also included personal items in the collection such as invitations to graduations, programs from various conventions, and photographs.

Rannels saved this collection for years and gave it to his close friend, Owen Crabb, in hopes that the latter could preserve the collection and make it a useful resource. Crabb contacted Margaret Trader at McDaniel College, where arrangements were made to have the collection preserved and put in the school's archive.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

- Box 1: 1952-1953 / 1953-1954
- Box 2: 1954-1955
- Box 3: 1955-1956 / 1956-1957
- Box 4: 1957-1958 / 1958-1959
- Box 5: 1959-1960
- Box 6: Miscellaneous
- Box 7: Series 2, 2008

## **INVENTORY**

### **BOX 1 (Series 1)**

#### **1952-1953**

The content of the articles contained in this collection mainly convey the county's financial needs to build new schools and renovate other schools, including a new school for African American students. During this academic year, the schools of Cecil County were evaluated and

a great deal of money was requested from the federal government to fund the certain renovations. The idea to renovate the schools and build new schools came about as a result of overcrowding in the schools and after the realization that many of the schools were in poor condition. The county's financial needs were not the only subject matter of the articles in the specific collection. Many of the articles discussed the county members' and parents' concerns and involvement in the county's plans to renovate the schools.

- Rannels becomes superintendent
  - Sartorius resigns
- Evaluation of schools
  - Overcrowding
  - Some schools in extreme poor condition
  - Rannels requests money to build new schools and to renovate others
  - School Bond Bill
- Community and parent involvement

### **1953-1954**

The contents of Mr. Rannels personal collection of newspaper clippings highlight the daily news stories that were pertinent to the Cecil County schooling system during the 1953-54 academic year. In his clippings he organized a chronological order of events that took place, from transportation improvements to new construction. The clippings highlight all the hirings, from principals to school board members, as well as teachers and janitors. The school year began with more than 7,000 students and 260 teachers starting the semester. To discuss issues such as school needs and new construction plans, 275 Cecil teachers attended the 86<sup>th</sup> Baltimore Convention. During the summer State Attorney General Rollins considers desegregation and attends the Supreme Court decision despite there being a unanimous vote by the school board to keep segregation in tact. At the end of the year many questions about school construction and integration were still left unanswered.

- State board of education
  - Votes that segregation stay in school pending the Supreme Court decision and those Negro students be denied admission to white schools.
  - As the summer comes to a close the biggest change for transportation is that it becomes mandatory that school busses have flashing signal lights on the front and rear of the vehicles to warn drivers before letting children off the bus.
- Columbia Press
  - Elkton high's yearbook is rated 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation.
- Carver School
  - Cecil Whig has huge story on the Carver School.
  - This school was built to serve the needs of 300 Negro students. The school housed both elementary and high school students.
  - The brand new facility had the new gymnasium, auditorium and cafeteria.
  - The new school would later be shut down and reformed into the school board office after the integration laws were passed.
- Elkton High School
  - Earlier in the year named Ernest Snodgrass as principal of school
  - Largest school in Cecil County
  - In November staged first homecoming in school history

- Integration
  - Integration brief is submitted by Attorney General Rollins.
  - States that “under no circumstances should little children of any race be used as guinea pigs to support anyone’s social theories.” This statement was made in reference to the numerous ideas of how to integrate the students.
  - Integration but on hold by state board.
- PTA
  - Last meeting was on December 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mr. Rannels is granted \$339,550 for Cecil County school purposes
  - Discussed the process of each county funding its own issues and analyzed the other construction issues in the county.

## **BOX 2 (Series 1)**

### **1954-1955**

This portion of the collection consists primarily of newspaper clippings for the school year of 1954-1955. Also included in this box of documents are a couple of newspapers in its entirety, personal invitations to Mr. Rannels, and copies of local published documents (such as MSTA publications). Through the collection, Rannels meticulously records the status of integration in Cecil County. Rannels also provides newspaper articles that discuss the financial situation of the Cecil County Public School System. Student enrollment, teacher hires/resignations, and school constructions/reconstructions are all topics in this particular collection.

- Integration
  - Brown v. Board of Education
  - Counties
- Segregation
  - Bainbridge Elementary segregation lawsuit
  - Bainbridge Elementary dismissal of lawsuit
- Construction
  - New schools
    - Chesapeake City Junior
    - Chesapeake Senior High
    - G. W. Carver School
      - Dedication program
    - Kenmore School
    - Conowingo School
    - Bainbridge Elementary
      - Dedication photography
    - Cecil Country Library
    - Federal Funding
- School Budgeting
  - Increase / Cutbacks
- School Expansion
  - Cecil County Schools
    - Bainbridge Elementary
    - North East High
    - Kenmore High

- Communism
  - Common Sense
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP)
- School Safety
  - Theft
  - Death
- Health
  - Medicine
    - Polio inoculations

### **BOX 3 (Series 1)**

#### **1955-1956**

The subject matter found within these clippings deal with estimated student enrolment for the schools, teacher shortage, salary negotiations for the teachers, and building plans and renovation of existing schools for the 1955-56 school year.

- Student enrollment
  - Numbers of enrollees increasing each year
- Teacher shortage
  - School sites pay as cause of teacher shortage
- Salary Negotiations
  - Teachers request raises – they feel they are understaffed and underpaid
  - Mr. Rannels lobbies for the raises and gets them for the teachers
- Appointment of principals
  - R. Sheck - Rising Sun H.S.
  - B. Corry - North East H.S.
  - S. Dixon – Chesapeake H.S.
- Building plans for new schools
  - Bainbridge elementary school
  - Hillsdale High School
- Renovation of Existing Schools
  - Cherry Hill
    - Community wants to renovate
    - School board deems school outdated/unusable.
- Dedication announcement
  - Bainbridge Elementary School
- Letters (2)
  - Thank you note for help with school matters from a colleague
  - Invitation to a symposium

## **1956-1957**

This part of the collection consists primarily of newspaper clippings from the 1956-57 school year. Memorabilia of a "Drive Safely" campaign are also included along with similar items from "Safety Day." Themes found within the articles include a special campaign of the teachers, who went door to door to meet the parents of their pupils in order to improve the school/home relationships of all involved. A grant was also issued to the public school system at this time and is included in these papers, along with bids to build more schools in the area, and a special honor in which Bainbridge Elementary school was showcased for an international school conference. Bainbridge was the first school with a skylight.

- Special Campaigns for the school systems
  - Drive Carefully – memorabilia includes two "Drive Safely" cards
  - Shoe leather for school bells – teachers went door to door to meet parents
  - Safety Day Parade – memorabilia includes flyers from event and news articles
- Grant given to schools
  - \$300 grant was the first issued to Cecil County Public Schools
- School attendance rises proving growth within the school system
- Integration is slow going (one article)
- Bainbridge Elementary School on exhibit
  - Sky lighted school used for international conference.

## **BOX 4 (Series 1)**

### **1957-1958**

This box of materials pertains to the Cecil County School System during the 1957-1958 school years. The main themes of the clippings address school issues such as construction, discipline, integration, administration and staff changes, health concerns, budgets, transportation, lunch programs, and various school functions such as graduation ceremonies and homecoming festivities. Other materials in the collection include bulletins, pamphlets, graduation invitations, and a handout from the 1957 School Administrators Conference held at the University of Pittsburgh.

- Integration
  - Chesapeake Elementary
  - Perryville Junior-Senior High
- Construction
  - New Schools
  - Elkton Senior High
  - Charlestown Elementary
  - Rising Sun Elementary
  - Bohemia Manor Junior-Senior High
- Discipline Issues
  - Principal Assaulted by Parent After Paddling Student
- Health Concerns
  - Flu Plan
  - Death of a Student at School
- Administrative Issues
- Redistricting
- Budget, Bond, and Taxation Issues

- Transportation
- U.S. versus U.S.S.R. Education
- Teacher Salaries
- Percentage of Cecil County Graduates that Continue Their Education

### **1958-1959**

This part of the collection consists primarily of newspaper clippings for the school year of 1958-1959. Also included in this set of documents are a few programs of events that Mr. Rannels attended, such as a basketball game featuring the Cecil County All-stars. There was a Historical Society Bulletin included in the folds of the collection, and a newspaper called *The Gist* in its entirety was also kept by Mr. Rannels. Many of the newspaper clipping included in this box focused on the newest high school of that year, Bohemia Manor High School. Opening in 1958, Rannels oversaw the funding and construction of Bohemia Manor, which was needed to help with the over-population of students. Through this collection Rannels meticulously documents the newly hired teachers and few resignations of that year, all PTA affairs, and budget and funding issues related to Cecil County Public Schools.

- School system –
  - Cecil county schools
    - Bohemia High School
  - School board
    - Bus routes
  - Promotions
  - Teacher resignations
- School budget
  - Income
  - Increase/decrease
- Integration
- School accreditation
- Youth
  - Problems
  - Conference
  - Child guidance
  - Establishment of leadership institute
- Expansion
  - Inclusion of Spanish classes
- School safety
  - Assault
    - Charges
- Construction
  - Costs of construction

### **BOX 5**

#### **1959-1960 (Series 1)**

These documents were collected by Mr. Rannels during the 1959-60 school year. This part of the collection chiefly focuses on the political battle between the Maryland State Legislature and

teachers in that state to gain across-the-board salary increases for the latter group. Other particular points of interest include Cecil County school budgets; new school construction and renovating of existing facilities; new teacher hiring; growing enrollment in the schools; an emphasis on science education; and comparisons between the educational systems of the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union. The vast majority of the documents are newspaper articles, many of which include photographs. Also included are event programs/menus; invitations; a high school graduation section from the *Cecil Whig*, and personal papers related to Rannels' employment transfer from Cecil County to Baltimore, Maryland.

- Science education
  - Elkton Senior High School science library
  - Emphasis in schools' curricula
  - Science fair
- Pupil transfers
- New school construction
  - Steel strike
- Purchase of schools
  - Colora School
  - Rising Sun School
- Teachers
  - Hiring
  - Resignations
- Enrollment
  - Growing numbers
- Budget
  - Cecil County Board of Education
  - Teacher salary increases
- Cecil County Council of P.T.A.s (C.C.C.P.T.A.)
- Educators
  - Morris W. Rannels
    - Superintendent of Cecil County Schools
    - Supervisor of Public School Transportation
      - Maryland Department of Public Education
  - Dr. Charles W. Willis
    - Superintendent of Harford County (MD) Schools
  - Milson C. Raver
  - Dr. May Russel
  - Thomas G. Pullen
  - Robert A. Gibson
    - Superintendent of Cecil County Schools
  - Dr. Ernest Snodgrass
    - Cecil County Supervisor of High Schools
    - Montgomery County Supervisor of Secondary Education
- Educational systems
  - Comparison
    - United States
    - Europe

- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
    - Russia
  - Dr. Charles W. Willis
- Educational conferences
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Maryland State Convention of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education
  - Fifth Annual Conference on School Legislation sponsored by the Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers and the Maryland State Teachers Association
  - First Annual Combined Conference of Public High School Principals and Supervisors
  - 92<sup>nd</sup> Maryland State Teachers Association Convention
  - Annual Conference on Children and Youth of the Cecil County Youth Commission
  - Lower Shore Educational Conference
- International Reading Association
- Corporal punishment
- Report cards
  - Redesign
- Elkton Junior High School
  - Curriculum
- George Washington Carver High School
- Graduation
  - Graduation Section
    - *Cecil Whig*
  - Invitations
    - Elkton Senior High School
    - Bohemia Manor High School
  - Bernard “Bugsy” Purdie
- The William A. Gunter Hall and The Thomas G. Pullen School
- John C. Cooke
  - Obituaries
- Cecil County Teachers’ Association
  - Morris W. Rannels

## **BOX 6 (Series 2)**

### **Miscellaneous**

Mostly a collection of correspondence, newspaper clippings, photos, microfilm printouts, graduation programs, and school dedications collected by Morris W. Rannels while he was superintendent of Cecil County Public Schools in Maryland from 1952-1960. There are several emails from 2006-2007 which give a description of the materials by Owen Crabb as he was looking for an individual or group to handle the collection. Much of the contents are concerned with building new schools and improving current schools.

There are two copies of “School Building Survey of Cecil County Maryland 1948”. In this, there are maps showing the population of students, location of schools, and proposed location of schools. There are four packets with information regarding the financial aspect of the

construction. Also, there is the original and several copies of “Statement of Need for Additional School Facilities”, December 29, 1952 by Morris Rannels.

The school board minutes printed from the microfilm range from 1926 to 1960. The information varies in content, but the focus is on the building of new schools and additions to current ones, the financing of the construction, and, after the Brown v. Board Supreme Court decision, integration. In the print out documents that we received from Mr. Rannels, the papers are arranged chronologically, except for a small section of 1955-56 meeting minutes at the end of the collection. On the microfilm these parts are all in chronological order. Inside the “Public School Laws of Maryland” are photographs of Conowingo School and dedication plaques from the other schools built from 1952-1960. Mr. Rannels’ name is on the cover, but there are no markings on the inside.

- Graduation/Dedication Programs
  - Chesapeake City
  - Elkton 1953
  - Bainbridge Elm 1956
  - Conowingo 1955
  - Bohemia Manor
- Surveys/Proposals
  - “School Building Survey...1948”
  - “Statement of Need...”
- Newspaper Clippings
- School Plaque Photos
  - Maywood Elm 1955
  - Rising Sun 1957-58
  - Cecil Manor 1954-55
  - Elkton HS 1957-58
  - Carver 1954
- Emails 2006-2007
  - Owen Crabb
  - Bryn Upton
  - Morris Rannels
  - Margaret Trader
- Finances
  - 4 packets of County Commissioner Bond Survey
    - Status of Construction
    - County/Local Debt
    - Purpose of Bond Issue
  - “Indicators of Relative Ability to Pay Taxes: Maryland”
  - 1956-57 Tax rates
- Letters
  - To Clement W. Mackie
    - Returning county audits, 1955-57
  - Contents of Safe Deposit Box 666
  - From Kay: Congratulatory
  - Supreme Court decision regarding segregation
  - From Janet Robinson

- 8/13/1954: 2 statements on integration
  - 11/30/1954: questions Rannels will be asked at meeting
- Curriculum Preference
  - January 1955
- Graphs
- School Board Notes
  - Integration / Segregation
  - Construction of Schools
    - Architectural bids
    - Financing
  - School Planning
    - Events
    - Budget
    - Faculty / Staff Updates
- Public School Laws of Maryland 1958
- Microfilm: Minutes from Minute Books of the Board of Education of Cecil County, Elkton, Maryland. 1926, 1927, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1948, 1950, and complete minutes from July 1952 through July 1960.
- Audio Tapes

**BOX 7 (Series 3)**

This box contains information on the processing of the processing the Morris Rannels Collection.

- 15 photographic prints showing the condition of the collection prior to processing.
- 3 photographic prints showing students working on the collection
- 8 papers written on what they learned by the students who processed the collection