

Collection #  
M 0120  
BV 1349–1366  
OM 0051

**MERTON W. GRILLS  
PAPERS, 1827–1956**

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 3 manuscript boxes, 17 bound volumes, 1 oversized folder, 3 photograph folders

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1827–1956

**PROVENANCE:** Merton W. Grills, Hagerstown, Indiana, 1963

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 1963.0012

**NOTES:**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Merton W. Grills (1872-1958) was born in Hendricks County, the son of James and Martha Grills. His father died when he was five, his mother's health failed, and he was thrown on his own resources at the age of twelve. Though small and frail, he supported himself, largely by doing farm work, through the remainder of his schooling. He managed to graduate from Richsquare Academy, in Lewisville, Indiana, in 1891. For a few years he taught in grade schools, until he felt, in his words, that "I was being forced to teach European Godless Kulture, and I could not...ruin good American children with such abhorrent training."

He settled in Hagerstown, Indiana, running an insurance agency and acting as a notary and a "counselor." He was a Boy Scout leader, and took a keen interest in community affairs. He had a literary bent, and often wrote short pieces and letters to newspapers. In 1950-1951 he was an officer of the Henry County Historical Society. He put together a memorial notebook about "Howard McCormick, Artist, 1875-1943." In the mid-1940s he became quite exercised about the Townsend Plan, and did some writing to refute its premises. Having supported his invalid mother as long as he lived, he never married. His will established a trust fund to aid worthy young men and women to attend college.

Sources:

Materials in Collection.

*Indiana History Bulletin*, Vol. 36, No. 1, January, 1959, p. 7.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes Grills' diaries, 1892-1894; 1908-1912; 1931-1956, a small amount of personal and business correspondence, 1908-1956; his writings on the histories of Wayne and Henry Counties; essays written while a student at the Richsquare Academy, Lewisville, Henry County, 1889-1891; notes on the Christian Endeavor Convention, Fort Wayne, Allen County, 1892; and miscellaneous poems, essays and other writings, including a manuscript literary magazine, 1897

Also included are correspondence and legal papers of the Grills family in Hagerstown, 1843-1905, including letters of Grills' grandfather, Henry S. Grills, written from Hagerstown, 1852-1858, and a record book of the Hagerstown and West River Turnpike Association, 1854-1858; an account book of Peter Schneck, Wayne County carpenter, 1827-1833; an account book for a Hagerstown woolen mill, 1847-1854; and an account book for the Hagerstown Canal Office, 1849-1851.

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