S0786 Rannells Family Papers, 1838-1914
176 Folders, 10 Oversized Items, 1 CD Of Digital Images

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Attorney Charles Samuel Rannells, who arrived in St. Louis in 1841, was a prominent participant in local business and political communities during a period of exponential growth for the region. He found friends among the city's elite, shared in its prosperity, served in public office and constructed a network of legal connections that extended across the country.

Rannells was born in 1814 in Mason County, Kentucky, where his father published a newspaper, the Washington Union. He practiced law in Kentucky and Mississippi before settling in St. Louis, where he quickly made a place for himself in the city's legal community. He moved in elite social and political circles as well, with memberships in the influential 2nd Presbyterian Church, Mercantile Library and the founding board of Bellefontaine Cemetery. He won election to the Missouri Senate on the Whig ticket in 1850 and was reelected in 1854.

By 1846, Rannells had also begun to invest in real estate, purchasing large tracts of land across St. Louis County. He had married Mary Warder, member of a prominent Springfield, Ohio, family in 1842. They built the house they named Woodside around 1850 on a 320-acre farm in what is now the St. Louis suburb of Maplewood. They had three children who survived to adulthood: Elizabeth, Edward, and John. In the 1860 census Rannells claimed ownership of roughly 2200 acres of land valued at $410,000. He also had substantial personal wealth in farm products and livestock; his household included six slaves and six farmhands.

Health problems cut this successful career short in the mid 1860s. A court-appointed trustee handled his financial affairs on behalf of Mary Rannells and their children for the rest of Charles' life. An 1866 assessment of the family's holdings listed nearly 2500 acres and outstanding mortgages of over $80,000. The trustee auctioned livestock and 1385 acres of the land to pay the family's debts and provide for their support. Five years later, he subdivided the farm in Maplewood into 85 lots to be sold in another auction. The family retained the house and a number of the lots.

After Charles Rannells' death in 1877, his son Edward (then in his early twenties) daughter Elizabeth and her husband Howard Brown lived at Woodside with their mother. Mary Warder Rannells died in 1896. Edward, like his father, dealt in real estate and practiced law; he also served as an associate judge of the St. Louis County Court. He lived at Woodside with his wife and two sons until his death in 1920.

SCOPE AND CONTENT
The Rannells Family Papers include approximately 3.5 cubic feet of correspondence, legal documents and household receipts. They have been organized into four series.

**Series 1: Business and personal papers of Charles S. Rannells**

The earliest and largest of these groups spans much of Rannells' working life, 1838 - 1865. It includes records of basic legal services he performed: drawing up wills, deeds, and powers of attorney, and managing estates. Extensive files of letters verify or disclaim debts owed to several large estates, notably those of fellow attorneys Beverly Allen, Augustus Kerr and Josiah Spalding. There are also indentures, promissory notes and other records representing innumerable real estate transactions for clients and on his own behalf.

This series also holds personal correspondence from his father, his Brother David Watson Rannells and other siblings, cousins and several members of his wife's family, the Warders, as well as from friends in his previous cities of residence.

**Series 2: Business and personal papers for Mary Rannells and family**

A second and considerably smaller set contains documents created by the trustee, some personal correspondence and records of property transactions by Mary Rannells and her children. These are dated from 1863 - 1896. There is also personal correspondence that discusses disagreements among the children over the value of jointly owned property and the settlement of their mother's estate.

**Series 3: Financial papers of Edward Warder Rannells**

Receipts of household expenditures and records of real estate transactions make up the bulk of this series. These are not comprehensive records for the period covered (1890-1914), but do provide significant information on the Maplewood property and on the family.

**Series 4: Oversized**

Real estate surveys, maps and posters advertising land auctions.

**FOLDER LIST:**

**SERIES ONE: Business and personal papers of Charles S. Rannells, 1838-1865**

**Box 1**

1. Legal Correspondence, 1830s
2. Legal Warrants & Records, 1837-1838
3. Legal Correspondence, 1842
4. Legal Correspondence, 1843
5. Legal Correspondence, 1844
6. Legal Correspondence, 1844
7. Legal Correspondence, 1845
8. Legal Correspondence, 1845
9. Legal Correspondence, 1845
10. Legal Correspondence, 1846
11. Legal Correspondence, 1846
12. Legal Correspondence, 1846
13. Legal Correspondence, 1847
14. Legal Correspondence, 1847
15. Legal Correspondence, 1847

Box 2

16. Legal Correspondence, 1848
17. Legal Correspondence, 1849
18. Legal Correspondence, 1850
19. Legal Correspondence, 1851
20. Legal Correspondence, 1852
21. Legal Correspondence, 1853
22. Legal Correspondence, 1854-55
23. Legal Correspondence, 1857
24. Legal Correspondence, 1858
25. Legal Correspondence, 1859
26. Legal Correspondence, 1860-1862
27. Legal Correspondence, Beverly Allen, 1843-1844
28. Legal Correspondence, Allen & Kerr, 1839-1844
29. Legal Correspondence, Allen & Kerr, 1845-1851
30. Legal Correspondence, John & Augustus Kerr
31. Legal Correspondence, John & Augustus Kerr
32. Legal Correspondence, John & Augustus Kerr

Box 3

33. Legal Correspondence, John & Augustus Kerr
34. Legal Correspondence, John & Augustus Kerr
35. Legal Correspondence, Mullen & Mitchell, 1846-1851
36. Legal Correspondence, Leon St. Cyr Estate, 1851
37. Legal Correspondence, Josiah Spalding Estate, 1852
38. Legal Correspondence, William Warder, 1844-1847
39. Legal Correspondence, Wood & Abbot, 1840-1852
40. Incorporation Papers, Washington College, 1855
41. Personal Correspondence--Family, Rannells
42. Personal Correspondence--Family, Bacon
43. Personal Correspondence--Family, Cadbury
44. Personal Correspondence--Family, Clarkson
45. Personal Correspondence--Family, Warder
46. Personal Correspondence--Friends
47. Personal Correspondence--Friends
48. Personal Correspondence--Friends
49. Personal Correspondence--Whig Party & Politics
50. Legal Papers, David Watson Rannells, 1853-1855
51. Receipts, Nathan Rannells, 1845-1854
52. Real Estate Records & Surveys, 1835-1851
53. Real Estate Records, 1839-1852

Box 4

54. Real Estate Records, 1840s and 1850s
55. Real Estate Records, Rannells personal, 1840s & 1850s
56. Real Estate Records, Rannells personal, 1848
57. Real Estate Records, Shands Addition, 1848-1863
58. Insurance Policies, 1852-1862
60. Account Book, J. Anderson & Co., 1855
61. Account Book, S.F. Summers, 1855
63. Account Book, Wm. Nisbet, 1846
64. Account Book, Lucas Simonds, Inc. 1853-54
65. Account Book, Benoist & Co., 1846
66. Account Book, 2nd Street Warehouses, 1849
67. Account Book, Southern Bank, 1863
68. Memo Book, Case Listings, 1835-1839
69. Memo Book, Real Estate Notes
70. Memo Book, Personal & Business Notes

Box 5

71. Cancelled Checks, 1849-1852 Cancelled Checks, 1849-1852
72. Cancelled Checks, 1853
73. Cancelled Checks, 1854
74. Cancelled Checks, 1855
75. Cancelled Checks, 1856
76. Cancelled Checks, 1857
77. Cancelled Checks, 1858-59
78. Cancelled Checks, 1861-62
79. Cancelled Checks, 1863
80. Cancelled Checks, 1864
81. Cancelled Checks, 1865
82. Cancelled Checks, Wm. Warder, 1850-53
83. Business Receipts, 1840s
84. Business Receipts, 1850
85. Business Receipts, 1851
86. Business Receipts, 1852
87. Business Receipts, 1853
88. Business Receipts, 1854
89. Business Receipts, 1855
90. Business Receipts, 1856
91. Business Receipts, 1857
92. Business Receipts, 1858
93. Business Receipts, 1859
94. Business Receipts, 1860
95. Business Receipts, 1861
96. Business Receipts, 1862

Box 6

97. Business Receipts, 1863
98. Business Receipts, 1864
99. 1866 Title Abstract of Rannells Property (Woodside)
100. Family Personal Receipts, Burials, 1854-1873
101. Medical Receipts, Charles' care, 1860s
102. Household Receipts, 1840s
103. Household Receipts, 1850s, no specific dates
104. Household Receipts, 1850
105. Household Receipts, 1851
106. Household Receipts, 1852
107. Household Receipts, 1853
108. Household Receipts, 1854
109. Household Receipts, 1855
110. Household Receipts, 1856
111. Household Receipts, 1857
112. Household Receipts, 1858
113. Household Receipts, 1859
114. Household Receipts, 1860s, no specific dates
115. Household Receipts, 1860
116. Household Receipts, 1861
117. Household Receipts, 1862
118. Household Receipts, 1863
119. Household Receipts, 1864
120. Household Receipts, 1865
121. Household Receipts, 1866

SERIES TWO: Business and personal papers for Mary Rannells and family, 1866-1901

Box 7

122. Legal Documents, Renick Guardianship, 1866-1876
123. Legal Documents, David Watson Rannells, 1869-1874
124. CS Rannells Estate Records, 1877
125. Legal Documents, Mary W. Rannells, 1871-1874
126. Legal Documents, Benjamin Warder for MWR, 1872-1876
127. Personal Correspondence, Edward Rannells, 1871
128. Property Taxes, 1874, 1875, 1876, & 1881
129. Household Receipts, 1867
130. Household Receipts, 1868
131. Household Receipts, 1869
132. Household Receipts, 1870s, no specific dates
133. Household Receipts, 1870
134. Household Receipts, 1871
135. Household Receipts, 1872
136. Household Receipts, 1873
137. Household Receipts, 1874
138. Household Receipts, 1875
139. Household Receipts, 1876
140. Household Receipts, 1877
141. Household Receipts, 1880-88
142. Family Correspondence & Transactions, 1896-1901

**SERIES THREE: Financial papers of Edward Warder Rannells, 1890 - 1914**

**Box 8**

143. Business Records, 1890-1902
144. Paid Notes & Deeds, Edw. Rannells, 1895-1904
145. Paid Notes, John Rannells, 1898-1905
146. Records of Animal Purchases
148. Real Estate, Deeds & leases, 1876-1889
149. Real Estate, Deeds & Leases, 1894-1899
150. Real Estate, Deeds & Leases, 1900-1906
151. Property Taxes, 1886-1889
152. Property Taxes, 1890-1898
153. Property Taxes, 1901-1905
155. Subdivision Records & Receipts, 1896
156. Cancelled Checks, 1894-1897
157. Cancelled Checks, 1900
158. Cancelled Checks, 1902-1903

**Box 9**

159. Cancelled Checks, 1905
160. Cancelled Checks, 1906
161. Household Receipts, 1894
162. Household Receipts, 1895
163. Household Receipts, 1896
164. Household Receipts, 1897
165. Household Receipts, 1898
166. Household Receipts, 1899
167. Household Receipts, 1900-1902
168. Household Receipts, 1909
169. Household Receipts & Records, no specific dates
170. Home Insurance & Inventory, 1896-1902
171. Legal Correspondence, 1914
172. Blank Deeds & Indentures
173. Unidentifiable Business Papers
SERIES FOUR: Oversized maps, property surveys and/or auctions of real estate offerings (stored in WHMC director's office)

a) Survey 1897, Auguste Chouteau and Louis courtois Son, T.43NR3E
b) Copy of Survey 359, Prairie du Pont Village by W.W. on 2 May 1851. Original by W. Elias Rector, 23 July 1808 (in map case)
c) Copy of Land Survey, Commons Field Tract, Village of Cahokia, 31 Dec. 1809
d) Copy of Land Survey, Village of Prairie du Pont, 31 Dec. 1809. Copy by W Warder May 1851
e) Highland ' A Western Addition to the City of St. Louis
f) Plat of Prairie DuPont Common Fields
g) Webster Groves ' subdivision at auction, October 2, 1847, by Robert Renick
h) Murdoch Farm (Shrewsbury) 350 acres at auction, May 10, 1869, McKenzie's subdivision
i) Hutchinson & Wylie's subdivision (along the Rock Road west of the city) by John A. Watson
j) North St. Louis, auction, May 25, 1875. Carr & Haynes, Real Estate Agents
k) Deed copy, General Land Office to Joseph Genereuse. 160 acres, New Madrid. Original 1835; copy made 8/24/1871

INDEX:

Alexander Turnbull & Co., f. 8
Allen, Beverly, f. 20, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33
Allen, Frederick, f. 5
Anderson, John L., f. 31
Andrews, L. K., f. 49
Archer, E.E., f. 23
Armstrong, Clinton, f. 10
Atkinson, John C., f. 8
Bacon & Hallowell, f. 11
Bacon, William H., f. 11, 42
Baldwin, J., f. 46
Barry, R.F., f. 12
Barton, S. C., f. 47
Bates, Edward, f. 40
Beatty, William B., f. 11
Benton, Thomas H. Jr., f. 27, 35
Betts, James, f. 12, 15
Betts, Sarah, f. 12
Blackwell, R. f. 27
Blow, Taylor, f. 26
Blow, William, f. 30
Bounty Lands, f. 6, 10
Bradford, H.E., f. 27
Bragg, R.W., f. 46
Breckenridge, Samuel, f. 26, 40
Briggs, D.C., f. 48
Briggs, R.W., f. 48
Brock, Elizabeth, f. 4
Brock, Moses, f. 2
Brown, Elizabeth (Rannells) f. 142
Burnett, Isaac, f. 4, 14
Cadbury, Joel, f. 7, 43
Camden, John, f. 4
Campbell, Robert, f. 23, 27, 29, 31
Carlin, Hugh, f. 26
Chambers, Ludlow, f. 15
Chambers, William, f. 10, 13
Charless & Blow, f. 13
Chase, Elisha, f. 28
Church, Willard, f. 35
Clark & Eck, f. 39
Clark, John, f. 16
Clarke, Isaac W., f. 5
Clarkson, B.B., f. 44
Clarkson, Caroline, f. 44
Clarkson, Charles, f. 44
Clarkson, E.D., f. 44
Clarkson, Elijah Smith, f. 44
Clarkson, Henry, f. 44
Clarkson, J. J., f. 44
Clarkson, Nathan, f. 44
Clarkson, Peter, f. 44
Clarkson, William, f. 44
Clemens, James Jr., f. 31, 34
Clemens, James, f. 16
Clower, David, f. 2
Cobb, Charles, f. 31
Coleman, James D., f. 3
Coleman, N.D., f. 1
Coleman, Reuben L., f. 18
Collins, Lewis, f. 48
Cooke, William M., f. 24, 25
Cornwell, A., f. 4
Covington, John W., f. 2
Craddock, Paschal D. (P.D.), f. 9, 21
Crittendon & McGavin, f. 13
Crain, John, f. 8
Dabney, A.L., f. 46
Darby, Hiram, f. 11
Darst, Robert A., f. 15
Davis, Charles A., f. 22
Davis, Greer, f. 22
Davis, John M., f. 5
Dent, F., f. 4
Diller, Adam, f. 17
Donnel, Henry, f. 11
Dorsey, William H., f. 11
Dougherty, David, f. 11
Drake, Charles, f. 3, 4
Duke, Basil, f. 24
E. B. Smith & Co., f. 8
Eads, John J., f. 8
Eamon, R., f. 46
Easton, Joesph, f. 6
Easton, Rufus, f. 6
Edwards, David, f. 18
Ellis, James P., f. 47
Ellison, John, f. 11
Evans, John, f. 29
Ferryl, John C., f. 2
Field, George B. (G.B.) , f. 3, 8
Field, Spofford, f. 3
Finley, I, f. 4
Finney, John Lee, f. 38
Forman, G., f. 48
Forman, Thomas, f. 6
Gaffey, Samuel, f. 5
Gamble, Hamilton, f. 49
Gary, L.E., f. 13
Geyer & Dayton, f. 14
Gibbs, C.D., f. 1
Goza, Joshua, f. 2
Green, Taylor, f. 12
Griswold, M. D., f. 4
Groom, William, f. 12
Hallowell, Charles, f. 11
Hampton, Henry, f. 34
Handley, John B., f. 11
Hardin, C. H., f. 8
Hardy, Nathaniel, f. 4
Hart, James H., f. 21
Hartly, John, f. 1
Harvey, C.K., f. 29
Haun, William G., f. 2
Hayden, J.H., f. 3
Heard, John, f. 27
Henderson, George, f. 48
Hickock, Luther W., f. 11, 18
Higbee, F.M., f. 13
Hinton, William O., f. 8
Hodges, C.D., f. 33
Holloway, James, f. 11
Howard, Elisha, f. 27
Howe, Alexander, f. 7
Howell, W.D., f. 7
Hughes, James, f. 3
Hull, William C., f. 7
Hundley, Thomas, f. 21, 22
Hunt, Charles L., f. 25
Hunter, Felix, f. 8, 11
Jackson, Charles S., f. 5
Jacobs, Charles A., f. 2
Jamison, John, f. 6
Johnson, Andrew J., f. 2
Jones, William V., f. 4
Kerr, Augustus, f. 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34
Kerr, John, f. 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34
Key, John James, f. 46
Key, Thomas M., f. 6, 48
Kimble, Hiram f. 10
King, Rufus, f. 9
Klett, Frederick, f. 3
Lacy, S.P., f. 12
Lawrence, A.H., f. 8
Lee, Charles M., f. 4
Leonard, A., f. 12
Light, Martin, f. 5
McCarty, Jonatha, f. 8
McCloud, W.E., f. 12
McClung, Calvin M., f. 25
McClung, Kitty G., f. 25
McClurg, Joseph, f. 6
McDonald & Yates, f. 13
McKay, H.R., f. 48
McLean, Martin, f. 5
McNair, Alexander, f. 10
McPherson, William, f. 20
Magee, Jacob, f. 2
Marshall, Thomas A., f. 47
Marsteller, S.A., f. 3
Matthews, Amos, f. 33
May, Joseph D., f. 20
Menzies, I. W., f. 48
Minturn, Charles, f. 48
Mitchell, Roland, f. 9
Moore, Captain B.D., f. 6
Moore, I.B., f. 3
Morrison, Matt, f. 17
Moseley, Thomas Jr., f. 48
Myers, William, f. 26
Nauvoo, Illinois, f. 10
Need, Preston, f. 32
Norcum, Frederick, f. 20
O'Rourke, John, f. 39
Paddack, Alex., f. 38
Parks, Joseph, f. 11
Parrish, E. H., f. 21, 22
Patterson, D.L., f. 4, 5
Patterson, William, f. 12
Payne, E.C., f. 49
Payne, Elizabeth Howard, f. 12
Payton, Thomas F., f. 7
Pease, A., f. 47
Philipson, Joseph, f. 4
Pollock, James, f. 28
Porter, William, f. 29
Priest, John G., f. 11
Ralls, John, f. 12
Ralls, John, f. 32
Ralston, Warren & Wheat, f. 3
Rankin, Charles S., f. 27
Rannells, David Vance, f. 41
Rannells, David Watson, f. 41, 50
Rannells, Edward W., f. 142
Rannells, John W., f. 142
Rannells, Mary Warder, f. 142
Rannells, Sally, f. 41
Rannells, Samuel, f. 41
Raymond, T.P., f. 3
Reed & Hardin, f. 8, 10
Reid & Hardin, f. 12
Reid, Hugh, f. 7
Rensberg, Jacob, f. 24
Rhodes, Samuel, f. 26
Richey, James, f. 3
Ripka, Joseph, f. 4, 10, 13
Roberts, Joseph L., f. 5
Robertson, Thomas, f. 2
Robinson, Lawrence B., f. 12
Rockhill, Thomas, f. 30
Rogers, William E., f. 27
Rucker, Alfred M., f. 18
Russell & Mercer, f. 18
Russell, William, f. 28
Ryder, Patrick, f. 10
Sac & Fox Half Breed Reservation, f. 18
Seaton, Hiram, f. 24
Shaw, L.B., f. 13
Sheldon, David, f. 8
Sheldon, William R., f. 8
Shelton, John G., f. 18
Shelton, John, f. 6
Shook, David, f. 7
Sibley, William, f. 8
Skinker, Thomas, f. 40
Slavery (legal cases) f. 3, 5, 7, 22
Slavery (CSR ownership) f. 6, 13, 44, 48
Sloan, E.W.F., f. 47
Smedes, W.C., f. 46
Smith, Henry, f. 12
Smith, James R., f. 6
Smith, William Oden, ff. 3, 48
Smyth, Isaac, f. 14
Soulard, James, f. 27
Starr, Henry W., f. 21
Steamboat 'Harry of the West', f. 5
Steamboat 'Mendota', f. 14
Steamboat 'Mermaid', f. 16
Steamboat 'Olive Branch', f. 12, 15
Steamboat 'St. Croix', f. 16
Steamboat 'Relief', f. 38
Stockton, L.D., ff. 11, 48
Strother, R.M., f. 5
Sturgeon, Isaac H., f. 17, 40, 47
Sturgis, Louis, f. 1
Sutliff, Mary, f. 17, 20, 21, 46
Tarpley, C.S., f. 48
Taxes, f. 11
Taylor, Isaac W., f. 20
Taylor and Green, f. 3
Thompson, William, f. 6
Thornhill, Thomas, ff. 3, 48
Unger, Richard A., f. 24
Valentine, C. H., f. 8
Vaughan, William L., f. 9
Virgin, Joel C., f. 3
Wallace, A., f. 6
Wand, William, f. 20
Warder, Ann Aston, f. 45
Warder, Benjamin, f. 45
Warder, Jeremiah, f. 45
Warder, William, f. 26, 45
Warren, C.A., f. 3
Warren, Thomas J., f. 7
Waugh, James, f. 7
Whig Party, f. 49
Wilson, James, f. 35
Wood, Samuel C., ff. 4, 6, 7, 10
Woodruff, John B., f. 17
Woods, H.C., f. 46
Woodson, William C., f. 8, 9