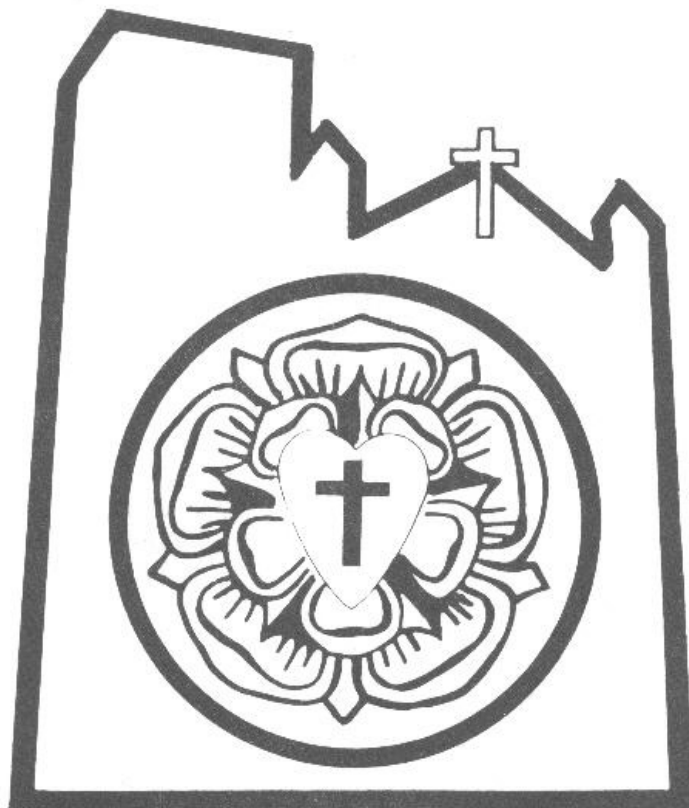


The Martin Luther Preparatory School Papers **An Inventory**



Archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Mequon, Wisconsin

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The Martin Luther Preparatory School Papers

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Collection Level Description

Title: The Martin Luther Preparatory School Papers

Dates: 1963-1995

Extent: 0.89 meters of textual records

Historical sketch:

Several essays on the beginnings of Martin Luther Preparatory School have been produced since the mid-1980s. Mark Henrich's Senior Church History paper, "How MLA in New Ulm, Minnesota Became MLPS in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin," comes from a member of the final graduating class of Martin Luther Academy. It offers some interesting insights and detailed research done on the process of creating MLPS. Much of the history is, of course, devoted to the transition from Martin Luther Academy in New Ulm to Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien. However, Henrich does offer some insights into the one synodical school that was closed to form MLPS – Northwestern Lutheran Academy, located in Mobridge, South Dakota. Further details on the history and closure of Northwestern Lutheran Academy can be found in the following Senior Church History papers: "A History of Northwestern Lutheran Academy" by John Schroeder and "The Closing of Northwestern Lutheran Academy" by Mark Wilde. In 1993, Ted Olson produced the Church History paper, "Martin Luther Preparatory School: Genesis" also on the topic of the creation of MLPS. The last half of his essay details changes that the school underwent during its brief history up until 1993.

One essay has been written on the closing of the school. In 1995, Paul Baur wrote, "The Closing of Martin Luther Preparatory School." His Senior Church History essay examines the details of the synodical school structure issue, as well as what led to the decision to close MLPS and amalgamate it with Northwestern Preparatory School to form Luther Preparatory School located on the former Northwestern campus in Watertown, Wisconsin in the fall of 1995. All essays mentioned here can be checked out at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Due to the brevity of Martin Luther Preparatory School's history, little else has been written about the school. The 1990 synodical history, *Our Church: Its Life and Mission*, offers some interesting insights into the formation of the school, as well as the history of the school up until 1990. By the time of the writing of that book, the enrollment at MLPS had dwindled to nearly 180 students after opening with 362 students. That same year, Pastor Kenneth Brokmeier was assigned to serve as recruitment director for MLPS and in its closing years, MLPS had an enrollment near 220. During Martin Luther Preparatory School's brief history, only one structural addition was made to the MLPS campus proper – a music facility, which was dedicated in 1988.

On 18 May 1995, the final graduate of Martin Luther Preparatory School walked away with diploma in hand. With that, the brief history of Martin Luther Preparatory School drew to a close after 16 years of God's grace. The school had instructed 4116 students, while matriculating 927. Of those 927, approximately half continued their education at DMLC, NWC or MLC.

Custodial history:

The custodial history of the Martin Luther Preparatory School papers is sketchy at best. Most of the materials have been donated over the years from various sources to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library and the WELS Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin. A large portion of the materials in this collection

came from the files of Rev. Edmund Schulz, who served as chairman of the MLPS Board of Control from 1978 until his retirement in 1989. From his files come many of the materials from the early years of the school, as well as many of the Board of Control documents from his time there. Another large portion of this collection was donated to the WELS Archives from the Archives of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota in September 2004. It is believed that these materials were stored at some point in time with the Northwestern College collection, formerly housed at Martin Luther College, instead of with the archives of Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin. They were donated to the WELS Archives when the NWC Collection was moved to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Donations were also made to the WELS Archives by Ms. Doris Schoenike on 7 August 1996. Little else is known about the custodial history of the MLPS collection.

Scope and Content:

The collection is made up of materials produced by or about Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin during its brief history from 1978 to 1995.

The collection reflects the brief life of a vibrant, college preparatory school established for the purpose of feeding students to the worker training colleges of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This collection reflects the mixture of joy and tension that resulted from the 1978-1979 closure of Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, South Dakota and the relocation of Martin Luther Academy, New Ulm, Minnesota. This collection reflects the challenges that Martin Luther Preparatory School faced during its brief history to recruit students to enroll on its campus, due to the remote location of the school, the mixed feelings in the synod that resulted from the 1979 amalgamation and the seeming attitude that the school lacked permanence. This series leaves the researcher wondering what could have been, if MLPS would have been developed to its fullest potential. This collection also reflects the joys and progress of the school as it produced many called workers during its brief history. Above all, this collection leaves no doubt that the Lord used MLPS as his instrument for the building up of his kingdom and the synod at-large during its brief decade and a half of existence.

The collection consists of the following series:

Series 1: Documents regarding the MLPS Board of Control

Series 2: Documents regarding the MLPS campus

Series 3: Documents regarding MLPS campus worship

Series 4: Documents regarding the MLPS faculty

Series 5: Documents regarding the MLPS Ladies' Auxiliary

Series 6: MLPS publications

Series 7: Documents regarding MLPS recruitment

Subseries 1: MLPS catalogs – 1979-1995

Subseries 2: MLPS recruitment brochures and calendars – 1978-1993

Subseries 3: Ram-O-Grams, MLPS Stepping Stones and recruitment correspondence – 1979-1992

Subseries 4: Recruitment reports to the MLPS Board of Control – 1980-1986

Subseries 5: Recruitment audio-visual aids – 1983-1992

Series 8: Newspaper clippings

Series 9: Documents regarding student life

Series 10: Documents regarding synodical school structure

Series 11: *The Rambler*

Source of supplied title: Title based on the provenance of the records.

Arrangement: See appendix A for arrangement of the folders in the boxes.

Restrictions: None.

Accruals: The collection remains open for future accruals.

Series level description

The Martin Luther Preparatory School Papers

Series 1: Documents regarding the MLPS Board of Control

Dates: 1978-1995

Extent: 14 folders, 24 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, agendas, minutes, reports and other documents created by or for the MLPS Board of Control. This series includes documents from the 1978-1979 MLPS Interim Committee that was in charge of the transition from MLA/NLA to MLPS. This series includes all of the president's reports to the Board of Control, as well as the Board's reports to the synod at-large. This series also includes documents regarding on-campus dances. This series reflects in great detail the brief history of Martin Luther Preparatory School from its early beginnings in the late 1970s through a time of growth and decline during the 1980s and finally its final years that led to the permanent closure of the school in 1995.

Series 2: Documents regarding the MLPS campus

Dates: 1963-1992

Extent: 8 folders, 5.9 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents regarding the campus of Martin Luther Preparatory School and the staff that maintained that campus. This series includes photographs, postcards, booklets and documents regarding the original owner of the campus – Campion Jesuit High School. It is believed these documents were used in the decision for purchasing the campus from the Jesuits, since they come from the files of Board of Control chairman, Rev. Edmund Schulz. This series includes photographs from the WELS' acquisition of the Campion campus in 1978. Included in this series are documents on MLPS business manager, Doug Wellumson; maintenance staff job descriptions; the Lutheran Girl Pioneers Case (1992); documents regarding faculty homes and the MLPS music facility, as well as correspondence and reports documenting asbestos removal. This series reflects the changes that the Prairie du Chien campus underwent over the years.

Series 3: Documents regarding MLPS campus worship

Dates: 1979-1988

Extent: 1 folder, 1.3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of bulletins, rites of installation and ordination, photographs and other documents pertaining to opening services, installations, dedications and graduation services held at MLPS. Of note are service folders from the dedication service of Martin Luther Preparatory School on 14 October 1979.

Series 4: Documents regarding the MLPS faculty

Dates: 1969-1989

Extent: 6 folders, 8.6 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, calls, faculty handbooks and other documents pertaining to the MLPS faculty. This series includes the correspondence and calls issued for the position of MLPS president in 1982, the MLPS dean of students between 1983 and 1988, and MLPS tutors. This series also includes reviews of some of the faculty members and the documents pertaining to the Prof. John Denninger Case (1969-1982). This series reflects some of the challenges MLPS faced in filling faculty and administrative positions, especially during the 1980s.

Series 5: Documents regarding the MLPS Ladies' Auxiliary

Dates: 1981-1989

Extent: 1 folder, 0.7 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents regarding the founding of the MLPS Ladies' Auxiliary, such as the organization's constitution, plus a variety of other documents regarding meetings and activities of this organization.

Series 6: MLPS publications

Dates: 1980-1993

Extent: 1 folder, 2.2 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of copies of *The Ram-Page*, the school newspaper produced by students of MLPS. This series also includes various issues of the *MLPS Conference Reporter* and reports for various pastor and teacher conferences.

Series 7: Documents regarding MLPS recruitment

Dates: 1978-1995

Extent: 9 folders, 19 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of brochures, calendars, catalogs, correspondence and other documents used to promote Martin Luther Preparatory School to the youth of the synod and to recruit them for enrollment. This series also includes two recruitment visual aids – the 1983 “A Step to Service” filmstrip with accompanying cassette tape and the 1988 “A Place to Grow” video. This series also includes a cassette tape with recordings from past MLPS Christmas concerts mailed to congregations across the synod.

Subseries 1: MLPS catalogs – 1979-1995

Subseries 2: MLPS recruitment brochures and calendars – 1978-1993

Subseries 3: Ram-O-Grams, *Stepping Stones* and recruitment correspondence – 1979-1992

Subseries 4: Recruitment reports to the MLPS Board of Control – 1980-1986

Subseries 5: Recruitment audio-visual aids – 1983-1992

Series 8: Newspaper clippings

Dates: 1978-1995

Extent: 1 folder, 1.3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of newspaper clippings from the local *Prairie du Chein Courier Press* regarding the purchase of the Campion campus, the creation and dedication of MLPS, various events that took place during MLPS' history and the closing of the school in 1995.

Series 9: Documents regarding student life

Dates: 1979-1993

Extent: 1 folder, 1.9 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of student handbooks, financial aid pamphlets, *Campus Criers* and other documents concerning the complex lives of preparatory school students.

Series 10: Documents regarding synodical school structure

Dates: 1985-1991

Extent: 5 folders, 9.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, reports and other documents regarding the synodical school structure issue that surfaced in the mid-1980s until its conclusion with the amalgamation decision of the 1995 WELS Convention. Included in this series are MLPS self-study reports from the mid-1980s, reports from the 1989-1990 Prep School Study Committee, responses from the faculties of all schools involved, responses and correspondence from concerned individuals and groups in the synod and other documents pertaining to this topic. This series offers a great deal of insight into the tension and difficulty that this issue caused in the WELS during this period of time.

Series 11: The Rambler

Dates: 1980-1993

Extent: 15.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of yearbooks produced by the student bodies of Martin Luther Preparatory School. This series reflects the rise and growth of MLPS as it began as a new synodical preparatory school in the early 1980s. This series also reflects the decline of the school as amalgamation was about to cut short the brief history of MLPS.

Appendix A

The Martin Luther Preparatory School Papers

Arrangement

Box 1: Folders 1-30

Box 2: Folders 31-47; Yearbooks

Box 3: Yearbooks

Series 1: Documents regarding the MLPS Board of Control
Folders 1-14

Series 2: Documents regarding the MLPS campus
Folders 15-22

Series 3: Documents regarding MLPS campus worship
Folder 23

Series 4: Documents regarding the MLPS faculty
Folder 24-29

Series 5: Documents regarding the MLPS Ladies' Auxiliary
Folders 30

Series 6: MLPS publications
Folders 31

Series 7: Documents regarding MLPS recruitment
Subseries 1: MLPS catalogs – 1979-1995
Folders 32-35

Subseries 2: MLPS recruitment brochures and calendars – 1978-1993
Folder 36

Subseries 3: Ram-O-Grams, *Stepping Stones* and recruitment correspondence – 1979-1992
Folder 37

Subseries 4: Recruitment reports to the MLPS Board of Control – 1980-1986
Folder 38

Subseries 5: Recruitment audio-visual aids – 1983-1992
Folder 39-40

Series 8: Newspaper clippings
Folder 41

Series 9: Documents regarding student life
Folder 42

Series 10: Documents regarding synodical school structure
Folders 43-47

Series 11: *The Rambler*