The personal papers of William Scully, if there ever were any, were lost in his London home during World War II. Some of his business records and correspondence are retained in the offices of the Scully Estates in Lincoln, Illinois, and in Beatrice, Nebraska. Without them, the Scully biography would have been limited to newspaper stories (which are largely hostile), to interviews, and to public records that contain many entries which apply to William Scully.

Essential to this study were the private business records of William Scully found in his estate offices. Public records have been fully explored in the Logan County, Illinois, courthouse, the Marion County, Kansas, courthouse, and in the public land records of the old General Land Office, now located in the General Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. Some public records, appropriate to the Irish years, were found in the Office of State Papers, Dublin Castle, and important newspapers were located in the National Library, Dublin. Other Irish and English newspapers were found in the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale.

Significant additions to this biography were found in newspapers and manuscripts located at the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, and in the Black and Williams Papers as well as the Oglesby Papers of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield. Farrell Library, Kansas State University, had most of the general information needed, and the Case Collection, of the Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, provided unique holdings.

Discussion of the life and activity of William Scully with tenants, agents, and owners, as well as with knowledgeable onlookers in the vicinity of the Scully lands, was an important source for the elusive story of Scully landlordism.

After I wrote my master's thesis on “The Scully Land System in Marion County, Kansas,” which was completed at Kansas State University in 1947, Paul James Beaver prepared a master's thesis with the title “William Scully and the Scully Estates of Logan County, Illinois,” which was completed at Illinois State University in 1964. Russell LaVerne Berry's doctoral dissertation in agricultural economics on
"The Scully Estate and Its Cash-Leasing System in the Midwest" was completed at Ohio State University in 1966. Each of these contains original materials not found elsewhere. Their combined bibliography, somewhat overlapping, covers twenty-one pages. For specific sources used in this biography see the citations in the notes.