

Record Series #: 1121-064.19
Name: Springfield Terrace School Community Collection
Dates: 1990-2024, no date
Extent/Size: 5 folders, 45 digital files (0.25 cubic feet; 28 GB storage)
Language: English

Landmark History:

The Springfield Terrace School building is located at 707 Hastings Street. The school is surrounded by modest single-family residential lots to its north and west, and industrial and commercial properties to its south and east. The surrounding area is characterized by late 19th to early 20th century working-class African American residential neighborhoods, along with commercial and industrial activities. The one-story, wood-frame building featuring four classrooms was built in 1926 and serves as an example of a school designed to educate Black pupils who were excluded from most of the buildings and resources of Chatham County's public education system in the early-20th century. At a time when African American schools throughout the state were inadequate, the school was a beacon of hope and continues to occupy a prominent place in the history of the community. Mrs. Pearl Lee Smith, a community activist and leader, was instrumental in securing the land and funding for the school, and in 1958 it was renamed in her honor. Additions were added in 1952 and 1959 to increase capacity and better serve the surrounding African American residential neighborhoods, including Springfield Terrace, Waterworks, Brickyard, and Carver Village. The school served as an institutional and civic anchor for the area until it closed in 1991. The building was briefly used as a transitional school and in 1999, the building reopened as the home of Oglethorpe Academy. Oglethorpe Academy was the first start-up charter school in the state of Georgia. In 2004, the school's name changed to Oglethorpe Charter School. Oglethorpe Charter School relocated in 2012 and as of 2024 the building was vacant. The school building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2022 in recognition of its significance in Education, Ethnic Heritage-Black, and Architecture.

Scope and Content:

The Springfield Terrace School Community Collection was created through the Savannah Community Memory Project during a collecting event in August 2024. The collection contains digital reproductions of photographs, funeral programs, as well as seven oral history interviews. There is one folder of written reflection prompt cards from area residents.

System of Arrangement and Ordering:

Files are both physical and digital in format. Digital files are arranged according to donor or interviewee. Physical files are arranged by donor and subject.

Conditions Governing Access:

None

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Digital Access:

Oral Histories are available through the [Voices of Savannah page](#). Select digitized materials are available through our [Online Catalog](#).

Access Points:

Baker, Barbara
Berksteiner, Bettye
Brown, Leonard
Georgia – Savannah
Lockett, Lydia
Neighborhoods – Carver Village
Neighborhoods – Springfield Terrace
Neighborhoods – Waterworks
Neighborhoods – Brickyard
Nesbit, Martha
Price, Brenda
Schools – African American
Schools - Oglethorpe Charter Academy
Schools – Pearl Lee Smith School
Schools – Springfield Terrace School
Simmons, Betty

Preferred Citation:

Record Series 1121-064.19, Springfield Terrace School Community Collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Collected on:

August 16-17, 2024

Processed by:

K. Zacovic, September 2024

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Inventory:

Physical Files [housed in Box 1121-064-002]

<i>Folder #</i>	<i>Description</i>
1121-064.19_001	Materials donated by Leonard Brown: Reproductions of Helen Fletcher's funeral program; photocopies of articles from the <i>Savannah Tribune</i> related to William du Henri Brown and his involvement in Springfield Terrace School, 1933-2022.
1121-064.19_002	Info sheet about the revival of Springfield Terrace School. Donated by Shawn Hearn, 2024
1121-064.19_003	Faculty Directory for Pearl Lee Smith School in 1977-1978. Donated by Dr. Virginia Edwards Maynor.
1121-064.19_004	Prompt Cards with written reflections from area residents, 2024.*
1121-064.19_005	Written reflection and reproduction of photographs from Romania Simmons Alford, a former student of Pearl Lee Smith School, 2024

Digital Files [housed in E-Archives]

See attached inventories for detailed descriptions and identified individuals of Digitized Items

<i>Folder #</i>	<i>Description</i>
	Scanned items from residents (34 files)
1121-064.19_006	Donor 1: Baker, Barbara [2 files]
1121-064.19_007	Donor 2: Berksteiner, Bettye [4 files]
1121-064.19_008	Donor 3: Brown, Leonard [8 files]
1121-064.19_009	Donor 4: Lockett, Lydia [4 files]
1121-064.19_010	Donor 5: Nesbit, Martha [16 files]
1121-064.19_011	Oral History Interviews (9 files)
	Interview 1: Baker, Barabara, August 16, 2024
	Interview 2: Berksteiner, Bettye, August 16, 2024 [3 files]
	Interview 3: Brown, Leonard, August 16, 2024
	Interview 4: Lockett, Lydia, August 16, 2024
	Interview 5: Nesbit, Martha, August 16, 2024
	Interview 6: Price, Brenda, August 16, 2024
	Interview 7: Simmons, Betty, August 17, 2024

Digitized Items Inventory

Note: Identifications provided by donor at point of collection.

Donor 1: Baker, Barbara

<i>Item #</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Funeral program for Florence Henerietta Williams, April 24, 1990 [2 files]

* Prompt Cards include topics that encourage written reflection about neighborhood history.

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Donor 2: Berksteiner, Bettye

- 1 Program for the closing of Pearl Lee Smith Elementary School, May 31, 1991 [2 files]
- 2 Final newsletter from Pearl Lee Smith School. Includes a student roster, June 7, 1991 [2 files]

Donor 3: Brown, Leonard

- 1 Funeral program for Helen Zenobia Fletcher Scroggins, June 23, 2022 [2 files]
- 2 Funeral program for Mrs. Helen B. Fletcher, February 29, 2000 [4 files]
- 3 Image of headstone of William DuHenri Brown, buried in Laural Grove South Cemetery, no date [1 file]
- 4 Image of headstone of Lydia Burns, Joseph Burns, Henry Burns, J. Burns Brown and Mary Burns, buried in Laurel Grove South, no date [1 file]

Donor 4: Lockett, Lydia

- 1 Lydia Riddle (left), Denise Halloway (right) in sixth grade, age 11, for the end of year Prom dance at Pearl Lee Smith school, no date [1 file]
- 2 (left to right) Helen Fletcher, Lydia Lockett (donor), and Eric Cook at the sixth grade Prom event at Pearl Lee Smith School, no date [1 file]
- 3 Sixth grade Prom event at Pearl Lee Smith School, (left to right) Annette Sanders, Randy Hamilton, Lydia Lockett (donor), and Genard Curtis in the school multipurpose room, no date [1 file]
- 4 (left to right) Dwayne Groover, Lydia Lockett (donor), Robert Eady [spelling?], and Denise Halloway at the Pearl Lee Smith School sixth grade Prom, no date [1 file]

Donor 5: Martha Nesbit

- 1 Renderings and paint color suggestions for Oglethorpe Academy renovations, executed by SCAD students, circa 1999 [2 files]
- 2 Memo regarding converting Pearl Lee Smith School building into Oglethorpe Academy, December 5, 1998 [2 files]
- 3 Memo with updates about converting Pearl Lee Smith School into Oglethorpe Academy, May, 6 1999 [2 files]
- 4 Pearl Lee Smith Preliminary Facilities Report, May 17, 1999 [1 file]
- 5 Pearl Lee Smith Facility Update memo, June 3, 1999 [1 file]
- 6 Image of the inside of Oglethorpe Charter School with banner hanging across a hallway, circa 1999 [1 file]
- 7 Image of students outside of Oglethorpe Charter School, gathered around the school's sign, no date [1 file]

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- 8 Image of students on a painted cement area “OCS Dedicated to Larry Brown”, no date [1 file]
- 9 Memo with updates about converting the Peal Lee Smith School, July 1, 1999 [1 file]
- 10 Memo regarding furniture for Oglethorpe Academy, July 1, 1999 [1 file]
- 11 Oglethorpe Charter School newsletter *The Titan*, article about the closing of the Pearl Lee Smith school site, April 2012 [1 file]
- 12 Oglethorpe Academy Facilities Committee updated site inspection, June 5, 1999 [1 file]
- 13 Oglethorpe Academy Facilities Committee updated site inspection, June 14, 1999 [1 file]