

Columbus Primary and Secondary Industrial School Collection (MC 228)

Organizational Note

Primary Industrial School

The history of this school is a complicated one, involving three name changes and a change in the focus of education of its students.

In 1901 a committee reported to city officials that a school be established for workers' children with more hand than book work. A building was secured on the corner of 1st Ave and 18th St, which had been a factory boarding house and 173 pupils were enrolled. Some academic subjects were taught though the greatest emphasis was on industrial training. Average age in day session was 10 years old, though the night school had all ages. George Foster Peabody had a large hand in this establishment.

The Primary Industrial School stayed in the boarding house for 3 years. In 1904 a large residence was bought at the corner of 18th and 1st Ave for \$10,000 and the school moved.

The former J.B. Kimball home on the brow of the hill on 2nd Ave, North Highlands, an impressive 2 story building, was offered at \$15,000 as the new home for the Primary Industrial School. The Board offered S.T. Whittaker \$1000 for the Kimball property and it was accepted. The property fronted 270 feet on 2nd Ave and extended through to 3rd Ave.

In 1906 under the administration of Carlton B. Gibson as Superintendent of Schools an Industrial High School was founded, the first of its kind in the United States which resulted in nationwide publicity and duplication. From the beginning of his term, Superintendent Gibson had interested himself in the education of mill children, as the mill-operative element in Columbus comprised about one-fourth of the city's white population. With no compulsory school law at that time, few of these children attended any schools, and when they did, "less than five per cent continued in school after they were old enough to work in the cotton mills." A Primary Industrial School had been instigated and organized by Carlton Gibson, first housed in rented quarters, and later in a Colonial style home with spacious grounds, gardens and swimming pool, on upper Second Avenue, near the center of the mill population.

In 1912 the name of the school was changed to North Highlands School, as the curriculum became more standardized. Two years later additional property was bought adjacent to the school and a brick building erected. This new school was named McIlhenny Grammar School. The Primary Industrial was losing its distinguishing features as industrial, adding more academic subjects to the curriculum.

North Highlands Elementary School had been part of the County School system prior to 1920 and had consisted of 8 rooms in 3 different buildings. North Highlands became part of the city system in 1920. Mrs. Susie MacDonald Fox was the first principal until her death in 1923. When North Highland became part of the city system, the County board allowed the city to use the North Highland property until June 1, 1920, agreeing also to retain the principal and 9 teachers. In June 1920, the trustees allocated \$50,00 for the lot and building of the North Highland School. One lot between 31st and 32nd Streets was \$1800. The present building was built in 1921 in the Spanish Mission style and consisted of 10 rooms on the first floor and 2 on the second. T. Firth Lockwood was the local architect. One wooden building of one room was kept as the kindergarten. Five more rooms were added in 1934 with labor and materials provide by the Civil Works Administration.

On April 14, 1947 the name of the school was changed to Fox Elementary in honor of Mrs. Susie Macdonald Fox. The school exists today as Fox Elementary in Bibb City.

Secondary Industrial School

The wording of the historical marker in front of the building reads, "Proposed in 1904 by Carleton B. Gibson, Columbus School Superintendent, the Secondary Industrial School is regarded as the nation's first public coeducational industrial high school. G. Gunby Jordan, then President of the School Board, and his son R. C. Jordan donated the land and were instrumental in developing the school. The school was centrally located in Waverly Terrace, a community planned and developed by the Jordan Company, and completed in 1906. The school's name changed to Columbus Industrial High School in 1912 and again in 1939 to Columbus Junior High School. Designed by the Atlanta firm of J. W. Golucke, the building is of monumental style and scale. Using brick and stone to illustrate the Neo-Classical details, this architectural design was popular for public buildings at the turn of the nineteenth century. The building's appearance has remained essentially unchanged since its opening with only minor alterations and an addition of a rear gymnasium in the 1930s. The interior layout is three floors over an English basement, or "Quincy Plan." Golucke was best known for designing twenty courthouses in Georgia. This structure represents one of his few designs that is not a courthouse. The School is located at 1112 29th ST." The building now houses the Academic Success Center for the Muscogee County School System.

Scope and Content

The contents of this text-sm collection for the Industrial Schools consists of two parts. The Primary School consists of contracts for the building and renovations of the school. The contents for the Secondary School consist of photocopies of the contents of the cornerstone with some information on its opening.

Permission to Publish

Permission to publish material from the Columbus Primary and Secondary Industrial School Collection must be obtained from the Columbus State University Archives at Columbus State University. Use of the following credit line for publication or exhibit is required:

Columbus Primary and Secondary Industrial School Collection (MC 228) Columbus State University Archives Columbus, Georgia

Provenance

The materials were donated at different times. The secondary

Provenance

is unknown. A note from Leslie Robertson of the Academic Success Center is included. The primary materials were donated to the CSU Archives by the Columbus Museum in August 2016.

Note to Researchers

See also:

Vertical File-Schools

[Cecil A. Darby Jr. Collection \(MC 213\)](#)

[Carol Ragsdale Collection \(MC 187\)](#)

Box and Folder/Item List

- Folder 1 - Contract by B.J. Jones Plumbing Co. at North Highland School April 14, 1927
- Folder 2 - Contract between T. F. Lockwood, Architect and the Board of Trustees for PublicSchool, Columbus, January 4, 1915

- Folder 3 - Contract between Stapel Heating Co and Columbus Public Schools, signed by Henry T. Goetchius, President; January 4, 1915
- Folder 4 - Annual Report of the Public Schools, Columbus, Georgia, (photocopy) 1905
- Folder 5 - Programme on the Occasion of Laying the Corner Stone of the Secondary Industrial School, Columbus, Georgia and photograph of cornerstone, June 22, 1906
- Folder 6 - Miscellaneous photocopies include:
 - Names outside the box Robert F. Hemphill, Atlanta Fireproofing Co. G. Gunby Jordan portrait George Foster Peabody portrait John McIlhenny portrait R. C. Jordan portrait
- Folder 7 - CD of the 1906 Cornerstone Time Capsule of Secondary Industrial School