



Guide to the Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922

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Summary

Collection Title:

Trinity Park School collection, 1898-1922

Creator:

Trinity Park School (Durham, N.C.)

Abstract:

Trinity Park School was established in 1898, under headmaster J.F. Bivins, to better prepare students for admission at Trinity College and other institutions. The school operated on the campus of Trinity College until 1922, when it was permanently closed. The Trinity Park School Collection includes bound volumes, print materials, the papers of headmaster F.S. Aldridge, photographs, and financial information. Annual Trinity Park School catalogs have been removed and cataloged separately.

Extent:

4.0 Linear Feet

Language:

Materials in English.

Collection ID:

UA.01.04.0001

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1271p>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Trinity Park School Collection, University Archives, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

The Trinity Park School Collection includes bound volumes, print materials, correspondence, and photographs. The Bound Volumes Series contains accounting ledgers, a grade book, minute books, and a roll book. Trinity Park School's annual catalogs have been removed and cataloged separately. These

materials offer insight into the students at the school, their courses of study, and their financial situations.

The second series, Print Materials, contains financial information, correspondence, illustrated booklets, and other documents related to Trinity Park School.

The third series, F.S. Aldridge Papers, contains the correspondence of the headmaster of Trinity Park School. It dates primarily from 1921 and 1922, when the school was closed.

The final series, Photographs, contains class photographs.

Biographical/Historical

Trinity Park School operated from 1898 to 1922 to better prepare young people for undergraduate work at Trinity College and other institutions. In a prospectus prepared prior to the opening of the school on September 7, 1898, it explains, "Very many young men apply for entrance to Trinity and are found upon examination unprepared and hence are not admitted. The idea of providing for this class of students at the college and under the immediate direction of the college, originated at the Western North Carolina Conference [of the Methodist Church]." According to the 1898-99 Trinity Park High School catalog, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Trinity College supported this proposal, and agreed to oversee the new school in June of 1898. In only three months, the school had several new buildings for its use and it opened its doors.

The Trinity Park High School, as it was then known, was located on the northwest corner of the present-day East Campus of Duke University, where the Mary Duke Biddle Music Building and the Branson Building now stand. Trinity College President John Carlisle Kilgo oversaw the new headmaster, J. F. Bivins, but the school operated semi-independently. From the start, the school had high aims, and in the 1898 catalog, the hazards of ill-prepared students were spelled out: "The period of a boy's life between the ages of twelve and eighteen is the most important one in his educational career. In most cases his habits of study and his character itself are fixed at the age of eighteen. If he has had slack preparation and loose discipline, he becomes disheartened, and abandons all hope of entering college and properly fitting himself for life."

The school had a junior class, one or two intermediate classes, and a senior class. Among their required subjects were arithmetic, geography, Latin, English, Greek, algebra, history, and physics. Because the school was located so close to Trinity College, the students were allowed to use the college library and attend lecture courses, as well as have use of the gymnasium. When the school opened in 1898, 71 students were enrolled, including 11 girls. Two students came from Virginia, one from Tennessee, and the rest arrived from points across North Carolina, although most came from the Durham area. According to Earl

W. Porter's Trinity and Duke, 1892-1924: Foundations of Duke University, the school quickly became a success, and increased its enrollment and became financially stable within a few years. New buildings had also been added to the campus, providing more dormitory space. Trinity Park School (the name was changed from Trinity Park High School to differentiate it from public schools) was a source of pride--and students--for Trinity College. According to Porter, "As late as 1907 only eight secondary schools in the Carolinas even offered as much as fourteen units of work"--the minimum required to be considered for admission to Trinity College.

Two major courses of study were offered: the classical and the Latin-scientific. Both courses were quite similar, with classical students required to take several languages and Latin-Scientific required to focus on natural and physical sciences. Students were expected to attend school from approximately 9am to 2 pm, and to study from 7pm to 10pm. Afternoons were reserved for physical activity.

Students were expected to periodically make declamations pertaining to their courses of study. Two organizations, the Grady Literary Society and the Calhoun Literary Society, offered their members the opportunity to practice their declamation and debate skills. An annual competition between these two societies occurred each year at commencement, when the top speaker was awarded a medal. Other extra-curricular groups included the Young Men's Christian Association, the Athletic Association, and the Park School Gazette. Mandatory chapel services were held daily. Although Trinity College had a Methodist affiliation, students could select the church of their choice in Durham to attend on Sundays.

Students were expected to behave properly at all times, although "Foolish and unnecessary rules are avoided; only as such are necessary to the safety, peace, and well-being of the whole community are adopted," according to the 1904-1905 Trinity Park School catalog. Most students conducted themselves with decorum, but those who "are addicted to loafing or disorderly behavior at night and who are careless in their study are required to attend the 'Night School' and study under a master's [teacher's] direction." In rare cases, when warnings and Night School did not achieve their desired effect, a student would be asked to leave Trinity Park School permanently.

Over time, the public school system improved in North Carolina. As these schools improved, fewer students attended Trinity Park School. In summer 1922, the Board of Trustees decided to close the School, and use the buildings and space for the growing undergraduate class. Trinity Park School was remembered fondly, however. As Porter writes, "It had held the line for Trinity until the public schools could arrive."

Although the school no longer exists, several buildings still stand as part of the East Campus of Duke University. The Branson Building was constructed in 1899 with funds from Benjamin N. Duke. Its original use was a dormitory for

Trinity College, and in 1915 it was remodeled for use as a dormitory by Trinity Park School students. After the School closed, it again became a College dorm. In 1935, the building was torn down, but some of its materials were used to create a new Branson Building, used as an engineering laboratory. In 1950, the building was again remodeled, this time becoming the present-day Branson Theater.

Bivins Hall, built in 1905 and named after the first headmaster, J.F. Bivins, was used as a dormitory for Trinity Park School students. In succeeding years, it has been used as a college dormitory, then the headquarters of the Departments of Botany, Zoology, and Civil Engineering. Today the Bivins Building houses several arts departments.

The main academic building used at Trinity Park School, the Asbury Building, was torn down in 1974. It stood on the site where the Biddle Music Building stands today. The other buildings that comprised the School were also torn down: Lanier Hall, a dormitory, was taken down in 1937; the York Dining Hall in 1928; and the Harnett and Drummond buildings, both dormitories, were destroyed by fire in 1928 and 1932, respectively.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

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Processing Information

Processed by Valerie Gillispie

Completed July 1, 2004

Encoded by Valerie Gillispie, July 6, 2004

Updated (addition of grade books from Registrar's Records and Holy Bible) by Tracy M. Jackson, June 2016.

Accession UA2021-0049 added by Leah Tams, December 2021.

Accession UA2023-0054 added by Leah Tams, October 2023.

Note: Box numbering skips 4.

Acquisition Information

The Trinity Park School Collection was received by the University Archives as a transfer in 1973 (A73-106) and as a gift in 2001 (A2001-8), a gift from Susan Nunn in 2021, and a gift from Perry Memorial Library in 2023. Other materials were added to the collection for which a donor and provenance cannot be established.

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Related Materials

Related Material

[Building Reference Collection](#), Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Park School Gazette, 1901-1911](#), Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Trinity Prep, 1921-1922](#), Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Trinity Park Annual Catalogue, 1898-1922](#), Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

Separated Material

The following photographs were moved to the University Archives photograph collection: Campus Views- Buildings, Rooms, Classes, Teams circa 1912-1921; Faculty, undated; and Students, 1901, undated. Note: Folder titles may have changed since being added to the University Archives photograph collection.

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Names and Subjects

- Photographs
- High schools -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Preparatory schools -- North Carolina
- Catalogs
- Financial records
- Diplomas
- Trinity Park School (Durham, N.C.)
- Trinity College (Durham, N.C.)
- Trinity Park High School (Durham, N.C.)
- Bivins, J. F. (Joseph F.)
- Duke University -- Buildings -- History
- Aldridge, F. S. (Frederick Soule)

Bibliography

Earl W. Porter, *Trinity and Duke, 1892-1924: Foundations of Duke University*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964

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Collection Inventory

Bound Materials, 1898-1922

Accounting ledger, 1910-1916

Box 1

Accounting ledger, 1910-1917	Box 1
Accounting ledger, 1917-1920	Box 2
Grade record book, 1904-1908	Box 6
Grade record book, 1909-1914	Box 6
Grade record book, 1915-1921	Box 6
Index to grade books	Box 2

Minutes

Box 3

Calhoun Literary Society Minutes, 1900-1909	Box 3
Calhoun Literary Society Minutes, 1916-1919	Box 3
Grady Literary Society Minutes, 1907-1909	Box 3
Roll book, [undated]	Box 3

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Print Materials 1898-1922

Clippings, 1915, [undated]	Box 5 > Folder 1
Columbian Literary Society Constitution and By-Laws, 1901	Box 5 > Folder 2
Commencement Programs and Materials, 1904-1919	Box 5 > Folder 3
Correspondence, 1906-1919	Box 5 > Folder 4
Debate and literary society regulations and by-laws, early 20th century	Box 5 > Folder 14

Scope and Contents

Regulations for intersociety debate, by-laws for the Calhoun Literary Society, and a note about an intersociety debate meeting. The reverse of the note contains a resolution about military training for TPS students.

Fred Flowers diploma, 1904 June 06	Box 7
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Financial Records - Grady Literary Society, 1914-1916	Box 5 > Folder 5
Holy Bible	Box 6
"Prospectus of Trinity Park High School," 1898	Box 5 > Folder 6
Trinity Park School illustrated booklet, 1911	Box 5 > Folder 7
"Views" and "Souvenir" of Trinity Park High School, 1901-1903	Box 5 > Folder 8
"What Others Say About Trinity Park School" pamphlet, [1914]	Box 5 > Folder 9

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F.S. Aldridge Papers 1911-1922

Correspondence

1911	Box 5 > Folder 10
1920-1921	Box 5 > Folder 11
January 1922-May 1922	Box 5 > Folder 12
June 1922-September 1922, [undated]	Box 5 > Folder 13

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Photographs 1898-1922

Class Photographs, circa 1909 Box 7

Physical Description: 2 folders

Scope and Contents

One photograph features Estelle Flowers, whose married name was Estelle Flowers Spears. Estelle Flowers was the sister of President Robert Flowers and the first woman trustee on the Duke Board of Trustees.

Senior class composite photograph, 1905 Box 7

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