Loockerman Hall collection

Repository: Delaware State University Archives
William C. Jason Library
1200 N. DuPont Highway; Dover, DE 19901
302-857-6130

Creator: Delaware State University Archives


Location: Row 9, Bay A, Shelf 3

Extent: 2 linear feet

Language: English

Source of Acquisition: Materials were taken from a Public Relations records transfer in September 2015 and backlogged archival records collected by the library prior to the formal establishment of the archival unit. Artifacts from Loockerman Hall were “orphaned” and stored in the attic. They were consequently transferred to the archives by the archivist.

Conditions Governing Access: This collection is open to public viewing. No restrictions.

Conditions Governing Use: US Code Title 17 applies. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from Delaware State University.

Scope and Content:

This collection is comprised of the records of the Loockerman Hall restoration committee that existed from 1965 until 1992. The records include correspondence exchanged between the committee and contractors for construction and interior design, as well as solicitations addressed to corporations and individuals to help defray restoration expenses. Additionally, the collection includes research about the history of Loockerman Hall in the form of handwritten notes, historical essays, a dendrochronology study and copies of property deeds. Also found here are building use studies, financial reports, and news clippings.

Biographical History:

In 1723 Nicholas Loockerman purchased 600 acres of land on the St. Jones River upon which he and his descendants built a saw-mill and stately Georgian-style brick home (c. 1780) with nearby slave quarters and stables.

For three generations the estate remained in the Loockerman family until it was sold in 1834. Thereafter ownership was perpetually short-lived as it exchanged hands eight times by lawsuit, auction, and various sales. Finally, in 1891 the Loockerman house and 95 acres of land was purchased by the State College for Colored Students (now DSU) for $4,400.

The transaction was made possible through federal funding from the Second Morrill Act of 1890. This federal act required each state to either demonstrate that race was not a condition of admission to state colleges or else establish separate African American colleges. DSU was of the latter category.

Loockerman Hall came to be the first building on campus. In the early days it served to provide a reading room, dining hall, kitchen, library, and housing for faculty and students. As the college outgrew the building, by 1961 Loockerman Hall no longer served a purpose and had fallen into disrepair. Beginning in 1965 a restoration committee was formed to investigate possible building uses, research building history, perform dendrochronology dating, raise funds, and facilitate restoration and preservation.
In 1970 Loockerman Hall was embroiled in public controversy due to disagreement about whether the building warranted the significant expense of preservation or should be demolished. On January 15, 1971 the building was burned by arson in the midst of the debate. Despite this the building was ultimately restored and opened in 1992.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged alphabetically by subject. Box 3 and Box 4 contain artifacts taken from a shadow box display once

Box and Folder Listing:

**Box 1:**
- Correspondence - Biden, Joseph R., August 1992
- Correspondence - Diamond/McCune Incorporated, 1986-1987
- Correspondence – general, 1979-1987
- Correspondence – steering committee, 1970-1971
- Deeds for college properties purchased [photocopies], 1882-1944
- Loockerman Family Deeds transcribed by unknown individual, n.d.
- Delaware State College proposal for Loockerman Hall, May 29, 1980
- Dendrochronology study of Loockerman Hall, 1994
- Financial reports, 1970-1971
- Funding solicitations, 1970-1992
- Furnishings for specifications for public bid, n.d.
- Historic paint colors for interior of Loockerman Hall, n.d.
- Historical marker, 1998
- History essays, n.d.
- Information pamphlets, n.d.
- Inventory of Loockerman Manor House in May 1790, n.d.
- Legislation – Senate bill no. 127, March 16, 1971
- News clippings, 1969-1975

**Box 2:**
- Old Dover Days home and garden tour preparation, 1993
- Photographs taken before restoration, 1980, n.d.
- Program for the encomium of the restoration of Nicholas Loockerman hall, May 6, 1992
- Time capsule internment ceremony program, 2017
- Restoration steering committee meeting minutes, 1965
- Restoration steering committee meeting minutes, 1969
- Restoration steering committee meeting minutes, 1970
- Restoration steering committee meeting minutes, 1971
- Restoration steering committee meeting minutes, 1974-1980
- Restoration steering committee membership, n.d.

**Box 3:**
- Pennant,
- 11 Photographs on foam-core
- Delftware pottery shard
- Decorative wood fragment
Box 4:

1991 centennial commemorative coin
1991 centennial button
1991 centennial lapel pin
1991 centennial glass plate
1991 centennial plate
Center panel of the Delaware flag
Stone
4 nails
Wood fragment

Colophon: Processed in November 2017 by Rejoice Scherry, University Archivist.