

The Filson Historical Society

**Shelby County Public Library
Collection on Science Hill Female Academy, 1852-2004**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the collections department.

Size of Collection:
0.33 cubic feet

Locator number:
Mss. BI S544

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Historical Note

Science Hill Female Academy in Shelbyville, Kentucky, was established in 1825 by Julia Ann Tevis. She and her husband Reverend John Tevis ran the school together until his death in 1860. In 1879, Julia Tevis sold the school to Dr. Wiley Taul Poynter and Dr. T. W. Jordan. In 1880, Dr. Jordan sold his interest in the school to Dr. Poynter. The Poynter family ran the school until it closed in 1939.

In 1961, the school buildings were purchased by Mark Searce and restored to become the Wakefield-Searce Gallery, which operates on the property today.

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Scope and Content Note

The material in this collection was donated to the Filson by the Shelby County Public Library, likely from an original donation by Rosella Yager Cunningham Davis (1915-2013) and Harriet Ballard Searce, graduates of Science Hill, and the estate of Rufus Harrod, a Shelbyville historian (see newspaper clipping in finding aid folder, *Shelbyville Sentinel-News*, April 16, 1993).

The collection includes mostly material from after Science Hill's closure, including pamphlets and correspondence from events, histories of the school and its leading families, and information about the school's later transformation into the Wakefield-Searce Gallery.

Folder 1 contains correspondence and miscellaneous material related to Rosella Yager Cunningham Davis of Shelbyville, a graduate of Science Hill with a lifelong interest in Shelby County history and historic preservation. Correspondence to Rosella seems to be mostly from former classmates reminiscing and gathering information about Science Hill's history. The folder includes a testimonial about Juliet Jameson Poynter (the last principal of Science Hill) sent to Rosella from Ruby Deans. (Also see Rosella's obituary in the finding aid folder).

Folder 2 contains a souvenir album awarded to Science Hill student Martha Threlkeld in 1852 for "excellent recitations and good conduct." The album is signed by Julia Tevis and includes inscriptions from classmates.

Folders 3-4 contain material related to events at Science Hill. Folder 3 contains material from the 1925 Science Hill centennial, including a list of celebration invitees and their addresses. Folder 4 contains material related to a 1961 appreciation luncheon for Juliet and Harriet Poynter and the 1966 dedication of the Science Hill historic marker. Material includes a letter of appreciation for the luncheon written by Juliet and Harriet.

Folder 5 contains material related to Mark Searce and the Wakefield-Searce Gallery, which took over the Science Hill buildings in 1961. The material includes correspondence, pamphlets, and other papers providing information about Searce's purchase and restoration of the Science Hill buildings, his life and career, and his nomination for the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation Preservation Award.

Folders 6-8 contain miscellaneous histories, clippings, notes, and papers related to Science Hill.

Folder 9 contains two blueprints for the Science Hill school buildings, one for the ground floor and one for the second floor. The blueprints are undated, but the architect is listed as Arthur G. Tafel. Arthur Gustave Tafel (1891-1974) was an architect active in Louisville from the late 1920s with an office at 140 S. Third St. from the late 1920s until at least the 1950s.

Related Collections:

Poynter Family papers, 1895-1910 [Mss. A P892]

Poynter Family added papers, 1887-1992 [Mss. A P892a]

Science Hill Female Academy papers, 1825-1975 [Mss. BI S416]

Science Hill Female Academy photograph collection [021PC54]

Tevis, Julia Ann, 1799-1880 papers [Mss. A T353]

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Rosella Cunningham Davis correspondence and other material, 1955-1999 and undated
- Folder 2: Martha Threlkeld award album, signed by Julia Tevis and classmates, 1852
- Folder 3: Science Hill centennial celebration material, 1925
- Folder 4: Science Hill luncheon and historic marker dedication, 1961-1966 and undated
- Folder 5: Mark Searce / Wakefield Searce Gallery material, 1961-1993 and undated
- Folder 6: Science Hill, Julia Tevis, and Poynter family histories, undated
- Folder 7: Newspaper clippings related to Science Hill, 1935-2004 and undated
- Folder 8: Miscellaneous notes and papers concerning Science Hill, 1937-1965 and undated
- Folder 9: Blueprints for Science Hill School buildings, Arthur G. Tafel architect, undated

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Subject Headings

Davis, Rosella Yager Cunningham, 1915-2013.
Poynter family.
Scearce, Mark, 1916-1993.
School architecture.
Science Hill Female Academy (Shelbyville, Ky.)
Tafel, Arthur Gustave, 1891-1974.
Tevis, Julia Ann, 1799-1880.
Wakefield Scearce Gallery (Shelbyville, Ky.)
Women – Education.