Overview

IIT’s campus at 33rd and State St. is adjacent to the historically significant Bronzeville neighborhood, centered around 35th and State St on Chicago’s South Side. Bronzeville reached its peak population during the Great Migration of the 1910s and 1920s, during which thousands of African Americans left the south to seek industrial jobs in Chicago. Through the 1920s, the neighbor was a prominent center of African American business and culture, particularly notable for its influence on jazz, literature, and the civil rights movement. Through the 1930-60s, much of the area was cleared as part of Chicago’s “urban renewal” efforts, and several large public housing projects were built, including the infamous Robert Taylor Homes. Despite the economic and social damage of urban renewal, the area has since continued to revitalize.

Because of its proximity, IIT has had a long association with the neighborhood. In the 19xxs IIT had input into the South Side Redevelopment through the South Side Planning Board along with Michael Reese Hospital, located nearby. Other nearby buildings of note includes the Lake Meadows, Prairie Shores, and South Commons residential communities. IIT’s expansion has impacted the surrounding area in various ways; one instance of particular interest is the acquisition of the Mecca Flats building.

The IIT Archives does not actively collect materials related to Bronzeville’s past or current history, but the Archives’ collections do include some materials which may be of interest to those interested in the area and the university’s relationship with it. Students have also produced theses that relate to the neighborhood.

Materials in UASC

Processed Collections

1998.018 Office of the Treasurer Melvin Tracht
(This collection has not been fully processed. Michael Reese Nursing Program is referenced in this collection, but it is uncertain at present how extensive the material is. Some of this collection is confidential and restricted.)

Academic and creative materials of The New Bauhaus (aka American School of Design), School of Design, the Institute of Design, ca. 1937 to ca. 1955. Includes academic catalogues, class and school activities announcements, biographical materials on faculty (including founder László Moholy-Nagy) and students. Photography projects may include Bronzeville images.

1998.035 South Side Community Center
Bulks with correspondence between Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago) treasurer R. J. Spaeth and Golden B. Darby (administrative director of Southside Community Committee, Inc.) concerning use of space at 3354 S.
State St. as a community center (AKA Mecca Community Center), and circumstances concerning termination of the agreement. Also includes the original signed agreement and the President’s Annual Report of the Southside Community Committee.

024.04.01  Henry T. Heald Papers
The collection consists of correspondence, memos, reports, and other materials which constitute the administrative files of the of Henry T. Heald in his role as President of Armour Institute of Technology (Chicago), 1937-1940 and as President of Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago), 1940-1952.

1998.149  Press (News) Releases

1998.192  Armour Research Foundation Photo Cards – Part 1
Negatives and contact prints of black and white images documenting scientists and research projects of Armour Research Foundation (later, IITRI). Includes some images of neighborhood buildings.

1998.199  Unprocessed Photographs
Misc. Chicago images remain in this collection; images specific to South Side redevelopment were removed to Acc. No. 1998.287 in April 2009. See 1998.287 below.)

1998.268  University History Collection
Glass slides – UET & Alumni Banquet

1998.287  South Side Redevelopment Collection
Small collection including aerial photos and photos of plans and models concerning the post-World War II planned redevelopment of Chicago's South Side, the area around Illinois Institute of Technology centered at 33rd and State Sts. Photos were variously taken by: Hedrich-Blessing; Lowellyn Studios; Chicago Aerial Survey Co. (Chicago Aerial Industries, Inc.); Williams & Meyer Co. See item listing for description of specific images.

2000.013  Harold Bretz Papers and 35 mm slides
Documents and photographs concerning Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago) created or collected by Harold Bretz. Includes photos of campus construction and some Bronzeville Buildings.

Aug. 1950 issue of Architectural Forum

2001.032  Institutional Chronologies Collection
Six typed chronologies containing timelines of institutional histories of Armour Institute of Technology (1892 – 1940), Lewis Institute (1896 – 1940) and Illinois Institute of Technology (1940 – present). Each covers a different
time range and each was apparently compiled from different sources, though much of the information is repeated and consistent from one chronology to the next.

035.03.01  *Bronzeville Collection materials*  
Materials from a variety of sources and dates documenting the past and present of the African-American neighborhood of Bronzeville, historically known as the Black Metropolis, located on the South Side of Chicago. This collection serve as a drop file of materials not otherwise accessioned and catalogued in the IIT Archives. Contains loose papers and soft cover books.

2004.003  *Central South Area Plan Materials*  
Four items documenting “The Central South Area Plan” to redevelop Chicago’s South Side neighborhood (Bronzeville) adjacent to the Illinois Institute of Technology campus.

2004.058  *South Central Association materials*  
"South Central Association Souvenir Twenty-third Street Viaduct Opening" publication, a 116-page booklet, dated 1925, published by the South Central [or Central South?] Association, a Chicago citizens’ membership organization.

2011.011  *Robert Philip Gordon Papers*  
Materials related to Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization

008.01.02  *Institute of Design Records, 1948-2001*  
See materials in boxes 49, 131, 163, & 366)

*ID Theses*  
*Institute of Design thesis project:*  
Visual Design Relative to City Planning by Harry B. Smith (uncatalogued as of April 15, 2009)

*Press Releases*

4/23/1946  South Side Redevelopment Association holds first meeting
5/3/1946  Robert E. Garrigan appointed executive director of Central South Side Development Association
3/1949  IIT to breathe new life into Chicago’s historic (Ada S. McKinley) South Side Settlement House at 3201 South Wabash Avenue.
1/24/1950  Buildings razed and land cleared in IIT’s redevelopment of Chicago’s near south side
1/1952  Raymond J. Spaeth named chairman of the South Side Planning Board
5/1952  John T. RettaI ata addresses South Side Planning Board
5/12/1952  Raymond J. Spaeth re-elected chairman of South Side Planning Board
10/1952  South Side Planning Board issues brochure for industrial research laboratory facilities
4/1953 Proposal for rebuilding of Chicago through industrial development of Central Southside presented in 32 page booklet at meeting of South Side Planning Board
5/1953 South Side Planning Board presents detailed proposal for encouraging light industry
4/1954 South Side re-development is one-third underway states Raymond Spaeth
5/1954 South Side agencies tour IIT as part of program dealing with redevelopment in area
5/1955 Henry T. Heald to be feature speaker at meeting of South Side Planning Board
7/1959 New designed boiler manufacturing plant will be dedicated on Chicago’s South Side

Books


Chicago Plan Commission. *Calumet Area of Metropolitan Chicago [Interim Report]*. Chicago, 1956. 711.4C532CH


Chicago Plan Commission. *Plan of Chicago in 1925, a report to the citizens of Chicago setting forth what has been accomplished by united civic effort during the past fifteen years.* Chicago, 1925. ARCHIVES.NA9127.C4A51925


**Theses**


**Additional External Material**

*University of Illinois Library*


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