

A Guide to the Arlington Outdoor Education Association Records, 1947-2017

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1947-2017

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

RG 111

Language

English

Creator

Arlington Outdoor Education Association

Extent

25 boxes.

Repository

Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

There are several files in Series 5, Series 6, and Series 15 which contain confidential information such as Tax ID numbers, checking account numbers, and social security numbers. These numbers should be redacted before access to any patron not affiliated with the AOEA who normally has access to these identifiers. Folders containing such numbers and IDs are marked.

Within Series 6: Tax information, from subseries 2 from 2012, 2013, and 2015 will remain closed until 7 years after their creation. Therefore, tax information from 2012 will remain closed until 2019, from 2013 will remain closed until 2020, and from 2015 will remain closed until 2022. As of 2020, Tax information from 2012 and 2013 are open for research, yet remain in the restricted box.

Within Series 21: Summer Camp, are three files related to summer employment. These files include job applications with social security numbers. These pages have been photocopied with the social security numbers covered. All the information except the social security number is available on the copy. The original document has been removed and placed in a restricted box that will remain closed until 2100.

Acquisition Information

Anita K. Scott donated this collection in 2000. A second accretion came from the school system in 2001. A third accretion came from Michael Nardolilli, past president of the AOEA, on August 15, 2017.

Preferred Citation

Arlington Outdoor Education Association Records, Collection # RG 111, Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Researchers may find [RG 7, Arlington County Public Schools](#), to have related materials. [RG 163, Arlington County School Board Records](#), should also be consulted. See Series 3, file 64 "Outdoor and Environmental Education (Outdoor Lab), 1967-1998." Papers of board member Valerie Kitchens can also be found in [RG 348, Valerie Kitchens Papers](#).

Historical Information

During the late 1950s, Dr. Phoebe Hall Knipling, the supervisor of secondary science education for Arlington Public Schools (APS) started a summer science enrichment program that incorporated outdoor education for students. The program aimed to improve students' environmental awareness by providing hands-on science experience in nature. During the 1960s, students visited various public and private lands in Northern Virginia, but it became apparent a permanent location for the program would improve the experience. Open land in Arlington County was diminishing fast due to the county's soaring population, as well as increased urbanization and development.

In January 1967, Dr. Knipling located a 200-acre site in Fauquier County at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, but APS lacked the funds to purchase the land. In May 1967, Dr. Phoebe Knipling met with representatives of the Natural Sciences for Youth Foundation in Connecticut, who advocated community involvement to acquire the property. Dr. Knipling started, with the help of community representatives, including parents of APS students and five school staff members, the Arlington Outdoor Education Association (AOEA) as a volunteer-run nonprofit on July 3, 1967 to create an outdoor lab exclusively for APS student use. Mrs. Susan T. Baker became the first president. Others first involved included J. Fuller Groom, J. Frederick Abel, Shirley Jolkoviski, Harold Mack, Paul Nelson, Joseph Newlin, and Theodore Taylor. The group began accepting donations and organizing fundraisers to earn the funds necessary to purchase the land. On March 14, 1968, the group purchased the land from Mary Rose Striker, who agreed to sell the property for less than market value to the group. At Dr. Knipling's suggestion, the land became known both as Tahl which translates into Wonderful Valley and as Floraunaretum, meaning "interaction of flora and fauna in an outdoor setting." APS students began to visit the land to observe the forces of nature firsthand and learn about ecosystems and biology, among other topics.

After Dr. Knipling retired in 1975, the AOEA board voted to rename the property the Phoebe Hall Knipling Outdoor Laboratory to honor her years of service to science education in Arlington County. The AOEA made the final mortgage payment for the property in November 1978, after a generous donation from Mr. Preston Carruthers. The Outdoor Lab, currently containing about 225 acres, features open fields, forests, wildlife, springs, a lake, as well as hiking trails, camping sites, a classroom, kitchen and dining facilities, observatory, and plant and animal identification areas. The land is reserved exclusively for APS student use. Though the lab is owned, maintained, and managed by the AOEA Board of Directors, APS creates and delivers all educational programs.

Scope and Content

This collection is approximately 10.75 linear ft. and spans 1947-2017, however the bulk date from 1968-1999. This collection includes the organizational records of the AOEA including financial records, meeting minutes, correspondence, AOEA newsletters and newspaper articles, fundraising materials, and the history of this impressive organization.

The Board of Directors meeting minutes (*Series 10*) and the AOEA newsletters (*Series 11*) serve as good resources that succinctly overview the activities of the AOEA and the Outdoor Lab. AOEA membership newsletters contain calendars of events, letters from Board Members (usually the President of the AOEA), announcements of upcoming events, descriptions of APS students' recent experiences at the Outdoor Lab, and other information related to operation of the Outdoor Lab. The minutes from Board of Directors monthly meetings contain descriptions of various reports members gave at meetings, including finances, public relations and membership, development and fundraising, facilities and maintenance, and often a Lab Report, which details student activities at the lab, including other operational information. Meeting minutes from the late 1980s to present often include supporting documents members received and evaluated at the meeting, including agendas, budgets, maps and surveys, written reports, as well as correspondence related to the meeting (see Arrangement and Description section below for more information).

Series 1 (Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and Procedures Manuals) contains the governing documents for the AOEA. *Series 2* (Committees) houses documents and materials created by sub-committees of the AOEA Board of Directors, staff, and members, including facilities development, long-range planning, maintenance and development to aid in the operation of the Outdoor Lab. Many of these committees report to the entire board during Board of Directors Meetings (see *series 10*).

Series 3 (Correspondence) contains correspondence related to the operation of the AOEA. However, the correspondence dated prior to 1967 relates directly to Phoebe Knipling's educational and professional career. Correspondence from the late 1960s includes Phoebe Knipling's correspondence with various organizations and individuals asking for support to buy property for an outdoor lab for Arlington Public Schools.

Series 4 contains documents and materials that pertain to educational programming and curriculum at the Outdoor Lab. *Series 5* (Facilities), subdivided into four subseries (Operation; Maintenance, Repairs, Inspections; Renovations and Construction; and "Outdoor Lab Building" Renovations 2006-2007) detail the upkeep and expansion of Outdoor Lab buildings. *Series 6* contains the financial records of the AOEA and is also divided into several subseries based on subject and item type, including Budget and Treasurer's Reports; Banking and Tax Information; Fundraising, Grants, and Donations.

Materials related to the history of the AOEA, including documents related to the lab's 20th and 50th anniversaries, as well as biographical materials for Dr. Knipling and other AOEA staff members, can be found in *Series 7* (History and Biography). Insurance policies can be found in *Series 8* (Insurance). *Series 9* holds membership and Board of Directors rosters, in addition to other documents related to volunteers and membership policies. Newspaper clippings can be located in *Series 12* (Newspaper articles).

Series 13, originally named "Office Files" was renamed in 2017 "Office and Staff Files." The original series only contained the files of board member Dorothy Knowlton, which included meeting minutes, personal notes, fundraising information, a Virginia forest stewardship plan and other materials related to the AOEA. Archivists moved additional staff files from *Series 20* (subject files) and those obtained in a third accretion donated in 2017 to this series. *Series 13* therefore serves as a space to preserve staff members' files that contain diverse materials that prevents them from fitting into a specific series, such as Facilities or Membership.

Deeds, leases, land appraisals and maps of AOEA land holdings are contained in *Series 15* (Property). *Series 16* (publicity) holds various marketing materials, including AOEA brochures, fliers, open house information and materials used by AOEA staff to promote the Outdoor Lab, including speeches and presentations.

Series 17 (Reading Files), contains correspondence organized by date covering a variety of topics, including membership, property, and surveys. This series sheds light on the early activities of the Outdoor Lab and the AOEA during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The collection also includes an extensive amount of visual materials, including photographs (*Series 14*), scrapbooks (*Series 18*), and slides (*Series 19*). Photographs and scrapbooks often depict visitors to the Outdoor Lab, mostly students from APS, and events held at the Outdoor Lab. Other photos document construction work of various facilities on the property and plant and animal life visitors observed on their visit. Scrapbook 5 appears to have been put together by student photographers who visited the Outdoor Lab who documented their class's experience. Scrapbook 6 details the formation of the AOEA and depicts the 1978 Dedication Ceremony of the Outdoor Lab once the AOEA made its final mortgage payment. Most of the slides show students in the summer science enrichment program on field trips to various locations in Virginia, Washington D.C. and Maryland with Dr. Phoebe Knipling. They also include early images of the APS science fair other teaching materials Knipling probably used. However, others do show the Outdoor Lab.

Series 20 (Subject files) contains miscellaneous materials, including studies and reports, lists, forms, and the like that did not fit well in any of the above series. *Series 21* contains materials related to the operation of the summer camp held at the Outdoor Lab.

Index Terms

Subjects:

Knipling, Dr. Phoebe Rebecca (Hall), 1909-1998

Outdoor education

Science and education

Arlington (Va.)

Arlington County (Va.)

Arrangement

The files found in this collection have been created, accrued, and managed over the years by many creators, most of whom were AOEA Board Members. The materials from the first donation and the second accretion were arranged into 21 series, either alphabetically or chronologically. Please note, files from the third accretion have not been folded in alphabetically. When possible, original file names from the third accretion have been preserved in quotes (" ") and additions to titles from the archivist have been included in brackets ([]) where clarification was needed.

RG 111 is arranged by type of material (such as Newsletters) or subject (such as Property) within 21 series. Series 5 (Facilities), Series 6 (Financial), and Series 10 (Board of Directors Meetings) have been divided into several subseries by subject to allow the researcher to more efficiently find appropriate resources. Many of the meeting minutes acquired in the second accretion from 2017 (spanning late 1980s until 2017) contain copies of minutes, as well as agendas and supporting documents discussed in meetings, all arranged by meeting date. To preserve original order, the archivist kept these documents together, which can all be found in Subseries 2 of Series 10. Many meeting minutes prior to the late 1980s in this subseries do not contain supplemental materials and their accompanying agendas and treasurer's reports exist in Subseries 1 of Series 10 and Series 6, Subseries 1 respectively. Please note there is some overlap, as meeting minutes from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s were donated prior to the third accretion.

Most of the documents in files are arranged by chronological order, except for some meeting minutes, which are arranged in reverse chronological order, as they had been arranged by the AOEA.

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File 5: Scrapbook 5, 1987, 1989 , n.d.

Box 19

File 6: Scrapbook in oversize box, 1967, 1978 , n.d.

Box 19

Series 19: Slides

Slide box 1: Fieldtrips, n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 2: Fieldtrips I, 1964

Box 20

Slide box 3: Fieldtrips II, 1964, 1966 , n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 4: Fieldtrips III skyline caverns, 1964 , n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 5: Fort Detrick and skyline drive, and Smithsonian, 1963

Box 20

Slide box 6: Gemstones, 1974

Box 20

Slide box 7: Great Falls, 1963

Box 20

Slide box 8: Naval Ordinance Lab, Botanical Garden and visiting sci and seminar leaders, 1963

Box 20

Slide box 9: Nike Base and Dulles Beach Erosion and Water Purif. Reservoir, 1963

Box 20

Slide box 10: Outdoor ceremony (unidentified), n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 11: Plant Bench and C & O Canal and bus, 1963, 1973

Box 20

Slide box 12-13: 1959 , n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 14: Teaching materials center, June 1975

Box 20

Slide box 15-19: Unidentified, Aug. 1964

Box 20

Slide box 20: Unidentified, n.d.

Box 20

Slide box 21: Unidentified, Sept. 1964& Oct. 1977

Box 20

Slide box 22: Slides from Gary to Anita Knipling of Phoebe and others at the Outdoor Lab, 1983

Box 20

Slide box 23: Outdoor Lab, 1993

Box 20

Series 20: Subject Files

File 1: Arlington County Fair, 1977, 1979, 1982 , n.d.

Box 21

File 2: Certificates of appreciation, blank, n.d.

Box 21

File 3: Community Resources Study Group, n.d.

Box 21

File 4: Food preparation regulations, 1984-1987

Box 21

File 5: Handwritten notes, n.d.

Box 21

File 6: Letterhead and stationery, n.d.

Box 21

File 7: Miscellaneous/Hashawa Environmental Center, 1987 , n.d.

Box 21

File 8: Proclamations and resolutions, 1987-1997

Box 21

File 9: Service contracts, 1994-1995

Box 21

File 10: Small parks project application form, n.d.

Box 21

File 11: Staff, 1978, 1989, 1997

Box 21

File 12: Student representatives, 1990

Box 21

File 13: Telephone, 1995

Box 21

File 14: Virginia Forest Stewardship plan, 1995 , n.d.

Box 21

File 15: Ecological Community of the Bull Run Mountains, Virginia Report, 2002 (1)

Box 21

File 16: Ecological Community of the Bull Run Mountains, Virginia Report, 2002 (2)

Box 21

File 17: Does Outdoor Education Really Work Study, 1998

Box 21

File 18: Arlington Chamber of Commerce

Box 22

File 19: Planetarium, 1986, 1994

Box 22

File 20: Hemlock Overlook, n.d.

Box 22

Series 21: Summer Camp

File 1: Attendance, 1995

Box 22

File 2: Budget, 1993-1997 (1)

Box 22

File 3: Budget, 1993-1997 (2)

Box 22

File 4: Employment, 1994 (Restricted until 2100)

Box 22

File 5: Employment, 1995 (Restricted until 2100)

Box 22

File 6: Employment, 1996 (Restricted until 2100)

Box 22

File 7: Meal menu and kitchen equipment, 1995-1996

Box 22

File 8: Pamphlet, 2017

Box 22

AOEA OVERSIZE BOX

Scrapbook

Plaques for Dr. Phoebe H. Knipling

AOEA EPHEMERA BOX

Arlington Chamber of Commerce Member Plaque, 2002

AOEA Badge

AOEA Stickers

AOEA Bumper Stickers, 1987

AOEA Magnet, 2005

3 AOE Magnifying glasses

RESTRICTED BOX

From Series 6: Financial

File 9: Tax Information, 2012 - Open for research

File 10: Tax Information, 2013 - Open for research

File 11: Tax Information, 2015 - Closed until 2022

From Series 21: Summer Camp

File 4: Employment, 1994 - Closed until 2100

File 5: Employment, 1995 - Closed until 2100

File 6: Employment, 1996 - Closed until 2100