

Friends of Elam Home Foundation Records

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

DuSable Museum of African American History
12/3/2012
Chicago, IL

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Summary Information

Repository	DuSable Museum of African American History
Title	Friends of Elam Home Foundation Records
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1974-1979
Date [inclusive]	1921-1981
Extent	0.5 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Friends of the Elam Home Foundation records spans from 1921-1981, with the bulk of material from 1974-1979. Some documents pertain to the original Melissia (Melissa) Elam Club Home for Working Women and Girls, while the majority of the collection relates to the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation's efforts to secure landmark status for the Elam Home. In 1923, the Melissia Ann Elam Club Home for Working Women and Girls was established at 4555 South Champlain Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. It served as a boarding house as well as a place for African-American women to develop independence.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

The Melissia Ann Elam Home for Working Women and Girls opened its first home in 1923 at 4555 South Champlain Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, to provide housing for single African- American women and help them develop independence. In order to meet the growing demand for rooms during the mid-thirties, Melissia (Melissa) Ann Elam purchased the house at 4726 South Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (formerly South Park Way, originally Grand Boulevard). The home was originally built in 1903 for Simon L. Marks, the president of a wholesale clothing firm.

Melissia Elam died in 1941 and her niece, Loretta (Lauretta) Peyton (Payton), took over as trustee of the Home. In 1974, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Director of the DuSable Museum of African American History, created the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation to prevent the house on King Drive from being torn down for numerous building violations. The DuSable Museum of African American History became a trustee of the foundation that raised money to restore the house and worked toward establishing historical landmark status for the Elam Home. On March 21st, 1979, the home was designated as a Chicago Historical Landmark. Dr. Burroughs resigned as President of the Friends of Elam Home in 1979 and was succeeded by Frances Boles.

Scope and Contents note

This collection spans from 1921-1981, with the bulk of material from 1974-1979. Some documents pertain to the original Melissia Elam Club Home for Working Women and Girls, while the majority of the collection focuses on the activities of the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation. The collection is arranged in two series, "Elam Club Home for Working Women and Girls," and "Friends of the Elam Home Foundation."

"Elam Club Home for Working Women and Girls" is one folder of material containing Elam's Warranty Deed from 1923 for the property at 4555 South Champlain Avenue, her business card, tax receipts, and other financial and legal documents concerning the transfer of the property to Loretta Peyton. "Friends of the Elam Home Foundation" relates to the activities of Margaret Burroughs as President of the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation (sometimes referred to as Elam Home Friends) between 1974 and 1979. This series includes correspondence, financial documents, meeting minutes, flyers, and pamphlets. The bulk of the documents relate to the organization's efforts to secure landmark status for the Elam Home, including correspondence between Margaret Burroughs and the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks. Other correspondence includes efforts by the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation to raise awareness and funds for the Home, letters endorsing Burroughs as a trustee for the home, and letters about Burroughs' resignation as president of the organization in 1979. Examples of financial documents are maintenance estimates, operation statements, and receipts.

This collection will be useful for researchers interested in the Melissa Elam Club Home for Working Girls, and the efforts by Margaret Burroughs and the Friends of the Elam Home Foundation to acquire landmark status for the Home.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

DuSable Museum of African American History 12/3/2012

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Burroughs, Margaret
- Elam, Melissia
- Payton, Lorretta

Subject(s)

- African American women – Chicago (Ill.) – Social conditions
- African American women—Chicago (Ill.) – History
- Elam Club Home for Working Girls
- Friends of the Elam Home Foundation
- Historic buildings – Illinois – Chicago
- Historic sites – Illinois – Chicago

Series I: Elam Club Home for Working Girls,

Collection Inventory

Series I: Elam Club Home for Working Girls, 1921-1945		
	Box	Folder
Elam Club Home for Working Girls	1	1
Series II: Friends of the Elam Home Foundation, 1974-1981		
	Box	Folder
Friends of the Elam Home Foundation	1	2-14