

Southside High School History Selma, Alabama

Southside High School is located approximately five miles southeast of Selma, Alabama, on the historic Civil Rights Trail, U. S. Highway 80 East. The original main building and auditorium/gymnasium (current resource media center) was built in 1946 to accommodate the families of returning military personnel following World War II. Many of the school's families lived on nearby Craig Air Force Base, which was deactivated in the early eighties.

The original school building contained 13,425 square feet of living space. Land for the school site was donated by the Harrison and Reeves families. A product of the Baby Boom generation, the school has continually expanded over the years as shown in the table below.

The original school was located approximately one mile northwest of the present site. This old wooden structure burned down, forcing students to meet in a private home until the current brick building could be constructed. When Southside first opened its doors in 1946, it consisted of grades 1-3. Students would then travel either to Collierville (no longer exists) or Selma (Parrish High) to attend later grades. The school grew from three grades to six, and finally to twelve. Over the years, the lower grades were transferred to newer schools that were being built to support the growing population. Today, Southside is a senior high school, containing approximately 530 students in grades 9-12.

The campus has also expanded over the years. A football field with concrete stadium seats and a press box, a field house, a concession stand, a baseball field, and a football practice field all now exist on the site. A paved parking lot at the rear of the school serves as a bus parking lot, band practice area, and ROTC review platform. Throughout the years of growth, portable classrooms have come and gone. We are thankful at this time that continued capital improvement has allowed portable classrooms to be removed from our campus.

The original gymnasium, which was located in the current media center, had goals that would retract into the ceiling for auditorium events. The basketball court moved into the new Collins Multi-Purpose Building in 1967. This gymnasium was named in honor of B. W. Collins, Dallas County Schools Superintendent from 1950-1963. A new gymnasium with expanded seating and comforts was built in 1998, leaving the old gymnasium for physical education classes and special events.

The original auditorium is now a state-of-the-art media center, allowing electronic checkouts and inventories. The cafeteria, located in its own building since 1975, once occupied the area behind the current media center. Today, this old cafeteria space is used as the Business Education computer classroom. The old vocational arts room is now a futuristic technology laboratory. The old home economics building is now occupied by the 961st air wing of the Air Force Junior ROTC program, a group

that instills much pride and discipline into our students. The award-winning wing has been in operation here since 1997.

Currently, every classroom and office is wired for the Internet, and technology is a part of everyday life on campus. The school website has been in operation since 2002, allowing alumni and friends to contact us and stay up to date on Southside. In 2003, a campus beautification project added new shrubbery, new trees, and a year-round, experimental flower garden.

As Southside High continues to grow and improve to meet the needs of our community, we will always hold high expectations of our students and staff. We are poised to meet the needs of the 21st century global environment with pride, dedication, and professionalism.

Year	Structures Built	Area Added
1946	Original Building with Gym/Auditorium	13,425 sq. ft.
1951	Four Classrooms	+3,744 sq. ft.
1957	Four Classrooms & Two Restrooms	+4,480 sq. ft.
1958	Four Classrooms	+3,696 sq. ft.
1961	Cafeteria, Four Classrooms, Four Restrooms	+8,807 sq. ft.
1963	Tens Classrooms & Chemistry Lab	+11,872 sq. ft.
1965	Home Economics, Band, Choir Rooms	+8,806 sq. ft.
1966	Two Classrooms & Vocational Arts Shop	+2,448 sq. ft.
1967	Gymnasium (Collins Multi-Purpose Bldg.)	+7,200 sq. ft. est.
1971	Three Classrooms	+2,592 sq. ft.
1975	New Cafeteria	+ 4,500 sq. ft. est.
1998	New Gymnasium & Four Classrooms	+10,000 sq. ft. est.
TOTAL		81,570 sq. ft.

Source: <http://southside.dallask12.org/history.htm> (Compiled by W. Glenn Walker, May, 2004)