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George R. Smith College

Natalie Rodriguez

01

History of the Institution

from the drawing board to
bricks and mortar



College History Garden

HISTORY: George R. Smith

Martha and Sarah

Martha Smith and Sarah Cotton were the daughters of George R. Smith. They were firmly against slavery. When the slaves were freed, the two worried for the future of African Americans.

The land for George R. Smith College for Blacks was donated by them, and was named after their father.



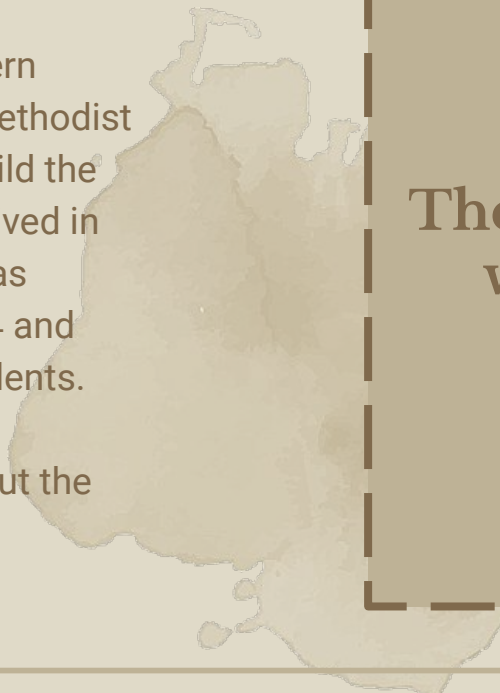
Life in Pettis County 1815-1973, Sarah Cotton (right)

HISTORY: Planning

Freedmen's Bureau

Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society of the Methodist Church used the land to build the school. A charter was received in 1903. The main building was completed in January 1894 and classes began with 57 students.

The budget was \$25,000, but the cost was around \$40,000.



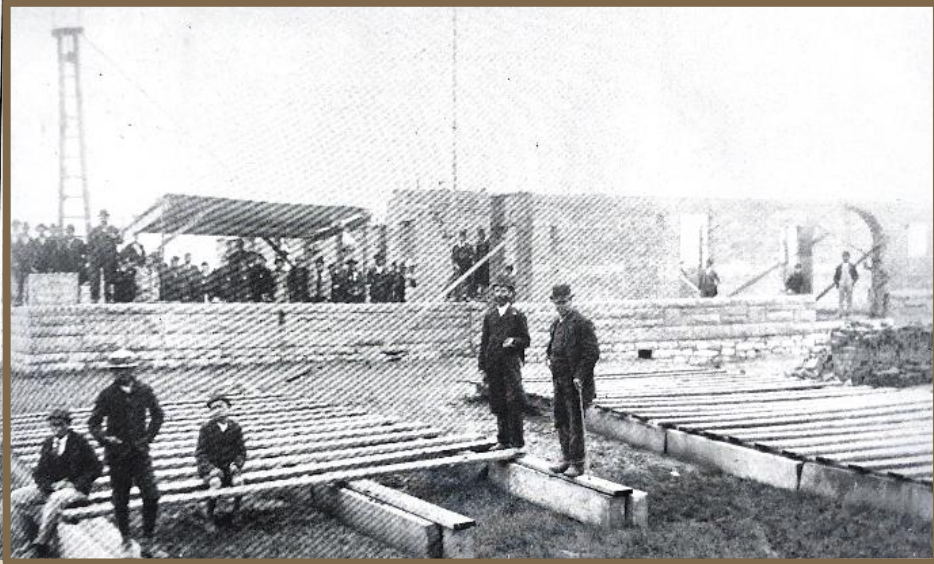
The site was on prairieland, located in northeast Sedalia.

The building was 4 stories, with a chapel that could seat 400 people.

Dormitories were also built for students.

HISTORY: Construction

Building the College



Missouri State Historical Society

William LaPorte was the builder.
The construction superintendent
was a former slave.

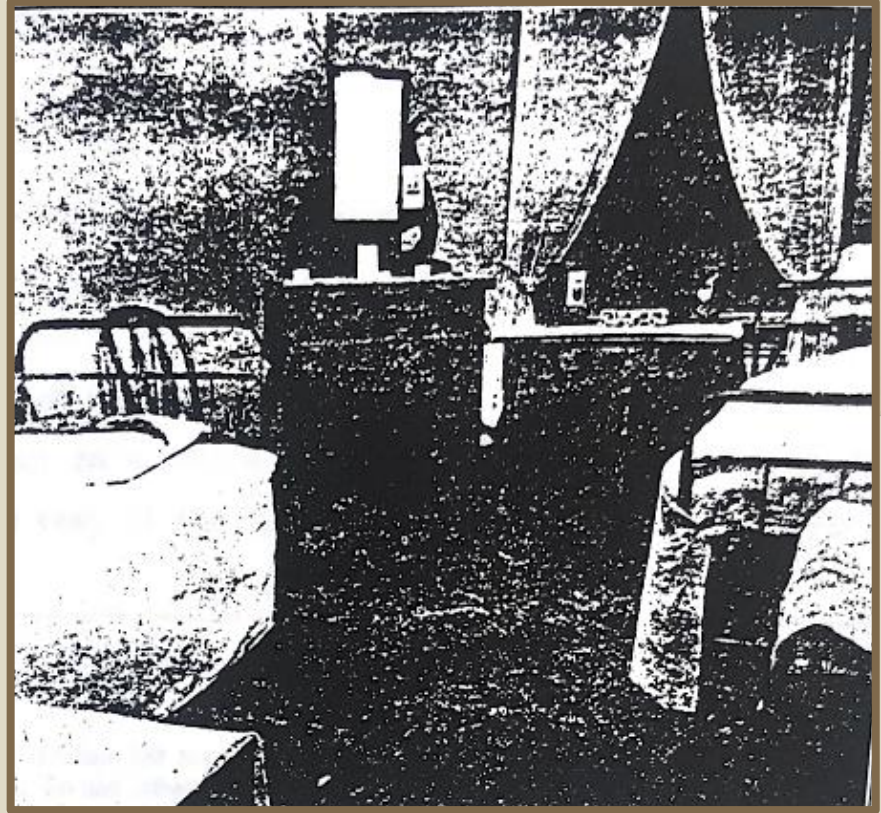
The college advertised steamed
heating, a bed with linens, and
basic furnishings.

There was also a kitchen, dining
room, recreation rooms, and
offices.

02

Daily College Life

strict expectations demand
respect.



Girls Dormitory - Lost on the Prairie

DAILY LIFE: Advertisement

Attracting Attendees

The Sedalia Weekly Conservator advertised the college. They also discussed social issues such as racial inequality.

Pamphlets were also distributed with photos of students on them, which served almost as a "yearbook".

Historical Sketch	FACULTY	Expenses
<p>The College was founded 1894 and named in honor of Gen. Geo. R. Smith, the campus and grounds of 28 acres being the gift of daughters, Misses Smith and Cotton. It is owned and conducted by the Freedmens' Aid Society. Is located on the M. K. & T. and Missouri Pacific railways.</p> <p>The main building is of brick 120x40 feet, with an ell 75x40, four stories high. Contains 62 rooms including offices, parlors, recitation rooms, chapel, kitchen, dining room, laundry, dormitories for ladies and gentlemen, heated by steam.</p> <p>Incorporation and Trustees</p> <p>The Charter was issued Feb. 19th 1903. It makes the Trustees a body corporate, defines their power, prescribes manner of election and the relation of the Board to the Freedmans' Aid Society.</p>	<p>A. C. MACLIN, A. M. Acting President—Walden University—Economics and Philosophy.</p> <p>B. H. BALL, A. B.—George R. Smith College—Mathematics.</p> <p>MISS B. NOBLESSE MASON, —University of Chicago—Greek.</p> <p>MISS BROADNAX, A. B.—Oberlin University—Latin and German.</p> <p>REV. F. S. BOWLES, A. B.—George R. Smith College—Science.</p> <p>EARL A. HARRIS, M. D.—McHarry Medical College—Chemistry and Physiology.</p> <p>MRS. ESTELLE H. MACLIN,—Wilberforce University—History, Literature and Rhetoric.</p> <p>MISS M. MINNIOLIA JACKSON—George R. Smith College—Music.</p>	<p>Board, Room and Tuition for one month of four weeks, less than : : \$10.00</p> <p>Use of the Laundry, .50</p> <p>Music, Instrumental or Vocal, for one month of four weeks, 2 lessons per week \$2.50 One lesson per week, \$1.50</p> <p>Use of Instrument per Mon. .50</p> <p>Use of Type-writer in Commercial Department per month of four weeks. : .50</p> <p>Rooms are lighted, heated, furnished with bedsteads, mattress, pillow, two quilts, mirrors, bowl, pitcher and lamp. Students furnish for themselves sheets, pillow cases, extra quilts, blankets, slop bucket, lamp chimneys, soap and matches.</p> <p>A reduction of 50cts per month is made from the tuition of candidates for the ministry and children of ministers.</p> <p>All bills are payable in advance the first day of each school month Money for students' expenses</p>

Sedalia Weekly Conservator

**Higher Christian Education is the
Nation's Greatest Defense**

George R. Smith College
Sedalia, Mo., Offers Splendid Opportunities

College Expenses

Basic Necessities

Laundry fees were 50 cents.

Basic Tuition

Board and Room was \$8. Tuition was \$2 for a 4 week term. Minister's children got discounted to 50 cents.

Music Courses

For two lessons per week, in a 4 week period, was \$2.50. Once per week was \$1.

DAILY LIFE: College Yell & Song

COLLEGE SONG

George R., I love old George R.;
I love her halls and her campus green,
Boys there are strong and steady,
Girls the finest that I have seen;
Rah! Rah! Rah!
Sun there is always shining.
Skies there are always blue;
George R., I love old George R.,
And we students to her will be true.

From the Twenty-Ninth Annual Bulletin
George R. Smith College

COLLEGE YELL

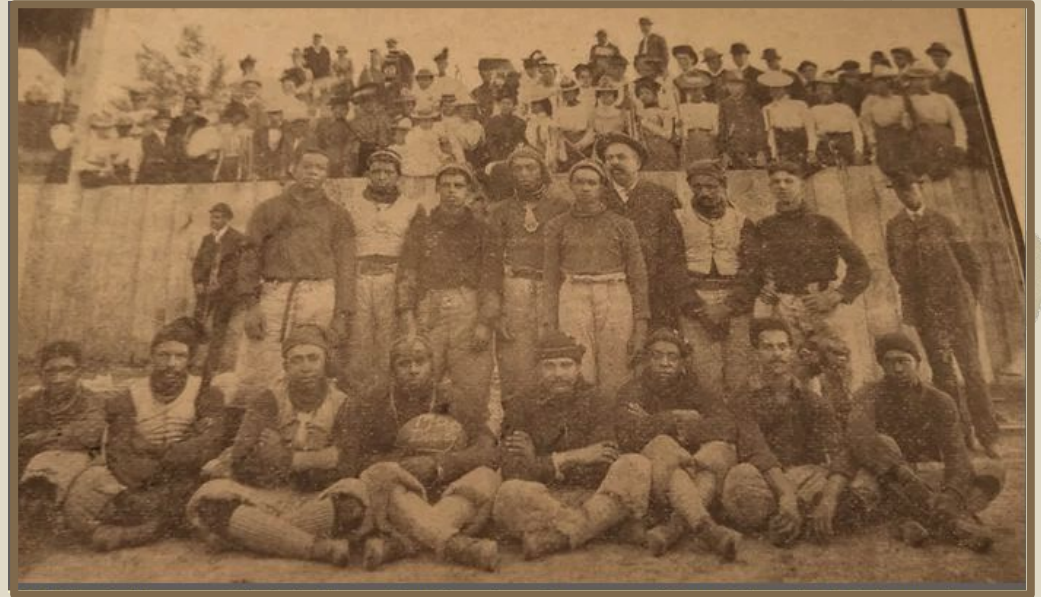
Rickety! Rickety!
Zis! Boom! Bip!
Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah!
George R. Smith;
Hip! Hip Hey!
What shall we say,
Se-da-li-a;
Se-da-li-a;
S-E-D-A-L-I-A.
Sedalia
Mi-ss-ou-ri
Mi-ss-ou-ri;
M-I-S-S-O-U-R-I
Missouri.

DAILY LIFE: Sports and Recreation

The name of the college's sports team was the **Deweys**. Their colors were purple and white.

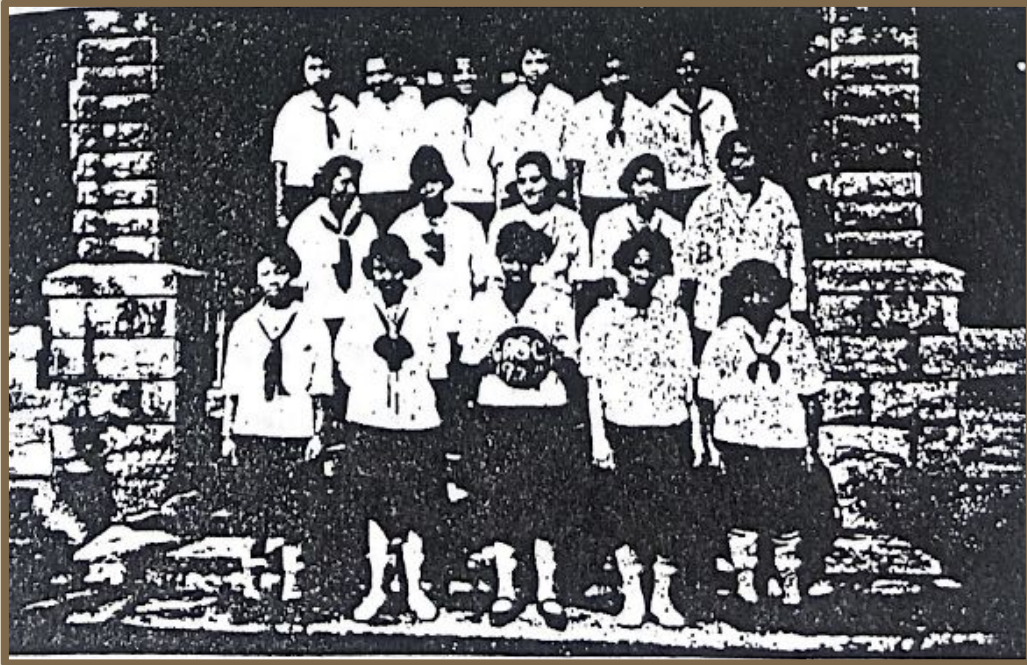
Men at George R. could play football, baseball, basketball, and tennis.

On the right is the 1900's football team with their fans.



Smithsonian, Historical Society of MO

DAILY LIFE: Sports and Recreation



All students at George R. Smith were members of the Athletic Association. They had to pay \$2 per year.

Women's sports included basketball, tennis, croquet, and swings.

THINGS STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DO

1. Deface the school building and furniture.
2. To use tobacco and intoxicating drinks. Those found violating this will be punished severely.
3. To play cards and other games of chance.
4. To laugh aloud and make unnecessary noise in and around the building.
5. To leave town without the consent of the President.
6. To use obscene and profane language.
7. To visit circuses, races and theatres.
8. To be irreverent at religious services, to desecrate the Sabbath nor to make any other breach of good morals.
9. To carry fire-arms and other dangerous weapons.
10. To have interviews with the opposite sex on the campus or about the building, either during or after school hours, without permission.
11. To contract debts without the consent of parents or guardians.
12. To talk from the windows, to throw things therefrom or to sing in the halls.
13. To visit each other's rooms during study or quiet hours without permission.
14. To visit the different halls without permission of their own preceptress or preceptor and the one in charge of the hall visited.
15. To remain in the laundry during school hours.
16. To congregate in living rooms.
17. To go shopping or visiting off the campus unless accompanied by the preceptress or some authorized person.
18. To leave the ground without permission from the one in charge.

From the 22nd Annual Bulletin, George R. Smith College

Strict Expectations

Rules that we laugh at today were seen as normal at George R.

Students were forbidden from going to circuses, races, and theatres.

They couldn't gamble, sing in the halls, or talk from windows.

Religious values and foundations for "respectability" heavily influenced these rules.

Black educator Booker T. Washington promulgated the idea that white America would give the black people their rights when they realized that black people knew how to behave. George R. Smith College, and most other black colleges at the time followed this idea.

— Dr. Rhonda Chalfant

DAILY LIFE: Dress Code

01. Women

Navy blue flannel, blouse, or sailor waist and plain skirts. Cuffs could be detachable, and clothing shouldn't be too expensive.

02. Men

Suits were to be blue, the regular military uniform.

The core concept was for clothing to be simple and durable.

DAILY LIFE: Music Program

George R. had a music program available to any black person who was interested. Enrollment in the school wasn't required to be involved.

This is how the famous composer, Scott Joplin, was able to take courses to pursue his dream of becoming a musician.

Music theory and Harmony were taught at this institution, which were the courses Joplin took.

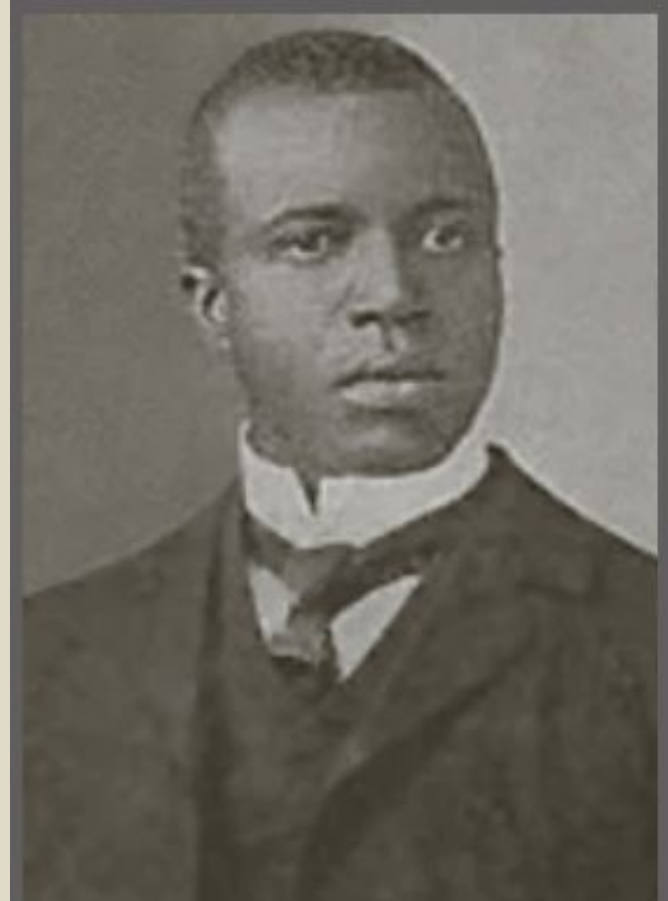


Invincible Four, Lost on the Prairie

03

The Footprint of Scott Joplin

Ragtime Sensation of Sedalia



lostcolleges.com

SCOTT JOPLIN: Background



Life in Pettis County 1815-1973

Who Was Scott Joplin?

Scott Joplin spent his childhood in a family of musicians. He didn't want to learn a trade, so once his mother passed, he played music wherever he could.

Joplin was a traveling musician when he came to Sedalia. He wanted to learn music the right way. This is what led him to George R. in the 1890's.

Night on Main Street was a gay place with its music, its singing in the bars and its prostitutes in their beautiful hats and enticing dresses, the gambling places, the bars, on the street, or hanging out the windows.

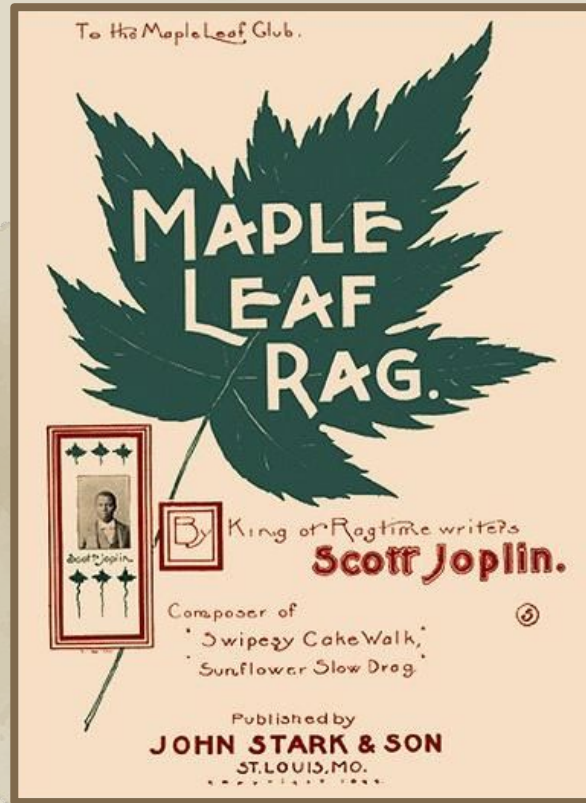
— Life in Pettis County
1815-1973

SCOTT JOPLIN: Composition

Maple Leaf Rag

Scott Joplin spent time in the Maple Leaf Club, playing the upright piano. Men would come and sing with him.

This is the club that the famous ragtime song, *Maple Leaf Rag*, is believed to be based off of.



SCOTT JOPLIN: Impact

Modern Day Influence



Democrat File Photos

Scott Joplin is the reason that Sedalia is known as the “cradle of ragtime.” There is a music festival dedicated to him, although it has been a challenge to get the community involved in recent years.

The picture to the left is of Ollie M. Martin at this festival in 1973.

04

The Downfall of George R. Smith College

a fire causes the demise



The Sedalia Democrat

DOWNFALL: The Fire

A Blaze Sweeps the College

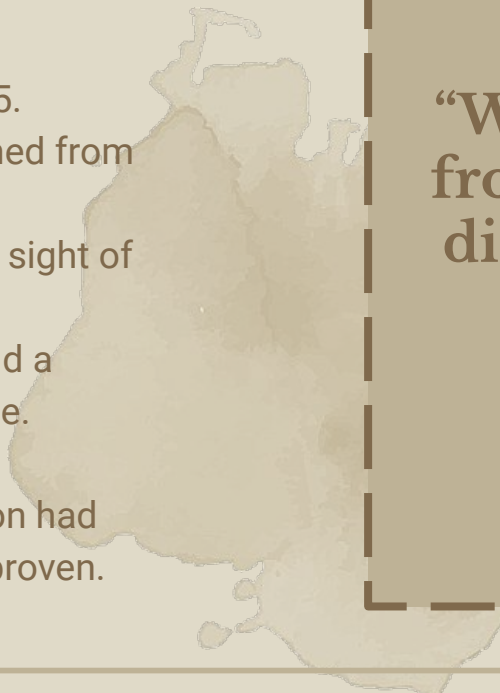
The date was April 26, 1925.

At 2:00 AM, two men returned from a fishing trip.

They were greeted with the sight of a fire at the college.

They sounded the alarm and a reporter arrived to the scene.

It was believed that a person had died, but this was later disproven.



“Within less than an hour from the time the fire was discovered the walls were caving in.”

- *The Sedalia Democrat*

DOWNFALL: The Fire

year of administration several schools would be built. For years the ruins of the college was in the center of a barnyard and only the archway of stone, the gate to the spacious grounds, stood to remind citizens of Sedalia that there once stood a beautiful building of learning. The archway and the men and women who went on to a better life because of the opportunity this school offered were, for a long time, all that remained of this great institution. Then the stone archway, too, disappeared, but the learning that took place within its walls has never been destroyed, for it has spread from generation to generation through the teachers it produced, the ministers, its music, its literature, its inspiration.

Life In Pettis County

The flames could be seen from miles, it was said they lit the heavens.

Very few furnishings were salvaged. People searched for their belongings in the rubble.

Students who boarded there were taken in by other black families.

DOWNFALL: The Fire

Classes continued at local black churches, as the head of the college had hopes for rebuilding.

Those hopes would soon fade, as they couldn't get the funds to do so.

The former college remained in ruins, a shell of its former self.



Site Visit, Natalie Rodriguez 01/24/22

DOWNFALL: The Remains



Site Visit, Natalie Rodriguez 01/24/22

What's left to speak for George R. Smith College for Negroes?

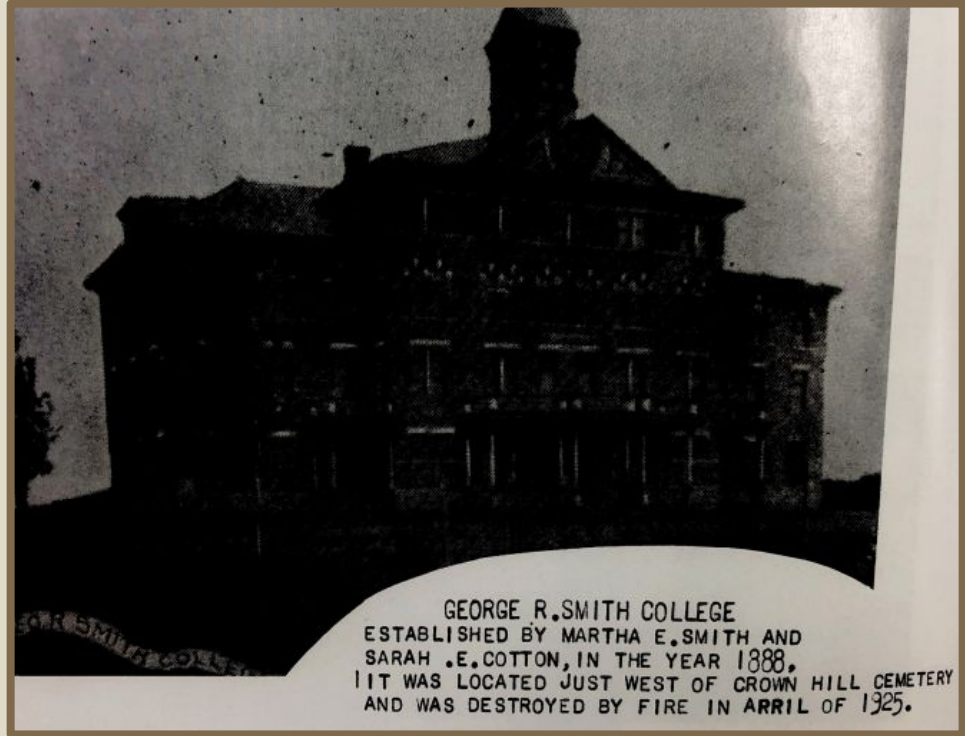
East of Crown Hill Cemetery is a plot of land that was purchased by a hog farmer. To this day, the land is used for that purpose.

Its reputation extends beyond the building.

05

Social Impact

communities connected,
lasting legacies



IMPACT: African American Education

White Community

While there was animosity towards black education, it was quelled after the institution proved that stigmas against African Americans were wildly incorrect.

In addition to this, black people learned all types of trades and forms of work, so they could be equal to their white peers.

Black Community

George R. Smith College transformed the lives of young black students. It gave them the “privilege” of earning an academic degree.

Although black people had been allowed to get an education, and slavery had been abolished, African Americans were still suffering from its consequences.



Thanks

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