

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

NAR06GRANT-048

“Bringing Alabama’s African American History to Light: A Model Partnership.”

Report 4 (February 1, 2008 – July 31, 2008)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to organize and make available a number of currently inaccessible African American collections at the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama and at the Tuskegee University Library, to learn and pass on archival skills, and to create a project web site and a finding aid web site.

PROGRESS

Processing

At the University of Alabama

From February 1 to July 31, 2008 roughly 197 linear feet of correspondence, railroad records (bills of lading), financial records, gristmill records, commissary records, vouchers and invoices were processed. Much of this included boxes that were not in any particular order and contained diverse materials from different time periods, as well as materials that had to be cleaned, humidified, and flattened before they could be used. Many of the boxes consisted of bundles of papers that were rolled tight and tied with string. Because of time constraints, the decision was made to address only the preservation issues of the most severely damaged materials (i.e., those that could not be used by patrons without special attention and care). Plat maps of Shelby Iron Works and other charts relevant to the company which had been separated from the collection due to format and storage issues were discovered. These were brought back into the collection and the process of describing them was undertaken. An additional 30 feet of ledgers, mostly payroll, were also described. An outline of the company history that will become the bio/history note was completed and work progressed on series descriptions for the finding aid.

At Tuskegee University

Processing has been completed on the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax (formerly known as the Virginia Durr Papers) records and the Southern Courier records. EAD encoding has begun on three collections processed earlier. Work has begun on the Tuskegee Civic Association records, and the majority of the work is complete.

Website

Work is ongoing to design and implement a site to mount searchable, EAD-encoded finding aids of all the collections.

Outreach

The S.D. Cabaniss Papers received attention this spring, as a few selected materials from the papers were added to our digital collection. Because of this digital exposure, we have received several emails from interested patrons. Of particular interest is a researcher who is writing about the life of one of the descendants of the Townsend heirs who became a prominent Civil Rights activist in the Midwest. <http://content.lib.ua.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2FCabaniss>)