

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

NAR06GRANT-048

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

Report 2 (February 1, 2007 - July 31, 2007)

Clark E. Center, Jr., Project Director

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.

In the second six months of the grant we expected to:

- Hire project archivist at Tuskegee
- Begin processing collections at Tuskegee
- Complete processing the Septimus Cabaniss Papers at the University of Alabama
- Begin processing the Shelby Iron Company Records at the University of Alabama

PROGRESS

Hiring Project Archivist

Though expected to take place in February, the hiring of Tuskegee’s project archivist was delayed, and the project archivist, Dana Chander, began work on March 22, 2007. Due to scheduling problems, the planned training session was not held in Tuscaloosa until April 27.

Processing

At the University of Alabama

Work has continued on the Septimus Cabaniss Papers. The extent of the Cabaniss Papers on which the original work estimate was based was found to have been in error, and the processing of the collection took longer than anticipated to complete. The finding aid is now being edited. Work on the Shelby Iron Company Records has begun, and an existing, incomplete box list has been compared to the boxes on the shelves. A report by the project archivist is found in the Appendix.

At Tuskegee University

The project archivist immediately began the process of locating subject collections. In moving material to the new archives facility, a great deal of material unsuited for the archives was brought there. The new project archivist found upon reporting for duty a large storage area filled with marked and unmarked boxes. He immediately began to sort through these, identifying collections and removing trash. The following collections have been processed and finding aids completed:

- Papers of Charles Goode Gomillion, 1928-1995
- Tuskegee Crisis Study, August 1957
- Luther H. Foster, Jr. Ephemera Collection, 1940-85
- Tuskegee University Autograph Collection

Note that the last two collections were discovered in cleaning out the archives storage area. Due to their small size, these were processed at once.

In addition, a phone system is in place and operational. New lights will soon be added to the collections area., and new shelving is being ordered for the Archives. Forms for research room use are being developed. Daily observations are made regarding temperature and humidity in the archives. Testing for vermin and insects has been done. No infestations have occurred since materials were moved to the Archives..

Website

The project website, located at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/NAR06GRANT-048> has undergone no changes since its creation. We have been awaiting the arrival of our newly hired Head of Web Services to address revising and expanding the website, especially in regard to mounting the project finding aids. These discussion should begin this week or next.

Bringing Alabama's African American History to Light: A Model Partnership

The University of Alabama

Progress Report, February 1, 2007 - July 31, 2007

Prepared by Merrily Harris, project archivist

February/March

I continued sorting the remaining 26 boxes of materials into categories of personal/legal correspondence, case files (assigning them to proper files as much as possible), financial records, land speculation by Cabaniss, and other categories. We determined that potential series would be Correspondence (with yet to be determined subgroups as this portion of the collection is massive), Financial Matters (personal and legal), Land Speculation, Case Files (of which Townsend is a part), and a miscellaneous catch-all for items not easily reconciled to previous categories. The numerous letterbooks and scrapbooks that comprise part of the Cabaniss papers were examined carefully, described, and notations made if the Townsend estate was referenced within. In March, processing the Townsend portion of the collection (which was now largely assembled) became top priority. As a part of this process, we identified two major legal cases which resulted in the distribution of the Samuel Townsend estate, and materials were sorted accordingly.

April/May

I continued sorting the remaining 10 boxes into previously mentioned categories. The difficulty in processing the Cabaniss papers has largely stemmed from the fact that every item had to be evaluated on an individual basis—down to the smallest receipt—in an effort to assign miscellaneous materials to case files. This has been particularly necessary because reconstructing the Townsend case file is the primary goal of the project; thus, we have tried to ensure that the

Townsend portion of the collection is cohesive and particularly useful for researchers. From the 1850s onwards, Cabaniss was involved in managing the Townsend estate while he engaged in general law practice as well. Many of his activities (such as his own involvement in personal land speculation in Kansas where he also assisted with the settlement of many of the heirs of Samuel Townsend) coincided with his role as executor of the Townsend estate, thus making it very challenging to separate materials applicable to the management of Samuel Townsend's affairs as well as the subsequent litigation. Though the creation of a single legal correspondence file for S.D. Cabaniss (organized incoming alphabetically and outgoing chronologically) made it much easier to manage letters, the other documents (receipts, promissory notes, bank drafts, deeds, summons, rental agreements, mortgage information, powers of attorney, affidavits, subpoenas, etc.) were not so easily reconciled.

During April/May, I arranged and described 21 boxes of correspondence files representing Cabaniss's personal and legal activities. Also included in Correspondence are the letters of his partners and associated attorneys that he never formally partnered with but conducted large amounts of business with during his career. The collection consists of a large amount of correspondence that is not to or from Septimus D. Cabaniss; thus, sub-series were created to accommodate the voluminous amounts of correspondence for other attorneys, such as his business partner F.P. Ward. A similar family correspondence sub-series was created to reflect the activities of Cabaniss's children, wife, and brother. Less straightforward was a considerable amount of correspondence to and from miscellaneous individuals. When possible, the correspondence that was not to or from Cabaniss, his family members, legal partners, or other attorneys that he regularly was involved in cases with was assigned to relevant case files. Sometimes, for example, correspondence was clearly used as evidence in cases, and other times it was clear that a particular client had supplied Cabaniss with his own letters for unspecified reasons. The remaining correspondence that could not be assigned to a case file was called miscellaneous legal or personal and sorted incoming alphabetically.

Also, we created two primary case files, one that reflects Cabaniss's activities over the course of his professional career in the estate management of nearly fifty substantial estates (there are many, many others he had just a small amount of involvement in settling) and another case file that reflects Cabaniss's court cases (Townsend, for instance, was a heavily litigated estate). Cases with five or more items were given their own folders, and other smaller cases were arranged by the last name of the individual Cabaniss represented then sorted chronologically within these general folders.

June/July

We completed processing (including arrangement and description) for the Septimus Cabaniss papers. Students were hired, and they have been instrumental in sorting various portions of the collection chronologically within folders.

The correspondence series was finalized and completed, as well as the two case file series. Attention was paid to the financial affairs of Cabaniss and his law practice and account sheets, statements, receipts, promissory notes, etc. were arranged and described. We are currently in the process of reboxing the collection in new Hollinger boxes, refolding portions of the collection in acid-free folders (changes of folder titles made the ones used during processing rather messy),

and printing new box labels. As we refolder, we (my students and I) are also checking portions of the case file to be certain of chronological arrangement within some folders. The S.D. Cabaniss papers are almost ready for the shelves, and the finding aid is being edited. The biographical note and scope and content note has been written, and I am currently revising series descriptions as the items are being made shelf-ready. I plan to have the finding aid handed in to Donnelly for review tomorrow.

In addition, we have started work on the Shelby Iron Works Records. The preliminary box lists of the collection have been checked and found to be accurate, which should help in processing. The next step with Shelby will be to identify and refolder the correspondence and letter books in the collection.

APPENDIX II

Bringing Alabama's African American History to Light: A Model Partnership
Tuskegee University
Progress Report, February 1, 2007 – July 31, 2007
Prepared by Dana , project archivist



Project Status Report

Project Name: Tuskegee University

Department: Archives and Museum

Focus Area: Archives

Product/Process: Clean up/evaluation/processing

Prepared By:

Document Owner(s)	Project/Organization Role
Dana R., Chandler	Project Archivist

Project Status Report Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
1.0	05/25/07	Dana R. Chandler	Document created
[Version #]	[mm/dd/yy]	[Change owner]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Change 1] • [Change 2] • [Change n]

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1 PROJECT STATUS REPORT PURPOSE

Project includes: Identification of targeted collections for processing, actual processing of collections.

The Project Status Report is a document that the Project Director may use as a means of formal regular reporting on the status of a project to key project members, including the Librarian, the Vice President and any other interested persons.



2 PROJECT STATUS REPORT

2.1 Project Status Report Details

Project began on March 22, 2007. Project responsibilities were determined and implemented as per recommendations.

- Current status according to the grant schedule is still 6-8 months behind.
 - Completed “Charles Goode Gomillion, Papers of” (see attached finding aid)
 - Started “Virginia Durr, Papers of”
 - Included processing and completion of “Tuskegee University Autograph Album” due to the location of original material in a box filled with waste.
 - Attended meeting on April 27 at University of Alabama regarding project status.
- After review, only archival storage boxes appear in satisfactory quantity for completion of project. Additional materials ordered through Mrs. Blackman. Quick turnaround of materials is necessary to keep project on course
- Due to excessive molds and mildews in collection boxes, it is necessary to carefully clean all materials and examine for processing. Newspaper clippings and various materials of poor quality paper must be copied.
- Additional shelving is needed in order to properly place processed materials
- Additional support personnel in the form of student workers will be required in the Fall.
- Lighting concerns have been addressed. Phone service in Archival Storage Area has been addressed with building maintenance supervisor.
- Continued cooperation and support from superiors is required for success.
- Necessary training to meet project goals must begin immediately. It is anticipated that Project Archivist will attend a conference on DACS at University of Tennessee on or about the last week in June.

2.2 Project Status Report

Project Name			
Prepared By: Dana R. Chandler	Date: 05/25/07	Reporting Period: 04/18/07 to 05/25/07	
Project Overall Status: Continued belief that although behind schedule due to the hiring of Project Archivist, schedule of completion of collections may be more than obtainable.			
Project Summary: Archives in fair order. Boxes of un-processed material line the hall due to lack of storage. Mrs. Roberts is seeking bids on new shelving at archives.			
Milestone Deliverables performance reporting over last period			
Milestone Deliverables	Due	%	Deliverable Status

	Date	Completed	
Milestone 1			
• Clean-up of other offices	05/25/07	100%	Completed
• Organization of archives	05/25/07	22%	Ahead of Schedule
• Papers of Charles G. Gomillion	05/25/07	100%	Completed
Milestone 2			
• Processing of Papers of Virginia Durr	05/25/07	5%	On schedule
• Finding aids	05/25/07	5%	Behind Schedule
• Organize materials	05/19/07	20%	Ahead of Schedule
Milestone Deliverables scheduled for completion over next period			
Milestone Deliverables	Due Date	% Completed	Deliverable Status
Milestone 1			
• Complete Papers of Virginia Durr	06/30/07	100%	Ahead of Schedule
• Begin Papers of Southern Courier (find and identify)	06/30/07	1%	On Schedule
• Organize materials	06/30/07	25%	Ahead of Schedule
Milestone 2			
• Review previously processed collections	06/30/07	0%	Behind schedule
• Complete MARC record for processed collections	06/30/07	0%	Behind schedule
• Successful meeting with Project Coordinator	06/07/07	0%	Behind schedule
Project impact of milestone success or failure for project remainder			

Completion of training with DACS and utilization of proper terminology in MARC records. In order to complete the vast amount of materials ahead, need student workers.	Failures may arise to status of materials in collections and the lack of adequate resources such as folders, etc.
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Project Budget/Financial Status

Budget Item	Planned Budget	Actual Cost	Variance/Explanation
Archival Materials including folders, pencils, etc..	300.00	0.00	Required materials available

Project Recommendations

<p>Please note that project problems have been addressed and are we are currently implementing solutions that will ensure that some time will be gained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project be completed on time and on budget? Yes, we believe it will. • Will the project deliverables be completed within acceptable quality levels? Yes. • Are scope change requests being managed successfully? N/A • Are project issues and risks being addressed successfully and mitigated? Yes. • Are all University concerns being addressed successfully? No, because the archives are currently closed.

Objectives for Next Project Status Review

Determine collection locations, complete processing and finding aid for "Papers of Virginia Durr," begin processing "Papers of Southern Courier" collection. Complete MARC records for existing processed collections.
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Related Project Information

<p>The following is a brief summary of further gains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation has been established between the archives and Archival Project Coordinator. • New lights will soon be added to collections area. • Phone system is to be up and running. • New shelving at Archives
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- Location of specific items for research use were determined.
- Librarian to verify headings in finding aid with the Tuskegee University Libraries online catalog
- Completed finding aid for "Luther H. Foster, Jr. Ephemera Collection, 1940-85"
- Completed finding aid for "Tuskegee University Autograph Collection"
- Located and filed "Luther H. Foster, Jr. Ephemera Collection, 1940-85" from damp box filled with debris, accessioned material, wrote finding aid. Collection completed.
- Daily observations are made regarding temperature and humidity in the archives. Humidity remains constant at approximately 50%. Temperature, on the other hand, varies from 66 to 73 degrees.
- Completed testing for vermin and insects. No further infestations have occurred since material was shipped from Drew Hall to current location.