

“A Look Back at Tougaloo”

In 1869, Tougaloo College was founded by the American Missionary Association (AMA), a Northern abolitionist society, which grew out of the Amistad Affair of 1839. The College, from its very inception, has a documented history steeped in social activism that spans one hundred and fifty years. From the early 19th Century to the civil unrest of the 1960’s, Tougaloo has been a catalytic agent for social progress. The *Lillian P. Benbow Room of Special Collections* was dedicated in the basement of L. Zenobia Coleman Library on October 14, 1979. This area, originally designated for gifted historical materials, was financed by Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated. Institutional records are presently held on the library’s third floor.

The Mission of the Tougaloo College Archives is to support the institution’s goals by identifying, collecting, organizing, and preserving records of the College, along with personal papers of individuals that possess an enduring value as it ensures their accessibility. The Archival Department serves as a reputable research and reference center for the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi. Specified selections of its internationally regarded Civil Rights Collection is presently housed within the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. An integral portion of exhibits shown at the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum were gifted from Tougaloo’s Archival holdings. Academics from around the globe, presently have dual access to artifacts and primary documents at the same nominal location.

Manuscript Holdings include: AMA Literature, early historical documents of the college, Faculty Records, Trustee Board Meetings, Presidential Records, School Catalogues, Blue Prints & Historical Backgrounds of Buildings, Photographs dating back to the late 19th Century and School Publications. The Civil Rights Collection contains personal papers, oral histories, photographs and other memorabilia of individuals who were active in the Movement including: Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, Aaron Henry, Ed King, Ernst Borinski, Lawyers Commission Desegregation Records, White Citizen Council Literature, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) Files and State NAACP Records.

As we grapple this present hour throughout our country with the notions of race, class and creed, a document from Tougaloo’s archives bears witness to a lingering social legacy of racism from 120 years ago. It is now most prevalent that the institutions that preserve our nation’s narrative must be sustained and guarded.

The Tougaloo News - February 1900 Issue No. 3

Page 2 contains an article entitled, “Suppression of Mobs” and it speaks to the blotted ill of lynching.