

2025



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LIBRARY

ANNUAL  
REPORTS

2025

# Library Annual Reports 2025

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## Texas Baptist Historical Collection

In 2025, the Texas Baptist Historical Collection celebrated its 92nd year of operation. Architectural design plans for the expansion of the TBHC are now complete. In conjunction with the expansion of the Collection, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Baptist World Alliance and Truett Seminary announced that will create and house a new BWA Center at the TBHC. The Center will include study carrels and other accommodations for visiting scholars. Fundraising for this endeavor is going well. If you would like to participate in this building campaign, please contacted the Director of the TBHC. In 2025 the holdings of the TBHC increased by 147 linear feet to the Collection. These new additions included church records of both active and disbanded churches as well as institutional records from around the state. Personal papers from several people who have served Texas Baptists, including Jimmie Nelson, long-time professor of preaching at SWBTS, were also acquired by the TBHC.

The TBHC is fortunate to house the George Whitfield Pulpit, used by Whitfield during his trips to the colonies from 1742-50. The pulpit is considered the second most important artifact of early American Christianity by the Smithsonian. Sight and Sound Films created a replica of the pulpit from the original for its movie A Great Awakening. This movie will be in theaters in wide release in 2026.

The THBC continues to grow its Friends group known as the 1839 Society. Jessica Tindol serves as Senior Researcher/Coordinator of the 1839 Society and is overseeing the Society's benefit program and quarterly newsletter. For more information on the 1839 Society or to join contact Jessica Tindol at [Jessica\\_tindol@texasbaptists.org](mailto:Jessica_tindol@texasbaptists.org).

The digitized scans of Texas Baptist associational minutes from 1840-1996 housed at the TBHC were used by numerous researchers through a website address and password provided to individual researchers. Access is limited by demand. For more information contact Brittany Crumpton at [Brittany\\_crumpton@texasbaptists.org](mailto:Brittany_crumpton@texasbaptists.org). Also, if you have a question or research request, you can submit it through Collection website at [thetbhc.org](http://thetbhc.org).

The Collection also continues proactively contacting churches that have major anniversaries in the next two years offering help as their significant date approaches. Many of these churches have contacted the TBHC as a result. If a church has an anniversary outside the two-year window but is planning an event, they can reach out to the TBHC at any time. The Director of the Collection spoke to many groups including Baylor Faculty and Alumni, BGCT Staff, Texas Baptist churches, Texas historical societies and several genealogical societies about the history and impact of Baptists in general and Texas Baptists in particular.

The TBHC continued its training-based outreach programs led by the Associate Director, Naomi Taplin, and included instruction on how to start a Church Archive, records management, and

sustain and reenergize Church Libraries. She is in churches leading sessions two to three times a month. Taplin is also overseeing the growing oral history program with African American and Hispanic churches.

The Texas Baptist Historical Museum, a branch of the TBHC, located in the historic Old Independence Baptist Church in Independence, Texas, continues to tell the story of Baptists both globally and locally. Independence is also the birthplace of Baylor University. In June and July, the TBHM hosted 2,800 Baylor freshmen as they learned why Texas Baptists founded Baylor as well as the early history of the school. If you or your church would be interested in touring the museum, contact Stephiane Kinghorn at [stephanie@kinghorn.com](mailto:stephanie@kinghorn.com)

## Baptist Historical Collections at Baylor University 2025 Report

With the addition of “Pro Mundo” to Baylor’s motto, the University’s Baptist historical collections embraced the David Youngbong Lee and Grace Kyung-ja Lee Collection as the cornerstone of Asian Baptist Collections. For 40+ years, Rev. Lee, a Republic of Korea Air Force veteran, pastored Korean Baptist congregations in the United States, founded Calvary Korean Baptist Church of Houston, and served as president of the Council of Korean Southern Baptist Churches. Nearly 100 friends from across the world attended the exhibit opening.

Partnering with London’s Keston Institute, University College Cork, Cardiff University, and others, Baylor is participating in the multinational project “Safeguarding Ukraine’s Religious Heritage: Digitization and Preservation of Endangered Minority Archives” that includes private Baptist collections in Kyiv.

The \$2.48 million Lilly Grant continues to impact the Black Gospel Archives. The award has funded reimagination of the space which will host a “re-grand opening” on September 18, 2026.

A white paper prepared by the Departments of Religion and History and the Garland School of Social Work became the impetus for an initiative on Baptist studies. Consequently, Libraries Dean Jeffry Archer created a Baptist History Collective to highlight existing collections, digitize Baptist resources, and obtain additional Baptist items. Task force members have identified Baptist materials across the collections, obtained scans of unprocessed Baptist archives, begun creating an extensive research guide, and exploring digital partnerships.

Because Baptist materials spread across the libraries, Baylor consolidates collections virtually through subject headings and metadata although archives have been challenging. With a move to ArchivesSpace, finding aids can carry descriptive terms relating to more than one area. The Libraries are also working with another Baptist repository to make their finding aids available in the Baylor Archival Repositories Database (BARD) but displayed as their discreet collection. Searching under “Baptist” in the library catalog yields 18,500 titles while BARD elicits 6,000 occurrences, and digital collections produce 44,500 references.

Baylor further promotes Baptist Collections through events:

- “Warm Heart, Devoted Service” exhibit opening celebrating the Lee Collection.
- Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer with keynote Merritt Johnston, Executive Director of BWA Women, co-sponsored by Truett Seminary, First Baptist Church Waco, and Waco Baptist Association
- “Ending Persecution: Charting the Path to Global Religious Freedom” lecture with Knox Thames and Joanne Cummings

Provost Office’s Readers Meet the Author and other author events hosted by the Libraries:

- *We Follow Christ: Helping Women to Discern God’s Call* edited by Matthew Kim, et al (1845 Books, 2025)
- *The Immortal Ten: The Definitive Account of the 1927 Tragedy and Its Legacy at Baylor University* by Todd Copeland (Big Bear Books, 2025)
- *Becoming the Pastor’s Wife: How Marriage Replaced Ordination as a Woman’s Path to Ministry* by Beth Allison Barr (Brazos Press, 2025)

History credits Texas Governor and Baylor President Pat M. Neff with choosing four quotations etched into stone on the building bearing his name. One reminds all who pass that "The preservers of history are as heroic as its makers." And we might add, "The preservers of [Baptist] history are as heroic as its makers."

Kathy Robinson Hillman  
Director of Baptist Collections



## **Carson-Newman University Middle & East Tennessee Baptist Archives 2025 Annual Report**

The Baptist Archives seeks to collect, preserve, and make available materials relating to Baptists of Middle and East Tennessee and abroad. We desire to see that heritage have a lasting influence on all patrons and specifically those we serve from Baptist churches in Tennessee.

Archives Assistant Linda Gass and I completed our 28<sup>th</sup> year working together and she continues to consistently provide outstanding reference service related to all Baptist Archives inquiries as well as handling all genealogy related requests.

9 items were cataloged for the Baptist Archives and 7 items for the Appalachian/Rare Book Collection. To date we have 4201 cataloged items in our Baptist Archives. We have 3709 items cataloged in our Rare Book and Appalachian Collection.

Among our accomplishments for the year were the following:

- \* Completed cleaning up our church vertical files, weeding out duplicate materials, photocopying, rearranging where needed, etc.
- \* Scanned various newspapers each week for relevant material to photocopy and add to our Baptist vertical files.
- \* Linda and I co-authored article entitled "The Newman Family Letters: '...go west or remain among the mountains of Old E. Tennessee'" that was published in *The Journal of East Tennessee History* (Vol. 96 – 2024).
- \* Continued adding Middle and East Tennessee Baptist associational minutes, filling in gaps in our collection. Shifted, re-boxed, and re-labeled collection were done as needed.
- \* Linda and I continued to provide tours to individuals, groups, and churches of the Jesse Baker (C-N president from 1869-70) cabin which has been reconstructed on campus.
- \* Continued to give tours of the Saint John's Bible exhibit housed in the library.

## Special Collections Reference Statistics 2025

### Patron Type

Value	Count	%
Faculty	3	8.3%
Staff	2	5.6%
Alumni	1	2.8%
Visitor/General Public	23	63.9%
Administration	7	19.4%

### Question Source

Value	Count	%
Walk-Up	7	19.4%
LibAnswers	6	16.7%
E-mail	21	58.3%
Phone	2	5.6%

## International Mission Board Archives 2026

The mission of the IMB's archives and records service is to identify, organize, and preserve information that details the Southern Baptist international missions experience. We seek to inspire future generations by sharing the rich history of Southern Baptist ministry among the nations.

### Electronic Records

Last year, 63,534 electronic records were added to the ERMS. As of the end of 2025, a total of 299,337 records were being managed, including more than 7,000 emails. An additional 11,505 boxes of physical records were listed with their inventories.

### Physical Records

Approximately 52 linear feet of transferred paper records were processed in 2025. Missionary personnel records were inter-filed alphabetically with existing files to await future conversion.

Each year the IMB conducts a purge of non-permanent records which have met their retention period. In 2025, approximately 55 linear feet of physical records were disposed.

### Donations Received

Donations of items received included materials related to work in China, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, South Africa (Transkei), Thailand, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These consisted of correspondence, journals, scrapbooks, sermon notes and outlines, photos, slides, video and audio recordings, coins, artwork, books, pamphlets, and copies of mission records.

One of the collections contains 39 years of letters and newsletters written and received by a missionary couple who served in Kenya. Another donation of eight boxes included the personal journals, sermon outlines, photos, and slides of a couple who served as Career missionaries in Japan for 20 years, as well as later mid-term assignments in Japan and Hong Kong.

Digitization of the various slide collections is ongoing, as are efforts to convert the audio and video materials.

### Digital Collections

The IMB Archives website (<https://archives.imb.org/>) provide researchers with access to several digital collections including: the African-American Heritage Collection, Board Minutes, FMB Annual Reports, FMB and IMB Periodicals (*Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, *Home and Foreign Journal*, *Foreign Mission Journal*, *Home and Foreign Fields*, *The Commission*, *Commission Stories*, *To the Ends of the Earth*), Missionary Albums, Prayer Resources (*Global*

*PrayerGram, PrayerPoints, Loving the Lost*), Lottie Moon Missionary Correspondence, and the Sallie and Landrum Holmes Collection.

In 2025, the correspondence collections were expanded to include the executive correspondence of the FMB's first two corresponding secretaries, James B. Taylor (<https://archives.imb.org/digital-collections/correspondence-collections/james-b.-taylor-executive-correspondence>) and Henry A. Tupper (<https://archives.imb.org/digital-collections/correspondence-collections/henry-a.-tupper-executive-correspondence>). These collections are not yet complete and work to digitize Taylor's copy books continued into 2026.

Also created in 2025 was a small collection of correspondence to and from Edmonia Moon (<https://archives.imb.org/digital-collections/correspondence-collections/edmonia-moon-correspondence>). Two letters from the Bob Churchill Donation were added to the digital Lottie Moon Collection. One letter was written in 1866 to Lottie by her mother Orianna Barclay Moon, and the other, dated May 3, 1912, was written by Lottie to Annie Andrews, the wife of Lottie's nephew.

All of the International Mission Board's digital correspondence collections can be accessed via this page: <https://archives.imb.org/digital-collections/correspondence-collections>.

The total number of assets contained in all of the above digital collections is 5,418. Searchable metadata fields include information such as the names of authors, editors, contributors, correspondents (both sender and recipient), dates, the modern equivalents of place names (of meetings, location of writing, addresses of letter recipients, significant places of ministry), Library of Congress subject headings, and other relevant fields. The amount of metadata varies by collection, and some assets have more detail than others. All names conform to the Library of Congress Name Authority File format. Tagged names in the various metadata fields currently exceed 6,600. *The Commission* magazine collection can be browsed by article title. Article specific metadata include title, author(s), and the page number(s) of the print edition.

# The J.H. Spencer Historical Society

## 2026 Baptist Historical Collection Report

The J.H. Spencer Historical Society exists to preserve Kentucky Baptist heritage and promote historic Baptist distinctives. The society seeks to achieve this purpose through the publication of an annual journal, holding regular meetings throughout the state, and publishing books and historic materials relating to our Kentucky Baptist heritage.

Our eighteenth annual meeting was held at First Baptist Church of Cold Spring in northern Kentucky. In spite of the icy roads, we had a good attendance. Bill Delperdange spoke on "The Perilous Road of Adoniram Judson: America's First Missionary" while Kevin Richardson shared about "Faithful in Northern Kentucky Across Generations: Ed Morin and Harold Pike." Delperdange is the creator of the "Preserving Our Baptist History" YouTube channel, and Richardson is a Kentucky Baptist pastor.

In 2025 the J.H. Spencer Historical Society published our seventeenth annual journal. This 50-page journal is professionally published and is filled with Baptist history articles and full-color photos. Among the sixteen articles in the journal were:

- "Asa: The First African American Preacher in Boone County, KY" by Jim Duvall. A member of the Bullittsburg Baptist Church in northern Kentucky, Asa was a slave owned by John Taylor. The second man was not only the pastor of this congregation but also the author of the important work "A History of Ten Churches." Duvall, the editor of the Baptist History Homepage website, shares the story of this Asa from the church granting him permission to experience his gift of preaching to his final freedom in 1839.
- "Zeal for Your House Has Eaten Me Up: The 'Excentrick' Ministry of Joseph Craig" by Kyle McDanell. Joseph Craig was the younger brother of Lewis and Elijah Craig. The former is famous for his leadership of the "Traveling Church," while the latter has become well-known for his bourbon. McDanell is a Kentucky Baptist pastor and has done a great deal of research on the Craig brothers. Here he examines Joseph's life and why he was known as an "excentrick" preacher.
- "The Paducah Revival of 1905-1906: Kentucky's Greatest Baptist Revival?" by Ben Stratton. This revival, although forgotten today, was profiled by J. Edwin Orr, the famous revivalist historian. This revival lasted 121 straight days, going through both

Thanksgiving and Christmas, and saw over 1,300 conversions. W.W. Hamilton, who later served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called it "Pentecost in Paducah!" So many new converts were received into the membership of First Baptist Church, Paducah, that Pastor J.S. Cheek literally worked himself to death counseling and disciplining them. Stratton, a Kentucky Baptist pastor, tells this amazing story.

In 2025 we also saw the publication of our latest book, "Preaching Through the Baptist Faith and Message," by Donald R. Houston. The author is a Kentucky Baptist pastor and provides alliterated sermon outlines on all the articles in the Baptist Faith and Message. This book is currently available for purchase on Amazon.

Membership in the J.H. Spencer Historical Society continues to grow, reaching an all-time high of 198. This is even more remarkable when you realize the J.H. Spencer Historical Society does not receive any funding from the Kentucky Baptist Convention. All of our finances come from donations and the membership dues of our members. May the Lord continue to bless our efforts as we remember stories from our Kentucky Baptist heritage.

Kentucky Baptist Convention  
FY 2024-25 Collection Report

The KBC Archives holds unique material of significance to Kentucky Baptist history, and it is accessible for researchers through email and appointments. Since April of 2017, Adam Winters has been contractually employed with the KBC on a part-time basis to manage its archival collections. The KBC's fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31.

Acquisitions:

- Received archival records for KBC committees (primarily 2014-2019) and sub-committees
- Acquired three extra copies of historic KBC publications from other institutions
- Received 225th Anniversary history of the Bracken Association of Baptists (2024)
- Acquired KBC programs/promotional material

Archival Progress:

- Maintained and added reference files for churches, associations, and KBC personnel
- Answered about 20 off-campus patron research requests via phone/email
- Digitized *Western Recorder* 1951-55, 1957-64 and 2001-2012 with OCR layering
- Compiled research on behalf of KBC employees and offices related to various denominational ministries and partnership affiliations.

Additional Services:

- Answered external research requests pertaining to Kentucky Baptist historical resources
- Managed reference file folders for newly-affiliated and formerly-affiliated churches
- Scanned historical photographs and materials related to staff retirement tributes
- Researched Kentucky Baptists' involvement in Cooperative Program (centennial anniversary)

Addendum:

The Western Recorder digitization project is currently hosted among the Digital Resources at [sbhla.org](https://sbhla.org), with several more uploads expected to be added monthly:

<https://sbhla.org/digital-resources/western-recorder/>



**Archives, Special Collections, and Digital Initiatives  
Jack Tarver Library, Mercer University, Macon, Georgia  
2026 Report to the Baptist History and Heritage Society  
Daniel W. Williams, University Archivist**

For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Archives, Special Collections, and Digital Initiatives department at Mercer University enjoyed a full year with a staff of four: Haley-Marie Chin-A-Young (Reference and Outreach Archivist), Maranda Christy (Processing and Digitization Archivist), Amanda Eisemann (Digital Archivist), and Daniel Williams (Head of Archives, Special Collections, and Digital Initiatives). The full staff enabled us to have a productive year in 2025.

The Archives' most significant achievement of the year was the initiation in the fall of a months-long reorganization project, still ongoing, to make better use of space in the department. The project involves moving several special book collections, our entire vertical file system, the Holmes Ancient Artifact collection, the association minutes and periodicals, and a large portion of the university records as well as adding several aisles of shelving. We are also shifting, reevaluating, and reorganizing our compact shelving wing. The end result will hopefully be a more logically organized storage system as well as approximately 275 extra linear feet of space.

Other accomplishments in 2025 include:

- Answering 358 research requests from patrons both on- and off-campus via email, telephone, and in person
- Hosting a variety of Mercer classes in the archives, providing instruction on primary sources, Baptist history, and archival research
- Continuing the multiyear process of digitizing church records microfilm with Ancestry. This project will result in the digitization of the records of 480 Georgia churches, the first batch of which we expect to become available for genealogical searching in May 2026.
- Concluding our collaboration with the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University and the John Bulow Campbell Library at Columbia Theological Seminary to build a Historic Rural Church Archive. The repository debuted in October and houses digitized church records from all three libraries, representing the largest Christian traditions in Georgia—Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. A \$150,000 grant to Historic Rural Churches of Georgia from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation funded this work.
- Receiving recordings of Rev. Dr. John R. Claypool's lectures during his tenure at McAfee School of Theology, the records of the Great Rivers Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, more papers from longtime Mercer professor Dr. Joseph M. "Papa Joe" Hendricks, records from Prosperity Free Will Baptist Church in Turner County, St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Chatham County and The Rock Baptist Church in Fayette County, as well as a steady stream of Mercer records, books, photographs, and artifacts from across campus
- Gathering, reorganizing, and systematizing our accession records
- Processing of both new and previously unprocessed materials—including the papers Hubert and Bettie Addleton (Southern Baptist missionaries to Pakistan), Louie D. Newton (20<sup>th</sup> century Georgia Baptist leader), and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of

Tennessee—as well as ongoing updating of existing finding aids for entry into ArchivesSpace

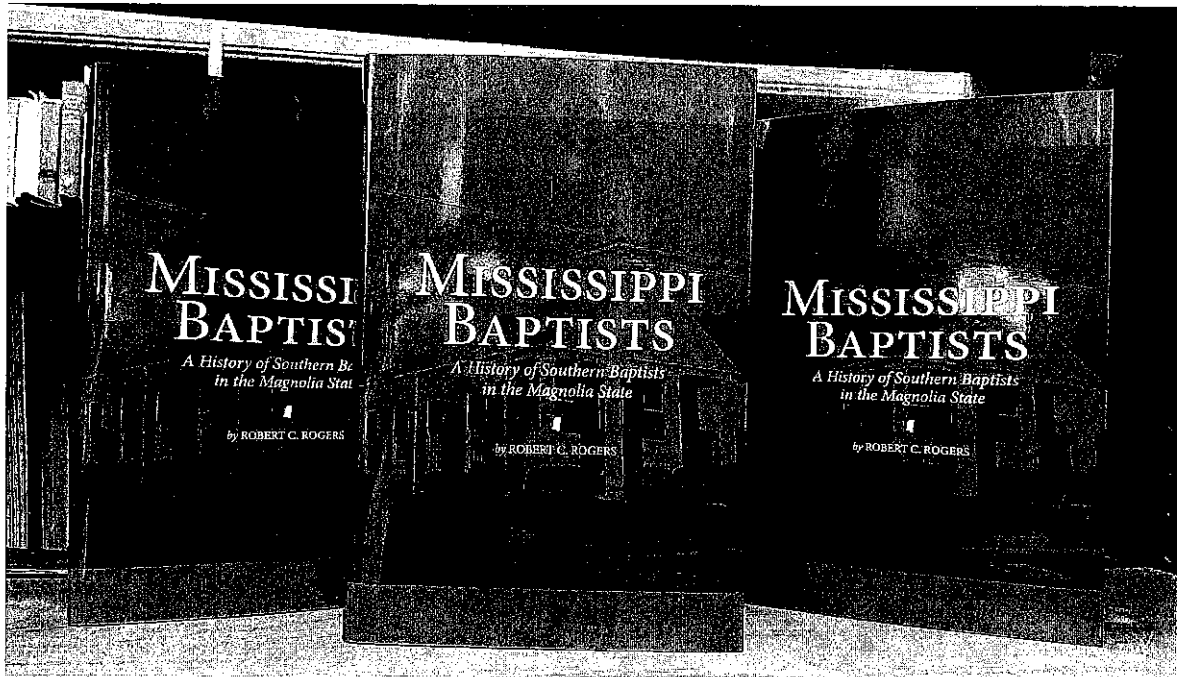
- Maintaining, correcting, and updating indexes of biographical, church, and university vertical files for upload into ArchivesSpace
- Revamping our finding aid of Georgia Baptist church records
- Continuing our digitization efforts in earnest after completing the migration to Alma Digital; materials added to URSA, our digital repository, include publications from Mercer's Atlanta campus, Tift College catalogs and newspapers, the diaries of Pearl Bigler (missionary to Brazil), early Baptist associations in Georgia, and many books and records on demand.
- Hosting the opening of a new exhibit from the Holmes Holy Land Ancient Artifact Collection in October
- Creating a display of Ken Medema vinyl records during the summer in time for his annual visit to Mercer and an exhibit of women's firsts at Mercer honoring Dr. Penny Elkins as Mercer's first female president



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST  
**HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**  
**Heather Moore, Assistant Director**

The year 2025 marks the 137<sup>th</sup> year that the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission and/or Historical Society has been actively involved in collecting and preserving the history of Mississippi Baptists.



After four years of work, the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission is excited to announce that *Mississippi Baptists: A History of Southern Baptists in the Magnolia State* is here! Dr. Bob Rogers, former Mississippi Baptist pastor and retired chaplain, has revised and updated Dr. R.A. McLemore's *A History of Mississippi Baptists* which was first published in 1971. This new history is written in a narrative style and it is our hope that this historical record clearly shows God's graciousness toward Mississippi Baptists, as well as the faithfulness of our Baptist ancestors. We included new photographs and a name index representing churches and people of significance in Mississippi Baptist life. May we, as Baptists, be challenged to remain dedicated to sharing the message of Christ.

Each college, university and seminary in Mississippi and affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention was mailed a book. Each Mississippi Baptist Convention church will also be gifted a copy of the book. Books were delivered to each state association, and will be distributed to the individual churches by association staff. Visit the Historical Commission website for information on how to get your own copy, or to download the e-book version for free: <https://mc.libguides.com/mbhc/historybook>.

### **Church Anniversaries**

52 churches had significant anniversaries in 2025. 3 celebrated 200 years, 18 celebrated 175 years, 8 celebrated 150 years, 18 celebrated 125 years and 5 celebrated 100 years. We prepared History Highlights for 29 churches which covered a total of 1,512 years' worth of Mississippi Baptist church history. The History Highlights are a year-by-year compilation of data about the church, obtained by researching the available minutes of the associations with which the church was affiliated through the years, including:

1. The date of organization, associational affiliation
2. Name of pastors and other church officers
3. Messengers to the Association
4. Membership and contribution data
5. Other information as listed such as obituaries, ordinations, special historical events, etc.
6. A list of articles that have appeared in *The Baptist Record*
7. A list of what items are in the MBHC church file

### **Church Record Inventories**

As part of the work we've been doing the past two years to digitize microfilm with vinegar syndrome and beginning to digitize physical church records, we have had over 350 reels digitized and scanned physical records for five churches and three associations. We have also been updating our church record inventories. We'll soon have these published to our website to let patrons know which formats each church's records are in: physical, digital and/or microfilm.

### **Other Activities**

During 2025, we also provided research assistance to over 900 individuals in person, or through phone and email services. 22% of these questions were related to church holdings, 26% were specific to anniversary churches, 52% were other general denomination or genealogy questions. We helped gather and preserve materials from three churches that had closed their doors. We also hosted a book signing and open house during MC's homecoming. Bob Rogers came and signed copies of the Mississippi Baptists book.

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**North Carolina Baptist Historical Collection (Special Collections & Archives (SCA)),  
Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University**

The North Carolina Baptist Historical Collection had another productive year for 2025. Among its activities were the following:

**Access:**

Marcia Phillips, our PT Metadata Technician (member of the Baptist State Convention of NC History Committee/Coordinator of the Davie Co. Public Library Martin-Wall Local History Room) reviewed and updated 1,768 metadata records for the CLIR-funded Recordings at Risk Grant, Biblical Recorder, and the Wayne Oates Papers. Marcia also authors in-depth blog posts about our collections and their connection with Baptist history, available from our web site.

**Digitizing Baptist files:**

SCA completed digitizing the NC Baptist Church and Association files of over 7,300 churches and church associations across North Carolina and surrounding areas. In addition, WFU worked with Backstage Library Works to digitize 13 reels of microfilm for 5 churches including:Lufty, Wallburg, Soldier Bay, Mt Holly First, and Grassy Knob Baptist Churches. The Digitization Lab continued scanning the records of the Wake Forest Baptist Church (Wake Forest University/Winston-Salem) and completed 2,386 pages. The church, which closed in 2022, donated funds for the digitizing of their collection.

Collaborative Digitizing Project with the University of Louisville: Wayne Oates is well known in Christian evangelical circles as the pioneer in Christian Psychology and the field of Christian Counseling. He explored how the study of human psychology fit into historic Christian theology and authored multiple books in this field and *The Five Love Languages*. Oates' papers, a student at Wake Forest College in 1938-1940, are in the holdings of the Special Collections of Wake Forest University. (He left his medical papers to the University of Louisville where he also studied psychology and taught.). A total of 1,301 pages from this collection were digitized in 2025 and are available through Quartex.

**Processing, Reference, and Outreach:**

During 2025, we processed 11 accessions/accretions (29.44 LF and 12.3 megabytes) and processed 3 collections (6.88 linear ft. and 12.3 megabytes) for the Baptist Historical Collection of North Carolina and received numerous publications for addition to our collection of monographs and serials documenting Baptist churches throughout North Carolina. Donated materials included accretions for the collections of Rev. Harold McKinnish (whose biography will be published this fall), Former SEBTS President/Pastor W. Randall Lolley, Dr. Stuart Sprague's donated collection of the Baptist Students Concerned protests at the 1968, 1969, and 1970 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meetings; the activities of Baptist Student Union of North Carolina members and the SBC from 1966 through 1998 more broadly; and accounts of these events written by former Baptist Students Concerned members, written circa 2025.

We responded to 208 research requests/visitors for our Baptist collections. A special thank you to Public Services Archivist Rebecca Petersen May, Access & Outreach Archivist Ashelee Gerald Hill, and Volunteer Shannon Bothwell (chair of ZSR Library's Board of Visitors) for answering many of these reference requests.

*Tanya Zanish-Belcher, Director-Special Collections & Archives and Executive Director-Wake Forest Historical Museum, Wake Forest University*



Special Collection  
Samford University Library  
Birmingham, Alabama  
<https://library.samford.edu/special>  
2026

### **Introduction**

For more than seventy years, the Special Collection department at Samford University has preserved church records, histories, minutes, annuals, and personal manuscripts of pastors and laity. These collections focus primarily on Alabama Baptists, though they are not limited to them. The records include materials from churches and other religious entities, as well as local and family collections. Together, these connected resources give researchers both breadth and depth for study.

In addition to collecting materials ourselves, the department has partnered with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC) to preserve records through preservation microfilming. This past year we accomplished this with a departmental staff of three professional archivists, a paraprofessional microfilm lab manager, a part-time microfilm specialist, and 3 student workers.

### **Microfilm Lab**

The ABHC, along with churches and associations, has long brought records to Samford University, where archivists prepare them for microfilming. The process included arranging and listing the materials, filming and developing the reels, and creating both a master preservation copy and a use copy. In many cases, the original records were returned to the church. The information remains secure while also being made accessible to researchers onsite and, through interlibrary loan, across the United States.

This past fiscal year, 4 sets of church records were preserved on microfilm, representing approximately 30,000 pages of Alabama Baptist records. Much of the filming was for the preservation of church records. Other collections filmed include The Alabama Baptist Newspaper, State Convention, and Associational material.

With Eastman Park Micrographics and Fuji discontinuing microfilm production, Samford University has decided to phase out its preservation microfilming program. The records currently on loan for filming will be the final ones filmed through Samford.

### **Growth**

In addition to records loaned for microfilming, the department grew by 56.7 linear feet of manuscript material. This past year, we received the papers of Dr. Andrew Manis, a Samford alum, distinguished historian, and scholar of civil rights history. The collection includes research materials, manuscripts, correspondence, and

other documents that illuminate Dr. Manis's contributions to the study of race, religion, and social justice. The department has begun processing the collection, ensuring its preservation and accessibility for future researchers.

The department began tracking digital materials received alongside analog documents. Special Collection received 734.5 GB of born-digital materials that were processed and added to the collection.

### **Digital Collections**

We digitized 102 volumes of church records already held in the collection, with materials dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The department processed 1,429 born-digital church photographs donated by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Of these, 1,272 photographs were uploaded into the Alabama Religious Life Digital Collection found on our website.

This coming year, the department is partnering with The Alabama Baptist to digitize additional years of the newspaper. These issues will be freely available online

### **Collection Use**

This past year, we assisted with 902 reference interactions, representing 275 hours of research assistance. 171 of the interactions used Baptist materials. The department hosted additional on-campus instruction classes for students and saw an increase in students' use of materials.

### **Conclusion**

The Samford Special Collection department remains dedicated to preserving and providing access to Baptist history and heritage. To maximize time in the collection, Samford guests are encouraged to make an appointment to utilize materials in person.

# Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

## Annual Report, August 2024 – July 2025

### Yearly Highlights

- Acquired 12 records center boxes of the SBC Executive Committee Office of Convention Relations Files, 1993-2016
- Acquired 14 records center boxes of the SBC Maryland-Delaware Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Union Records, 1887-1990
- Acquired 1 document box of the W. J. and Dorothy Hughes Collection, 1962-1994
- Added 1 records center box to the Baptist Convention of Israel Minutes Collection, years 1957-1992
- Added 1 records center box of World War II correspondence and photographs to the Louie Newton Collection, 1942-1948
- Acquired 5 document boxes and 2 records center boxes as the Paoli Baptist Church (Paoli, Pennsylvania) Collection, 1962-1990s (recently disbanded church)
- Acquired 9 document boxes of the Gerry Hutchinson Home Mission Board / North American Mission Board Social Ministries Department Collection, 1985-2001
- Accessioned the 2023 SBC Minister's Wives Luncheon Notebook
- Added 1 records center box and 1 document box of state Baptist convention WMU reports to the SBC Woman's Missionary Union Records Series
- Added 1 document box each of additions to the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission Records Series (publications and promotional materials and policy guides in English and Spanish), SBC Press Kit Collection (news clippings, 1990s-2000s), Historical Commission Records (publications and promotional materials), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Collection (bulletins and directories, 1950s-1970s), and BSSB Church Training Department Collection (Group Learning Improvement Clinics, 1962-1964)
- Added 1 records center box of material from the SBC Great Commission Resurgence Evaluation Task Force, 2023-2024
- Acquired 124 issues of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference Newsletters, 1974-2010
- Added 1 document box and 1 oversize item of CP100 Celebration Items, 2025
- Added 1 document box of photocopies and correspondence to the A. H. Newman Collection, 1881-1933
- Accessioned 7 document boxes of the Barry Holcomb Collection, 2002-2006
- Added 7 document boxes of sermons and subject files to the Lloyd Elder Collection
- Accessioned 1 document box of writings and articles as the Bill Sumners Collection
- Completed processing 3 archive collections: the M. E. Dodd Collection, Owen Cooper Collection, and Great Commission Resurgence Task Force Collection; and 2 large series of the SBC Radio and Television Commission Records Series (Paper Files and Motion Picture Film Collections); and updates to the Woman's Missionary Union Collection
- Prepared an extensive 5-display case exhibit on the history of the SBC Cooperative Program for the SBC annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, in June
- Completed digitization and online accessibility of 20 new digital resource projects and additions to 9 existing digital projects including a new category of Tracts and Pamphlets
- Added a new "For Churches" tab to the SBHLA website, including links to 13 articles of "Archives Helps" resources, information to assist local Baptist churches in celebrating church

anniversaries, and information for Southern Baptist churches on the history of the SBC Cooperative Program

- Added 130 annuals, 22 archive collections, 3 church and associational history files, 64 audio-visuals/kits, 533 books, 57 electronic resources, 5 informational files, 20 pamphlets, 642 periodicals, and 410 photograph files

### **Research Use**

The collection continues to attract scholars and students from a wide range of colleges and universities. Researchers from 29 different institutions conducted research in the collection during the past year. The collection was visited by 134 registered researchers and staff provided 1,001 patron contacts.

### **Acquisitions**

Six new archive collections and additions to 16 existing archive collections were accessioned into the SBHLA holdings. The WMU of the Maryland-Delaware Baptist Convention Collection, 1887-1990, contains many unique items related to the organizational founding and early work of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union. The W. J. and Dorothy Hughes Collection documents the work of longtime SBC missionaries in Wyoming, North Dakota, and Montana, and includes newspaper clippings, programs, and church planting activities in the Northwest from 1962-1994.

The SBC Executive Committee Office of Convention Relations Collection includes material from 1993-2016 and contains correspondence, reports, office memorandums, publications, and audio-visual materials. Additions were made to the Baptist Convention of Israel Collection to include minutes of the BCI for years 1957-1992. Additions to the Louie Newton Collection include 5 large notebooks of correspondence and photographs from members of Newton's church, Druid Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, who served in World War II. Additions of various state Baptist convention WMU annual meeting minutes from the 1920s-1960s were added to the WMU archive collection. The 2023 SBC Ministers' Wives Luncheon Notebook was acquired, as well as small additions of publications and promotional materials to several archive record groups. The Great Commission Resurgence Evaluation Task Force donated one large notebook of meeting materials, correspondence, and background information on the work of the Evaluation Task Force, 2023-2024.

Records of the recently disbanded Paoli Baptist Church in Paoli, Pennsylvania, were acquired. The collection, 1962-1990s, includes church records (business meeting minutes, financial reports, and membership lists), photographs, church history materials, and subject files. Paoli Baptist Church was organized as part of the Home Mission Board's Pioneer Missions program in 1962. It was a founding member of the Pennsylvania-South Jersey Baptist Convention in 1970. While most of its membership was white, African Americans were freely accepted into the membership from the early 1970s and were elected to leadership positions. The membership also included Native American and Asian members from China and India.

Two Home Mission Board / North American Mission Board Collections were acquired: the Gerry Hutchinson Christian Social Ministries Department Collection, 1985-2001; and the Barry Holcomb Collection, 2002-2006. The Hutchinson material includes correspondence, publications, subject files, and reports related to the CSM area emphasis. The Holcomb Collection contains reports and correspondence.

Additions of sermons and writings were added to the SBHLA holdings. Sermons and subject files were added to the Lloyd Elder Collection. Elder led the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1984-1991. Prior to coming to the SSB, he served as a Southern Baptist pastor and as

Executive Vice President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Writings and addresses of former SBHLA director Bill Summers were also added to the collection. Summers served as director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives from 1990-2016. Additions were also made to the A. H. Newman Collection. The Newman material includes correspondence mostly between AHN and Harold Bender from 1925-1933 but also contains some of Newton's personal correspondence from 1881. Book acquisitions this year included 11 titles of ethnic/foreign language resources including materials in Chinese, Korean, and Spanish.

### **Preservation Program**

Preserving material in a sustainable format is an ongoing task for the staff of the SBHLA. The staff works to provide archival quality containers (folders and boxes) and a suitable environment for the valuable collection in the library and archives. Ninety-two photograph files of SBC Home Mission Board migrant mission work, pioneer missions, churches, baptisms, and church activities from the 1940s-1960s in the Midwest and Northeast were transferred to acid-free folders and enclosures. The files include photographs of Southern Baptist missions activities and church plants with African Americans, Cubans, Italians, Mexicans, Native Americans, and Polish migrants.

### **Access to the Collection**

Processing was completed on 3 archive collections (M. E. Dodd Collection, Owen Cooper Collection, and the Great Commission Task Force Collection), 2 series of the SBC Radio and Television Commission Records group (Paper Files and Motion Picture Film series), and updates to the Woman's Missionary Union Collection.

M. E. Dodd served as a Southern Baptist pastor, denominational leader, and author. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Shreveport, Louisiana from 1912-1950. He was president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention (1926-1927) and President of the Southern Baptist Convention (1934-1935), and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. He was a member of the 75 Million Campaign Commission and instrumental in the launching of the SBC Cooperative Program. The Dodd Collection includes addresses, clippings, correspondence, histories of FBC Shreveport, Louisiana, and 2 of Dodd's sermons. Cooper, a businessman and Southern Baptist layman from Mississippi, served as SBC President (1972-1974); President of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (1955-1969); Chairman of the Laymen's Committee of the Crusade of the Americas (1966-1969); President of the Pan American Baptist Layman's Congress (1968); Vice President of the Baptist World Alliance (1970); and as a member of the SBC Executive Committee for 21 years. His interests included agricultural improvements in the South, improving agricultural conditions in India, rural hospitals, and as an advocate for improved race relations within the SBC. The Cooper Collection includes addresses, biographical information, clippings, one correspondence file, subject files, and an oral history interview Cooper gave with Jim Young of Baptist Press in 1974. The Great Commission Resurgence Task Force Collection, 2009-2010, includes 57 compact disc audio recordings of the GCRTF from 2009-2010, one dvd recording of the Task Force's report to the SBC annual meeting in 2010, one file of printed blog posts from the pray4gcr.com website, and the printed GCRTF progress report. The Task Force asked the SBC to adopt 7 recommendations. All of the recommendations were adopted at the 2010 SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

The SBC Radio and Television Commission Paper Files record series includes materials from the late 1930s through 1997. The collection includes minutes; reports; subject files related to radio, television, and film production; files of project ideas; scripts; and correspondence. The RTVC Motion Picture Film series is a collection of motion picture films (16mm) transferred from the RTVC. Most of the films

were produced by the RTVC, but some were produced by other SBC agencies. The collection includes 271 film titles, arranged in alphabetical order and stored in open-shelf format.

Processing work was completed on updates to the Woman's Missionary Union Collection. This addendum includes state convention WMU annuals, Baptist Press stories, booklets, manuals, brochures, and posters, as well as annual reports and yearbooks from 1911-2005.

The SBHLA awarded 14 individuals with Lynn E. May Study Grants for the year 2024-2025, ranging from \$500-\$750 per person.

Twenty new projects, and additions to 9 existing projects, of any word searchable pdf files and audio visual content, including a new category of Tracts and Pamphlets, were added to the Digital Resources page of the SBHLA website. These projects include:

- Arnold T. Ohrn Correspondence, 1948-1955
- John and Thomas Westrup Missionary Correspondence, 1881-1897
- Erik Alfred Nelson Papers, 1891-1932
- Calowa William Stumph Autobiography, 1964
- George Washington Bouldin Autobiography, 1962
- William Wesley Lawton, Sr. Diaries, 1891-1899
- Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board Minutes, 1897-1915
- *Parlor Visitor*, 1854-1857
- *Kononia Farm Newsletter*, 1956-1983
- *Calling America Back to God* Audio Recordings, 1939
- Adrian Rogers SBC Pastor's Conference Sermons Video Recordings, 1982-2003; and Adrian Rogers SBC Presidential Addresses Video Recordings, 1980, 1987-1988
- Two new collections to the Oral History Interviews category: Baptist Sunday School Board Oral History Interviews, 1971-1988; and SBC Historical Commission, Southern Baptist Leaders Oral History Collection, 1986-1987
- Two new projects added to the Sermons and Addresses category: L. Carlisle Marney Sermons, 1950-1952; and W. A. Criswell SBC Sermons and Addresses, 1965-1988
- Significant additions were made to the *Western Recorder* digital project, a collaboration between the SBHLA, SBTS Library, and Kentucky Baptist Convention Archives, to include years 1879-1904 and 1957-2011
- 2,670 images added to the Photo Gallery including images in 5 new photo albums: Baptisms, Baptist Institutions – Activities, Baptist Institutions – Buildings, Cooperative Program, and Social Ministries

The SBHLA is tasked with collecting, preserving, and making available materials that document Southern Baptist history. This work allows members of our staff to discover aspects of our Baptist heritage that inspire and enrich us each day. Our task is big but we welcome the work with grateful hearts.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Archives & Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library  
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The archives acquired approximately two linear feet of manuscript material: Norman O. Shands Papers and additions to the T. Vaughn Walker Papers. Another notable addition that cannot be objectively measured in linear feet was historical materials from the 22nd and Walnut Street Baptist Church/23rd and Broadway Baptist Church. The Archivist remained hesitant to accept any substantially large donations from off-campus due to concerns about the shortage of storage space, which has resulted in many book donation requests being declined or referred elsewhere.

Staff promoted preservation and perpetual access to audio-video resources through conversion of analog media to digital format. The Digital Archivist scanned or reformatted 161 items, acquired/processed 163 born-digital media files, and added 1.031 terabytes of media data to hard drive storage, transferring backups onto CD, DVD, and Blu-Ray formats. Digital Archivist also digitized 3 boxes of VHS tapes acquired from the Communications office and prepared them for offsite storage, with one additional box to be processed in the new fiscal year.

In a voluntary capacity, retired librarian Martha Powell assisted with many projects for the year, contributing 210 total hours. The most notable contribution was a comprehensive index of all institutional trustees and their historical terms. Other projects involved creation of a spreadsheet indexing the Missionary Anthropology Collection.

The main office re-opened to host in-person visits near the end of 2024 after months of closure for building renovations. Staff responded to approximately 315 total research requests, issuing 14 invoices. In the main office, staff hosted 17 scholarly research visits. The archives circulated 181 items (75 barcoded, 106 non-barcoded) for research purposes.

Consistent with the archives department's third major task to provide services designed to educate the SBTS community, staff hosted 280 visitors, prepared presentations for 4 SBTS/Boyce classes and prepared exhibits for 293 campus Preview Day guests under faculty direction. Archivist facilitated an exhibition for students from Christian Academy of Louisville organized by the admissions department. Staff also archived 310 internet sources relevant to the seminary. Staff contributed to furnishment of exhibits in the renovated second-floor foyer, which has proven to be of great interest to students, visitors, and campus tour groups.

