PORTER ROUTH PAPERS

AR 454

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

by Joanna Wilkey

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Porter Routh Papers

AR 454

Summary
Main Entry: Porter Routh Papers

Date Span: 1939 – 1987

Abstract: Collection includes correspondence, articles, and speeches of the Porter Routh, President of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, concerning work of the Convention, the Executive Committee, and the Cooperative Program. The collection also includes photographs of the Russian Baptist Convention and Routh family Bibles.

Size: 11 linear ft. (22 boxes)

Collection #: AR 454

Biographical Sketch
Porter Wroe Routh was born July 14, 1911 in Lockhart, Texas, the son of Mary Wroe Routh, who died of tuberculosis when Porter was still a boy, and Southern Baptist minister and editor, Eugene Coke Routh. Porter spent his early years in Texas before his father took a position as editor of the Baptist Messenger, the Oklahoma state paper. Routh received his A.B. degree in Political Science from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1934. He also attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1934 – 1935, and the University of Missouri in 1938. Routh received an honorary Doctor of Law degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1950 and a Doctor of Divinity degree from Wake Forest University in 1978.

Routh worked as a reporter for the Shawnee News-Star and as an instructor at Oklahoma Baptist University, from 1934 to 1935. From 1935 to 1937, Routh worked for the Oklahoma Baptist University Press before becoming a journalism instructor and director of public relations in 1939. From 1940 to 1943, Routh worked as Associate Secretary of Sunday School and Training Union at the Oklahoma Baptist Convention. In 1944, he became editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger, where he stayed until he moved to Nashville, in 1945, to become Secretary of the Department of Survey, Statistics, and Information of the Sunday School Board. From 1947 to 1951, he was Senior Recording Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, as well as a member of the SBC Executive Committee, from 1947 – 1951. In 1951, Routh was elected as the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention, where he remained until his retirement in 1979.

At the time of his retirement, Routh was serving as Director of the American Bible Society, a member of the Baptist World Alliance General Council, a member of the
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a member of Kiwanis International, and Director of the National Council of Boy Scouts of America. Routh had also served as director of the First American National Bank in Nashville, a member of the Committee on Medicine and Religion of the American Medical Association, and as chairman of the Tennessee Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities. Porter Routh was the author of numerous articles to Baptist journals and periodicals and also appeared on national radio and television programs. He wrote several books, including My World Too, Meet the Presidents, and 77,000 Churches.


Scope and Content Note
The Porter Routh Papers consists of 11 linear feet in 22 boxes. The collection contains material from 1939 – 1987 and partially documents Porter Routh’s career with the Sunday School Board, his time as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention, and his retirement years. Also included are articles, speeches, correspondence, and photographs.

The collection includes a large number of articles by Routh, written mainly for Baptist publications that cover topics related to the Southern Baptist Convention, Cooperative Program, missions, the Baptist Jubilee Advance, race relations, and other similar topics. The collection also includes portions of Routh’s book 77,000 Churches and articles for his regular column, “Personally.” Articles by other authors are also found throughout the collection.

Also included in the collection are speeches and addresses given by Porter Routh at various events including dedications, founder’s day celebrations, commencements, and state convention meetings. The topics of these speeches are mostly the work of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Program, higher education, and missions.

The collection contains two photograph albums of the Russian Baptist Convention for 1963 and 1966. The albums give a visual history of each convention and the leadership of each.

Another section of the collection is correspondence, which includes letters from prominent Southern Baptists, as well as presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and Jimmy Carter. Post-retirement correspondence focuses on the conflict within the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The Collection is divided into three sections: General files, Manuals and Reports, and Bibles. Each section is arranged alphabetically. The manuals and reports are related to Southern Baptist Convention agencies, and the Bibles are the personal Bibles of Routh and his family.
The papers were given by Porter Routh as a gift in 1980.

Additional material related to Porter Routh, including most of his official correspondence, is found in the records of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (AR 627-1).

**Arrangement**
Divided into three sections, each in alphabetical order

**Provenance**
Given by Porter Routh as a gift in 1980

**Preferred Citation**
Porter Routh Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

**Access Restrictions**
None

**Subject Terms**
Southern Baptist Convention. Executive Committee
Vsesoiuzmyi soviet evangelskikh khristian-baptistov (Soviet Union)
All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians – Baptists (Soviet Union)
McClellan, Albert, 1912 – 2004
Baptist jubilee Advance
Baptist World Alliance
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Routh, Eugene Coke, 1874 – 1966
Allen, Clifton Judson, 1901 – 1986
Storer, James Wilson, 1884 – 1970
Baptists – Soviet Union
Baptists – United States
Church fund raising
Religious newspapers and periodicals
Soviet Union – Churches and religious affairs – Baptist
Speeches
Albums
Photographs

**Related Materials**

Southern Baptist Convention. Administrative and Program Planning Files. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, AR 627.
Container List

A. General Files

Box 1
1.1 Administrative and Convention Arrangements Subcommittee of the SBC – Minutes, 1979
1.2 Africa Tour, 1968
1.3 Agencies – SBC – Charters and program assignments
1.4 American Baptist Convention
1.5 American Bible Society – “For Consideration of the Findings Committee of the 1954 Advisory Council of the American Bible Society”
1.6 Anderson, H.L. – “Glory in Their Face,” 1961
1.7 An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of the Cooperative Program
1.9 Article – “Advance Can Continue,” 1952
1.10 Article – “All Phases of Denominational Life Depend on the Schools,” 1953
1.11 Article – “American Bible Society,” 1967
1.12 Article – “Are We Advancing”
1.13 Article – “Areas of Cooperation between American Baptists and Southern Baptists,” 1961
1.15 Article – “A Baptist World Fellowship,” 1958
1.16 Article – “Bible Study and Training in Maryland”
1.17 Article – By Others
1.18 Article – “Can I Know Jesus?”
1.20 Article – “The Challenge of the Unenlisted Adult Multitudes,” 1951
1.21 Article – “The Checks and Balances of Southern Baptist Organized Life,” 1966
1.22 Article – “Christian Ethics and Southern Baptist Growth”
1.23 Article – “Christian Men Have Christian Obligations,” 1952
1.24 Article – “Church Administration in the Bible,” 1963
1.25 Article – “The Contributions of the Association to Baptist Life,” 1957
1.26 Article – “The Convention and the Agencies”
1.27 Article – “The Convention and the Christian College,” 1952
1.28 Article – “Co-operation Pays Off,” 1952
1.29 Article – “Cooperation Without Coercion,” 1951
1.30 Article – “The Cooperative Program,” 1954
1.31 Article – “The Cooperative Program and California Baptists,” 1955
1.32 Article – “Cooperative Program at Work Around the World,” 1975
1.33 Article – “The Cooperative Program in – State and the World”
1.34 Article – “The Cooperative Program is Missions,” 1959
1.35 Article – “The Cooperative Program is Team Play”
1.36 Article – “The Cooperative Program Picture”
1.38 Article – “Crises in Recent Southern Baptist Life,” 1981
1.39 Article – “Current Issues that Could Shape the Destiny of Southern Baptists”
1.40 Article – “A Decade of Progress,” 1956
1.42 Article – “Disciple in Dispersion,” 1969
1.43 Article – “Distribution of the Cooperative Program,” 1966
1.45 Article – “Dr. T.L. Holcomb as Denominational Leader,” 1953
1.46 Article – Editorial for the Training Union Magazine, 1963
1.47 Article – “Every Baptist a Witness,” 1957
1.48 Article – “Exalt His Name Together,” 1955
1.49 Article – “The Executive Committee”
1.50 Article – “Explaining the Cooperative Program,” 1963
1.51 Article – “Facets of Training Union Growth,” 1951
1.52 Article – “50th Anniversary Vacation Bible School,” 1951
1.53 Article – “50 Years of Cooperative Program”
1.54 Article – “Fifty-Fifty by 1950”
1.55 Article – “Finding America’s Greatest Resource”
1.56 Article – For the Centennial Issue of The Baptist Currier, 1969
1.57 Article – For Homelife, 1972

Box 2

2.1 Article – For Outreach
2.2 Article – “Forty Thousand Lost in Action”
2.3 Article – “A Four-Star Church,” 1953
2.4 Article – “The Forward Program- Its History and Future,” 1958
2.5 Article – General
2.6 Article – “George W. Schroeder,” 1956
2.7 Article – “Get Acquainted with Southern Baptists,” 1957
2.8 Article – “God’s Traffic Rules,” 1959
2.9 Article – “Good News for All Who Seek,” 1951
2.10 Article – “Guidebook to Where?” 1957
2.11 Article – “The Habit of Testimony,” 1963
2.12 Article – “A Half Decade Ahead,” 1964
2.13 Article – “Helping Children to Form Standards,” 1956
2.15 Article – “How the Convention Relates to the Churches,” 1972
2.16 Article – “How the Executive Committee Does Its Work,” 1967
2.17 Article – “How Music Shares in the Cooperative Program,” 1964
2.18 Article – “How to Live on a Hundred Dollars a Year”
2.19 Article – “How the Sunday School Helps Build Christian Homes”
2.20 Article – “How We Got the Church Covenant”
2.21 Article – “How We Serve Together,” 1956
2.22 Article – “How We Work Together as Baptists,” 1972
2.23 Article – “I learned it in Training Union,” 1955
2.24 Article – “The Importance of Tithing to the Ministry of a Church,” 1960
2.25 Article – “J.N. Barnette’s Contribution to the Denomination,” 1957
2.26 Article – “Joy to the World,” 1958
2.27 Article – “Kentucky’s Long Look”  
2.28 Article – “Know Your Executive Committee,” 1957  
2.29 Article – “Let’s Attend the Convention,” 1951  
2.30 Article – “Let’s Give the Churches Back to Christ!”  
2.31 Article – “Light a Candle and Shovel Mud!” 1970  
2.32 Article – “The Light of a Denomination,” 1960  
2.33 Article – “Looking at Your Hands”  
2.34 Article – “Looking Toward Denver”  
2.35 Article – “Looking Toward Miami,” 1952  
2.36 Article – “The Lord Has Blessed Us”  
2.37 Article – “Luther Rice and Church Music,” 1963  
2.38 Article – “Major Contributions to Stewardship and Giving,” 1952  
2.39 Article – “Make Your Card Count,” 1961  
2.40 Article – “Meet the President of the Baptist World Alliance, John Soven,” 1961  
2.41 Article – “Men Meeting World Needs,” 1965  
2.42 Article – “A Million More in ‘54,” 1953  
2.43 Article – “A Million More in ’54 will Reinforce All Agencies of the Convention,” 1954  
2.44 Article – “Mine and Thine”  
2.45 Article – “Ministers and Men,” 1958  
2.46 Article – “Missions Facing World Upheaval,” 1952  
2.48 Article – “My Dad and the Gospel,” 1964  
2.49 Article – “My Pocketbook,” 1953  
2.50 Article – “My Teacher Helped Me When I was an Intermediate,” 1952  
2.51 Article – “The Need for Enlistment of Nonresident Church Members,” 1952  
2.52 Article – “The Need for More Adequate Data”  
2.53 Article – “A New Day for World Missions,” 1962  
2.54 Article – “New Dimensions for Cooperative Program Giving,” 1965  
2.55 Article – “The New Life”  
2.56 Article – “New Life for Southern Baptists,” 1979  
2.57 Article – “Observing All Things”  
2.58 Article – “On the Work of the Baptist Church in Hungary”  
2.59 Article – “Our Total Mission Force”  
2.60 Article – “Our Unfinished Task in Training Union”  
2.61 Article – “Pascagoula and the Great Commission,” 1952  
2.62 Article – “Peace on Earth”  
2.63 Article – “Personally”: 1951 – 1957  

Box 3  
3.1 Article – “Personally”: 1958 – 1963  
3.2 Article – “Personally”: 1964, 1968  
3.3 Article – “Personally”: 1969 – 1972  
3.4 Article – “Personally”: 1973 – 1979  
3.5 Article – “A Picture of Southern Baptist Giving”  
3.6 Article – “Prayers for World Missions”
3.7 Article – “Preparation for Ministry,” 1979
3.8 Article – “Presenting the New Secretary,” 1960
3.9 Article – “Progress in Virginia”
3.10 Article – “Purple People-Eaters”
3.11 Article – “PW”
3.13 Article – “Reading – The Fifth Freedom...Enjoy it!”
3.14 Article – “The Record and the Unfinished Task”
3.15 Article – “The Relationship of a Baptist Church to Other Religious Bodies,” 1952

Box 4
4.1 Article – “Relations and Baptist Policy,” 1966
4.2 Article – “Religious Concepts in Conventions”
4.3 Article – “Representatives in the Southern Baptist Convention”
4.4 Article – “The Romance of the Association,” 1958
4.5 Article – “Sharing Christ with the Whole World,” 1963
4.6 Article – “Should Your Church Incorporate?”
4.7 Article – “A Significant Anniversary,” 1965
4.8 Article – “The 64,000 Question”
4.9 Article – “Southern Baptist Convention,” 1962
4.10 Article – “The SBC Executive Committee and Alabama Baptists”
4.12 Article – “Southern Baptists Give $15 Million for SBC Causes in 1953”
4.13 Article – “Southern Baptist Home Missions,” 1953
4.16 Article – “Southern Baptist Rural Churches”
4.17 Article – “Southern Baptists Want... Need...and Expect Action,” 1969
4.19 Article – “Spiritual Nature of the Cooperative Program,” 1954
4.20 Article – “Stewardship Week, October 19 – 23”
4.21 Article – “Stewardship and World Missions,” 1956
4.22 Article – “Strategy for Providing Assistance to Churches,” 1965
4.23 Article – “The Strength of Southern Baptists,” 1954
4.24 Article – “The Sunday School Board has Contributed to Other Denominational Agencies”
4.26 Article – “Teaching the Special Stewardship Lessons,” 1958
4.27 Article – “Testimony on Personal Reading,” 1967
4.28 Article – “Texas Baptists Help in Planning Advance”
4.29 Article – “The Things that Have Made Us”
4.30 Article – “This Grace Also,” 1956
4.31 Article – “This is how the Money you give is Used,” 1956
4.32 Article – “This I Believe”
4.33 Article – “Three Crises in Southern Baptist Life”
4.34 Article – “Thy Will be Done”
4.35 Article – “A View of the North American Baptist Fellowship,” 1964
4.38 Article – “We Are Colabourers Together”
4.39 Article – “We Are Making Progress in Race Relations”
4.40 Article – “We Still Do Not Believe,” 1952
4.41 Article – “What About Deacons?” 1948
4.42 Article – “What’s in the Annual?” 1966
4.43 Article – “What is the ‘Baptist Church?’” 1952
4.44 Article – “What is the Cooperative Program,” 1973
4.45 Article – “What is the Purpose of Our Fellowship?”
4.46 Article – “What’s the Score?”
4.47 Article – “What is the Southern Baptist Convention?” 1956
4.48 Article – “What the Adult Thrust Can Mean to Southern Baptists,” 1964
4.49 Article – “What the 1955 Simultaneous Crusade Could Mean to Southern Baptists and the Cause of Christ Around the World”
4.50 Article – “What the Sunday School Offers Men,” 1955
4.51 Article – “What Management is”
4.52 Article – “Whatsoever Things are True”
4.53 Article – “When God Was Near,” 1964
4.54 Article – “Who Are Southern Baptists?” 1957
4.57 Article – “Why are We Cooperating with Other Baptists in the Baptist Jubilee Advance?” 1959
4.58 Article – “Why They Started the Cooperative Program”
4.59 Article – “William J. Fallis—Book Editor”
4.60 Article – “Witnessing Together”
4.61 Article – “The Work of the Trustee of SBC Agencies”
4.64 Article – “Your Gifts Came, but Didn’t Stop Here,” 1960
4.65 Article – “Your Privilege as a Sunday School Teacher,” 1954
4.66 Baccalaureate Address- Ouachita Baptist University, 1979
4.67 “Background Information for Study on Canadian Baptists and Southern Baptists Relationships”
4.68 Baldwin, James M. – “The Theology of the Cooperative Program”
4.69 Baptist Canada
4.70 Baptist Elementary Training Centre- Welcome Address to Dr. Routh, 1955
4.71 Baptist Ideals
4.72 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1980

Box 5
5.1 Baptist Messenger, 1943
5.2 Baptist Messenger – Editors
5.3 Baptist Standard, 1951
5.4 Baptist World Alliance, 1950 – 1981
5.5 Baptist World Alliance, 1975
5.6 Baptist World Alliance, 1960
5.7 Baptist World Alliance, 1979
5.8 Baptist World Alliance – 10th Congress, 1960
5.9 Bennett, Phyllis
5.10 Bicentennial (USA), 1976
5.11 Boards and Commission – Trustees by Gender – ca.1978
5.12 Bold Mission Thrust, 1979
5.13 Briley, Beverly- “Invocation at Inauguration,” 1963
5.14 Bulletins: 1952 – 1979
5.15 Carlson, Adelle – “Southern Baptist Senior Adults”
5.16 Carter, Jimmy – Meeting, 1977

Box 6
6.1 Charter – Southern Baptist Convention
6.2 Church Letter, 1921 – 1946
6.3 Church and State, 1979 – 1980
6.4 Clippings
6.5 Clippings – Routh, Porter
6.6 Committee on Church Organization, 1947
6.7 Communication Technology – Today and Tomorrow
6.8 Congratulation Letters, 1951
6.9 Cooper, Owen – “The Role of the Christian College in Today’s World (From a Layman’s Viewpoint),” 1961
6.10 Cooperative Program, 1952 – 1986
6.11 Cooperative Program – Affirming Statements
6.12 “The Cooperative Program at Work around the World,” 1981
6.13 Cooperative Program – Distributions, 1900 – 1979
6.14 Cooperative Program and Missions, 1947
6.15 Cooperative Program – State Conventions

Box 7
7.1 Correspondence – A-B, 1943 – 1987
7.2 Correspondence – Allen, Clifton J., 1939 – 1961
7.3 Correspondence – C-E, 1943 – 1987
7.4 Correspondence – Communism, 1971
7.5 Correspondence – Daley, C.R., 1961 – 1967
7.6 Correspondence – Election as Secretary of Research – Sunday School Board, 1945 – Porter Routh
7.7 Correspondence – F-I, 1938-1987
7.8 Correspondence – Fallis, William J.
7.9 Correspondence – Gwaltney, L.L., 1948
7.10 Correspondence – J-M, 1939 – 1987
7.11 Correspondence – Maffett, I. Lamar, Jr., 1962 – 1965
7.12 Correspondence – McClellan, Albert, 1945 – 1986
7.13 Correspondence – N-R, 1943 – 1987
7.14 Correspondence – Nudity, 1971
7.15 Correspondence – Ormond, Helen C., 1969
7.16 Correspondence – Race Relations
7.17 Correspondence – Raley, John Wesley, 1945 – 1962
7.18 Correspondence – Rankin, M. Theron, 1946 – 1948
7.19 Correspondence – Retirement, 1979

Box 8
8.1 Correspondence – Riddle, Sue, 1970
8.2 Correspondence – S-Z, 1942 – 1987
8.3 Correspondence – Storer, J.W., 1945 – 1967
8.4 Crank Letters: General, 1969 – 1971
8.5 Crank Letters: General, 1969 – 1971
8.6 Crank Letters: General, 1970 – 1971
8.7 Crank Letters: General, 1969 – 1971
8.8 Crank Letters: Personal, 1969 – 1972
8.9 Devotionals- Open Windows, 1952
8.10 Dictaphone Recording
8.11 Dilday, Russell H., Jr. – Southern Baptist Convention Sermon –“On Higher Ground,” 1984
8.14 Europe Trip, 1964
8.15 Executive Committee

Box 9
9.2 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1950
9.3 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1951
9.4 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1952
9.5 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1953
9.6 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1954
9.7 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1955
9.8 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1956
9.9 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1957
9.10 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1958
9.11 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1959
9.12 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1960
9.13 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1973
9.14 Executive Committee of the SBC – Minutes, 1976
9.15 Executive Committee – Salaries, 1952
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.18</th>
<th>First Baptist Church – Nashville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Box 10**

| 10.1 | Fisher, Ben C. – Draft, 1975 |
| 10.3 | Fletcher, Jesse C. – “1965 to the Present” |
| 10.6 | Foreign Mission Board/ Radio and Television Commission Relationship |
| 10.7 | Gaddy, C. Welton – “A Sociology of Aging: Concerns of Ethics and Morals” |
| 10.8 | Greenleaf, Robert K. – “The Choice is Always Ours” |
| 10.10 | Hastings, Robert J. – “Secrets of Successful Promotion” |
| 10.11 | HMB Conference on the Inner City, 1969 |
| 10.13 | Holcomb, T.L. – “We Salute the Vacation Bible School” |
| 10.14 | Holocaust Booklet |
| 10.15 | Home Mission Board |
| 10.16 | Impact 80’s – Critical Concerns of the Churches, 1975 |
| 10.18 | Impact 80’s – Report on Impact 80’s Query |
| 10.19 | Income Tax Form – Oklahoma, 1944 |
| 10.20 | Inter Agency Council – A Formal Plan for Denominational Planning, 1977 |
| 10.21 | Inter Agency Council – An Informational Plan for Denominational Planning, 1977 |
| 10.22 | Leavell, Frank H. – “The Philosophy and Program of Southern Baptist Student Work” |
| 10.23 | Letter to the Editor – Baptist Joint Committee, 1987 |
| 10.24 | King, Martin Luther, Jr. – Death |
| 10.25 | Marney, Carlyle – “Peace but Not Yet,” 1965 |
| 10.27 | May, Lynn E., Jr – “Baptist Theological Battles are Not New,” 1962 |
| 10.28 | McCall, Duke |
| 10.31 | McClellan, Albert – “Coordinated Promotion Planning Leadership,” 1976 |
| 10.34 | McClellan, Albert – “The Executive Committee in Southern Baptist Heritage,” 1979 |
| 10.35 | McClellan, Albert – “For Liberty and Life,” 1963 |
| 10.36 | McClellan, Albert – “The Future of Southern Baptist Churches” |
10.38 McClellan, Albert – “Implication of Church Life Today For the Future of Religious Education,” 1970
10.39 McClellan, Albert – “An Introduction to a Study of the Southern Baptist Ministry Today”
10.41 McClellan, Albert – “Lay–Pastor Tensions in the Southern Baptist Convention”
10.42 McClellan, Albert – “A New State Editor Begins His Task,” 1980
10.43 McClellan, Albert – “Possible Danger Signals in Southern Baptist Life”
10.44 McClellan, Albert – “Problem Identification and Decision Making,” 1966
10.47 McClellan, Albert – “Southern Baptist Journalism 1891 – 1971”
10.49 McClellan, Albert – “The State Baptist Papers and Their Role Today,” 1980

Box 11
11.1 McClellan, Albert – “State Baptist Papers Today”
11.2 McClellan, Albert – “What Holds Southern Baptists Together”
11.3 Meet the Presidents
11.4 Meeting with State Secretaries- Dallas, TX, 1959
11.5 Messengers – SBC
11.6 Moody, Jess C. – Addendum to an Address to the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, 1967
11.7 Moore, Hight C – “The Baptist Contribution to Religious Liberty in America”
11.8 Moore, L.H. – “Who is Responsible?”
11.9 Morris, Elias Camp – “Negro Baptists- Retrospective and Prospective”-1897
11.11 Muggeridge, Malcolm – “Statement to the Annual Meeting of the American Bible Society”
11.12 National Seminar on Support of Missions, 1976
11.13 Newspaper Clippings – Election to Executive Secretary, 1951
11.14 North Carolina Baptist Convention, 1981
11.15 Oates, Wayne E. – “Understanding and Coping with Extremism”
11.16 Oklahoma Baptist University (O.B.U.) Club
11.17 Pamphlets – Southern Baptists
11.18 Pamphlets – General
11.19 Photographs – Family
11.20 Photographs – Midwestern Baptist Seminary – Dr. Porter Routh Visiting Professor
11.21 Photographs – Routh, Nixon, and Billy Graham
11.22 Photographs – Routh and Others
11.23 Photographs – Routh and Others Continued
11.24 Photographs – Porter Routh
11.25 Postcards
11.26 Presidents of the SBC – Photographs

**Box 12**

12.1 Price, G. Norman – “Why Have Southern Baptists Assigned Foreign Missions To a Special Board?”
12.2 Price, Janet – “A Bibliography of State Baptist Histories”
12.3 Programs, 1961 – 1986
12.4 Pronouncements in SBC History
12.5 Public Affairs Committee – SBC
12.6 Rauschenbusch, Walter – Authoritative Statements
12.8 Religious Journalism
12.9 Report of the Business Efficiency Committee to the SBC, 1927
12.10 Representation (Messengers) – Southern Baptist Convention
12.11 Resolutions – SBC, 1978
12.12 Rice, Luther – An Address delivered before the Singing Society of the Second Baptist Church in Boston – 1815
12.13 Ridgecrest, 1954 – 1957
12.14 Routh, Dorothy K. – Speech Given to Southern Baptist Leadership Conference
12.15 Routh, E.C.
12.16 Routh, E.C. – Booklets
12.18 Routh, E.C. – “Southern Baptist Convention – Hither to and Henceforth”
12.19 Routh, Ruth
12.20 Ruschlikon Baptist Seminary
12.21 Russian Baptist Convention – Photo Scrapbook, 1963

**Box 13**

13.1 Russian Baptist Convention – Scrapbook, 1966
13.2 Sampey, John W.
13.3 Scales, James R. – “The Recent Years,” 1966
13.4 Scales, Robert S. – “Seven Reasons Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program”
13.5 Seever, Howard William
13.6 Selective Service Documents
13.8 77,000 Churches
13.9 77,000 Churches

**Box 14**

14.1 Sharp, Dores Robinson – “Authoritative Creeds”
14.2 Southern Baptist Convention – Ballots
14.5    Southern Baptist Convention – Logos
14.6    Southern Baptist Convention – Minutes, 1945
14.9    Southern Baptist Convention Presidents, 1845 – 1981
14.10 Southern Baptists Woman’s Missions Heritage
14.11 Speeches, 1946 – 1948
14.12 Speeches, 1950 – 1952
14.13 Speeches, 1953 – 1954
14.15 Speeches, 1957 – 1959
14.16 Speeches, 1960 – 1962

**Box 15**
15.1    Speeches, 1963 – 1964
15.2    Speeches, 1965
15.3    Speeches, 1966 – 1969
15.4    Speeches, 1970 – 1972
15.5    Speeches, 1973
15.6    Speeches, 1974 – 1975
15.7    Speeches, 1980 – 1981
15.8    Speeches – Public relations
15.9    Speeches – Others

**Box 16**
16.1    Speeches – Outlines
16.2    Speeches – Outlines
16.3    Speeches – Outlines
16.4    Speeches – Outlines
16.5    Speeches – Outlines
16.6    Speeches – Outlines
16.7    Speeches – Outlines
16.8    Speeches – Undated
16.9    State Secretaries Meeting, 1978
16.10 Statistics – SBC, 1979

**Box 17**
17.1    Statistics- SBC, 1930 – 1980
17.2    Stewardship Commission, 1976
17.3    Storer, James Wilson
17.4    Storer, James Wilson (Mrs.)
17.5    Straughton, William – “Circular Letter on Infidelity,” 1834
17.6    Sunday School Board
17.7    Sunday School Board – Sixty Years
17.8    Syllabi – Change and Conflict in Church Denomination
17.9    Syllabi – The Southern Baptist Heritage
17.10 Syllabi – Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary – Southern Baptist Growth
17.11 Teaching – How Baptist Work Together
17.12 Teaching – Lecture Material- Baptist History
17.13 Teaching – Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary – Ministries to the Religious Community
17.14 Teaching – Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980
17.15 Teaching – Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary – SBC Studies
17.16 Testimony of Friends of Porter Routh, 1979

Box 18
18.1 The Tharp Lectures – New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary – No. 2, 1972
18.2 Theophil, Rehse – New Orleans, L.A. From Germany, 1946 – 1954
18.3 Thompson, Randall – “The Testament of Freedom”
18.4 Thumbnail Sketch of Porter Routh, 1966
18.5 Tract for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering – “Let’s Face It,” 1965
18.6 Treadway, Charles Franklin
18.7 Tributes to Porter Routh
18.8 Trip to the Orient, March, 1961
18.9 Truett, George W. – “Baptists and Religious Liberty”
18.10 Trustee Selection – SBC Boards
18.11 Tulga, Chester E. – “How a Liberal Minority Controls a Conservative Majority in the Northern Baptist Convention,” 1947
18.12 Turner, Maynard P. – “The Role of the Pastor in Politics – As the Pastor Views it,” 1964
18.13 Unknown, “The Cross,” 1841
18.16 Wedding Book, 1936
18.17 “Who are Southern Baptists”
18.18 Women’s Missionary Union
18.20 “World Ahead” – Materials – Forum Collected by Howard Bramlette

B. Manuals and Reports

Box 19
19.1 Manuals and Reports – Baptist Joint Committee of Public Affairs Staff Manual
19.2 Manuals and Reports – Baptist 75 Million Campaign Survey of Needs
19.3 Manuals and Reports – Baptist World Alliance General Council Meeting, 1981
19.4 Manuals and Reports – A Basic Understanding of Southern Baptist Missions Coordination
19.5 Manuals and Reports – Budget Planning and Expenditures in Southern Baptist Churches, 1966
19.6 Manuals and Reports – Budget Planning and Expenditures in Southern Baptist Churches, 1966
19.7 Manuals and Reports – A Church Fulfilling its Mission Through Worship, 1963
19.8 Manuals and Reports – A Church’s Worship, 1963
19.10 Manuals and Reports – Abe Lincoln Awards to Distinguished Broadcasters, 1979
19.11 Manuals and Reports – The Comprehensive Planning of Southern Baptist Seminars by George Kaludis, 1974
19.12 Manuals and Reports – Consultation on Women in Church Related Vocations – 1979

**Box 20**
20.3 Manuals and Reports – Foreign Missions – A Southern Baptist Perspective
20.4 Manuals and Reports – How Southern Baptists Do Their Work, 1977
20.5 Manuals and Reports – Impact 80s Emphasis Plan, 1979 – 1986
20.6 Manuals and Reports – Impact 80s – Situation in the Churches, 1979
20.7 Manuals and Reports – Life and Faith of Baptists, 1978
20.8 Manuals and Reports – Missions Challenge Report Committee of the SBC, 1976 Report
20.9 Manuals and Reports – Oates, Wayne E. – Understanding and Coping with Extremism
20.11 Manuals and Reports – The Report of the Study Committee of fifteen to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1973

**Box 21**
21.3 Manuals and Reports – SBC Organizational Manual, 1975
21.4 Manuals and Reports – Sunday School Board – Employee Photo Album
21.6 Manuals and Reports – Workers Together: Employee Handbook of the Sunday School Board, 1977

**C. Bibles**

**Box 22**
22.1 Bible – Given to Porter Routh by Dorothy and Frances, 1939
22.2 Bible – Given to Porter Routh by Austin Crouch, 1946
22.3 Bible – The Living Bible from Kenneth N. Taylor
22.4 Bible – C.W. Purtle, 1946
22.5 Bible – Ruth Routh, 1957