THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST COMMISSION ON THE AMERICAN BAPTIST SEMINARY RECORDS

AR 630



Faculty and students at the American Baptist Seminary in 1937

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Updated March, 2013

The Southern Baptist Commission on The American Baptist Seminary Records

AR 630

Summary

Main Entry: The Southern Baptist Commission on The American Baptist Seminary Records

Date Span: 1913 – 1996

Abstract: Records document the origin and development of the American Baptist Seminary and include minutes of the Board of Trustees, the Commission, the Business and Executive Committees of the seminary, and minutes of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. The American Baptist Seminary, a joint enterprise of the National Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, was established in 1924 in Nashville, Tennessee, to provide ministerial training for African American Baptists.

Size: 16 linear ft. (13 boxes)

Collection #: AR 630

Historical Sketch

The American Baptist Theological Seminary, an institution of learning for the training of black ministers and religious workers, was established in 1924. The seminary is jointly owned and controlled by the National Baptist Convention, Inc. and the Southern Baptist Convention. It is located in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1913, E. Y. Mullins offered a resolution at the Southern Baptist Convention calling for the establishment of a Negro Theological Seminary. A nine-member committee was appointed to study the issue. The committee recommended the establishment of a seminary that would operate under the control of the National Baptist Convention.

Because of conditions resulting from World War I and a division in the National Baptist Convention, the founding and opening of the seminary was delayed until 1924. The seminary was first located on land adjacent to Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee. The seminary opened Oct. 1, 1924, with an enrollment of 28 men and 2 women. The first faculty consisted of William T. Amiger, J.H. Garnett, and 0. L. Hailey. Sutton E. Griggs was elected the first president.

As approved by the Southern Baptist Convention, the objective of the Commission was to "act as liaison between the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A., Inc. and the Southern Baptist Convention in matters relating to the American Baptist Theological Seminary and through the Seminary to assist generally in developing a strong program of ministerial education for National Baptists." The members of the Commission were to serve as trustees for the seminary. The

executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention was asked to serve as secretary-treasurer of the Commission of the American Baptist Seminary in 1962.

The funds allocated by the Southern Baptist Convention provided operating funds for the seminary and scholarships for students in church related vocations. During the school year, 1987 – 1988, the student body included 165 students. The institution's extension program had an enrollment of nearly 600 students. In the 1990s, the Southern Baptist Convention relinquished any ownership and authority over the American Baptist Seminary, and the Commission was dissolved by Convention action in 1996.

For more information see the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists.

Scope and Content

The records of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary span the years 1913 – 1996 and include 16 linear ft. of material. The records document the origin and development of the American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.

The records contain the Minutes of the annual meetings of the Seminary's Board of Trustees from 1924 to 1992; Minutes of the Executive and Business Committees of the seminary from 1924 to 1993; the Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Commission; and the Minutes of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary, 1940 to 1996. The Minutes of the various meetings list attendees, agendas, actions of the group, reports, committee appointments, and financial statements. Also included are the subject and correspondence files of the executive director of the Commission. Included in these files are reports, articles, financial records, building files, charters and other historical papers, farm operation files, correspondence with the seminary president and faculty, and scholarship information.

Significant subjects covered in the papers include: incorporation of the Seminary in 1924; agreement on the operation of the seminary in 1949; record of significant contributions of educators, administrators, and officials of the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.; and the role of area pastors to the operation and success of the American Baptist Theological Seminary. The addendum include files related to the dissolution of the Commission on the American Baptist Seminary and the transfer of the American Baptist College to the National Baptist Convention.

The material has been divided into the five series listed below, showing date spans and folder numbers. The Minutes are arranged in chronological order.

- A. Minutes Annual meetings, Board of Trustees, American Baptist Theological Seminary, 1924 1968, Box 1, Folders 1 38.
- B. Minutes Annual meetings, Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary, 1940-1965, Box 1, Folders 39-65.
- C. Minutes Committee Files, American Baptist Theological Seminary (Executive and Business Committees) and the Executive Committee of the SBC, 1924 –1974, Box 1, Folders 66 95 and Box 2, Folders 1 54.

- D. Subject/ Correspondence files, 1913 1965, arranged in alphabetical order by folder title, Box 2, Folders 55 75, Boxes 2 7.
- E. Addendum. Minutes, Audits, and Files, 1922-1996, arranged alphabetical by folder title, Boxes 8-13.

The records were deposited with the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives by the Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary in 1986. The major addition to the collection was placed in the Archives in 1996. These files were added as an addendum to the collection and includes six record center boxes of material. The addition included minutes of the Board of Trustees, minutes of the Holding Board, and minutes of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary. Audits of these governing organizations are included. This portion of the collection is arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

Significant correspondents in the collection are listed below:

Alldredge, Eugene Perry

Amiger, William T.

Boddie, Charles

Freedman, John

Garnett, John Henry

Hailey, Orren Luico

Holcomb, T. Luther

Jackson, J. H.

Miles, J. C.

Monroe, George

Riley, R. W.

Sedbury, L. S.

Townsend, Arthur Melvin

Turner, Maynard P., Jr.

Walker, Arthur

Arrangement

Divided into five series, with minutes in chronological order.

Provenance

Records deposited with the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives by the Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary in 1986, 1996.

Preferred Citation

The Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary Records, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

American Baptist Theological Seminary

American Baptist College

Southern Baptist Convention. Commission on the American Baptist Seminary

National Baptist Convention of the United States of America

African American Baptists

African American theological seminaries

Related Materials

Powell, Ruth Marie. *Lights and Shadows: the story of the American Baptist Theological Seminary,* 1924-1964. Nashville, 1965

Container List

- 1.1 Minutes Annual Meeting Board of Trustees ABTS, 1924 –1925
- 1.2 Minutes Annual Meeting Board of Trustees ABTS, 1926 –1927
- 1.3 Minutes Annual Meeting Board of Trustees ABTS, 1928 –1929
- 1.4 Minutes Annual Meeting Board of Trustees ABTS, 1930 –1931
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1.32
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- 1.33 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Board of Trustees – ABTS, 1965
- 1.34 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Board of Trustees – ABTS, 1966
- 1.35 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Board of Trustees – ABTS, 1967
- 1.36 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Board of Trustees – ABTS, July – Dec., 1967
- 1.37 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Board of Trustees – ABTS, Jan., 1968
- 1.38 Minutes - Annual Meeting - Board of Trustees - ABTS, June, 1968
- 1.39 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Southern Baptist Commission on ABTS, 1940
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- 1.43 Minutes – Annual Meeting – Southern Baptist Commission on ABTS, 1944
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- 1.78 Minutes Business Committee Board of Trustees, 1940
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Addition to collection – Processed in 2013

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- 9.3 Audit ABTS1975 1976
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