

**INVENTORY TO THE  
JAMES GARVIN CHASTAIN PAPERS**

**AR 117**



**Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives**

Revised October, 2011

# James Garvin Chastain Papers

## AR 117

### Summary

Main Entry: James Garvin Chastain Papers

Date Span: 1882 – 1950

Abstract: Chastain served as a long-time Southern Baptist missionary to Mexico, from 1881 to 1913. He also served a short time as a missionary in Cuba. He was born in Mississippi in 1853 and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The papers consist of six items – four diaries, an extensive scrapbook, and a notebook of miscellaneous material. . The diaries cover the years 1887-1912 and 1925-1930 and detail his daily activities. The early diaries document his life as a Southern Baptist missionary in Mexico. The scrapbook includes clippings and reports of Chastain, usually relating to mission activities in Mexico. The scrapbook covers the period from 1882 to 1950.

Size: .75 linear ft.

Collection #: AR 117

### Biographical Sketch

James Garvin Chastain was born Dec. 18, 1853 in Itawamba County, Mississippi. He was baptized Dec. 21, 1873 and ordained as a Baptist minister June 17, 1875. He graduated from Mississippi College (1882) and received a Th.M. degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1888.

On June 6, 1888, he was assigned by the Foreign Mission Board to work in Mexico. He worked there 25 years serving in Matehuala, Doctor Arroyo, Morelia, Guadalajara, and Durango. He traveled over the country preaching, teaching, and holding conferences. He served as Spanish editor of the Mission Publications for many years, writing letters for the religious papers in the United States.

In 1913, the Mexican Revolution forced Chastain to leave the country. He spent the next four years doing enlistment work. In 1917, he accepted an appointment to do missionary work in Cuba where he served three years. He became Superintendent of the Spanish work of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in 1920. He retired in 1927 and died Feb. 20, 1954 in Richton, Mississippi.

### Scope and Content Note

The Collection consists of six items – four diaries, an extensive scrapbook, and a notebook of miscellaneous material. The diaries cover the years 1887 – 1912, 1925 – 1930, and detail Chastain's daily activities. The early diaries document his life as a Southern Baptist missionary in Mexico. The scrapbook includes clippings and reports of Chastain usually relating to mission

activities in Mexico. The scrapbook covers the period from 1882 – 1950. The notebook contains some loose papers and anecdotes. The collection includes .75 linear feet of material.

**Arrangement**

Diaries arranged in chronological order

**Provenance**

Placed in the archives in 1964.

**Preferred Citation**

James Garvin Chastain Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

**Access Restrictions**

None

**Subject Terms**

Chastain, Lillian Wright, 1878 – 1962  
Southern Baptist Convention, Foreign Mission Board  
Missionaries – Correspondence, reminiscences, etc.  
Missions – Mexico  
Missions – Foreign  
Mexico – Religion

**Related Materials**

Chastain's book, Thirty Years in Mexico, details much of his mission work in that country.

**Container List**

**Box 1**

- 1.1 Diary, 1887 – 1894 (250 pages)
- 1.2 Diary, 1894 – 1912 (363 pages)
- 1.3 Diary, 1925 – 1927 (75 pages)
- 1.4 Diary, 1928 – 1930 (75 pages)
- 1.5 Notebook – anecdotes, stories, clippings

**Box 2**

- 2.1 Scrapbook – clippings, reports, letters, photographs, 1882 – 1950