

**INVENTORY TO THE
WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION
COLLECTION**

AR. 517



**Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives
August 1997**

Woman's Missionary Union Collection

AR 517

I. Historical Sketch

Baptist women began organizing local societies in support of missions at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By 1881, Henry Allen Tupper, secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, estimated that about 500 such societies existed in connection with Southern Baptist churches. A movement to coordinate those societies at the state level had begun in 1870s; by the mid-1880s, Tupper had taken the lead in encouraging the development of a convention-wide organization.

On May 11, 1888, delegates from fifteen states began a three-day meeting to consider organizing a women's missionary society as an auxiliary to the SBC. Mrs. Theodore Whitfield, wife of a Richmond pastor, presided over the meeting, which took place in the basement of the Broad Street Methodist Church in Richmond, Virginia, while the Southern Baptist Convention met nearby. On May 14, the gathering approved the organizing committee's report and formed the Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention. They selected Martha Macintosh as their first president and Annie Armstrong as corresponding secretary and voted to establish their headquarters in Baltimore. The WMU transferred its headquarters to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1921.

Since its inauguration, the WMU has had two principal objectives. The first of these, motivated by the severe financial handicap under which the Foreign Mission Board operated in the 1880s, was raising money. The annual offering for foreign missions began almost as soon as the WMU organized in 1888. It started as an effort to raise funds to send an assistant to Lottie Moon in China. By 1918, the funds were being applied to the entire foreign field and the annual offering was named in honor of Lottie Moon. The annual offering for home missions began in 1894 and was named for Annie Armstrong in 1934.

The second principal objective of the WMU has been educating the people of the SBC, especially its children and young people, about the cause of missions at home and abroad. Sunbeam Bands for young children had been organized in some local societies prior to 1888. In the 1890s, that practice was encouraged by the national organization, and a system of graded missionary organizations was established that included Baby Bands for two- and three-year-olds, Sunbeams for boys and girls of grammar school age, young ladies' societies for high school and college students, and ladies' societies for adults. That system has been elaborated over the years. The current structure includes: Mission Friends (preschool boys and girls), Girls' Auxiliary (elementary and junior high girls), Acteens (high school girls), Baptist Young Women (college and twenties), and Baptist Women (over thirty). From 1907 to 1956, the WMU operated the Woman's Missionary Union Training School for Christian Workers in Lexington, Kentucky. The name changed to the Carver School of Mission and Social Work in 1953 and the SBC assumed responsibility for it in 1956, merging it with the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1963. The WMU has also furthered its educational work through an extensive publications effort that has included study materials, books, pamphlets, newsletters, and magazines.

II. Bibliography

Durham, Jacqueline. And Some Had Dreams: A History of the Woman's Missionary Union. Birmingham, AL: WMU, 1987.

Hunt, Alma. The Woman's Missionary Union. Rev. ed. Nashville: Convention Press, 1976.

Mather, Juliette. "Woman's Missionary Union." In Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II, 1506-27. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958.

Scales, T. Laine. "All that Fits a Woman": The Education of Southern Baptist Women for Missions and Social Work at the Women's Missionary Union Training School. 1907-1926. Lexington, KY: 1994.

Watkins, Rees. A Backward Glance: A History of the Woman's Missionary Union. Birmingham, AL: Woman's Missionary Union, 1987.

III. Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of 4.25 linear feet of WMU publications, dating from 1902 to 1997, with the bulk dating from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. It is organized into ten series: annual reports, annual meeting programs, executive board minutes and reports, general publications, historical publications, memorabilia, newsletters and magazines, organizations, weeks of prayer, and yearbooks. The collection includes a complete file of annual reports from 1914 to 1990. The content of those reports varies somewhat from year to year, but they generally contain the annual address of the president; reports of the corresponding or executive secretary, the treasurer, and committees; a digest of state reports; executive committee recommendations and resolutions; and proceedings of the annual meeting. Yearbooks for the years 1950-1974 provide guidelines for operating church or associational WMU's and contain the year's plan of work, lists of available literature and supplies, monthly missionary and Bible topics for meetings, and descriptions of the duties of officers. A wide assortment of other publications document WMU programs, activities, and organizations primarily in the 1950s and 1960s.

The principal body of WMU archival materials is located at the WMU headquarters: Woman's Missionary Union, P. O. Box 830010, Birmingham, Alabama 35283-0010. Some of those materials have been microfilmed and are available in the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives as follows:

MF 551 Report of the Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, 1889-1978.

MF 564 Executive Committee Minutes, 1888-1974.

MF 565 Board of Manager's Minute Book, 1925-1955.

MF 409 Magazines

Our Mission Field, 1906-1914

Royal Service, 1914-1978

Sunbeam Activities, 1954-70

Tell, 1954-70

Window of the YWA 1929-61

World Comrades 1922-53

MF 1330-1 WMU Training School, Alumnae Association Annual Bulletin, 1916-46

MF 1330-2 WMU Training School, Alumnae Bulletins, 1942-March 1963

Related Materials

In addition to the microfilm and print records of the national Woman's Missionary Union, the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives holds annual reports, histories, and microfilm minute books for a number of church, associational, and state WMUs.

Inventory

Box 1

Annual Reports

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6. 1930-33
7. 1934-37
8. 1938-41
9. 1942, 1944, 1946
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11. 1951-54
12. 1955-58
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Box 2

Annual Meeting Programs

1. 1954-57, 1959-61, 1967, 1969-71, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1984

Executive Board

2. Minutes, 1976, 1978
3. Reports, 1959-62, 1964, 1966-68, 1971, 1973-74, 1983, 1988

General Publications

4. Associational WMU, 1968, 1970, 1980-81
5. Booklists and publications catalogs, 1954-61, 1964, 1992
6. Church growth, 1966
7. Cooperative Program, 1962, nd
8. Day camping, 1970
9. Director plan book, 1970
10. Drama, 1965, nd
11. Family and home, 1966, 1970
12. Field services plan, 1970-71
13. Foreign Mission Board, 1963, 1968, 1973, nd
14. Group guides, 1968, 1970
15. Leadership, 1965, 1980, nd
16. Living Religions resource packet, nd
17. Manuals, 1950, 1968, nd
18. Maps, nd
19. Mission Action Series, nd

20. "Missions and the SBC," 1986
21. Posters, ca. 1950s & 1960s
22. Prayer retreats, 1965-66, 1970-71
23. Programming and organizational structure, 1954-57, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1967-68, 1970, 1992, nd
24. Project HELP and Cultural Diversity resource kit, 1997
25. Record and report book, 1970
26. Stewardship, 1926, 1961, nd
27. Teachers' Guides, 1968-71
28. Teachers' Helps, 1960, 1963, nd
29. Travel, 1991-92, nd

Historical Publications

30. Anniversaries --50th, 1938
31. Anniversaries --75th, 1963
32. Anniversaries --150th of American Baptist Missions, 1964
33. Biographical --Armstrong, Annie, 1952, 1967, nd
34. Biographical --Hunt, Alma, 1974
35. Biographical --Mathis, Mrs. R. L., 1963
36. Biographical --Moon, Lot tie, 1955, 1960, nd
37. Building and site dedication, 1982, 1985
38. "Laborers Together With God: Mary Hardin-Baylor College and Woman's Missionary Union," 1945
39. Royal Service 75th Anniversary album, 1989
40. "Short History of the Hong Kong WMU," nd
41. WMU Training School, 1927, 1943
42. Memorabilia, nd

Newsletters and Magazines

43. Dimension, October/December 1970
44. Missionary Link, 1956-57
45. Missions Now, Spring 1993
46. New WMU, No.1 June 1980, No.5 Winter 1982
47. Teach Missions Boldly, nd
48. WMU News, 1978-79
49. WMU Resort, Spring 1993

Box 3

Organizations

1. Mission Friends, 1970, 1972, 1977, nd
2. Sunbeams --Director's planning book, 1968
3. Sunbeams --World in Books, 1964-65
4. Sunbeams --Nursery, 1968
5. Sunbeams --Beginners, 1968-69
6. Sunbeams --Beginners --Mission Pictures, nd
7. Sunbeams --Primary, 1968, nd
8. Royal Ambassadors, 1952, nd
9. Girls' Auxiliary --Associational, 1962
10. Girls' Auxiliary --Badges and seals, 1970-71
11. Girls' Auxiliary --Coronation, 1967, nd
12. Girls' Auxiliary --Counselors, nd

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2. Girls' Auxiliary --Drama, 1959, 1961
3. Girls' Auxiliary --Intermediates, 1968
4. Girls' Auxiliary --Juniors, 1968
5. Girls' Auxiliary --Leaders, 1970, nd
6. Girls' Auxiliary --Manuals and handbooks, 1970, nd
7. Girls' Auxiliary Miscellaneous, 1952, 1960, 1962, 1965, 1968
8. Girls' Auxiliary --Mission Adventures, 1970
9. Girls' Auxiliary --Record and report books, 1968, 1970
10. Girls' Auxiliary --World in Books, 1964-65
11. Acteens --Leaders and members books, 1970-71
12. Acteens --Miscellaneous, 1970-71

Box 5

Organizations (cont'd)

1. Young Women's Association --Book Club, 1954-58, 1964-65, nd
2. Young Women's Association --Emblem Series, 1960-62
3. Young Women's Association --Leadership, 1968
4. Young Women's Association --Manuals and handbooks, 1950, 1956, 1968
5. Young Women's Association --Miscellaneous, 1952, 1965, 1968, nd
6. Young Women's Association --Plan books, 1968, 1970
7. Baptist Young Women, 1970-71
8. Baptist Women, 1970-71
9. Woman's Missionary Society, 1968, 1970

Outside Organizations

10. Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1961
11. Baptist World Alliance, 1993

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43. 1953-60
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