

**RICHARD NEWTON OWEN
COLLECTION**

AR 768



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Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives
July 2004

Updated July, 2012

Richard N. Owen Collection

AR 768

Summary

Main Entry: Richard N. Owen Collection

Date Span: 1950 – 1978

Abstract: The collection consists primarily of Richard Owen's correspondence to and from Baptists and political leaders, mostly related to Tennessee. Owen served as editor of *The Baptist and Reflector*, the Baptist newspaper for Tennessee.

Size: one linear ft. (2 boxes)

Collection #: AR 768

Biographical Sketch

Richard Newton Owen was born in Covington, Tennessee, April 1, 1898, the son of a judge and homemaker. One of seven children, Owen attended First Baptist Church in Covington and was baptized in 1906. After attending Tulane University, Owen graduated from the University of Tennessee, in 1920, with a B.A. degree and from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in 1922, with a master's degree in theology. He attended Union University where he was awarded a doctorate of divinity in 1934. Owen married Margaret Steele, May 5, 1923, and they had one child, Richard N. Owen, Jr., born in 1924. Owen became editor of *The Baptist and Reflector*, Tennessee's state Baptist newspaper, in 1950. He retired in 1968.

Richard Owen was ordained as a minister May 8, 1921, at First Baptist Church Covington. He was pastor at four Tennessee churches: First Baptist Church of Milan, from 1923 to 1926; First Baptist Church of Elizabethton, from 1926 to 1929; First Baptist Church of Paris, from 1930 to 1937; and First Baptist Church of Clarksville, 1938 to 1950. Owen also served in the United States Army. He was author of two books: *Glimpses of Germany*, in 1934, and *Basic Beliefs: Truths We Hold*, in 1954. Owen was the recipient of several awards: Who's Who in America since 1952, Friend of Education from the Tennessee Baptist School in 1964, and the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's Distinguished Service Award in 1968.

Owen became moderator of the Western District association in Paris, Tennessee, in 1930, and served in that capacity until 1937. He was also moderator for the Cumberland Association in Clarksville from 1946 to 1948. He was elected vice president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1931, and, in 1946, he was elected Tennessee Baptist Convention president. He served on the executive committee of the Tennessee Baptist Convention from 1947 to 1950. Owen was the second president of the Southern Baptist Historical Society (1952 – 1954), and served another term as president from 1958 to 1968. He was president of the Southern Baptist

Press Association from 1960 to 1961. Owen was also a trustee of Union University from 1937 to 1938, Tennessee College for Women in 1940 to 1945, and Cumberland University from 1946 to 1949. He was the director of the America Baptist Theological Seminary from 1947 to 1951. He was also a delegate to the Baptist World Alliance in Berlin, Germany (1934), Atlanta, Georgia (1939), and Cleveland, Ohio (1950).

Owen was editor of *The Baptist and Reflector* from 1950 to 1968 and dealt with many changes, both with the paper and also within the Southern Baptist Convention. He was involved in many of the political dealings of the SBC and the government. Owen informed his readers about what was going on and the stand that Baptists were taking on issues. He was involved with the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist schools taking federal money from the government. In the late 1960s, Owen used his newspaper as a voice of support for integration. He supported Martin Luther King, Jr. and helped to open Baptist churches to African American membership. Under Owen's leadership, *The Baptist and Reflector* supported Supreme Court rulings that allowed religion in public schools in the 1960s. Owen led the way for editors of Baptist newspapers all across the nation to take a stand on political issues. Under his leadership, the circulation of the newspaper increased from 42,000 to 73,000.

Scope and Content Note

Many of the individuals contained in the correspondence of the Owen Collection round out a "Who's Who" of Southern Baptist leaders from the middle decades of the twentieth century. They include former SBC presidents William Wayne Dehoney, James David Grey, Robert Greene Lee, Louie Devotie Newton, Henry Franklin Paschall, William Ramsey Pollard, James Wilson Storer, James Lenox Sullivan, and Casper Carl Warren. Additional Baptist leaders with correspondence in the Owen Collection are Clifton Judson Allen, Baker James Cauthen, Norman Wade Cox, Wilmer Clement Fields, John D. Freeman, J. Marse Grant, Herschel Harold Hobbs, Thomas Luther Holcomb, Alma Hunt, T. A. Patterson, Courts Redford, C. Winfield Rich, Porter Wroe Routh, O. W. Taylor, Foy Valentine, and Davis Collier Woolley. There is correspondence from local, state, and national politicians, including Beverly Briley (former mayor of Nashville), Frank Goad Clement (former Tennessee Congressman), Albert Gore, Sr. (former Tennessee Senator), Brooks Hays (former Arkansas Senator and former SBC president), and Carey Estes Kefauver (former Tennessee Senator and 1956 Democratic vice-presidential nominee).

Although the collection consists primarily of correspondence, typescripts of letters from pastors and talks that Owen gave are also part of the collection. The typescript letters from pastors are all letters of appreciation discussing the impact that *The Baptist and Reflector* had on their churches. There are letters from various churches, organizations, and individuals expressing their appreciation for articles written in the newspaper. The talks by Owen include topics such as church library work, public relations, and the role and function of a Baptist newspaper. The collection focuses primarily on Owen's career as editor of *The Baptist and Reflector*.

The Richard Newton Owen Collection includes two linear feet of material, which is arranged alphabetically by folder title. There are sixty-five folders included in the collection. Owen donated the collection to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in 1991.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by folder title

Provenance

Donated by Owen in 1991 to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Preferred Citation

Richard Newton Owen Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

Allen, Clifton Judson, 1901 – 1986
 Cauthern, Baker James, 1909 – 1985
 Clement, Frank Goad, 1920 – 1969
 Dehoney, William Wayne, 1918 –
 Fields, Wilmer Clemont, 1922 –
 Gore, Albert Sr., 1907 – 1963
 Grey, James David, 1906 – 1985
 Hays, Brooks, 1898 – 1981
 Hobbs, Herschel Harold, 1907 – 1995
 Holcomb, Thomas Luther, 1882 – 1972
 Kefauver, Carey Estes, 1903 – 1963
 Lee, Robert Greene, 1886 – 1978
 Newton, Louis DeVotie, 1892 – 1986
 Paschall, Henry Franklin, 1922 –
 Redford, Courts, 1898 – 1977
 Routh, Porter Wroe, 1911 – 1987
 Storer, James Wilson, 1884 – 1970
 Sullivan, James Lenox, 1910 – 2005
 Valentine, Foy, 1923 –
 Warren, Casper Carl, 1896 – 1973
 Woolley, Davis Collier, 1908 – 1971
 Baptist and Reflector – Tennessee
 Southern Baptist Press Association
 Tennessee Baptist Convention
 Public relations – Churches

Container List**Box 1**

- 1.1 Correspondence, No Dates
- 1.2 Correspondence, 1950 – 1954
- 1.3 Correspondence, 1955

- 1.4 Correspondence, 1956 – 1957
- 1.5 Correspondence, 1958
- 1.6 Correspondence, 1959
- 1.7 Correspondence, 1960
- 1.8 Correspondence, 1961
- 1.9 Correspondence, 1962
- 1.10 Correspondence, 1963
- 1.11 Correspondence, 1964
- 1.12 Correspondence, 1965
- 1.13 Correspondence, 1966
- 1.14 Correspondence, 1967
- 1.15 Correspondence, 1968, January – April
- 1.16 Correspondence, 1968, May – November
- 1.17 Correspondence, 1969 – 1978

Box 2

- 2.1 Correspondence – Allen, Clifton Judson
- 2.2 Correspondence – Briley, Beverly
- 2.3 Correspondence – Cauthen, Baker James
- 2.4 Correspondence – Clement, Frank Goad
- 2.5 Correspondence – Cox, Norman Wade
- 2.6 Correspondence – Dehoney, William Wayne
- 2.7 Correspondence – Fields, Wilmer Clement
- 2.8 Correspondence – Freeman, John D.
- 2.9 Correspondence – Gore, Albert, Sr.
- 2.10 Correspondence – Grant, J. Marse
- 2.11 Correspondence – Grey, James David
- 2.12 Correspondence – Hays, Brooks
- 2.13 Correspondence – Hobbs, Herschel Harold
- 2.14 Correspondence – Holcomb, Thomas Luther
- 2.15 Correspondence – Hunt, Alma
- 2.16 Correspondence – Kefauver, Carey Estes
- 2.17 Correspondence – Lee, Robert Greene
- 2.18 Correspondence – Newton, Louie Devotie
- 2.19 Correspondence – Paschall, Henry Franklin
- 2.20 Correspondence – Patterson, T. A.
- 2.21 Correspondence – Pollard, Ramsey
- 2.22 Correspondence – Redford, Courts
- 2.23 Correspondence – Rich, C. Winfield
- 2.24 Correspondence – Routh, Porter Wroe
- 2.25 Correspondence – Storer, James Wilson
- 2.26 Correspondence – Sullivan, James Lenox
- 2.27 Correspondence – Taylor, O. W.
- 2.28 Correspondence – Valentine, Foy
- 2.29 Correspondence – Warren, Casper Carl
- 2.30 Correspondence – Woolley, Davis Collier

- 2.31 Letters from Pastors, A-D
- 2.32 Letters from Pastors, E-H
- 2.33 Letters from Pastors, J-M
- 2.34 Letters from Pastors, N-R
- 2.35 Letters from Pastors: S-Y
- 2.36 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Any Word for Today’s World
- 2.37 Talks by Richard N. Owen – The Church Library Helping the Church Fulfill Its Mission through Materials to Disturb Our Complacency
- 2.38 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Church Publicity
- 2.39 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Communicating the Gospel
- 2.40 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Dragons Teeth or Angels of Light
- 2.41 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Effective Communication
- 2.42 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Public Relations
- 2.43 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Thoughts for the Day
- 2.44 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Toward an Informed Church Membership
- 2.45 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Value of the Paper
- 2.46 Talks by Richard N. Owen – What Should an Editor Be?
- 2.47 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Working together as Tennessee Baptists
- 2.48 Talks by Richard N. Owen – Your Paper’s Purpose