

GAINES STANLEY DOBBINS PAPERS

AR 795 – 281



**Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives
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Gaines Stanley Dobbins Papers

AR 795 - 281

Summary

Main Entry: Gaines Stanley Dobbins (1886 – 1978) Papers

Date Span: 1945 – 1966

Abstract: Papers of Southern Baptist seminary professor, Christian educator, and writer. Gaines Dobbins was one of the most prolific of Christian educators, having authored 32 books and approximately 5000 articles. The collection focuses on the period after his first retirement from teaching at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his second career of teaching at the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. The collection includes articles, book reviews, book manuscripts, correspondence, course material, lectures, and other material related to religious education and Baptist church life.

Size: linear ft. 5 linear ft. (10 document boxes)

Collection #: AR 795 – 281

Biographical Sketch

Gaines Stanley Dobbins (1886 – 1978), was one of the most influential Southern Baptists of the twentieth century in a number of areas – church administration, pastoral care, missions, and evangelism – but especially in the field of Christian education. His understanding and emphasis on the value of each individual, created in the image of God, significantly impacted his teaching philosophy and methodology. Dobbins might be considered a Christian pragmatist in his unusual ability to make ideas practical and useful in Christian education, both for the individual and also in the life of the church in strategic ways. Dobbins was one of the most prolific of Christian educators, having authored 32 books and approximately 5000 articles.

Gaines Dobbins was born July 29, 1886, in Langsdale, Mississippi, to poor farming parents, Charles Wesley and Letita Gaines. The family eventually moved to Hattiesburg where they began operating a boarding house, a venture that provided a stable family income. At the age of 12, Gaines Dobbins obtained a job as the printer's devil for the Hattiesburg, Mississippi newspaper, *The Hattiesburg Progress*. By the time he was 17, he was the Associated Press correspondent for South Mississippi. In 1904, he became editor of one of the largest weekly newspapers in Mississippi, *The Saturday Evening Eye*.

He enrolled at Mississippi College in 1905, a small college related to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, to further his education. In 1906, he publicly confessed his belief in Christ as his Savior. Dobbins later wrote on that day, "...a strange peace came. My doubts faded, and life now took a different turn."

He matriculated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1909, for what he thought would be one year of training. One year led to four years for his ThM, and in 1914, he received his Th.D. degree. His dissertation was *A History of Southern Baptist Journalism*. During his seminary training, Dobbins married his childhood sweetheart, May Riley, and the first of their three children was born. Dobbins also realized that he was being called to pastoral ministry, and he was ordained by the Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He served two churches as pastor during his seminary days.

Dobbins continued his education at Columbia University and the University of Chicago. He remained on the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary until 1956 when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. He was then invited to another Southern Baptist seminary, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served as professor of Church Administration. During his stay there, he also served as co-chairman and chairman of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Bible Teaching and Training. In addition, he engaged in mission tours of Europe, South America, Canada, Africa, and the Orient. He taught at Baptist theological seminaries in Switzerland in 1958 and in 1962 in Nigeria.

A second retirement followed his ten years at Golden Gate, but Dobbins continued in untiring fashion by serving as a chaplain at a nursing home from 1967 – 1973 in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1975 – 76, he returned to Southern Seminary as visiting lecturer at their Boyce Bible School. Dobbins died on September 22, 1978, in Birmingham where he is buried.

Scope and Content Note

The Gaines Dobbins Papers consists of five linear feet of material, most related to Christian education and the church as a teaching institution. The files came during his years of service at Golden Gate Seminary. The collection includes drafts and copies of articles, correspondence with friends and colleagues, course information, church survey reports, material related to Golden Gate Seminary and the Baptist World Alliance, book manuscripts, lectures, and other material related to religious education.

The major topics and issues included in the papers include: Christian education, role of the church, evangelism, Golden Gate Seminary, worship, Nigerian missions, and the Baptist World Alliance.

Additional papers of Dobbins are found at the libraries at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Samford University.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in alphabetical order by folder title.

Provenance

The Dobbins Papers is part of the Sunday School Board (LifeWay Christian Resources) records, transferred from the Dargan Library in 1998. The collection was initially acquired by W. L. Howse Jr., director of the Education Division of the Sunday School Board.

Preferred Citation

Gaines Stanley Dobbins Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

Dobbins, Gaines Stanley, 1886 – 1978

Religious education

Worship

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary -History

Baptist World Alliance

Missions – Nigeria.

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- 10.17 Training potential leaders: A special course for training potential lay leaders in a church
- 10.18 Training Union Leadership articles, 1963