

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE
DEPARTMENT COLLECTION

AR 795 – 568



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Revised, 2015

Church Architecture Department Collection

AR 795 – 568

Summary

Main Entry: Southern Baptist Convention. Sunday School Board. Church Architecture Department Collection.

Date Span: 1920 – 1970

Abstract: In the early years of the 20th century, the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began assisting Southern Baptist churches with architectural needs and published a guide for the churches in 1917. The collection includes drawings and specifications for Sunday School Board buildings, drawings and floor plans for church buildings, and subject files, reports, publications, photographs, and posters related to church architecture.

Size: 6 linear ft.

Collection #: AR 795 – 568

Historical Sketch

The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention established the Department of Church Architecture in 1917. P.E. Burroughs served as head of the new department which published free literature on various aspects of church architecture. The Board provided a capable staff of architects and draftsmen, and the department offered guiding service for churches that planned to build, remodel, or erect pastors' homes. An information bureau was established to supply suggestions about church furniture, equipment, and sources of funding for building projects. The department, with Burroughs as the writer, published four books (1917 – 1938) related to church buildings.

In 1940, William Asa Harrell was named secretary of the Church Architecture Department. The department served about 100 churches each month by offering free literature, suggested floor plans and exteriors, stock plans of working drawings, and general consultation services. By 1980, the department was servicing approximately 700 requests per month with a staff of 26 people. The Church Architecture Department was part of the Church and Staff Support Division in the Office of Church Programs and Services.

By 2013, LifeWay Christian Resources had ended its direct architectural services to churches and began a new way to serve churches through architecture and building projects. LifeWay Architecture joined forces with Visioneering Studios, a national architecture firm that has a reputation for being innovative and for designing efficient, effective, and exciting facilities for churches.

Scope and Content

The collection is divided into the following four series:

- A. Drawings/Sunday School Board buildings
- B. Drawings/Perspectives/Floor Plans/Photographs – Church Buildings
- C. Reports, Manuals, Subject Files
- D. Publications/Booklets and Posters

The first series consists of architectural drawings, working drawings, and specifications for the construction of select Sunday School Board buildings and additions. The files, placed with the Church Architecture Department, are arranged alphabetically by the name of the building. Drawings (perspectives and floor plans) for church buildings make up the second series of material. The drawings, photographic reproductions that could be sent to churches, are arranged numerically by plan number. The third series, consisting of reports, manuals, and subject files, includes pamphlets, publications, and posters related to church architecture. This series is subdivided into (1) publications and (2) posters which are arranged alphabetically by title.

The collection spans the years 1920 to 1970 and includes 6 linear ft. of material. However, no official records are included. Photographs of Baptist churches were separated and placed in the photograph collection in the SBHLA. The collection was transferred to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives by the E. C. Dargan Library, Sunday School Board, in 1990, and is open to researchers.

Arrangement

Alphabetically by title

Provenance

Transferred to the SBHLA by the E. C. Dargan Library in 1990

Preferred Citation

Southern Baptist Convention. Sunday School Board. Church Architecture Department Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Access Restrictions

None

Subject Terms

Burroughs, P. E. (Prince Emanuel), 1871 – 1948

Harrell, William Asa, 1903-1971

Southern Baptist Convention. Sunday School Board. Frost Building

Southern Baptist Convention. Sunday School Board. Sullivan Tower

Church architecture – Designs and plans

Church facilities – Planning

Architecture

Related Resources

- Burroughs, Prince Emmanuel. *A complete guide to church building*, 1923.
 Nichols, J. B. *A historical study of Southern Baptist church architecture*, 1954. MF 2830
 William Asa Harrell Papers, AR 795-306
 Harrell, William A. *Planning better church buildings*, 1957.

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- 1.3 Frost Building – Remodeling Specifications, 1922
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