

Preserve Your Church Records On Microfilm

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

An entity of the
Alabama Baptist State Convention

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Preserving History and Heritage

Much of the history of a church and its people is recorded in the pages of church records. Regardless of size or denomination, every church should preserve its historical documents in the best possible way - by microfilming these valuable records.

The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, in cooperation with the Samford University Library, provides a simple and efficient microfilm procedure **at no cost to the church.**

What materials should be microfilmed? **Anything you do not want to lose.**

For example: clerk's, deacons', trustees', or committee minutes, membership lists, legal documents, newsletters, orders of worship/bulletins, programs from special events, WMU and men's ministry records, VBS records, financial records, written histories, newspaper articles, scrapbooks, church directories, calendars, architectural drawings, other printed materials.

TIP: Because many churches have the same name, it is beneficial to include the full name, address, city, and Baptist association in the materials you send for filming. Please include the church name and address on all documents produced by your church. Including the full date can be a great help to those using records in the future. Example: Anniversary Program, First Baptist Church, Camellia AL, Liberty Baptist Association, Jan. 7, 1998.

Organizing Records for Microfilming

- Put like things together such as records for business meetings, WMU, bulletins, directories, etc.
- Put the records in chronological order by type with the earliest date first.
- The exception to the above order is individual membership cards/letters. These should be in alphabetical order by the last name.
- Please do not include checks, records with bank account numbers or social security numbers.
- Please keep in mind that photographs, particularly color, do not film well. If you have a collection of significant photographs for your church, please select 2 or 3 of them to represent the collection.
- Scrapbooks that contain programs and articles can be filmed, however they often require additional time to complete.
- Include only one copy of each document.

Below is an example of how records are organized before being microfilmed. It is not necessary to actually list the records before sending them. The microfilm lab will list the records for you. The more organized your records are, the easier it is for the library accession department to make the list.

1. 1979 – 1982 Business Meeting Minutes
2. 1975 – 1977 Deacon's Minutes
3. Jan. – Dec. 1978 Bulletins
4. 1979 Church Directory
5. 1979 - 1981 Financial Records, Report of Public Accounts
6. Membership A – Z

Procedures for Microfilming

The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission will pick up and return records, free of charge. Church records can also be brought daily to the Special Collection Department, Samford University Library, Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. *Hours may vary with academic calendar.*

The time required for filming depends on the amount and organization of material. Filming is done on a first come - first served basis. The church will be notified when the originals are ready to be returned and a convenient time for returning records will be scheduled.

Microfilming of church records is done at the Samford University Library Microfilm Department, the only certified microfilm laboratory in Alabama. The staff is fully trained and experienced in handling historical documents.

Some churches choose to entrust their original records to the Alabama Baptist Historical Collection for custody in the archival section.

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The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

Provides microfilming of
Alabama Baptist church records,
association records,
Alabama Baptist State Convention
and convention entity records, free
of charge, with free pick up
and delivery.

Why Microfilm?

Microfilming ensures that a copy of church records will be available if the originals should ever be destroyed or lost. It is the gold standard of archival preservation and according to experts, will last hundreds of years. Changes in computer technology or software will not affect our ability to access microfilmed records.

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TIME . . .
It's worth
preserving