

Collection #s
M 0524
OM 0259

**SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH (INDIANAPOLIS, IND.)
RECORDS, 1912–1985 (BULK 1937–1967)**

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27 August 1991
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 2 oversized manuscript folder, 1 photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1912-1986; Bulk 1937-1967

PROVENANCE: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Alan Goebes, "The History of Second Baptist Church", SC 1889

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1990.0684X

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Second Baptist Church was established in Indianapolis during the antebellum period. In 1846 Reverend Charles Sachel, a Cincinnati missionary, organized a group of men who met at the home of Deacon John Brown located near the corner of West and Ohio streets.

The Church's first building, a small frame structure was erected on Missouri Street, between New York and Ohio streets on land purchased by Brown. The Church was built around 1850, during the ministry of Joshua Thurman who came to Second Baptist in 1848. The building was destroyed by arson in 1851 and rebuilt during Jesse Young's tenure as pastor (1852-53).

In 1864 an addition was added to the building to accommodate a growing congregation. The membership of the Church continued to increase and in 1867 Second Baptist purchased a site for its third building. Moses Broyles (pastor of the Second Baptist Church, 1857-1882) gives a detailed account of the building in *The History of Second Baptist Church*. Published in 1876, this book recounts the institution's first 30 years.

The Church prospered under the pastorate of Broyles. He was recognized for his political leadership. His influence was felt during the 1870s when Mary Rann became the first black student to enter and graduate from Shortridge High School. Second Baptist had several pastors between Broyles' death in 1882 and the arrival of Boston J. Prince around 1910. Prince is listed as pastor of the Church in Indianapolis city directories from 1910-15. The Church was condemned during this period. A new Church structure with a cornerstone dated 1912 was begun. From all indications (newspaper accounts and church documents), it appears that the fourth and current building of the Church was not completed until 1920, under the ministry of B.J.F. Wesbrook. Creating some stability in church leadership, Wesbrook came to Second Baptist in 1919. He remained pastor until 1932. John Hall, a young man who had been ordained by Wesbrook in 1928 became pastor after Wesbrook's death. He remained until his death in 1978. During the early part of Hall's administration church membership increased and several interior improvements were made to the building. The Church's mortgage was burned in 1944. Hall's later pastorate of the Church was plagued by a drastic decline in membership-- many inner city inhabitants moved eastward and northward as the city experienced much growth and development. Hall was replaced by Francis M. Wade who remained until 1981. Hoy Thurman became pastor in 1981. The current pastor of the church located at 420 W. Michigan is Floyd Spencer Crenshaw.

Additional information about Second Baptist Church can be found in Alan Goebes, "*History of Second Baptist Church*" (Indiana Historical Society Collections, SC 1889).

Sources:

1. Materials in the collection.
2. Indianapolis city directories.
3. Alan Goebes, "History of the Second Baptist Church," IHS Collections, SC 1889.

4. Moses Broyles, *The History of the Second Baptist Church*, Indianapolis: Printing and Publishing House Print, 1876.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, spanning 1912-1985, contains material related to the Second Baptist Church which was organized in Indianapolis in 1846. The bulk of the collection pertains to the history and the membership of the church. It contains information about the Pastor and Deacon's Conference, the organization which apparently served as the church board. A minute book of the Deacon Board, 1932-38 is in the collection, as is a 1961-67 Pastor and Deacons In Conference minute book.

A 21-page church history written by a church member is contained within the collection. It gives an overview of the church and its pastors through 1915. A brief account of the last four pastors is given. Also contained is biographical information about long-time pastor, John Hall (1932-1978), and successful businesswoman and church member, Mary Winston.

Several copies of the *Second Baptist Herald* and a copy of *The District Informer* are in the collection. The former contains information about the Church and its activities, a monthly message written by the pastor, and advertisements of local businesses. A January 1944, issue includes a brief history of the Church. The latter was apparently a news organ of the local Baptist churches. There is also a 1938 issue of the *Pilgrim's Messenger*, a publication of the Pilgrim Baptist Church and a program booklet from a 1920 celebration announcing the rebuilding of the Church. There are minutes from a historic preservation meeting held at the Church in 1983. The minutes describe a discussion that took place between church members and representatives from the Indiana State Department of Historic Preservation pertaining to the historic status of the church building.

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