

## Microfilming Your Church's History

Louisiana Baptist churches are -- the people, the buildings, the services. Each church has its own unique beginning, struggles and triumphs. Preserving that history is as important as the Sunday morning service. Without a plan for keeping history safe, many parts of it will be lost!

One way to preserve the records of your church is by microfilming. The primary purpose of preservation microfilming church records is to provide a replacement of materials for researchers, historians, and future generations of the church.

Fire, flood, and other natural disasters are a few reasons why it is imperative that you have your church records microfilmed. Another reason is the great majority of material is written on paper. Early paper-making techniques and the use of alkaline materials contributed to the longevity of paper. Contemporary high speed machines produce inexpensive paper with high acid content set the stage for its own destruction. Paper deteriorates much more quickly when housed under poor environmental conditions. Too often church materials are stored at inconsistent temperatures and in too humid areas (always a problem in Louisiana). Ultraviolet light, air pollutants and other chemicals may cause the paper to become unusable.

The microfilm process is reasonably inexpensive. Microfilm is durable and with the proper handling and storage can last for many, many years. If deterioration does begin for any reason, it can be caught with regular inspections, and a duplicate can be produced; therefore it has an unlimited life-span.

The Louisiana Baptist Convention Archives is able to provide this microfilming service your church needs to preserve its history, free of charge. The earnings from a gift given by the Mr. and Mrs. Clark Williams Estate of Oak Ridge to the Louisiana Baptist Foundation in 1969, are designated for the collection and preservation of Louisiana Baptist history.

Listed are a few steps to follow before contacting the archives.

1. Suggest and/or obtain permission that your church's records be microfilmed. The church history committee or clerk can present this recommendation.
2. Organize the records and prepare a general list of all items being filmed, such as, chronological by groups (minutes, financial reports, bulletins, etc.). The archivist of the LBC can suggest ways that will be beneficial to historians. Remove all staples, paper clips, and other minor bindings to aid with the speed of filming.
3. Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing. The minutes and records are kept in a secure, environmentally controlled area while being filmed.

The Louisiana Baptist Convention keeps a copy of the microfilm available for viewing and photocopying in the archives. The Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention houses the master film in a fire proof, environmentally controlled vault. If

the your church chooses to have a copy of the film, it can be obtained through the Commission at the church's cost . If necessary, transportation arrangements can be made for the materials through your associational office to and from the convention archives.

Contact Karon McCartney (Karon.McCartney@LBC.org), Archivist of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, for more information with this project.

***Now you can feel secure if fire, flood, or time destroy your church's records, a copy is and will always be available.***

*This pamphlet is to assist and persuade you and your church in the decision to microfilm.*