Mission Statement

Archives and Special Collections in the Library at Southeastern exists to procure, preserve, and promote access to rare books, personal papers, institutional records, Baptist materials and church records, and other primary sources of enduring historical value that can be used to better equip Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary students, faculty, and the broader research community to serve the Church and fulfill the Great Commission.

Collection Policy

Archives and Special Collections in the Library at Southeastern actively collects materials documenting the history of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Southern Baptist Convention, and churches, organizations, and individuals that have contributed to Baptist life and the cause of Christ.

While Archives and Special Collections (ASC) will collect broadly within these areas to support the needs of students and faculty, specific emphasis will be placed upon acquiring materials documenting the following topics that build upon the core holdings currently in our collection or grow new areas of strength to support primary source research within emphasized areas of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) curriculum.

- Christian Apologetics
- Christian Missions
- Church Planting and Revitalization
- Churches, organizations, and individuals representing Kingdom Diversity within the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention
- Baptist churches, local associations, and state conventions in North Carolina
- Baptist churches, local associations, and state conventions cooperating within the Southern Baptist Convention that are located in states along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, particularly those located in the under-documented regions of New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and the Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, Washington, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia).
- Under-documented Baptist groups (ex. Primitive Baptists) without dedicated, organized, publically accessible, and professionally managed archival institutions to support the preservation and access of their records.
- Born-digital Baptist records that cannot be adequately preserved and made accessible at other Baptist institutions
Major Collection Areas

ASC actively collects materials in four major areas: Rare Books, Personal Papers and Organizational Records, SEBTS Institutional Records, and Baptist Materials and Church Records.

Rare Books

Rare Books are bound materials or special collections of bound materials that are particularly unique due to their age, value, the number of extant copies, a previous owner, marginal notes, or other distinguishing factors.

ASC actively collect the following types of materials that fit within our Collection Policy.

- Bibles published before 1812
- Books published outside of the United States before 1800
- Books published in the United States east of the Mississippi River before 1812
- Books published in the United States west of the Mississippi River before 1850
- Books with marginal notes by a significant owner
- Incunabula
- Baptist Pamphlets
- Personal libraries of notable Baptists
- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty publications

ASC generally does not collect the following types of materials even if they otherwise fit within our Collection Policy.

- Bibles published after 1812
- Family Bibles
- Widely accessible general readership books and third party publications

Personal Papers and Organizational Records

Personal Papers and Organizational Records consist of correspondence, notes, manuscripts, sermons, audiovisual recordings, electronic records, and other materials documenting the life and work of a particular person, family, or organization.

ASC actively collects the following types of materials (in print and digital formats) from persons or families that fit within our Collection Policy.

- Correspondence
- Brochures and flyers
- Diaries
- Manuscripts (unpublished materials)
- Memoirs
- Ministry records
- Photographs
• Professional papers (research, reports, etc.)
• Scrapbooks
• Sermons
• Audiovisual resources created by the donor

ASC actively collects the following types of materials (in print and digital formats) from parachurch Christian organizations and institutions (other than SEBTS) that fit within our Collection Policy.

• Annual financial records
• Audiovisual materials created by the organization/institution
• Correspondence
• Directories
• Governing Documents (Articles of Incorporation, Charters, Bylaws, etc.)
• Handbooks
• Meeting minutes
• Memoranda
• Membership lists
• Newsletters
• Organizational charts
• Pamphlets and brochures created by the organization/institution
• Photographs
• Planning documents
• Press releases
• Reports
• Speeches
• Topical files

ASC generally **does not** collect the following types of personal papers from individuals, families, or parachurch organizations and institutions even if they otherwise fall within our Collection Policy.

• Architectural and technical drawings
• Art and artifacts
• Day-to-day financial records (20th century forward)
• Duplicates
• General readership books and third party publications without significant annotation
• Records containing restricted information (Medical records, student records, employment records, records with personally identifiable information such as social security numbers, etc.)

**Institutional Records**

Institutional Records consist of reports, correspondence, and other records of enduring historical value created by SEBTS administrators, departments, and staff in the course of their work for the institution. While the Archivist and Digital Collections Manager does assist SEBTS administrative units and departments with recommendations for managing records of temporary administrative, fiscal, and legal value, only Institutional Records of enduring historical significance justifying permanent retention are transferred to ASC for preservation and access.

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ASC actively collects the following types of institutional records (in print or digital format) that fit within our Collection Policy.

- Administrative records of historical significance
- Annual financial records
- Architectural records
- Art and artifacts
- Audiovisual materials created by SEBTS
- Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors minutes and reports
- Commencement programs
- Course Catalogs
- Directories
- Photographs
- Presidential records
- SEBTS and College at Southeastern publications
- Student organization records
- Programs, brochures, and flyers for campus events

ASC generally **does not** collect the following types of institutional records even if they otherwise fall within our Collection Policy.

- Student records
- Day-to-day financial records
- Duplicates
- General readership books and third party publications
- Records containing restricted information (Medical records, employment records, records with personally identifiable information such as social security numbers, etc.)

**Baptist Materials and Church Records**

Baptist materials and church records consist of annuals, minutes, newspapers and periodicals, and other materials documenting Baptist faith, practice, polity, and life.

ASC actively collections the following types of Baptist materials and church records (in print or digital format) that fit within our Collection Policy.

- Business meeting reports
- Church histories
- Church minutes
- Committee records
- Association annuals
- State convention annuals
- Governing documents
- Photographs
- Audiovisual materials created by churches, associations, and state conventions
ASC generally **does not** collect the following types of Baptist Materials and Church Records even if they otherwise fall within our Collection Policy.

- Bulletins
- Church libraries (General readership books and third party publications)
- Pulpit Bibles (published after 1812)

**Acquisition Policy**

ASC staff are committed to helping donors find the best home for their archival resources. In order to keep that commitment, archives staff proactively collect materials in the areas set out by our Collection Policy that will further the goals set forth in our Mission Statement.

Our Collection Policy governs the types of materials that we will accept into our holdings and archives staff are not permitted to acquire or accept materials that clearly fall outside the collection areas specified by that policy. Furthermore, like most repositories, ASC cannot accept every donation that falls broadly within our Collection Policy due to staffing and space constraints. Acquisition decisions are to be informed by professional standards and made at the discretion of the Archivist and Digital Collections Manager (in consultation with the Director of the Library at Southeastern when required by the Collection Management and Development Policy).

In cases where materials fall outside of our collection areas or cannot be accepted into our holdings due to staffing or space constraints, our staff will endeavor to connect donors with other archives and archivists who might be able to accept their donation, preserve the unique materials it contains, and make those materials accessible to researchers.

**General Acquisition Guidelines**

When accepting materials into our holdings in ASC we commit to the following.

- **Preservation:** We will carry out professional best-practices that our budget and staffing permit to preserve materials and the information they contain as long as is feasible. Preservation decisions will be made to best serve the materials, surrounding collections, researchers, and the organization.
- **Access:** We will arrange and describe collections in accordance with professional standards, make them accessible and discoverable to researchers, and promote their use through instructional sessions and outreach.
- **Donor Protection:** We will ensure that all materials containing legally protected information (medical records, student records, social security numbers, etc.) are restricted from use and abide by any donor imposed access restrictions or limitations on the use of sensitive information agreed upon in the documentation accepting the materials into the possession of the archives.
- **Ethical Transparency:** We will obtain clear documentation of the donor’s intent for a collection when transferring a collection in our possession and abide by that documented intent. In rare cases when it is no longer feasible to maintain a collection in ASC holdings we will work with other repositories and the donor(s) to find a new research home for deaccessioned materials,
return it to the donor(s), or dispose of the materials in a secure manner as specified by the donor agreement or deed of gift.

When accepting materials into our holdings in ASC we cannot:

- Accept materials without transfer of title or a clear intent to transfer title at a defined time.
- Accept materials for which the donor does not have a clear title.
- Accept donor specified restrictions or limitations that are indefinite or cannot be enforced and applied equally to all researchers.
- Provide appraisals of the monetary value of gifts.
- Accept liability for loss or damage of donated or gifted materials due to deterioration, fire, or other disasters which befall the material or are inherent within it. (Note: In some instances we may accept limited liability in the case of loans. See information on Loans under Acquisition Agreements below.)

Acquisition Methods and Documentation

Materials can be received into SEBTS custody through one of five methods of acquisition:

1. Loans
2. Donations
3. Gifts
4. Purchases
5. Transfers

Materials will only be received into SEBTS holdings with a signed agreement to the terms upon which they are transferred into the possession of the seminary. Materials may not be accepted by archives staff or stored in the archives holding areas for any period of time without a signed agreement.

Loans

Under the terms of a loan, the owner of the materials maintains ownership (title), but temporarily transfers the materials into the custodianship of SEBTS so that the physical copies may be used by researchers, displayed for library patrons, or digitized and returned.

Loaned materials are covered under SEBTS insurance for the value provided by the lender in the Loan Agreement. Lenders are required to provide a value and maintain the documentation necessary to establish that value. ASC staff are legally and ethically prohibited from appraising the monetary value of loans, donations, or gifts.

Loaned materials are only to be accepted for two main purposes.
Research and/or Exhibit

Loans for the purpose of research and/or exhibit transfer physical materials into custodianship of SEBTS so they may be accessed by researcher’s onsite or placed on display for a specified term.

- Loans for the purpose(s) of research and/or exhibit will only be used to govern the transfer of materials in the rarest of cases and will be avoided at all costs.
- All expenses for processing, storing, and preserving materials loaned for the purpose(s) of research and/or exhibit should be borne by the owner of the materials unless a clear path is laid out for an unrestricted donation of the materials to the seminary at the conclusion of the term of loan.
- Loans for the purpose(s) of research and/or exhibit must be approved by the Director of the Library at Southeastern in consultation with the seminary’s legal counsel.

Digitization

Digitization loans transfer materials into SEBTS custodianship so that they may be digitized, copied, and/or reformatted to be placed online by SEBTS. It is understood that the materials received under a digitization loan will be returned to the owners once digitization, copying, and/or reformatting are completed.

- All digitization loans must be accompanied by a Digital Collections License granting SEBTS, at a minimum, non-exclusive rights to make, distribute, and create additional digital copies for preservation and access in perpetuity.
- Materials that cannot be made available online to, at a minimum, SEBTS students, faculty, and staff will not be received under a Digitization Loan.

Loans received for the purpose(s) of research and/or exhibit are to be documented with a Loan Agreement. Loans received for the purpose of digitization are to be documented with a Digitization Loan Agreement and Digital Collection License.

Donations

Under the terms of a donation, the owner of the materials transfers ownership (title) and in most cases any accompanying copyrights to SEBTS.

Donations should normally be received as without restrictions, but reasonable restrictions on a donation may be accepted at the discretion of the Archivist and Digital Collections Manager in unique cases.

Unrestricted Donation

Unrestricted donations transfer ownership (title), copyrights, etc. to SEBTS without setting any limitations, restrictions, or conditions upon SEBTS’ subsequent use of the materials. The vast majority of collections that are transferred into the possession of SEBTS are and should continue to be unrestricted donations (or unrestricted gifts if appraised by donor) as this is the standard
that allows archivists to care for materials and make them accessible and usable for researchers long-term as technologies and professional best-practices develop.

**Restricted Donation**

Restricted donations transfer ownership (title) to SEBTS but sets some specific limits upon the way in which SEBTS will exercise ownership of those materials going forward. While there are cases in which reasonable restrictions make sense, limitations that threaten the long-term accessibility or preservation of a collection may not be accepted.

- Access restrictions are granted at the discretion of the Archivist and Digital Collections Manager and should only be granted in situations when there is a reasonable concern that the absence of the proposed restriction would result in harm or damage to the donor.
- ASC staff will seek to maximize researcher access when negotiating restrictions with donors.
- ASC staff will not agree to access restrictions that exceed the lifespan of the donor and will not retain materials in archives holdings that will never be accessible to researchers.
- ASC staff may, in unique cases, accept donations that transfer ownership (title) but not copyrights for a collection. In such cases, there must be clear justification for the limitation and a method of forwarding researcher publication requests must be established and documented.

All donations (unrestricted and restricted) are to be documented with a Donor Agreement.

**Gifts**

Under the terms of a gift, the owner transfers ownership (title) and in most cases any accompanying copyrights of materials that he or she has had professionally appraised to SEBTS.

All terms for donations are applicable for gifts, the only difference being that a gift has been professionally appraised at the cost of the donor. SEBTS staff are legally (per IRS regulations) and ethically prohibited from providing appraisals.

All gifts (unrestricted and restricted) are to be documented by a Deed of Gift.

**Purchases**

Under the terms of a purchase, SEBTS pays the owner to acquire title to specific materials. Materials should only be considered for purchase if they fall within emphasized areas of the ASC Collection Policy or fall within budget line items dedicated to a specific type of acquisition or purpose that is congruent with the ASC Collection Policy. Purchases must be approved by the Director of the Library at Southeastern.

All purchases are to be documented with an itemized receipt detailing the terms of the purchase.
Transfers

Under the terms of a transfer, materials that are owned by SEBTS are transferred into the custody of ASC due to their historical significance. Transfers should only be used for Institutional Records and, in very unique circumstances, other materials for which SEBTS has clear and documented ownership such as fine arts, artifacts, etc.

All transfers are to be documented by a Records Transfer Form.

Deaccession Policy

ASC staff have a professional and ethical obligation to help donors find a home for their papers that will result in their accessibility to and use by researchers. As a result, we limit new acquisitions within the bounds set by our Collection Policy and seek to help prospective donors find the best home for their papers, whether it is at SEBTS or elsewhere. In rare cases, this obligation may also result in the reappraisal of extremely low use materials within our collection, materials that were improperly acquired outside the bounds of our collection policy, or materials that are no longer of use to our patrons due to preservation concerns, obsolete formats, or curriculum development. In such cases, our archives staff will follow all professional guidelines and best practices for reappraisal and deaccessioning to ensure that the wishes of our donors are respected and the materials are made available to those who could benefit from their use.

Deaccessioning Guidelines

ASC staff will keep regular metrics tracking the use of archival collections and will conduct regular reappraisals of holdings that show few to no signs of regular research use.

Reappraisal by Archives Staff

Reappraisal will include a review of the following considerations.

1. **Content:** Materials must contain unique, usable materials that support the ASC Mission Statement and fit within the ASC Collection Policy.
2. **Use:** Materials must show signs of use or hold a reasonable expectation of future use in ASC to justify their inclusion in our holdings.
3. **Preservation and Access:** ASC must be capable of providing continued preservation of and access to materials in our holdings and the materials must not present a preservation risk to other portions of ASC holdings.
4. **Overall Assessment:** Given all other considerations, the benefits of continued access in ASC for SEBTS students, faculty, staff, donors, and the broader research community must justify the costs of continued preservation and storage.
Reappraisal Report

A Reappraisal Report documenting the findings of the reappraisal will be prepared and submitted to the Director of the Library at Southeastern. This report will contain a thorough examination of the status of the collection and evidence to support one of the following recommendations.

1. **Deaccession:** A collection (in whole or in part) will be recommended for deaccession if one or more considerations of reappraisal clearly indicate that SEBTS, patrons, and the collection’s donors would be best served if the materials were permanently removed from ASC holdings. Considerations justifying deaccessioning include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
   a. Materials may be recommended for Deaccession (in whole or in part) based upon a consideration of **Content** if they...
      - Consist predominantly of duplicates, general readership books, third party publications, records containing restricted or legally controlled information, or other record types and should never have been accepted by the archives in light of generally accepted archives best-practices.
      - Do not support the ASC mission.
      - Do not fit within the ASC Collection Policy.
   b. Materials may be recommended for Deaccession (in whole or in part) based upon a consideration of **Use** if there is a documented lack of researcher interest and...
      - No reasonable expectation exists of increased researcher demand in the future.
      - Communication with appropriate faculty indicates that the collection does not support their anticipated research or the research of their students.
      - A reasonable expectation exists that the collection would gain increased use in another archives, library, museum, or repository.
   c. Materials may be recommended for Deaccession (in whole or in part) based upon a consideration of **Preservation and Access** if...
      - ASC does not have the resources or staff to adequately preserve the materials going forward.
      - ASC does not have the resources or staff to adequately promote and support access to the materials going forward.
      - The materials have deteriorated beyond usefulness.
      - The materials contains contaminants that threaten other materials in ASC holdings.
      - The materials have technical access requirements that ASC cannot provide.
   d. Materials may be recommended for Deaccession (in whole or in part) if multiple considerations during reappraisal lead to a questionable overall assessment and it is determined that the current or continuing costs of preserving and promoting access to the collection significantly outweigh the benefits for SEBTS students, faculty, staff, donors, and the broader research community.

2. **Retention:** A collection will be recommended for retention if it is determined that it fits within the mission and collection policy of the archives and that it would be in the best interest of SEBTS, patrons, and the collection’s donors to continue to preserve and promote access to the collection in ASC.

3. **Annual Reappraisal:** A collection (in whole or in part) will be recommended for Annual Reappraisal if there is inconclusive evidence available at the time to determine if it is best for the collection to be deaccessioned or retained. This decision will signal archives staff to more closely monitor and
document the use and/or potential long-term use of the collection during their interaction with researchers.

**Administrative Review**

The Director of the Library at Southeastern (Director) will review the Reappraisal Report prepared by archives staff.

If the Director approves the recommendations of the archives staff, the recommendation will stand and be carried out forthwith.

If the Director determines that additional input is required he may convene a review committee consisting of the Director, Associate Director, Assistant Director, Archivist and Digital Collections Manager, and the seminary's legal counsel to determine whether to deaccession, retain, or conduct and annual reappraisal of the collection. This committee will serve in an advisory capacity at the pleasure of the Director.

Throughout the review process, the Director of the Library at Southeastern will retain the responsibility to make the final decision to deaccession, retain, or annually reappraise a collection.

**Disposition of Deaccessioned Materials**

If it is determined that a collection (in whole or in part) will be deaccessioned, archives staff will abide by all stipulations agreed upon in extant donor agreement or deed of gift regarding the disposition of deaccessioned materials. If there are not any stipulations specifying the way the materials should be deaccessioned, archives staff will work to dispose of the materials with the following priorities.

1. **Transfer:** Continued public access for researchers will be prioritized over monetary gain for ASC. In most cases, this means that Archives staff will coordinate with professional colleagues at other archives, museums, and/or institutions to try and find an appropriate repository for the materials where they can continue to be preserved and made freely accessible to researchers. Transfer involves the legal transfer of title and any copyrights held by the archives to another repository. The repository receiving the deaccessioned materials will pay all shipping expenses and sign a release form in which they assume ownership of the material.

2. **Sale:** Sale will only be considered in instances when the monetary value of the deaccessioned materials outweighs the research value or in cases in which no appropriate repository can be found to accept the transfer. In such cases, materials with established or likely significant monetary value may be considered for sale. The following considerations should be factored into a decision to sell deaccessioned materials.
   a. ASC staff will continue to prioritize public access over institutional monetary gain even in the event that the materials are to be sold. This includes preferential consideration of sale at a discount to a repository that can continue to provide public access over sale at auction or by closed bid to private collectors.
   b. If deaccessioned materials are sold, all proceeds from the sale will go towards acquiring, preserving, and providing access to archival materials at SEBTS.
   c. Current and former SEBTS staff and their families will not be eligible to acquire or purchase deaccessioned materials from the collection.
3. **Return to Donor:** Deaccessioned materials will first be offered for return to the donor(s) or their heirs and assigns if such consideration is specified in the donor agreement or deed of gift. In other instances when a transfer or sale cannot be pursued, a good faith effort will be made to contact the donor(s) and their heirs and assigns offering to return the collection before the deaccessioned materials are destroyed. ASC will not be required to pay any shipping costs to facilitate the return of a collection to a donor unless it is specified in the donor agreement or deed of gift.

4. **Destruction:** Outright destruction of deaccessioned materials will only be considered if reappraisal determined that there was no merit in the continued preservation of the materials (such as in cases where the material has deteriorated beyond usefulness) or in instances where all other options for disposition have been exhausted.

ASC is legally prohibited from disposing of deaccessioned materials for which it does not have clear documentation establishing ownership. If a formal agreement governing the transfer and/or donation of materials to SEBTS does not exist, our archives staff pledges to carry out the following steps that are consistent with the abandoned property law governing North Carolina Office of Archives and History (*North Carolina General Statues, 121-7*). While this law does not directly apply to archives at private institutions, ASC will follow the model it lays out to establish our good faith effort to respect all materials in our possession.

1. We will make a good faith effort to contact the donor(s) or their heirs or assigns to determine their wishes for the materials that will be deaccessioned. A good faith effort will include a letter mailed to the last known address of the owner or his or her heirs or assigns.
2. If no claim is made within 90 days from the date that the notice is mailed, the archives will publish a notice in three papers of general circulation once a week for four consecutive weeks.
3. If no claim of ownership is submitted to the archives at the end of 30 days from the date of the last published notice, the archives will determine that legal title of the materials is vested in SEBTS and dispose of the deaccessioned materials in accordance with all other departmental deaccessioning policies.

**Contested Collection Policy**

Some materials have been brought into the possession of ASC without a signed agreement prior to the implementation of this Collection Management and Development Policy. The understanding of SEBTS and library administrators and staff working with these materials was that, unless clearly stated otherwise, they were intended as unrestricted donations, and, as such, SEBTS allocated significant resources in staff hours, supplies, and storage space to transport, arrange, describe, and preserve the collections that were brought into our possession. However, the lack of clear documentation has led to rare cases in which the intent of the donor has been brought into question or challenged.

ASC staff are committed to responding to such rare situations in an ethical and charitable manner which respects the concerns of the donor, protects the investment of the seminary, and prioritizes the needs of researchers. As such, ASC staff encourage donors to contact Archives staff directly with any concerns they have about collections they have transferred into the possession of SEBTS. This communication allows archives staff and donors to address any misunderstandings that may exist, reach a mutually acceptable and well documented agreement governing the materials that have been transferred into
the possession of SEBTS, and strengthen the edifying relationship between donors, the archives, and researchers.

In cases where such an agreement cannot be reached between the donor and Archives staff, the contesting party may request a Contested Collection Review (Contact ASC staff to request copies of the Contested Collection Review procedures and request form). A Contested Collection Review will generally take no less than one month and no more than two months to be completed. If the issue is referred to the Board of Trustees, it will be presented at the next possible board meeting for a decision. In such cases, it may take up to one year from the time the Contested Collection Review request is received to reach a decision.

Ethics Statement for Archives & Special Collections Staff and Contractors

Potential for ethical conflicts or at the very least the appearance of unethical decisions exists when those in the employ of ASC (full-time staff, part-time staff, contractors, etc.) personally and actively collect materials that overlap with the collection areas of ASC. In such areas, employees should always consider the interests of ASC over their own personal interests.

An employee considering the personal acquisition of historically significant material that may be within ASC collecting goals (as identified in ASC Collection Policy) should bring the intended acquisition to the attention of the Director of the Library at Southeastern in a timely manner to determine whether or not the archives is interested in acquiring the material for the collection (and has funds available for purchase, if relevant). If ASC does not intend to acquire the item, the Director of the Library at Southeastern will notify the individual in writing that he/she may proceed with his/her personal acquisition. If it is not possible to consult the Director of the Library at Southeastern in advance, the individual may acquire the item but should then inform the Director—and be prepared to donate or sell (as applicable and at the documented purchase price) the acquisition to ASC, if the director recommends such action.

An employee may not use their institutional affiliation to promote their own or their family members’ personal collecting or business activities. No employee or contractor may participate in any dealing (buying or selling for profit as distinguished from occasional sale or exchange from a personal collection) in material similar or related to material collected by ASC.

Information of a sensitive and/or confidential nature that an employee might acquire in the course of performing his/her duties must be treated as proprietary to ASC and should not be used for personal advantage or for the purposes of damaging ASC, the Library at Southeastern, or SEBTS. No person associated with ASC may use confidential information outside the scope of his/her assigned duties without the prior permission of the Director of the Library at Southeastern.