

# First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas Ephemera, 1977, 1989, 1991: A Guide

## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas

**Title:** First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas Ephemera, 1977, 1989, 1991

**Inclusive Dates:** 1977-1991

**Abstract:** The collection documents the activities of the First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas from 1856 to 1989.

**Identification:** AR65

**Extent:** 1 folder

**Shelf location:** Small Collections Box 2, Folder 15

**Language(s):** Collection is in English.

**Repository:** Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas

## Organizational History

William "Choctaw Bill" Robinson organized the First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas in 1856. He served as part-time pastor until 1866. The membership had grown from 3 to 148 in those ten years. Serving from 1898 to 1901, J.B. Fletcher was the first full-time pastor. In 1898 the foundation for a church building was laid on Block 60 on the corner of W. Tarleton and Paddock streets. The building was dedicated in June 1901 with the dedication sermon delivered by Dr. J.B. Gambrell. The cornerstone of a new brick sanctuary was laid in March 1923. The building cost \$75,588.00 and was built almost entirely by membership labor. The church was paid for as it was built, so the church was debt-free on March 28, 1926 when it was dedicated. First Baptist Church began a mission in 1945, which became the Calvary Baptist Church. Another mission established in 1956 became the Riverside Baptist Church. In 1945 the church extended its mission to the campus of John Tarleton Agricultural College by starting a Baptist Student Center on Tarleton Avenue. In 1951 the church began broadcasting worship services on the local radio station. Broadcasting of the worship services later extended to the local television station Channel 6. On August 7, 1977 a new sanctuary was dedicated and the cornerstone was laid with a time capsule installed behind it. The dedication was celebrated the rest of the week with sermons given by guest preacher each evening. In order to carry out its purpose of outreach and evangelism, the church membership decided to remodel and expand the church building in the early 1980s. The remodeling project was completed in late 1983. Missions begun in the 1980s include an International Sunday School Class for foreign students attending Tarleton State University and a Hispanic mission. In April 1989 a History Committee was formed to establish an archives with the purpose of collecting and preserving the vital records and history of the church. By 1989 the membership of the First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas had grown to 1,682 members.

## Scope and Contents

The collection documents the activities of the First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas from 1856 to 1989. Materials are textual, comprising the Revival of Dedication program for August 7-10, 1977, "History of First Baptist Church, Stephenville, Texas: 1856 through July 1989," and the *1991 Directory of First Baptist Church*. Information of importance found in the history of the church is the location and list of contents of the time capsule installed behind the cornerstone in 1977.

## **Organization**

The collection is in chronological order.

## **Rights and Access**

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Physical Access Restrictions**

None.

### **Technical Access Restrictions**

None.

### **Publication Rights**

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### **Reproduction Note**

Reproductions must be made from surrogates (microfilm, digital scan, photocopy of the original held by Archives/Special Collections, Dick Smith Library, Tarleton State University), when available. Only archives staff may photocopy collection documents.

## **Index Terms**

### **Persons**

Fletcher, J.B.  
Gambrell, J.B.  
Robinson, William "Choctaw Bill"

### **Organizations**

Calvary Baptist Church—Stephenville—Texas  
First Baptist Church—Stephenville—Texas  
Riverside Baptist Church—Stephenville—Texas

### **Subjects**

Baptist church buildings  
Church buildings  
First Baptist Church of Stephenville—History

### **Places**

Stephenville (Tex.)

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance**

Unknown

### **Preferred Citation**

First Baptist Church of Stephenville, Texas Ephemera, 1977, 1989, 1991, AR65, Small Collections Box 2, Folder 15, Tarleton State University, Dick Smith Library, Archives and Special Collections, Stephenville, Texas.

### **Processing Information**

Finding aid prepared by Phyllis Kinnison, 2021

### **Note to the Researcher**

The collection is processed, but advance notice is required with time allowed to retrieve them before conducting research. There may be occasions when staffing or weather conditions prevent retrieval of the records. Some materials originally housed in binders have been placed in folders and boxes. For more information, contact Librarian/Archivist Phyllis Kinnison at [pkinnison@tarleton.edu](mailto:pkinnison@tarleton.edu).