

**THE
LIBERTY CORPORATION
ARCHIVES
MSS 160**

**Register
of the
HISTORICAL RESEARCH MATERIAL
RECORDS
1905-1986, bulk 1979-1985**

**Record Group 11.1
2 cubic feet**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| INTRODUCTION | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | iii |
| CORPORATE HISTORY | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | iii |
| SCOPE AND CONTENT | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | iv |
| LIST OF INTERVIEWEES | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | vi |
| CONTAINER LIST | | | | | | | | | |
| DOCUMENTS AND PAPERS | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1 |
| CASSETTE TAPES | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 6 |
| PHOTOGRAPHS | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 14 |
| SEPARATION LIST | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 17 |

REGISTER OF THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH MATERIAL RECORDS, 1905-1986, bulk 1979-1985

Mss 160, Record Group 11.1, 2 cubic feet, including 134 folders in 4 document boxes, 27 cassette tapes with duplicates in 4 cassette boxes, 20 folders containing 55 photographs in a ½ document box, and three oversize photographs.

INTRODUCTION

The Historical Research Material records document the history of The Liberty Corporation, The Liberty Life Insurance Company, The Southeastern Life Insurance Company, and affiliate or subsidiary corporations acquired or formed by Liberty including Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation. These records also document the history and contributions of the Hipp family South Carolina's economic growth. They contain important "who, what, where, why, and when" information concerning corporate creations and expansions, important people and events, decision making processes, and the development of business and insurance industries in South Carolina and the surrounding region. This collection holds research potential for twentieth-century South Carolina history in the areas of business and insurance, economics, and mass communications, and provides a rich source of reference material on The Liberty Corporation.

The material in this series was donated to Special Collections as part of The Liberty Corporation Archives. There are no restrictions on the use of this material other than those which pertain to Special Collections. This series information was compiled in 1997 by Alan Burns and revised by James Cross in 2001. This material came from accessions 82-49, 82-86, and 86-10.

CORPORATE HISTORY

The history of The Liberty Corporation dates from November 3, 1905, when it began business in Spartanburg, South Carolina as the Southeastern Life Insurance Company. It continued to operate with its executive offices in Spartanburg until the early part of 1910, when the Home Office was moved to Greenville, South Carolina, where it has since remained.

On October 13, 1919, W. Frank Hipp (1889-1943), who began his life insurance career as an agent for Southeastern Life, organized a new company he named The Liberty Life Insurance Company. This firm enjoyed rapid growth, later proving a strong nucleus for the present corporation. W. Frank Hipp became one of Greenville's best-known business leaders.

In 1933, Hipp became president of the Southeastern Life Insurance Company. Subsequently, Southeastern and The Liberty Life Insurance Company were operated under joint management until January 1, 1942, when the business of the companies was consolidated under the name of Liberty Life Insurance Company, with Hipp as president. This consolidation resulted in the formation of a strong, well-rounded organization that offered a complete line of life insurance protection.

W. Frank Hipp served as president of Liberty Life until his death in 1943. He was succeeded by his son Francis M. Hipp (1911-1995), who became chief executive, under whose leadership the company continued to make outstanding progress as a financial institution and

organization of service. Francis M. Hipp rapidly became one of South Carolina's best known business leaders.

In 1955, with a decade of excellent company growth to his credit, Francis Hipp initiated the construction of new company headquarters just outside of Greenville. Heretofore, the four previous Liberty Life Home Offices, as well as the Southeastern Life Building, had all been located in downtown Greenville. Many downtown merchants thought their businesses might suffer with the loss of this major downtown enterprise. However, as with many of Francis Hipp's business decisions, downtown business did not suffer, in fact, new businesses were attracted to the area largely due to the substantial growth evidenced by Liberty Life Insurance Company's expansion.

In 1966, Francis Hipp recommended to the Board of Directors the qualities and advantages of having a holding company function as parent organization for large and diverse business activities for growing companies such as Liberty Life. In 1967, the Board of Directors acted on Hipp's recommendation and formed the holding company which they named The Liberty Corporation. In 1969, The Liberty Corporation stock was listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

Also in 1969, the third generation of the Hipp family joined the company when, W. Hayne Hipp (1940-) was made an assistant vice president of Liberty Life. He succeeded his father as President and Chief Executive Officer of The Liberty Corporation in 1978. W. Hayne is now one of South Carolina's foremost business leaders as well as one of Greenville's best-known civic leaders.

At the end of the twentieth century, Liberty Corporation went through the most dramatic period since its formation in 1967. On June 19, 2000, The Liberty Corporation announced it was selling its insurance operations, Liberty Life Insurance and Liberty Insurance Services Corporation, as well as its real estate – including the headquarters building in Greenville, South Carolina – to the Royal Bank of Canada for \$650 million. In addition, Liberty announced the merger of Cosmos Broadcasting with Jackson, Mississippi based Civic Communications, under which Liberty would pay Civic \$204 million in cash. The sales agreement between The Liberty Corporation and the Royal Bank of Canada was completed on November 1, 2000 and a month later, on December 4, Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation completed the acquisition of Civic Communication. As of that date, Cosmos owns fifteen network-affiliated television stations.

The Liberty Corporation, with members of the Hipp family at its helm, continues a leadership role in guiding the activities and investments of its various affiliated businesses. W. Frank and Francis M. Hipp, whose foresight, guidance, and business acumen built the strong foundation of Liberty Life, set the standard of influence. The force of their leadership during the formative years, now passed on and in the capable hands of W. Hayne, shapes The Liberty Corporation's future.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Historical Research Material Series consists of documents and papers, graphic materials, photographs, and cassette tape recordings of interviews with executives of The Liberty Corporation, and former agents and employees of The Liberty Life Insurance Company and The Southeastern Life Insurance Company. Included with the documents and papers are notes identifying thirty-eight individuals interviewed, six of whom are not on tape. Dates for the material run from 1905 to 1986, with the bulk of the material dating from 1979 to 1985. Much of

this material was gathered in the course of research for *The Liberty Life Insurance Company, 1919-1953* by Zane Knauss and *The Liberty Spirit: History of The Liberty Corporation, 1905-1985* by Doyle Boggs.

Several folders pertain to historical research material about The Liberty Corporation, The Southeastern Life Insurance Company, and The Liberty Life Insurance Company. One of these contains the *History & Genealogy of the Hipp Family, 1749-1943*. Another contains *The Liberty Spirit: History of The Liberty Corporation*. Many folders contain publication material used during production of *The Liberty Spirit*. A single publication folder holds the *Fiftieth Anniversary 1905-1955* of The Liberty Life Insurance Company. A few folders contain draft history typescripts of *The Liberty Spirit* and *The Southeastern Life Insurance Company*. Several folders contain the manuscript history of Columbia, SC radio and television station WIS, *So Rich A Heritage*. Other folders contain interview notes that Knauss kept as he gathered oral information. Certain folders contain transcriptions of interviews, including those with Francis and Herman Hipp. One folder contains releases for use of the information on tape. Some folders contain research material used for the histories of the company. Additional folders contain material related to field agents, Furman University, Knauss, interview lists and reference sources, and reports. The thirty-two interviews themselves reside on twenty-seven original and duplicate user tapes. Numerous folders contain photographs of agents and employees, buildings and building sites, company executives and offices, conventions and training meetings, cotton mill village life, and downtown Greenville and Spartanburg dating from 1902 to 1978. A couple oversize folders contain photographs of standings of agents and the Southeastern Life Building.

Although focusing on historical developments which culminated in the formation of The Liberty Corporation, the oral interviews, transcriptions, typescripts, and other material in this collection are also a prime source of information on the insurance and broadcasting industries in South Carolina. The interviews and printed material also provide valuable information on the development of other business interests in the state. Of equal importance is the biographical/entrepreneurial information pertaining to members of the Hipp family who developed and organized Liberty Life and The Liberty Corporation, i.e., W. Frank Hipp, Francis M. Hipp, Herman N. Hipp, and B. Calhoun Hipp. This collection holds research potential in areas of twentieth-century South Carolina economic and mass communications history, and is a rich source of reference material for researchers.

A list of the people who were interviewed follows.

List of Interviewees:

Athearn, James L., Executive,
Communications, Liberty Life Insurance Co.

Batson, Charles A., Chairman, 1968,
Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation

Campanaro, Richard W., Exe Vice-Pres,
Liberty Life Insurance Company

Davis, James K., Vice-President &
Actuary, Liberty Life Insurance Company

Edwards, Clint E., Vice-President,
Operations, Liberty Life Insurance Company

Furman, Alester Garden, Jr., Chairman,
The Furman Company; Liberty Life Board

Gravelly, Harris P., President & CEO
Liberty Life Insurance Company

Harden, Frank, Executive,
WIS & WIST-Radio

Harper, Walter W., Director,
State Development Board, 1959-67

Hicken, Patsy, Director,
Broadcasting Museum of Charleston

Hilliard, R. Glenn, President,
Liberty Life insurance Company

Hipp, Francis Moffett, Chairman,
The Liberty Corporation

Hipp, Herman Neel, President & CEO,
The Liberty Corporation

Hunt, Frank D., Vice-President,
Savings & Loan, Liberty Life Insurance Co.

Hunt, Roy F., Vice-President,
Investments, Liberty Life Insurance Co.

Kroeg, Alex A., Agent, Southeastern &
Liberty Life Insurance Companies

Smith, John I., President, Abney Mills;
Liberty Life Insurance Co. Board of Directors

Lorick, Mark, President, La Marick
Beauty Systems, Inc., a TLC subsidiary

Martin, C. Wallace, Manager and
Co-owner, WIS-Radio, 1947-62

Maxwell, Leonard A., Vice-President,
Communications, The Liberty Corporation

McDonald, R. E., Vice-President,
Claims, Liberty Life Insurance Company

McEachern, W. W., President, SC
National Bank; Liberty Life Board

Merrill, Mildred, Secretary,
Liberty Life Insurance Company Home Office

Patton, Macon G. "Mack," Chairman,
1981, Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation

Quave, Mackie "Cactus," Actor/Announcer,
WIS-Radio & TV's "Bar Q Ranch" show

Ritchie, Robert D., Secretary,
Liberty Life Insurance Company

Rivers, John & Martha Robinson,
Owners, WCSC-Radio & TV, Charleston

Robelot, Thomas H., Vice-President,
Combination Agencies, Liberty Life Insurance Co.

Rude, Mary Olive, Secretary,
Liberty Life Insurance Company Home Office

Satterfield, Walter Mose, Agent, Liberty Life
& Southeastern Life Insurance Companies

Scales, Robert Roper, Jr., Legal Vice-President,
Liberty Life Insurance Company

Self, James Cuthbert, Jr., President, Greenwood
Mills; Member, State Development Board

Shafto, G. Richard, President, The Broadcasting
Company of the South, 1951, & Cosmos, 1965

Other Interviewees listed in notes, but not identified on tape:

Agnew, Paul B., Assist. Secretary,
Liberty Life Home Office

Hipp, W. Hayne, Vice-Chairman &
CEO, The Liberty Corporation

Lindsay, John W., Legal Assistant
Vice-President, Liberty Life insurance Co.

Palmer, Sidney
Information Source

Payne, Martha, Secretary, Senator
Ernest F. Hollings' Columbia, SC Office

Pinner, Joseph
Information Source