

**THE
LIBERTY CORPORATION
ARCHIVES
MSS 160**

**Register of the
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS
1947-1986**

**Record Group 8.1
13.1 cubic feet**

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REGISTER OF THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS, 1947-1986

Mss 160, Record Group 8.1, 13.1 cubic feet, including videos and oversize.

INTRODUCTION

The Communications Department Photographic Records represent the visual history, activities and events, of the Liberty Life Insurance Company, The Liberty Corporation, and their employees as only pictures can. The photographs in this collection were produced and/or commissioned by the Communications Department for various company and corporate publications. As such they strongly support and stand beside Communications Department Publications (Record Group 8) in importance. They visually communicate meaning for significant company events as well as ordinary employee activities in ways the written word cannot express, yet compliment such words by adding greater meaning to them through the visual experience. These photographic records chart the growth and development of a significant South Carolina based corporation. This register was created in 1998 by Alan Burns. The photographic material in this collection came from the following accessions: 82-22, 82-24-10A, 82-24-10B, 82-24-11, 82-24-12, 82-24-13, 82-24-15, 82-47, 84-3, 85-8, 85-17, 85-19-2, 85-24-12, 86-5-A, 86-8, 86-9, 87-1, 87-2, 88-6, 88-16, and 94-54; and five video cassette tapes from 98-37.

DEPARTMENT HISTORY

The Communications Department has a long history of service and involvement with each of The Liberty Corporation's family of insurance and broadcasting companies, over the years, through its various and diverse publications. Beginning soon after the charter of Southeastern Life, in 1905, to Liberty Life's establishment, in 1919, to the merger of the two, in 1941, and ending with the formation of The Liberty Corporation, in 1968, there has been a need to publish news and information about company and employee related endeavors. Although broadcasting publications are not represented in the publications of this record group many broadcasting company activities and employees are, however, frequently mentioned in them.

The Communications Department has had different names over the years with the various companies. Before the time of its creation communications or public relations responsibilities were part and parcel of other departments. Actual details about departments and/or individuals in charge of company publications are scanty, even non-existent, until the early 1950s. In 1954, an Advertising & Public Relations Department was created for Liberty Life with John V. Blalock as manager. By 1959, Advertising & Public Relations had become part of the President's Office along with Audit, Claims Service, and Legal. In 1961, Paul E. Smith, Jr. replaced Blalock as head of the department and remained so until 1967.

The Liberty Corporation was formed in 1968 and one year later Leonard A. Maxwell was installed as Director of Communications. Thus advertising & public relations with accompanying publications responsibilities passed from company to corporate management. In 1972, Maxwell became Vice President for Communications and remained so until the late 1980s.

A publishing highlight for the corporation, and indeed a culmination of efforts to that point, was publication of The Liberty Spirit: History of The Liberty Corporation in 1986.

Among those earlier efforts, representing the first regular company publication, is The Southeastern Circle which was published by Southeastern Life. The Southeastern Circle ran leading insurance news and sales techniques for the company from approximately 1905 to 1941, and set the stage for its successor. Liberty Legion began publication during 1919, and became the second regular company publication, in 1941, when Southeastern and Liberty merged. The Southeastern Circle and Liberty Legion consequently overlap during the years 1940 & 1941 when the companies were negotiating a union.

Later efforts continue with Liberty Legion which enjoyed a long and prosperous run, from 1940 to 1971, as Liberty Life's banner publication. By 1972, in order to facilitate a new image and better describe its clientele, the publication's name was changed from Liberty Legion to Liberty Leaders. This publication also enjoys a continuing and prosperous run due to the fact that Liberty Life and its agents are indeed leaders in the insurance field, both at home and throughout the Southeast.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Communications Department Photographic Records span the time period of 1947 to 1986. Bulk dates run from 1970 to 1984. There are 790 photograph folders, 525 for positives and 265 for negatives, in thirty-seven document boxes; 290 oversize photographs in one container box and in three flat storage boxes and three larger oversize photographs in The Liberty Corporation Map Case drawer #63; and fifty-five small to oversize graphic arts material in The Liberty Corporation Map Case Drawer # 65. There are also five video format cassette tapes with this collection.

This photographic collection contains valuable visual information effectively documenting Liberty Life activities, events, and individuals through photographic records developed for Company/Corporate publications and public relations. This collection includes photographs produced for such publications as Home Office News, Liberty Legion, Liberty Leaders, Liberty Life News, and LINK; a variety of images depicting public relation sponsored and promoted events; and individual portraits and pictures, including those of agents and employees, directors, executives, and members of the Hipp Family.

Many activities and events are represented in this collection. Photographs produced for several company publications over more than forty year's time necessarily mount into the hundreds. A few of the more prominent categories for these activities and events include: agents and employees; athletic events; branch offices; Combination Agency activities; company functions and activities; conferences and conventions; Home Office; individuals, i.e., executives, directors, and other VIPs; monthly sales promotions; regional meetings; sales incentive programs; Scholastic Art; Service Awards; and training. These activities and events are documented throughout the collection under divisions titled Company and Employee Functions, Executives, Hipp Family, Home Office News, Individuals, Liberty Legion, Liberty Leaders, Liberty Life News, and Public Relations, and under format sections titled Positives, Negatives, and Oversize. There is also a Large Oversize section comprising 290 photographs and a Separation List for three larger oversize photographs and fifty-five small to oversize graphic arts material.

The photographs comprising this collection, commissioned for various company publications, and in combination with the written word give meaning and depth to company activities and events and the people who participated in them. Yet, when separated from the written word, as they are now and were when commissioned, they hold original as well as additional meaning for whomever view them. These photographs tell us things about the company that words alone, and in combination with words, cannot. The value and meaning of each is, as they say, in the eye of the beholder. One should be able to behold the heart and soul of the Liberty Life through viewing this collection.

Of special interest to those doing research on the Liberty Life Insurance Company and/or The Liberty Corporation are the numerous portraits of executives and board of directors members. These pictures represent decades of company and corporate leadership, and depict the appearance and bearing of those individuals who shaped the business. These portraits are located in the two flat storage boxes for oversize material. Also of interest are similar photographs of Liberty Life Insurance Company agents and employees from the 1940s to the 1980s. These pictures are more candid than those for the executives and board members and, thus, depict ordinary people doing ordinary insurance work.

Taken as a whole, the photographs of this collection offer insights into who the people of Liberty Life were and what they did over the years to make a difference within the company and throughout the state for the business of insurance. This company had fun making things happen and made a solid impact on its people and on the business character of the state of South Carolina. This collection of photographs represents those accomplishments and contributions, to company and business, as only visual representations are able.

Also included with this collection are five distinctive videos depicting company and corporate events and anniversaries. They include “Backroads” 1986, “Hugo” 1989, “Liberty Life 90th Anniversary” 1995, and “WIS 40th Anniversary” 1993.