

The Path Forward is Digital!

At Your Fingertips!

Faced with retirement this August, Executive Director Deborah Van Broekhoven named the *At Your Fingertips* campaign as her final obsession and legacy. "This will be my focus between now and August, in that we need to raise campaign funds in support of a 21st century method for digitizing materials. When in 1998 I began working at the Historical Society," Van Broekhoven recalled, "the exciting news was that ABHS had just received a grant to create databases and provide better access to records of the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the missionary correspondence of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society." So ABHS was an early adopter of digital methods for accessing the collections. She notes, "we also stretched the funds to create a database of books printed by the American Baptist Publication Society and Judson Press."



Pauline and Walter Rauschenbusch with their five children, 1907. Children, left to right: Elizabeth, Paul, Winifred, Karl, Hilmar. From ABHS archives, RG 1003, Box 145, folder 2.

Rauschenbusch materials are being included on ArchivesSpace

Thankfully those older databases are still functioning. But these stand-alone projects and digital files in general are fragile – Assistant Director Jan Ballard has compared them to snowflakes – here today and gone in an instant. So many separate systems and ad hoc files are no

longer the best way to provide access to rare materials. So Jan Ballard has turned her attention to building one on-line catalogue that will provide the infrastructure and capacity to record and track data about all collections.

As Ballard explains, the on-line catalogue will allow distant users to search and identify Baptist materials for their research. It will also allow staff to register collections, beginning with their

acquisition and legal status, and including information about how documents or rare

books are used, whether in exhibits or by researchers.

The major tool for building this infrastructure for ABHS collections is a new, cutting edge

Continued on page 2

Digital Path

Continued from Page 1

software, *ArchivesSpace*. By adopting this tool, the Historical Society is pressing into the frontiers of the new digital age of record-keeping. Rather than using the paper files standard in the 19th and 20th centuries, or the multiple catalogues and scattered electronic files standard practice in 2000, ABHS staff is now able to keep information about collections in one on-line catalogue that is open-source. Open-source means the catalogue can be modified by ABHS staff, who can customize the software and its functioning to better fit ABHS collections and needs.

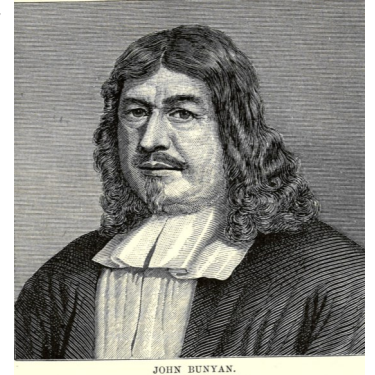
Like most digital projects, *ArchivesSpace* is one that allows and even requires collaboration. For ABHS, our chief collaborator is the Mercer University library system and its digital librarian Jeremy Brown, who has worked on the project with Jan Ballard and ABHS web designer Rachel Trent. This partnership will remain critical as both Mercer and ABHS build capacity, but may be expanded to include other educational institutions and programs.

"I'm in awe of this software and even more of Jan, Jeremy, and Rachel's use of it to organize and share our rare materials," Van Broekhoven noted. "That's why it is easy for me to explain to donors the reality that this project is the key investment in our future – one in which the Historical Society will continue to expand its mission of collecting, preserving, and sharing the materials of Baptist history." She noted that once collections and images from them are stored in *ArchivesSpace*, each will be available to those planning on-line exhibits or other educational projects. "We are stepping into an amazing future," Van Broekhoven concluded, "and it's very satisfying to have been a leader on this path into the future."



American Baptist Quarterly

The quarterly journal published by ABHS, the *American Baptist Quarterly*, has developed a publication schedule designed to catch up on the delayed issues. Three issues will soon be on their way to subscribers mailboxes. These issues are *John Bunyan and the Baptist Academy*, *Sam Sharpe and Jamaica at Fifty*, and *A.J. Gordon: American Baptist Pastor and Evangelical Leader*. Three more issues are planned for the rest of 2016.



American Baptist Quarterly is a publication that seeks to inquire in-depth into the nature of who we are as Baptists, especially those traditions that have come together in the member churches that are part of the fellowship of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Subscriptions to the ABQ are included with a membership to ABHS, and are \$50/year. There is a subscription/membership form on page 5, and an address to which you can send the form.

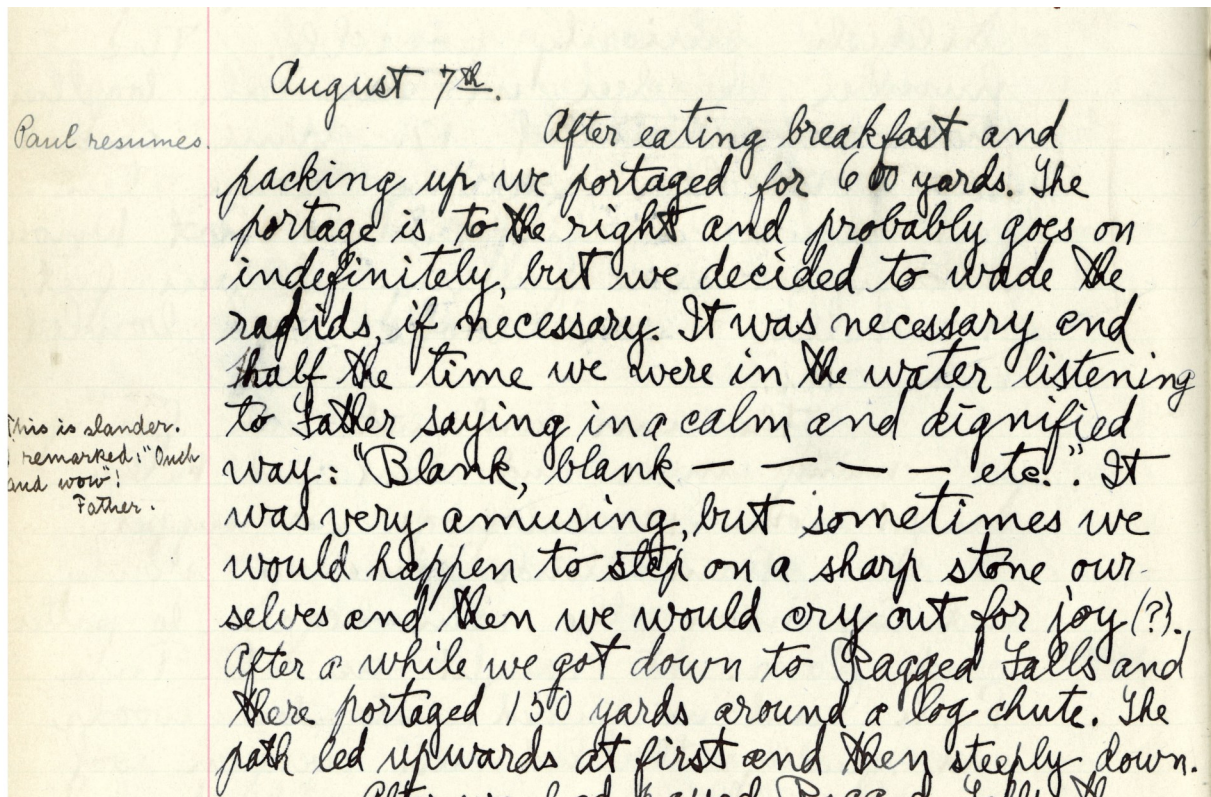
Correction

The "From the Archives" article in the last issue (Fall, 2015) misidentified Phyllis Benner as a missionary doctor. Robert Smith, former missionary in Congo, writes to us, "Phyllis Benner was not a medical doctor. Perhaps she earned a doctorate in theology or something, but not in medicine." Benner and Mama Mattie were included in a group picture of the Baptist Women's Union of Africa from 1959.

In addition, Smith writes, "Mama Mattie came to California in the early 60s and I took her with others to Disneyland, as she and others requested. Riding the Matterhorn roller coaster was a new and scary experience!"

Camping Journal of Walter Rauschenbusch Family

Of all the thousands of sermons, lectures, notes, letters, and scrapbooks that make up the voluminous Walter Rauschenbusch Family Collection (RG 1003), a favorite item is the journal of entries kept during several summer camping trips taken by the family. This is one of many family items in the collection, which has largely been mined for materials about Walter – but not about family members, each of whom carried on the family legacy. In the camping journal, most of the entries were written by the children, who competed in recording unusual sights and sounds. Unlike the theological and historical writings that are part of the collection, the entries in this journal are often funny, as the various children competed to show off their sense of humor and their skill in capturing the spirit of their summer adventure. There's much about tenting, food, deer, black flies and porcupines, as well as family jokes. It's fascinating to read this journal entry for August 7th, 1913, describing how their canoe trip was slowed by a particularly hard portage around and through rocks and waterfalls. This entry was written by son Paul – with marginal comments by his father, Walter.



Source: American Baptist Historical Society RG 1003, Scrapbook/Journal of Summer Vacations, 1911-1915, p. 98.

Post this page on your bulletin board. When you use information from "From the Archives" remember to give credit to the American Baptist Historical Society

Thanks for Your Generosity

The American Baptist Historical Society thanks all those listed below for their generosity in 2015 towards our ministry of memory. Thanks also to the many who supported this vital mission with smaller amounts throughout the year. "Without those friends, we would not be able to preserve and share Baptist history with researchers from around the world," said Executive Director Dr. Deborah B. Van Broekhoven. "Every gift is important, and we know that every dollar represents your conviction that Baptist history matters!"

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at YOUR FINGERTIPS

American Baptist Historical Society is grateful to those who contributed to At Your Fingertips, the five year campaign to enable the Historical Society to 'go digital'. To contribute or pledge to this campaign, fill out the form on page 7 and send it to the Valley Forge address.

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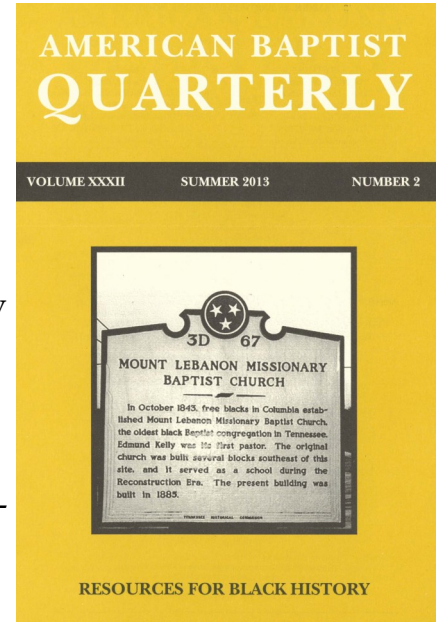
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TORBET PRIZE ANOUNCED

The American Baptist Historical Society proudly announces that Andrew Gardner is the winner of the 2015 Torbet Prize. This \$500 award is given yearly for the best essay in any area of Baptist History. The Research and Publications Committee of the Board of Managers of ABHS made the determination at their meeting in early October. The winning essay, entitled "Reversing Roles: Denominational Community among the American Baptist Churches USA and the Alliance of Baptists," will be published in an upcoming issue of *The American Baptist Quarterly*.

A 2015 graduate from Wake Forest University's School of Divinity with a Master of Divinity, Gardner is currently in his first year of a doctoral program at Florida State University in American Religious History. He received his bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary where he double majored in Religion and History. While in Divinity School he attended and interned at Knollwood Baptist Church, an American Baptist Congregation.

Each year the American Baptist Historical Society seeks essays from authors who have not already been published in a major scholarly work. Entries should be no more than 25 pages (excluding notes) and must be double spaced in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style. Send entries to abhs@abhsarchives.org. The deadline for the next award is September 1, 2016.



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WORKING TOWARDS THE GOAL: *AT YOUR FINGERTIPS*

The staff of ABHS is, step by step, moving towards the goal of digitizing parts of the archives and having on-line access to our collections. We are almost half way to our goal of \$550,000 toward the support of a digital archivist. See the list of donors to the *At Your Fingertips* campaign on page 6.



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“Chin girl from the hills of the lower country,” from the Arthur E. and Laura Carson papers



Marilyn Whiteley with Assistant Director Jan Ballard and the Isabel Crawford journals. These were recently donated to ABHS by Barbara McKinnon, a niece of Isabel Crawford.