Native American Holdings Highlighted

This June in Overland Park, Kansas, the Historical Society offered two programs, both featuring Native American history for the Mission Summit of the American Baptist Churches, USA. The program on June 28 featured author Marilyn Whiteley speaking on “Scotch Determination and Irish Nonsense: The Story of Isabel Crawford,” missionary to the Kiowa.

Archivist Jan Ballard led the other program, a workshop about Native American history resources held by the Historical Society. Co-sponsored by the Native American Caucus, Asian Caucus, and Inter-Caucus, the session on June 25 elicited much discussion about telling one’s story to new generations.

Marilyn Whiteley’s presentation drew from her brand new publication, *The Life of Isabel Crawford: More Than I Asked For* (Wipf and Stock Publishers). Whiteley suggested the successful career of Crawford came because of her dogged persistence and her sense of humor—something illustrated in the many journals kept by Crawford and later donated to the Historical Society.

The book subtitle, *More Than I Asked For*, Whiteley adapted from the following journal entry from 1897-98: When Spurgeon became a Baptist his mother said “Well Charles we did pray that you would become a Christian but we never prayed that you would become a Baptist,” and Surgeon replied, “That is always the way with the Lord, Mother. He always gives us more than we ask.” I’ve got more than I asked for but I’ll go (Whiteley, p. vi).

One of the best known missionaries of her generation, Isabel Crawford also worked with Native Americans in western New York and with students at Central Seminary. She spent years on the lecture circuit, using her stories and humor to bring the message of stewardship and missions to hundreds of Baptist congregations.

Part of the Mission Summit conference of the American Baptist Churches, USA, both programs drew listeners interested in

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While retiring to her native Canada, Crawford requested that at her death her body be returned to the Baptist church at Saddle Mountain, Oklahoma. As her will stipulated, the marker included only her dates (1865-1961) and the words, “I Dwell Among Mine Own People.”

Marilyn Whiteley’s book about Crawford is available at Amazon and directly from the publisher at www.wipfandstock.com. Crawford’s extensive collection of journals and diaries remains available at the American Baptist Historical Society, which plans to digitize some of this record group when implementing the campaign, *At Your Fingertips*, launched this summer.

the work of the Historical Society. In their turn, staff of the Historical Society highlighted images, stories, and records from the section of the country hosting the conference, particularly Kansas and Oklahoma. For those attending the workshop, Archivist Jan Ballard provided a packet of reference materials, along with a sampling of documents from the collections of ABHS, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, and the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

Because of interest stirred by the workshop, on October 13 and 14 Archivist Jan Ballard will be at Bacone College to present more of their Baptist heritage to the student body in chapel and to a class on Baptist history. Interestingly, this is a trip that Isabel Crawford made regularly during her missionary career.

Cherokee, Kiowa, Comanche Indian missionaries. (ABHMS ph.66-6.14)
Baptist Women Celebrate 50 Years in Congo

Anniversaries help us remember. This was the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the Communauté Baptiste du Congo (CBCO), the Congo Baptist Community, celebrated 50 years of the organization of Baptist Women ("Oeuvre Féminine", or "Women's Work") August 11th to 15th in Kinshasa, DRC.

Assisting with this celebration, missionary Miriam Noyes wrote to the Historical Society, wondering if we might supply images of early women missionaries in the Congo. She especially wanted an image of Mama Mattie Marie Nsingani, the pioneer leader named after missionary Mathilda Frederickson. If we had one of Mama Mattie at the 1959 Women’s Union meetings, she noted, that would be “gold.”

Missionary Miriam Noyes reported that the celebration included an 800 strong choir of Kinshasa women, a history book, and a two day conference. Celebrants also visited “a beginning museum of Mama Mattie and the women’s work.”

This occasion called for older images from the archives. This summer new images and stories were added, through the volunteer labor of Harold Van Broekhoven, who in July went to Indianapolis to interview Congolese pastor Emmanuel Musinga, pastor of Grace Tabernacle Ministries, a congregation of Congolese refugees. His digital recordings are a precious record of this congregation’s founding story.

For that digital story to be preserved and shared, ABHS is campaigning for the funds needed to hire a digital archivist—someone who will know how to keep media like this in a format that remains useable for future researchers.

Baptist Women’s Union of Africa, Monrovia, Liberia, July 18-21, 1959. Mama Mattie is in the second row, third from the left. Missionary doctor Phyllis L. Benner is next to her, third from the right, second row. BIM Box 54, folder 3.

Mathilda Frederickson. If we had one of Mama Mattie at the 1959 Women’s Union meetings, she noted, that would be “gold.”

ABHS staff searched through many files of images, finding that “gold” and providing scanned copies of many images, including those on this page.

Mrs. Frederickson (above) and her husband, Peter, served in the Belgian Congo between 1887-1921. BIM bio file, ABHS.

Mama Mattie Marie Nsingani, daughter of Ngunda Elisabeth, a co-worker of Mrs. Mathilda Frederickson. BIM Box 74, folder 40.
Pictures from Biennial:

Below Left: Marilyn Whiteley talks with a visitor at the ABHS booth. Left: Archivist Jan Ballard shows a visitor how digitized records can be accessed on the web; Above left is the display that illustrates digitized archives on Archive Space.

At right, The Younger Award for Local American Baptist History is awarded to The Baptist Church in Warren (Warren, RI). The award is accepted by pastor Esther Irish and her husband Rick.

Missionary Roberta Stephens and Dr. Mayumi Hara. Photo courtesy of Dr. Hara
Workshop, Breakfast and More

Workshop, Ministry of Memory, led by Archivist Jan Ballard.

Breakfast at the Biennial.
Baptists have long been noted as people of conscience. From the days of Roger Williams to the work of E.Y. Mullins to the witness to Martin Luther King, Jr., conscience is one of the hallmarks of Baptist thought, witness, and work. But historical explorations of Baptists and conscience have focused on two primary themes: individual freedom of conscience, and dissent from authority.

This focus has largely neglected the relationship between the Christian conscience and public debates. What contributions have Baptists made with regards to how to approach public issues of religious liberty and ethics? And in what ways have Baptists accounts of conscience offered something distinctive? In an age when issues of religious liberty, the common good, protection of minority interests, and surveillance, recovering what Baptists have to offer with regards to conscience is of prime importance.

This issue of the American Baptist Quarterly explicitly solicits articles on this issue: investigating the nature, role, and legacy of Baptist thought on conscience. Articles should be historical explorations of seminal figures, events, and movements in which Baptist appeals to conscience have shaped Baptist life and thought. Possible historical explorations include, but are not limited to:

--Conscience and objection to war
--Religious liberty in the 20th century
--the relationship between Baptist polity and civic law
--liturgical freedom and legal forms of liberty
--gender, conscience, and public reason
--conscience and the limits of religious liberty
--the relationship between individual, ecclesial, and civic conscience

--Baptists and the prophetic national conscience
--Church, state, and conscience in the 19th and 20th century
--Conscience, equality, and the public square
--Global Christianity, Baptists, and unity
--Western Christianity and Baptist advocacy
--Baptists and the conscience of marginalized groups

Abstracts for essays (500 words) should be submitted no later than December 31st, 2015 to Myles Werntz (Palm Beach Atlantic University) at myles_werntz@pba.edu.

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Have You Been Part of AB Women’s Ministries Since 1951?

As part of American Baptist Women’s Ministries’ 65th anniversary celebration in 2016, AB Women’s Ministries would like to recognize any American Baptist woman (still living) who has been part of their ministries since the charter year of 1951.

If you, or a woman that you know, is part of that group, please contact AB Women’s Ministries with your name, or her name, and current contact information.

Send the information to AB Women’s Ministries at info@abwministries.org, or call (610) 768-2288, or mail it to AB Women’s Ministries, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. Please send the information by January 31, 2016. Thank you!

The American Baptist Historical Society holds the archives of the ABWomen’s Ministries and its predecessor organizations.

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At Your Fingertips: Archives for the 21st Century is the American Baptist Historical Society’s new fund-raising campaign to make our rich Baptist heritage collections widely known and digitally available throughout the world. We are seeking your support in raising $550,000 for this bold venture. In this information age, our highly mobile and transient researchers need digital access to significant archival collections such as ours. See our web page, http://abhsarchives.org/how-you-can-help/at-your-fingertips/ for more information about At Your Fingertips.

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