

Change: An Integral Aspect of History

By the time of her retirement at the end of July, Dr. Deborah Van Broekhoven had served seventeen years as Executive Director of the American Baptist Historical Society. The most obvious change during Van Broekhoven's tenure was that of location: whereas prior to 2008 the archives were split between two locations, Valley Forge, PA and Rochester, NY, following "The Big Move" the collections are consolidated at a single address in Atlanta, GA.



Deborah Van Broekhoven receives gifts of appreciation at her retirement.

Yet shepherding sixteen 18-wheelers filled with Baptist treasures down the interstate is far from Van Broekhoven's only accomplishment. Under her leadership the Society expanded its collections – most recently with the addition of the personal papers of Glen Stassen and David Gushee, the Isabel Crawford journals, Emery Andrews' papers, and records from the Growing Healthy Churches region in California, the ABC of the Niagara Frontier, and the Buffalo Baptist Union. Following the move to Atlanta, the Society established an annual lecture, hosting such notable scholars as Beverly Mitchell, Andrew Manis, and Adam Bond. Van Broekhoven initiated "At Your Fingertips," a major campaign designed to bring the Society

into the twenty-first century. (See page 3.) At Your Fingertips will provide funding for digitization of the collections' catalogs and some of its artifacts in order to put the archives at *your* fingertips. In recognition of Van Broekhoven's leadership and accomplishments, the ABHS Board of Managers named her Executive Director Emerita.

And so we arrive at the next phase of change: a new Executive Director. In June the Board of Managers selected the Rev. Dr. Priscilla E. Eppinger as the Society's new Executive Director. Eppinger describes herself as American Baptist "by birth and by choice." Both her father, Paul, and paternal grandfather, Ted, were American Baptist pastors, and her mother, Sybil, served on the American Baptist General Board and as president of the Board of National Ministries in the 1980s.

Eppinger began her professional life as an International Ministries' missionary to the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly called Zaire). She subsequently worked in the American Baptist Home Mission



Board of Managers President Garth Brokaw serves up pancakes to Executive Director Priscilla Eppinger at a recent Board meeting.

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Change

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Society's Office of Governmental Relations in Washington, DC.

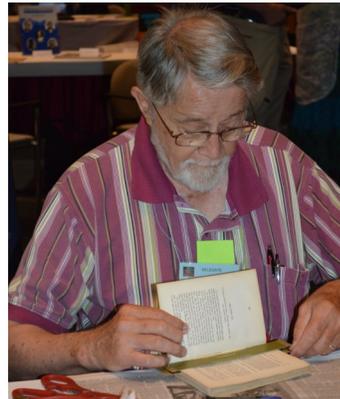
Following her graduation with an M.Div. from Andover Newton Theological School, she served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Plymouth, MA. During this time, she was elected to the American Baptist Board of Educational Ministries. She served as Minister with Young Adults at North Shore Baptist Church in Chicago, IL, while working toward her Ph.D. For the past fourteen years Eppinger has taught theology and religious studies at Community of Christ Seminary in Independence, MO, and Graceland University in Lamoni, IA.

"Our faith is rooted in stories of God working within history, through people," Eppinger notes. "From Abraham and Sarah, through Jesus himself, and continuing in the early church, we cherish stories of God working through humankind. What we have here in Atlanta are records of God working through the group of people called Baptists." She is excited about bringing this Baptist storytelling into the digital age. Eppinger also recognizes the challenges at hand: caring for millions of fragile documents, some of them hundreds of years old, while raising funds to make these manuscripts, photos, and audio files more accessible. "Every congregation has its own stories of God at work in their midst. What a blessing to get to witness to the work of the Holy Spirit across time and place!"

Thanks to Volunteers

Several volunteers regularly come to ABHS and use their talents to the benefit of the archives. We give many thanks to these dedicated folks.

Paul Reeder (pictured here), mends books that have lost their bindings, or have torn pages or other imperfections.



Don and Ginny Rasmussen survey original church records and put their findings in an excel spreadsheet which makes it very easy to organize the data.

Garth Brokaw has made inventories of several collections, and is now working on the photograph collection (see *From the Archives*, page 4-5).

Charles Chicks accompanies his wife, Barbara, to the Board of Managers yearly meetings, and devotes at least one day to cataloguing things like the foreign missionary biographical files.

All of these projects increase the ease with which the staff can find individual records for researchers. Many of these finished projects can be added to the data base in the reading room or included in the ArchivesSpace on-line catalog.

Research Snapshot



One of our recent researchers is [Frances O'Morchoe](#), a Ph.D. candidate in History at Oxford University in the United Kingdom who spent three weeks in the reading room looking at records of the peoples on the Burma-Thai border. "These archives are invaluable because the missionaries gave the local people a written language. The records here contain the earliest written history of the Lahu people; they tell history from the perspective of the people who lived on the borderlands, the local people," Frances explained. She is also interested in the role of church organizations that helped people across national borders feel a common identity. From Atlanta, Frances traveled to Burma to continue her research.



In order to move ABHS into the twenty-first century, we are looking to digitize and put on-line some of the most important portions of the archives. The At Your Fingertips campaign is geared toward funding this digital-age initiative. We have raised about \$350,000 of our goal of \$550,000. We invite you to contribute to this fund to be part of the digital age. Go to our web site <http://abhsarchives.org> and click on Give Now, email abhsoffice@abhsarchives.org or call Kay Eland at 610/768-2269 to make your pledge.

Eighteenth Century Meets Twenty-first Century!

One aspect of putting Baptist history At Your Fingertips is our **new online catalog for archives and manuscripts** that we invite you to explore. The catalog contains entries for our holdings of personal papers, missionary correspondence, and more. Several entries contain digital images of items from the collections. This catalog is a work-in-progress, with new entries being added on a regular basis. We invite your comments, questions, and suggestions regarding its usability. Online catalog: <http://libraries.mercer.edu/archivesspace>. Email feedback to jballard@abhsarchives.org; subject line: "online catalog."

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and no need to recycle or save the hard copy. Email us at: abhsoffice@abhsarchives.org, with **Digital Primary Source** in the subject line.

Primary Source is published 3 - 4 times a year by the American Baptist Historical Society. It highlights current activities at the Society as well as information about many other parts of the Baptist family.

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Support the Story

#GivingTuesday

ABHS's ministry is one of story-telling: in our vast archives we hold the stories of Baptists engaged in ministry throughout the world. These stories are told and re-told by our ABC/USA partners and, to many outside the ABC family, by researchers who consult our collections. (See "Research Snapshot," p. 2.)

You can easily participate in our story-telling mission. If you shop on amazon.com, please go to smile.amazon.com and choose American Baptist Historical Society to receive a percentage of what you spend. If you engage on Facebook, like our page and share our posts.

We invite you to join dozens of other generous people whose gifts ensure propagation of the Baptist story. [Donate online](#) or use the form on p. 7 to send a check. Help us reach our goal of \$3000 on November 29, #GivingTuesday.

Baptist History Resources

You Can Hear The Whistle Blow

This video traces the history of colporters and railroad chapel car missionaries who spread the Gospel by preaching, teaching, baptizing and establishing Sunday Schools and churches. (19 mins.) DVD - \$20.95



Chapel Car Grace

Bringing Our Legacy to Light

Stories of missionaries Joanna P. Moore, Astrid Peterson, and chapel car missionaries, told by the people who knew and researched them. This video gives insight into the valuable collections held by ABHS. By popular demand, the DVD includes a specially prepared discussion guide. This is perfect for Sunday school classes, youth groups and adult forums. (20 min. DVD) \$5

For more resources, go to: <http://abhsarchives.org/publications/items-for-sale/>.

From the Archives

This October, several members of the ABHS Board of Managers arrived the day before the annual ABHS Board meeting in order to work on volunteer projects. Among them were Garth Brokaw, Board president, and Mitch Homma who, along with his wife Stephanie, assisted with a project to digitize the ABHS photograph collections. In the course of their work, they were rewarded with some serendipitous discoveries.



Mitch Homma and his wife, Stephanie, a database expert, digitizing ABHS photographs.



Mrs. Wada (right) was considered a gifted Bible woman by her co-workers. She is shown here with Miss Kishi, superintendent of the Sunday School. (ABFMS Collection, bimpic-4-1-002.)

Mitch found photographs of his great-grandparents, Rev. Masahiko and Kuni Anazawa Wada. The Wadas left behind their high-ranking social positions in Japan in order to become Christians. Rev. Wada studied at the Yokohama Baptist Theological Seminary and then served as an overseas missionary to Japan-occupied Korea, Siberia, and Manchuria. In 1928, the American Baptists sponsored Rev. Wada as a missionary in the United States under the auspices of the Los Angeles City Mission in California. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, he was pastoring Gardena Baptist Church. The FBI arrested the Wadas as dangerous aliens, then later paroled them to the Amanche internment camp in Colorado. After their release, Rev. Wada served as pastor of the Japanese Baptist Church in Seattle until his retirement in 1955.



Masahiko Wada (standing, third from left) in a group of students in 1908. (ABFMS Collection, bimpic-6-6-020)



Paul Eppinger (left), with Mr. and Mrs. Ngai, in front of Foote Memorial Chapel at Baptist camp in Inagawa. (ABFMS Collections, bimpic-2-4-46)

As he worked on a file of International Ministries photos, Garth discovered photographs of another missionary, Paul Eppinger, who began his work in Yokohama, Japan, in 1955, about the time when Mitch's great-grandparents were retiring. In a November 1956 letter written to his American Baptist friends back home, Rev. Eppinger describes Japan as "a country which is right in the middle of a great revolution, changing in some ways from Eastern habits and ways to Western customs, but still trying to hold on to the best of its own." He also remarks upon a "wonderful 26 days with a certain Methodist missionary in the Philippines, a Miss Sybil Casbeer" and notes that "it just so happened that the diamond that I had in my pocket just fits her third finger, left hand. You can imagine that our happiness was and is unbounded." A few years later, after returning from the mission field, Paul and Sybil Eppinger had a daughter, whom they named Priscilla. Today, Reverend Dr. Priscilla Eppinger is the new executive director of the Historical Society.



Rev. Paul Eppinger and his high school English Society students celebrate International Church Christmas, 1956. (ABFMS Collections, bimpic-2-4-017)

Nominations Open for George Younger Award

Has your church or region celebrated your history this year or last? If so you might be eligible for the George Younger Award!

Projects eligible for this Award include but are not limited to church anniversary celebrations, congregational or regional histories, oral history projects, or other historical programs that promote Baptist history in the local community or region. The judges especially look for evidence of the impact on the targeted audience, with special consideration given for those projects with outreach beyond the immediate Baptist community.

Nominations should include the following documentation:

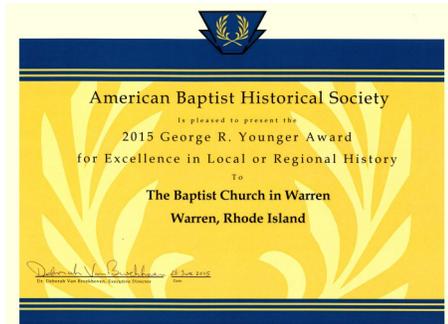
1. Cover sheet listing the name of the project and the name and contact information for the sponsoring church, group or institution;

2. A short (one or two page) description of the project or program, including a project timeline of the dates and locations of project events;

3. Supporting material, such as program bulletins, newspaper clippings, and comments by those who participated;

4. Evidence of the quality (historical content and production quality) of the program or project. Written evidence or evaluations of the project or program may be supplemented by other records of the program, such as videos, newspaper clippings, audio-recordings, or photographic images;

5. Evidence of impact on the targeted audience, with special consideration given for impact on a broader-than-Baptist community.



The next George Younger Award will be presented during the 2017 ABC Mission Summit in Portland, OR. The deadline for submission is May 1, 2017. Send your entry to: American Baptist Historical Society, 3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, GA, 30341.

George D. Younger (1926-2001) was a historian, minister, ecumenical leader, and



George Younger

lifelong enthusiast for Baptist history. Along with his congregational and regional ministry in New York City and New Jersey, he served as editor-in-chief of the ABHS journal, *Foundations* (predecessor to the *American Baptist Quarterly*), represented the Baptist World Alliance at the United Nations, and taught

Baptist history and polity at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Drew Theological School, and Union Theological Seminary.

Dr. Younger stressed the importance of Baptist history and principles. Seeking to honor his achievement and to continue his legacy of encouraging others to share their own part in Baptist history, the Historical Society's Board of Managers created the George D. Younger Award in 2004.

For more information, please call the ABHS office at 678-547-6680.

Like Us On Facebook!

American Baptist Historical Society's Facebook page has been revitalized with the addition of church anniversary notices. Please 'like' our page, and add comments.

Another new feature is a nod to historical events in Baptist life, like the birthday of Walter Rauschenbusch on October 4. If you don't know who he is, check out our Facebook page.



Anniversary Celebrations

Celebrate with us the many years of faithful ministry of American Baptist congregations! Some churches celebrating special anniversaries this year are:

Date	Church/location	Anniversary
July 16	Odessa, Odessa, WY	175
July 24	Livonia, Campbellsburg, IN	150
July 24	First Baptist, Marseilles, IL	150
July 24	Waynesfield, Waynesfield, OH	150
July 31	Harmony, Hundred, WV	175
July 31	Community Baptist, Whitefield, NY	200
August 20	Lincoln, Macedon, NY	200
August 7	Inghams Mills American Baptist, Little Falls, NY	175
September 17	First Baptist Church of Amo, IN	150
September 18	Pleasant Grove, Lebanon, MO	100
September 26	First Baptist Church, Ansley, NE	130
October	Norwood, Warwick, RI	125
October 9	First Baptist, Washington, IA	175
October 16	First Baptist, Jerseyville, IL	175
October 16	The First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa, NY	225
October 16	First Baptist, Niles, MI	175
October 27	New Life Christian Fellowship, Castro Valley, CA	25
October 27	Olivet, Lansing MI	100
November 13	First Shiloh, Buffalo, NY	100
November 13	First Baptist of Greensburg, TN	175
November 20	Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA	116
November 6	First Baptist, Ottawa, IL	175
December 4	First Baptist of Westfield, NJ	150
December 4	Holy Trinity, Philadelphia, PA	125

ABHS is pleased to recognize church anniversaries. To request an Anniversary Certificate for your church's significant anniversary, go to <http://abhsarchives.org/for-churches/>.



Yes! I/We want to support a Ministry of Memory with the enclosed gift of \$_____ for the American Baptist Historical Society.

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Questions? Call Kay Eland at 610/768-2269.

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INSIDE
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New Items for the Archives

In addition to items mentioned in the front page article, we recently have received a membership book from North Baptist Church of New York; original church records beginning in 1831 from First Baptist, Belleville, IL; a history of Hwa Mei Hospital (China); personal papers of Charles B. Tenny, a missionary in Japan, and Mark Rich, who was a pastor in rural parts of the US.

Our Mission

The American Baptist Historical Society, as a premier religious historical society, advances Baptist identity, promotes historical literacy, and thereby inspires spiritual and social transformation.