



Volume 14, No. 2 & 3

Spring/Summer, 2016

Just A Click Away

By Deborah Van Broekhoven

Technology! I love clicking through beautiful webpages—and never have I been prouder when I showed a seminary professor our (then) brand new website, Judson200.org. His exclamation of delight told me we had a winner, attractive images and text that



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would link the American Baptist Historical Society with people around the world. The main point was not the technology, but rather the images and information about the Judsons and their legacy that technology allowed ABHS to share. Similarly the main point of our current campaign is to make many more ABHS records available *At Your Fingertips*.

As I look toward retirement this summer, I have been reflecting on the role of technology in sharing the treasured resources held by the Historical Society. When moving in 1998 from aademie to the American Baptist Churches Mission Center in Valley Forge, I had to move from WordPerfect to Microsoft software. WordPerfect had weaned me from the typewriter and seduced me into the joys of word processing. Moving into the world of Microsoft introduced me to uses of spreadsheets and databases—essential tools in managing ABHS finances and collections for the benefit of researchers.

Creating the text for mission history exhibits was another new challenge, made effortless

because of the skills of Wilma R. Taylor. Because of her interest in journalism, Taylor was an early adopter of the Mac computer and its design applications. Taylor volunteered to bring her Mac and printer to Green Lake to assist with a new exhibit on Baptists in India. She created the explanatory text and captions—often at a moment's notice, after we discovered yet another fascinating missionary artifact to be included in the exhibit.

Wilma Taylor also demonstrated how essential volunteer skills were to operations. Our very first web pages were designed in 1999 by



Primary children playing in front of Giles Hall, Spelman Seminary (ABC-Dakotas, Glass Slide Collection, 2016, Slide 21)

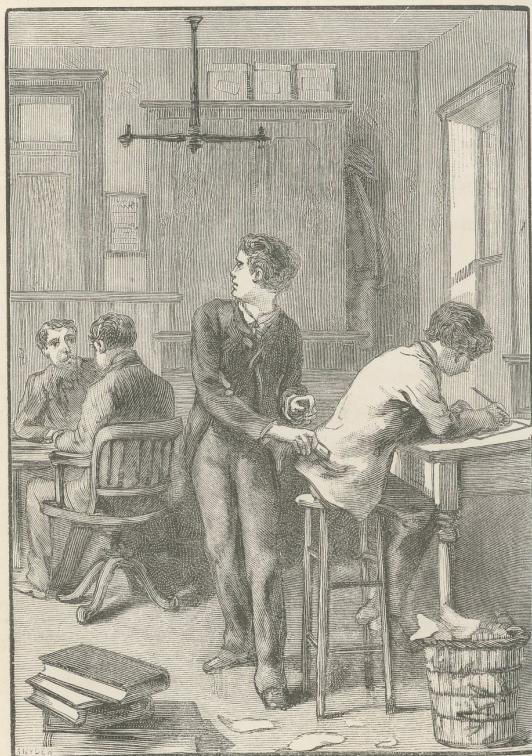
volunteer David Cushman and more recently have been redesigned by another volunteer, Rachel Trent.

Compared to ABHS operations that in 1998 were handled by extremely slow computers, our computers now are fast, able to handle a variety of software programs. New software allows staff to design newsletters, create exhibit texts,

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From the Archives

The American Baptist Publication Society (ABPS) of Philadelphia provided tracts, Bibles, and literature to Baptist and general readers across the nation, especially through the nineteenth century. Novels that suggested a strong moral and Christian outlook were especially popular and included titles like the now rare *Clarence and Corinne; Or, God's Way* (1890), *The Hazeley Family* (1894), and *Martina Meriden, or What Is My Motive?* (1901). Mrs. Amelia E. Johnson (1858-1922) was the author of these novels. Likely the editors at ABPS learned of Mrs. Johnson's literary skills through Baptist channels, where her husband, Rev. Harvey Johnson (1843-1923) was active. Longtime pastor at Union Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.



Clarence and Corinne.

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CLARENCE AND CORINNE.

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So very anxious was he to fit himself for it, that he studied and worked during dinner time, just allowing himself a few minutes to snatch a hasty lunch.

It was the noonday hour now, and no one was in the office but himself and Mr. Emory.

Presently the door opened, and a gentleman was shown in by Sam Baker, who had also a message to deliver.

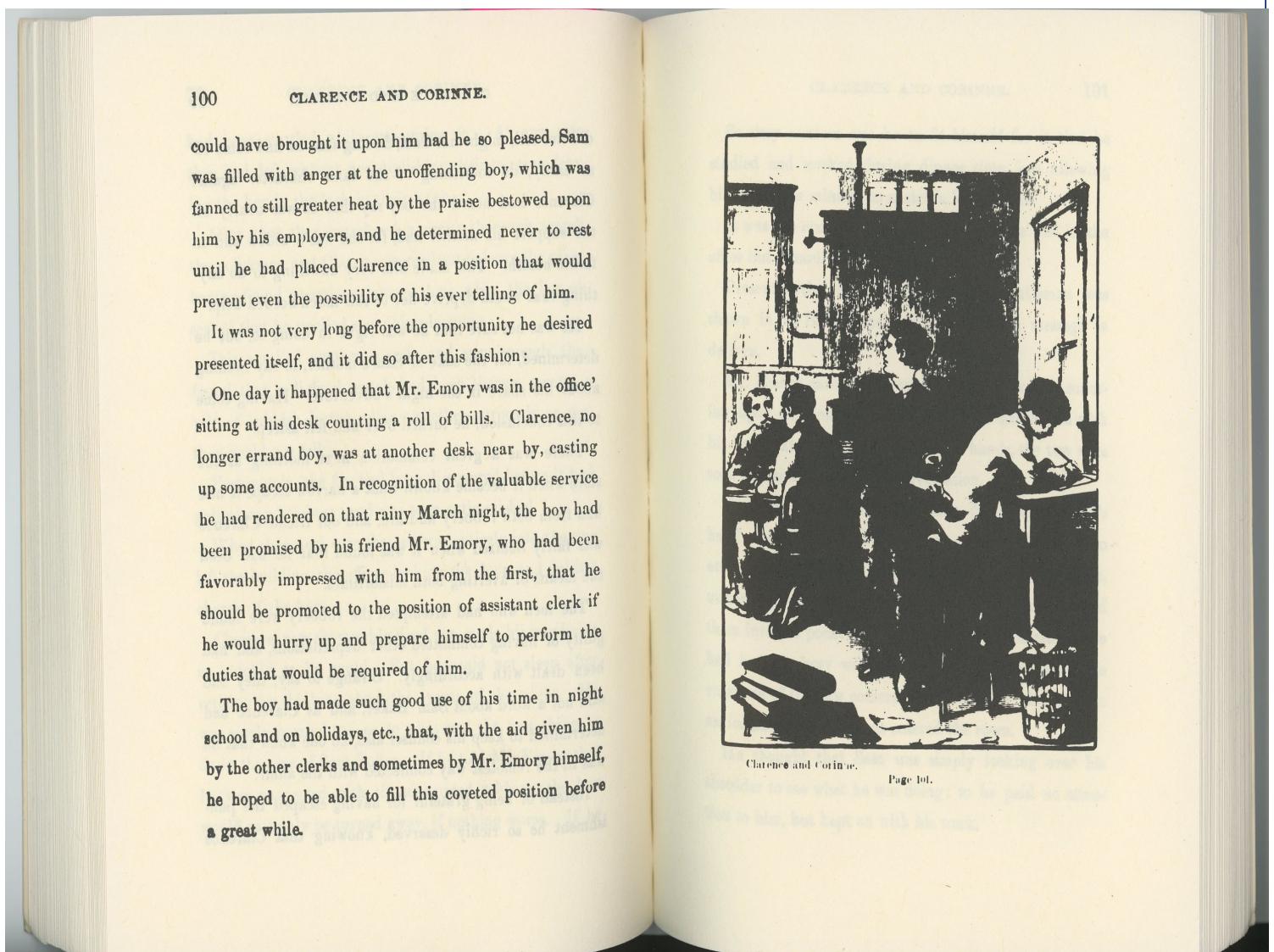
Mr. Emory carelessly dropped the bills he was counting upon the desk, and went toward the gentleman with his hand extended. Having shaken hands, the two were soon earnestly engaged in conversation.

Sam had noticed the bills drop from Mr. Emory's hand, and now, while waiting that gentleman's leisure to attend to him, he slowly edged his way across the room, unnoticed, to the desk, lifted the bills from it, and slipped them into the pocket of the unsuspecting Clarence, who had been so busy with his figures as to not notice the entrance of the new comers further than to raise his eyes an instant when they first entered the room.

He thought that Sam was simply looking over his shoulder to see what he was doing; so he paid no attention to him, but kept on with his work.

land, Rev. Johnson was a community leader and civil rights advocate. Several of his sermons are also available in the Samuel Colgate-American Baptist Library at ABHS in Atlanta. Since Mrs. Johnson was the first African American woman to publish a novel, Oxford University Press in 1988 published a new edition of *Clarence and Corinne*, part of the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers.

These images from *Clarence and Corinne* illustrate the changes in scanning and technology used to copy publications, with the superior images (page 2) comparing favorably to the inferior images (below) from the 1988 reprint of this rare novel. Archivist Jan Ballard created these images using the Epson Perfection V800 Photo scanner recently given to ABHS by Virginia Rasmussen. This new flatbed scanner is capable of creating images up to 6400 dpi which is needed for preservation images – far sharper than the usual 300 or 600 used for most publications. The publication standard of 300 dpi was used to scan both of these images.



Clarence and Corinne.

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Legacy of Walter Rauschenbusch

American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS), the Mercer University Center for Theology and Public Life (CTPL), The Acadia Centre for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies, and McAfee School of Theology are joining together to sponsor a conference on Walter Rauschenbusch, the premier theologian of the Social Gospel.

Entitled "The Legacy of Walter Rauschenbusch: A Scholarly Conference in Recognition of the Centenary of His Death" the conference is scheduled for April 9 - 11, 2018 and will be held at Mercer University in Atlanta. Lead planners will include William Brackney, (Acadia Center), David Gushee (Mercer CTPL), and Deborah Van Broekhoven.

ABHS has a large Rauschenbusch collection, including correspondence, diaries and photographs from members of the family. Walter Rauschenbusch's lecture notes, sermons, correspondence, and manuscripts are one of the most used part of the collection. Some will be on display during the conference.

Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) was a Christian theologian and Baptist pastor who taught at the Rochester Theological Seminary. Rauschenbusch was a key figure in the Social Gospel movement that flourished in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was also the maternal grandfather of the influential philosopher Richard Rorty and the great-grandfather of Paul Raushenbush, Senior Vice-President for Public Engagement at Auburn Seminary. The Conference will coincide with the publication of a critical three-volume edition of Prof. Rauschenbusch's works by Mercer University Press.



Walter Rauschenbusch

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and to "clean up" imperfect images or other scanned material for website features. When the ABHS website first opened, the scanning and posting was outsourced because staff lacked the skills and software needed for those tasks. Today office manager Janet Winfield routinely scans and adds photos and new stories to the front page of our website, abhs@abhsarchives.org. This work is made easier with the support provided by our web designer and talented "fixer," Rachel Trent.

In 2001 staff began our first digital preservation project, supported by a grant that included



Chemistry Class (ABC Dakotas Glass Slide Collection, 2016, Slide 14)

funds for the specialized scanner needed to copy glass slides. Project worker Kay Eland and archivist Betty Layton cleaned and repackaged slides, scanning the images from India, Congo, Burma, and China. Project work also included scanning images of home mission work in Alaska, among immigrant neighborhoods and native Americans in the West.

This first glass slide project focused on bringing to light the stories that were the major form of communication in an age prior to motion pictures, radio, filmstrips and television. At late as the 1940s, dozens of these slide sets were in circulation in Baptist churches – each of them focused on telling one part of the mission story. Recently a volunteer from the Dakotas discovered

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additional glass slide sets, each one telling a chapter in the history of American Baptist mission work. The slides included a striking image of Isabel Crawford, missionary to the Kiowa, workers at urban Christian Centers, and African American students on the campus of Americus Institute, Georgia.

Overseas missionaries also used these “magic lantern” slides in their work, using outdoor shows to attract listeners to their meetings as late as the 1960s. One of the antique machines, the technology of another age, came to the Historical Society from Robert Johnson, who had used the machine during his missionary work in Burma (also called Myanmar).

Today the Historical Society preserves the actual glass slides as well as the projector, while at the same time making the images more widely available as high resolution scans.

Like all technology (and machines), the state-of-the art scanner purchased in 2001 became unrepairable. Noticing this gap in ABHS technology, volunteer Virginia Rasmussen this year provided the funds needed to purchase an Epson Perfection V800 Photo scanner, able to create images at up to 6400 dpi, much higher than the earlier preservation images made at 600 dpi

or the more common 300 dpi images used in publications like this newsletter.

Of course technology is not the main point, but rather enabling better preservation and public access to rare and fragile materials held only at the American Baptist Historical Society. Providing access to these materials and the stories they tell has been the constant joy of my

work with the American Baptist Historical Society. Another joy has been my own learning more stories about American Baptists told by researchers, retired ministers, missionaries, and lay leaders.

As I leave, I’m confident that this work will go on. Churches and individuals needing advice about their records or a history project will continue to have access to the wisdom of Assistant Director (and archivist) Jan Ballard, available through phoning (678-547-6680) or email at jballard@abhsarchives.org. Soon too, there will be another archivist on staff, focused on preserving the increasing number of digital files that make up historical records today. Soon the search for a new executive director will be completed, with the ABHS board choice to be ratified in June by the Board of General Ministries of American Baptist Churches. The hope is that the new director will begin work August 1st.



Americus Institute, Georgia (ABC-Dakotas, Glass Slide Collection, 2016, Slide 13)

With retirement my ties to American Baptist history will not disappear. I look forward to more active involvement in my home congregation, the historic Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, and some volunteer work for ABHS.

The Big Move!

By Deborah Van Broekhoven

Arguably the major accomplishment of my tenure at ABHS was the big move of 2008, during which the Historical Society moved collections from Rochester (NY) and Valley Forge (PA) to Atlanta, Georgia. That move came about because both the ABHS board and our supporting organizations envisioned a consolidated library, archives, and staff as providing plenty of room—something we had run out of-- and the most efficient service to anyone needing information about Baptist history.

I had assumed that the likely site for consolidation would one of our two existing locations. But throughout our search, we looked for the best possible location for our ministry of memory. We looked not just for a site with sufficient room and facilities, but also for another partner organization whose support would buttress that of our existing partners. After hundreds of hours of conversations and tours of options in Rochester, NY; the Philadelphia and Valley Forge, PA, area; Illinois; Rhode Island; and Massachusetts, the dream proposal came from Mercer University in Georgia. Not only had Mercer recently acquired a building with plenty



New Home of ABHS In Atlanta

of space adaptable for ABHS operations, but Mercer's incoming president, William Underwood, had the vision that ABHS held

treasures for all kinds of Baptists. He recognized ABHS as a crown jewel that would attract attention and resources to a university that aspired to be pan-Baptist.

The American Baptist Historical Society has also aspired to be pan-Baptist, in its founding documents listing the collection of items by, about, for and against Baptists as central to its mission. Our pedigree, however, is solidly northern Baptist, having been organized during

a meeting of the American Baptist Publication Society—now Judson Press. Every day of work on the Atlanta campus of Mercer University reminds me that the Historical Society's work involves collaboration with many institutions and individuals.

Longtime partners have been the component organizations of American Baptist Churches,

whose records we keep. Crucial annual support comes from the ABC's Office of General Secretary, Home Mission Society, Foreign Mission Society (Board of International Ministries), Min-

isters and Missionaries Benefit Board, American Baptist Women, and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Wanting to understand better the resources available through ABHS, these partner organizations have held board meetings in the ABHS building on Mercer's Atlanta campus.

Explaining this move has been challenging to our northern supporters, though less so as it became clear how excited American Baptist church leaders in the South were about the prospect of ABHS moving to their region. The identification of these churches with the American Baptist denomination was rooted in the long-time role of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in the South—both during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and during work with recently emancipated freedpeople following the Civil War. Also I soon learned that many of our northern supporters had friends and relatives in greater Atlanta.

Another benefit of this move has been the addition of McAfee School of Theology to the list of ABHS supporters. Faculty there worked

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Ribbon Cutting at Dedication in 2008

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with ABHS staff to sponsor a Judson Legacy conference, honoring the bicentennial of Adoniram and Ann Judson's mission to Burma. Representatives from Judson College in Alabama as well as from Judson College in Illinois joined the Judson pilgrimage to Burma sponsored by ABHS. Anticipating the centennial of Walter Rauschenbusch's death in 2018, plans are also underway for an international conference on the legacy of this social gospel pioneer (see story, p. 4). McAfee Seminary students have also joined the ABHS staff, as work study student assistants.

Perhaps the most surprising benefit of this big move has been the flow into Atlanta of refugees from Burma (Myanmar), most of them identifying as American Baptists indebted to the missionaries who first brought them the gospel. Forming more than forty congregations, some Chin, some Karen, some Kachin, and some "mixed," these refugees host visiting preachers from Burma, generally including a visit to ABHS as part of their hospitality. At ABHS these Burmese visitors are able to see missionary scrapbooks and letters, as well as early printings of hymnals, Bibles, and association minutes in their language. Having assumed that this part of their heritage had been lost, these visitors are both excited and emotional about the documents and images they are able to see at ABHS.

For me personally, the big move has brought me into close contact with several historical congregations. The key sponsor of the newest ABC church in the South, the Georgia Chin Baptist Church, has been Oakhurst Baptist Church, which has also supported ABHS in its efforts to reach out to more Burmese refugee congregations. Best of all, I've been adopted by families and friends at Friendship Baptist Church, where the founding stories include those of Spelman and Morehouse colleges, both of which met in Friendship's building until their own campus was created. Digging more deeply into that part of our American Baptist history has led to many interesting discoveries, some of which I'll be sharing with the public on Friday evening, September 30, at an event sponsored by the ABHS board of managers on Mercer's Atlanta campus.



Yes! I/We believe in a Ministry of Memory and enclose a gift of \$_____ to support the American Baptist Historical Society

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Talk on New Era Institutes

Friday evening, September 30th, Dr. Deborah Van Broekhoven will present the program provided to the public in conjunction with the annual board meeting of the AB Historical Society. Her topic is "The New Era Institutes: A Nineteenth Century Path Toward Cooperation." Conceived by Northern and Southern Baptist leaders after their Fortress Monroe meeting in 1894, these short-term schools across the South targeted African-American church leaders and provided a rare example of black and white leaders working together.

Work Study Students Learn New Skills

This March, Paul Reeder, a dedicated volunteer with ABHS, was glad to share his expertise in book repair with three of the Work Study students.

Cody Carpenter (left), Traveous Atkins (center), and Andrew Scott (right) are all students at McAfee School of Theology, and work part time at ABHS.

