

# BAPTIST HERITAGE SUNDAY

“A great cloud of witnesses...” Hebrews 12:1a



Adoniram Judson

Baptist Heritage Sunday is a time to remember earlier people of the faith. In Hebrews 11 and 12, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses are listed in the ‘cloud of witnesses’ whose faith, collectively and individually, reminds us of God’s power. This list of witnesses also includes the less famous and anonymous; Rahab the prostitute, the wanderers, the persecuted, the women who witnessed miracles, and those who ‘won strength out of weakness.’

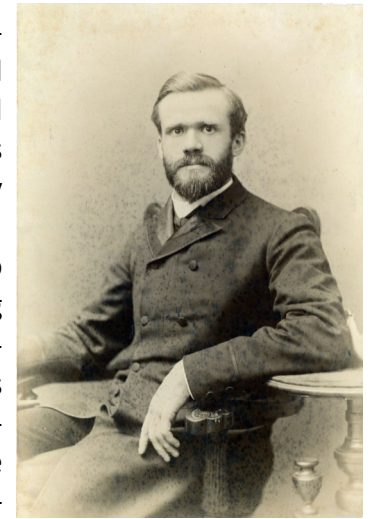
Who in your personal history, your church, and your community is part of that great cloud of witnesses to God’s power? The stories of those individuals may not be recorded in your official church history, but they should be! Since 1853 the American Baptist Historical Society has collected, often from the records of local churches, the stories of American Baptists whose lives are witnesses to God’s power and faithfulness. These collections include information about sacrificial pastors, female mite societies, and youth ministries.

Times of war and worry are important occasions for drawing strength and guidance from such stories, as one young historian commented during her visit to research Home Missionary Joanna P. Moore. In the wake of September 11, this visitor to the Historical Society need-



ed more than ever to focus on the witness of someone like Moore, who had crossed boundaries of race and regional cultures when she traveled from Illinois to Louisiana in order to teach newly emancipated slaves.

Your church also has stories to share of faithful ministry. Remembering these people of faith, the writer of Hebrews argues, helps us claim their faith as our own. Surrounded by these witnesses, we, too, can “run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2



Walter Rauschenbusch



Helen Montgomery

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**Doing Church History—Your Own** is an interactive digital resource to help local churches compile and preserve their history. To order send a check for \$15 with your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to American Baptist Historical Society, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA, 19482-0851. This resource can be downloaded or received on a thumb drive, please indicate which you would like.