Premiere of Restored Mather Film Draws Alums

She first learned about the Mather film premiere that morning when she read her email.

Shirley Patterson was traveling for work in West Virginia, and her colleague was driving them to Richmond, VA, their next assignment.

She got a phone call a little later. As vice president of the National Mather School Alumni Association, she is very involved in the network of those who had attended the boarding school/junior college in Beaufort, SC, until it closed in 1968.

By noon, her colleague was speeding down the highway, while she was on the phone to Delta Airlines to get a ticket for Atlanta, then calling a friend and alumna telling her when she would be arriving. And what they would be doing that evening.

She made it to the ABHS event by 7:00 pm.

History Is Exciting!

It was an incredible evening. We gathered to celebrate history, and found ourselves making history.

The event, open to the public, was hosted by ABHS’s Board of Managers as part of their annual meeting. The film, titled Good News had been discovered two years earlier in the ABHS collections by intern Heidi Holmstrom, who now works in media preservation for the National Archives.

Because of its historic importance, ABHS was awarded a grant to preserve the film by the National Film Preservation Foundation, San Francisco, CA.

Mather School was founded in 1867 in Beaufort, SC, by Rachel Crane Mather of Boston, with a mission to provide black women and girls a quality education. Students boarded at the school, which trained several generations of black women leaders. In 1882, the Women’s Home Mission Society assumed support for the school which continued, with some changes, until it closed in 1968.

Good News follows the school life and trials of fictional Willie Mae Jackson, who comes to Mather from work in the cotton fields and hopes to gain the education necessary for a better job and position in life.

Panel members were able to put the film into the wider historical context. Moderated by Dr.

Continued on page 6.
Call for Papers

Memory, Identity, and Hope: Intersections in American Baptist Ecclesiology

In an effort to foster ongoing, vigorous theological conversations among American Baptist theologians and theological educators, a pre-Biennial conference around the theme, “Memory, Identity, and Hope: Intersections in American Baptist Ecclesiology” will be held on Thursday and Friday, June 23-24, 2011, at ABC-related Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

The Office of the General Secretary (OGS) and the Emerging Theologians Task Force, hosts for the event, welcome paper proposals that address the conference’s central theme. Papers may explore American Baptist ecclesiology in its relation to questions of race, gender, class, the financial or ecological crises, ecumenism, historical or contemporary practices, etc. Papers should be limited to 20 minutes and can be co-authored.

Confirmed keynote speakers will be Bill J. Leonard (Professor of Religion, Wake Forest Divinity School), Guillermo Ramirez-Muñoz (Professor of Old Testament, Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico), and Emily M. Townes (Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology, Yale Divinity School).

Papers from the conference will be published in a special issue of the American Baptist Quarterly.

In addition, OGS announces a competition for an ABC, USA Theology Fellow. Eligible candidates include students in Ph.D. programs in religion and/or theological studies who are interested in making contributions to the life of American Baptist Churches, USA. Recipients of the fellowship will be awarded a bursary that will cover expenses for attendance to the pre-biennial event in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Submit paper proposals before February 15, 2011 to the attention of Rady Roldan-Figueroa (Rady_Roldan-Figueroa@baylor.edu).

For an ABC, USA Theology Fellow application contact Jennifer W. Davidson (jdavidson@absw.edu).

For registration information for the pre-Biennual event visit http://www.abc-usa.org/EventRegistration.aspx.

Information on how to order the special ABQ issue on conference will be in future issues of Primary Source, and on our website at http://www.abhsarchives.org/publications_abq.html.

Theological Discussions in ABQ

ABHS has published numerous issues of the American Baptist Quarterly which deal with topics planned to be discussed during the upcoming ABC theological conference.

A limited supply of single back issues of the ABQ are available for $15 each. To order a copy, contact us at 678/547-6680 or email abhs@abhsarchives.org.

- 1986, Vol. 5, No. 1, Racial Injustice
- 1986, Vol. 5, No. 4, Theological Conference
- 1987, Vol. 6, No. 2, American Baptist Identity
- 1998, Vol. 17, No. 1, Stewardship
- 1999, Vol. 18, No. 2 A Typology of Baptist Theological Education
- 2008, Vol. 27, No. 2, The “Other” and Community Responsibility
- NEW!! 2009, Vol. 28, No 3, Engaging Christian Faith and the Sciences
History Matters Campaign
Phase I Report 2007-2010

The first phase of ABHS’s History Matters Campaign has come to a close. The goal of the first phase was as simple as it was bold: consolidate the Historical Society’s two sites and raise the funds to facilitate a move.

We achieved our goals because of the support of the friends listed below. Thank you!

As you’ve read in earlier issues of Primary Source, consolidation was a huge project: 17 moving vans—including one refrigerator truck for our oldest materials dating back to 1522, 5.7 miles of shelving, hundreds of staff hours to plan and prepare for moving the collections, maintaining the safety of rare, fragile materials and keeping everything in shelf order.

Special thanks goes to those who were able to pay their pledge early. With the cash on hand, and a loan from our American Baptist Partners, we were able to pay a professional team of movers who had experience with archival material. (We joked that they had ‘practiced’ for ABHS when they moved materials for the Nixon Presidential Library.)

Mather alum Charliese Rogers-Jackson, Virginia Beach, VA, tells her story.

Mather film panel members Heidi Holmstrom, former ABHS intern who found the film in the collections, now a Motion Picture Preservation Specialist at the National Archives, and Dr. David Laubach, representing the American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Continued on p. 4
**History Matters**  
*Continued from p. 3*

Chester & Margaret Jump  
Richard Kahoe  
Charles & Carol Kenyon  
Lloyd & Betty Kenyon  
Diana Kirk  
Claire Kluskens  
Carla & David Knipel  
Sandra Knudson  
Rui Kohiyama  
Jim & Betty Layton  
Gayle Lewis  
Ray & Sigrid Lindland  
Thomas Litwiler  
Tom & Gail Litwiler  
Glenn Loafmann  
Los Angeles City Mission Society, CA  
Trinette McCray  
Phyllis & Harold McPheeters  
Robert Maase  
Carl Marquette Jr  
Chalmer Mastin  
Roy & Patricia Medley  
Phyllis Mild Belles  
Joy Miller  
Paul & Mary Minton  
Beverly Mitchell  
Henry Mitchell  
Harry & Dot Moore  
Paul V. & Dorothy Moore  
John & Dale Murrow  
Yosh Nakagawa  
Lawrence Nelson  
Dennis & Joan Norris  
North Shore Baptist Church, Chicago, IL  
Joseph & Hazel O’Donnell  
Owl Creek Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon, OH  
Virginia Palmer  
Martha Ellen Parkhurst  
Scott Pearson  
James Peck  
Henry & Fran Pedersen  
James Pendleton  
Pennepack Baptist Church, PA  
Marshall & June Peters  
Ken & Genevieve Peterson  
Timothy Phillips  
Joe & Eleanor Poe  
Primera Iglesia Bautista, Caguas, PR  
Margaret Prine  
Mary Purcell  
Marilyn Pulliam  
Clenon Ray  
June Rhoads  
Wesley & Sylvia Roberts  
L. Wayne Rogers  
Tom Ross  
Christine Roush  
Ruth Rowland  
Paul & Stacie Rumery  
Duron Rutenber  
Charles & Pamela Scalise  
Marshall & Donna Schirer  
Pat & Ron Schlosser  
Eloise Scott  
William R. Scott  
Francis & Vivian Searle  
Robert & Pearl Seymour  
Dorcas & Donald Shaner  
Betty Shelton  
Donald & Joanne Shoemaker  
Charles Short  
LaVerne & Malcom Shotwell  
*Continued on p. 6*

**Archivist Betty Layton To Retire Next Year**

After more than 22 years, ABHS archivist Betty Layton has announced her plans to retire in 2011. A search is underway to find her successor.

“Betty trained me when I came to work for the Historical Society,” said executive director Deborah Van Broekhoven. “Her knowledge of the collections, her dedication to the Historical Society and her calm, gentle spirit have been of enormous value to me and thousands of researchers.

“I am excited for Betty, although we’ll miss her terribly. I am so grateful that she is willing to be available for us to consult in the future.”

The search process for a new archivist was started early, so the new archivist will have several months to work with Betty. Candidate interviews are scheduled for early December.

Throughout her career, Betty has overseen the safe relocation of the archives—whether within the same building or across hundreds of miles—and served as interim director while the Board conducted the search for a new director.

Watch for the next newsletter to meet the new archivist and learn more about celebrations for Betty’s retirement.
Margaret Wenger compiled an unpublished history of Mather School in 1968, the year the school celebrated its centennial and, due to the changing times, closed. This excerpt is one alumna’s account of her school years and the decade following.

Vivian Delores McMillan Ray
I reside in Orangeburg, S.C., attended Mather from 1947-1952. I worked in the laundry to help with my expenses. While at Mather, I received honors for five years for having the highest average in my class. Graduated as Valedictorian of the class of 1952, won first place in the Elks Speaking Contest for Beaufort County and then in the State of South Carolina and later competed in the regional in Miami, Florida. At Mather I was chosen as May Queen and the Ideal Mather Girl. Upon graduation I entered BMTS [Baptist Missionary Training School] in Chicago in September of 1952, receiving scholarship aid from the American Baptist Women of New Jersey and from the First Baptist Church in Aurora, Illinois. While at BMTS, I was a member of the Student Council, basketball team, attendant to May Queen, President of the Senior Class, member of choir and Gospel Team, and participated widely in speaking and dramatics. I worked in the School library for my scholarship work.

During my sophomore year my field work was serving as advisor to a Junior Fellowship group at North Shore Baptist Church in Chicago, Junior year; worked in the extended session and in the Mentally Retarded class at the First Baptist Church of Evanston, Ill.; Senior year: Advisor to the BYF (Baptist Youth Fellowship) at the First Baptist Church of Chicago. During the summer of 1954 I was employed by the Calvary Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., as Kindergarten teacher for their Christian Center program, where Dr. Cranford was pastor. In the summer of 1955 I worked in the Day Camp program for the Mentally Retarded in Evanston, Illinois. I received second honors in my graduating class of 1956 for academic achievement.

After graduation, my first assignment was to serve as Director of Christian Education in the Zion Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio. Being their first director, I had to do a lot of convincing and organizing so that the Christian Education program might be unified and effective. We organized a Board of Christian Education and through it I was able to give direction to the Adult work, Youth, Children, and Mission work of the Church. In addition to this I taught Bible classes to different age levels during the week after school. While in Cincinnati I worked closely with the Council of Churches of Greater Cincinnati, serving as a faculty member for their Christian Education Leadership School. Also served as Camp Counselor for the Ohio Baptist State Camp program and as president of the BMTS alumnae Chapter in Cincinnati.

I was married in August, 1958 to Chester A. Ray of Ehrhardt, S.C. During the year 1958-59, he studied at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio and I served as Director of Christian Education for Union Grove Baptist Church there. We have four children, three sons and one daughter. Chester is the Assistant Principal for Wilkinson High School and my time is divided between my family and the many duties of the Church and community: a member of the Board of Trustees of The Mather School, Youth director for my church, Church School teacher, Chairman of the Program committee for Mission group, a member of the Advisory Council for the Felton Laboratory School at South Carolina State College. Chairman of the Preschool PTA Program Committee. Much of my time is spent in speaking to Church groups, schools and community welfare groups.

From Women’s American Baptist Home Mission Society, Box 216 F1, “Mather School History 1868-1968.”
History Matters
Continued from p. 4

Donald & Mary Ruth Shropshire
Barry Sisk
Gordon Smith
J. Alfred Smith
Vergie Spiker
Truman & Pat Sproles
David & Carol Stephenson
Joe & Jane Stoner
Winnifred Stanford
Robert Stephens
Roscoe & Barbara Stuber
Wilma Taylor
Audrey Teasdale
Leo & Yvonne Thorne
Ralph & Kathleen Tingley
James & Sue Trent
Thomas & Carol Tupitza
Deborah & Harold Van Broekhoven
Richard & Carol Visser
Cheryl Wade
Larry & Rebecca Waltz
Albert & Evangeline Wardin
Paul Webb
John & Penny Webster
Carol Weale
Marilyn & Hugh Whiteley
Beverly Williams
Peter Wolf
James & Mary Wyatt
Dana & Elizabeth Younger

Good News of Mather School
Continued from p. 1

Adam Bond, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union University, a new ABHS Board member; Ms. Heidi Holmstrom, Motion Picture Preservation Specialist at the National Archives (DC/MD), who, as an ABHS intern found the film and helped prepare materials for the grant request; Dr. Lawrence Carter, Dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel at Morehouse College, Dr. David Laubach, Associate for Higher Education, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, and Dr Randall Burkett, Curator of the African American Collections, Emory University.

The alumnae put the film in a personal context. “Willie Mae’s story was my story,” said one of the Mather alums. Another spoke of her parents sending her to Mather as a “refuge from the Civil Rights movement.”

ABHS will share Good News and collect oral history during the annual Mather Alumni gathering on Feb. 26, 2011, at the Technical College of the Low Country, located on Mather’s former campus.

Good News Available on DVD!

Good News, the restored 1949 short film about Mather School, is available on DVD from the American Baptist Historical Society. A discussion guide is also being created. Proceeds will go towards future preservation projects. $20 includes shipping.
Why Your Support Matters

Each year at this time, we ask you to support the American Baptist Historical Society in a tangible way.

Your donation, whether small or large, is necessary to ABHS. Here’s just a few reasons:

ifetime in the future. Foundations look at an organization’s support structure. Almost all grants are for unique needs, not for day-to-day operations. They want us to have a solid base before they’ll award us with a grant.

Our ABC partners need our services to care for their records. Unlike other denominational archives, our budget is not included in the denomination’s budget. The funds we receive this year through American Baptist United Mission giving amount to 3% (approximately $11,500) of our annual budget.

The largest mission societies (International Ministries, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board), cover a large part of the gap—over and above the fees for caring for their records. They do this because they know how vital we are in preserving their history. But they’re feeling the effect of the recession, too.

ABHS needs a broad base of supporters so we—and our partners—can do the ministry we’re called to do.

We’ve seen researchers and collection donors cry. They’ve been tears of joy: The Republic of Georgia Baptist archbishop, able to be here for only a few hours, found documentation of beloved ministers and congregations that has been lost in his country; an older gentleman, who remembers fondly as a boy playing with the helmet his grandparents brought back from their missionary days, seeing the safe and secure place where their letters and memories will be preserved and shared.

Annual Fund

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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Make checks payable to ABHS and mail with this form to ABHS, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851.

Contact Us

Website: www.abhsarchives.org
Baptist History Network: www.historymatters.ning.com Discussions with Baptist history lovers.

On Facebook: Use the Facebook search box to find “American Baptist Historical Society.” Click the “Like” button on our page.
Phone: 678/547-6680 Research appointments, collections donations, general questions.
Phone: 610/768-2269 American Baptist Quarterly subscriptions, accounting questions.
Mail: 3001 Mercer University Dr., Atlanta, GA 30341
Shipping: 2930 Flowers Rd. S., Suite 150, Atlanta, GA 30341
Email: abhs@abhsarchives.org For all the above.
INSIDE
The Good News of Baptist History

Volunteers
We Need You!
Volunteers are needed to help ABHS preserve and share history. Whether you’d like to work on short-term projects or a regular weekly commitment, we’ll find the project to meet your interests. On-campus housing is possible during June & July. Call or email us today (with no obligation!) for more information. 678/547-6680 or abhs@abhsarchives.org.

ABHS Biennial Breakfast
Sunday, June 26, 2011
7:00-8:30am
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Enjoy fellowship, good food, and Baptist history. Held during the American Baptist Churches, USA, Biennial Meeting, the event is open to Baptists and non-Baptists alike. Tickets are available through the Biennial registration www.celebrate2011.com or through the ABHS office by phone 610/768-6680 or email abhs@abhsarchives.org. Watch this space for details.

Save the Date!
Friday evening, September 23, 2011, ABHS Annual History Celebration. Hosted by the Board of Managers, this event is rapidly becoming a showcase of why Baptist history matters. Join us for an evening that is sure to inspire.