Judson Heritage Explored & Celebrated

Celebrating two hundred years of outreach, one hundred students and practitioners of mission gathered to re-member the pio-neer work of Ann and Adoni-ram Judson. Led by keynote speakers, particip-ants attended work-shops and heard speakers Molly Marshall, Bill Leonard, Rob Nash and Pamela Smoot consider the im-pact of the Jud-sons on mission work then and now.

Conference leader Deborah Van Broekhoven, of the American Baptist Historical Society, worked closely with McAfee School of Theology faculty, Pam Durso and Loyd Allen, to organize and publicize the conference. Participants came from as far away as Montana, Rhode Island, and Illinois and included academics, seminary stu-dents, pastors and lay leaders.


Archivist Jan Bal-lard prepared both actual and virtual exhibits to enable viewers to understand better the struggles of the Judson family and their major accomplishments, particularly in language translation and the printing of Scripture and tracts in Burmese languages.

The conference program included a special worship service led by local congrega-tions and choirs of Chin and Karen people from Myanmar (Burma), direct products of the Judson mission.

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Welcome Paul Gjenvick

The Historical Society welcomes Paul Gjenvick as our new digital/processing archivist (part-time). He joined the staff in September 2013 and has already proven to be a great asset.

Paul’s professional background is in accounting and informational technology in the corporate sector, but his great love has always been the study of social and cultural history. Around 1990, he began researching his branch of the Gjenvick family, who emigrated from Norway to the United States in 1913. Paul became fascinated with the social history of the steerage class of passengers who, like his ancestors, arrived in America aboard the Cunard steamship line. He began compiling historical information and collecting passenger lists, menus, brochures, immigration contracts, and other paper-based items regarding steamship immigration. In 2000, Paul launched a website, Gjenvick-Gjønvik “GG” Archives (www.gjenvick.com), to display his research and collected images for the benefit of others with similar interests. Today the site features some 5,000 pages and over 20,000 images.

Paul turned his avocation to vocation two years ago, when he began his formal study of digital archival management at Clayton State University (Morrow, GA). This past December Paul graduated with a Masters Degree in Archival Science. He distinguished himself as the first student ever to complete this rigorous program at Clayton State with a perfect 4.0/4.0 grade point average. As part of his degree’s capstone project, Paul compiled research on the feasibility of establishing, operating, and sustaining a professional digital preservation and access program at the American Baptist Historical Society.

Today’s archival management requires digital technology. We are indeed fortunate to have someone with Paul’s expertise to navigate the rapid and ever-changing waters of technology in order to establish a creative yet sustainable digitization program for ABHS.

Wish List

25” Computer Monitor $300

Reading Room Lamps: Four needed. $100 each

Café Chair: For researchers checking databases on the reading room computer. $150

Reading Room Chairs: For conference table (8 chairs). $2500

Museum gallery protective posts and belts. $100

Shelving: Units needed for processing. $500 - $3000
Baptists in Early North America

Dr. William H. Brackney, senior editor, and Mercer University Press, have published the first two volumes in an exciting new series, Baptists in Early North America (BENA). Designed to provide scholars with transcriptions of original records of key congregations during the colonial and early national periods, each volume includes a substantial introductory essay and scholarly notes.

This series, comprising twelve volumes, will provide scholarly editions of key Baptist Congregational records that detail the grassroots community heritage of Baptists in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th century North America. Each hardcover volume will include an introductory essay, the actual text of the records of congregations, critical annotations covering biographical, geographical and church historical data, and a bibliography, plus a comprehensive index of names and subjects.

This is the first major research project in Baptist studies in half a century and is designed for libraries, genealogists, religious scholars, and specialists in colonial and early national North America, and local/regional historians. Several of the congregations in the series have unbroken histories from the 17th century.

Dr. Brackney, of Acadia University, will be the general editor. Dr. Deborah Van Broekhoven, ABHS Executive Director, and Dr. Edwin Gaustad, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Riverside, will be consulting editors.


In addition to the introductory essays that provide context and a sense of progression, both volumes offer careful transcriptions of manuscripts, detailed bibliographies and comprehensive notes and indexes. In addition to the context about theological and social matters important to each congregation, readers will find helpful the copious information about individual names; for example, Lemons identifies a full 103 of 126 pew owners in 1775.

These two books, first in the series, can be ordered from Mercer University Press, www.mupress.org.

Judson Conference
Continued from page 1

Preacher for the worship service was Rev. Saw Ler Htoo, executive secretary of the Karen Baptist Convention USA and American Baptist Home Mission Societies home missionary.

Workshops addressed questions about mission today, including outreach to victims of sex trafficking, motivation for philanthropy, and leadership training among refugee communities.

Workshop leader Carol Bauer speaking on “Philanthropy and Mission: Historical Roots.”
Mission for Life: The Judson Family and the Mission to Burma

In 1812 Adoniram and Ann Judson set sail for Burma with little more than each other and a shared faith. Less than twenty years later, the couple had become American legends, inspiring legions of young men and women to become missionaries throughout the world and galvanizing the fledgling Baptist denomination in the United States to support their work.

What was the secret to their success? In 1832, when asked by aspiring missionaries for some words of advice, Judson wrote: “First, then, let it be a missionary life; that is, come out for life, and not for a limited term.” (Letter to the Foreign Missionary Association of the Hamilton Literary and theological Institution, N.Y.; Maulmain, June 25, 1832)

It was to this cardinal principle that Adoniram Judson and his closest partners in mission – his wife, Ann Hasseltine Judson; and subsequently, Sarah Hall Boardman Judson and Emily Chubbuck Judson – committed both themselves and their children. The new Judson200 exhibit, Mission for Life: The Judson Family and the Mission to Burma explores the influence and effects of the mission-for-life concept on the Judsons: the definition of their individual characters; the development of their ground-breaking mission in Burma; and their inter-relationships as the first modern missionary family for American Baptists.

The physical exhibit opened in the ABHS Reading Room in November 2013; and an extended online version will open on Judson200.org at the end of February.
An interesting artifact featured in the Mission for Life exhibit is the Public Service Hand-Book for Pastors by Adoniram Judson. Originally written for his own ministerial use, Judson later translated the manual to provide aids to assist native pastors in conducting public services. The first edition was published in 1829, with subsequent editions appearing in 1831, 1836, and 1860. The latter two editions omit “Service for the Consecration of Infants” and include a prefatory note by Judson that explains the evolution of the Hand-Book and emphatically states that it was not an attempt to introduce uniformity into religious worship. The revised edition on display in the Judson200 exhibit was published by the American Baptist Mission Press, Rangoon, in 1907. Sewn into this copy with pink thread is a handwritten script for a Burmese marriage ceremony.

Credit: Public Service Hand-Book for Pastors by Adoniram Judson. American Baptist Mission Press, Rangoon, 1907. From the Board of International Ministries, Foreign Language Books Collection, held by American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, GA.

Post this page on your bulletin board. When you use information from “From the Archives” remember to give credit to the American Baptist Historical Society.
Thanks for Your Generosity

The American Baptist Historical Society thanks all those listed below for their generosity in 2013 towards our ministry of memory. Thanks also to the many who supported this vital mission of preserving and sharing Baptist history with smaller amounts throughout the year. “Without those friends, we would not be able to preserve and share Baptist history with researchers from around the world,” said Executive Director Dr. Deborah B. Van Broekhoven. Every gift is important. We understand the demands on everyone’s budget, and we know that every dollar represents your conviction that Baptist history matters!”

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Judson200 Exhibit Now On-Line

The latest exhibit on the Judson200 web site is now available for you to view on www.judson200.org. Entitled Mission for Life: The Judson Family and the Mission to Burma, this exhibit highlights the lifelong work of Ann and Adoniram Judson. There is also a component that deals with their family, and how the children remembered life in the mission field.

Judson Conference Papers Available

Missed the Judson conference? The major presentations are being published in The American Baptist Quarterly. This special issue includes Bill Leonard’s “`Wild and Romantic in the Extreme’’: Ann H. Judson (her husband Adoniram) and a duty to go `to the Distant, Benighted Heathen’,” Rob Nash’s “`And How Shall They Preach Unless They are Sent’: The U.S. Church and the Mission to Burma,” Graham Walker’s “Building a Christian Zayat in the Shade of the Bo Tree,” and Molly Marshall’s “Extending the Judson Legacy.” To subscribe to the ABQ ($50/year) or order this issue ($15), email abhs@abhssarchives.org or phone 610-768-2269.