

Chico First Baptist Church Honors Former Pastor with Gift to ABHS

Chico First Baptist Church (Chico, CA) recently made a significant donation to ABHS's endowment fund, from the proceeds of a fund established in memory of a beloved former pastor. Rev. Dr. Henry Irving Fox served CFBC as pastor (1968-1979) before moving to Chicago as Director of Higher Education for the ABC-USA in the Midwest and West.

CFBC was established on July 18, 1880 with nine people bringing their letters from various Baptist churches. This little church with its progressive stance and missional heart would serve Chico as it grew from a small rural community into a thriving town with university and college campuses.

Throughout the church's history, CFBC has remained steadfast in its stand for peace and justice and love of all living beings, welcoming all. In purchasing the Wicks Pipe Organ from the World's Fair in San Francisco in 1939 for people to enjoy (later dedicated in memory of Dr. L.G. Morony), hosting the Chico Area Interfaith Council to ensure all faiths had opportunity for equal expression and sharing, and swapping choirs with Second Baptist Church to celebrate diversity of worship, this feisty little Baptist congregation, while never a large church, became known for its resilience and hospitality.



In times of crisis, CFBC looks for ways to minister to those in need. In 2018, the church helped those affected by the Camp Fire, the

deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history, by providing space for school, day care, music classes, adult and family counseling, supervised family visitation, teachers' education, shelter for the homeless, and concerts. Throughout the pandemic, the church has found ways to bring hospitality and soul nurture to the community, buying and distributing tablets and Chromebooks to vulnerable elders so that they might maintain connection with others. Making box lunches for the unhoused and providing dinners at the shelter are other ways that the congregation ministers in its community. With ample resources, creativity, and lots of outdoor space, the church delights in sharing with others! Most recently, CFBC provided shelter to 34 homeless neighbors in the wake of a massive rainstorm.

Throughout her life, CFBC has been a witness to peace and justice for all people, putting art, music, philosophy and theology into practice.

When Pastor Emeritus Fox died in 1997, his family established a fund in his memory to support education programs. This year, the church and the family chose to share income from this fund with ABHS.

We are tremendously grateful to Chico First Baptist and its pastor, Gail Serratt, and to Rita Fox Landrum and daughters Patty Fox and Janetta Jonsson, for their generous gift to ABHS, which will help ensure that Baptist story-telling and story-keeping continue into the future.



Church Anniversaries

October – December

We celebrate the faithful ministry of American Baptist Congregations and their pastors! The following churches mark anniversaries this quarter:

250 Years

First Baptist Church of Chelmsford, Chelmsford, MA; Rev. Willie J. Seals, Jr., pastor

240 Years

First Baptist Church in Woburn, Woburn, MA;
Rev. Dr. Yaliang Zhao, pastor

225 Years

First Baptist Church of Connellsville, Connellsville, PA; William Hough, pastor

175 Years

Franklin Union Baptist Church, Worthington, PA;
Rev. Scott A. Jones
First Baptist Church of Urbana, Urbana, OH;
Brian Wonn, pastor
New Albany Baptist Church, New Albany, PA;
Rev. Terry VanHorn, pastor
Upper Merion Baptist Church, King of Prussia, PA;
Rev. Samuel Geiger, pastor

151 Years

First Baptist Church, Council Grove, KS;
Chris Carlson, pastor

Primary Source

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150 Years

Bethlehem Baptist Church, Saint Clair, PA;
Joe McDemus, pastor
Calvary Baptist Church, Hopewell, NJ;
Rev. Dennis M. O'Neill, Jr., pastor
First Baptist Church, Lansford, PA;
Rev. Jeremy Banick, pastor
First Baptist Church of Conshohocken,
Conshohocken, PA; Rev. Bradley E. Lacey, pastor
Genesee Baptist Church, Rochester, NY;
Rev. Steven G. Wilson, Sr., pastor
Jackson Street Baptist Church, Scranton, PA;
Rev. Dr. Elliott Cooke, pastor
Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church, Rochester,
NY; Rev. Dr. Michael Ford, pastor
Liberty Baptist Church of Blanchard, Blanchard, PA;
Rev. Christopher A. Davis, pastor

125 Years

Central Baptist Church of Woodbury, Woodbury,
NJ; Rev. Dr. Carla A. Romarate-Knipel, pastor
First Baptist Church, Kittanning, PA;
Rev. Mark Brady, pastor
Waldron Baptist Church, Waldron, IN;
Rev. Kimberly Jarrett, pastor
Walkchalk Salem Baptist Church, Kittanning, PA;
Mike Browser, pastor

120 Years

Milan First Baptist Church Milan, Milan, IN;
Rev. Harris B. Long, pastor

100 Years

Baptist Temple Church, Pittsburgh, PA;
Rev. Rodney Adam Lyde, pastor
Union Baptist church, Wilmington, DE;
Rev. Labarron L. McAdoo, pastor

95 Years

Trinity Baptist Church, Brooklyn, NY;
Rev. Dr. Gilmore Bembry, Jr., pastor

75 Years

University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, MO;
Dr. Nolan Porter, pastor

50 Years

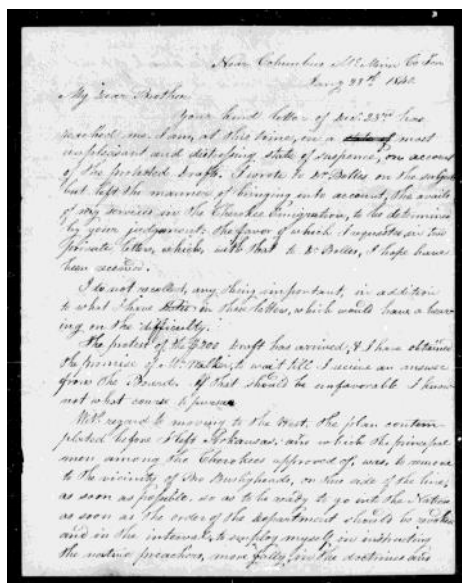
Congregation of the Covenants, Indianapolis, IN;
Rev. Roberta White, pastor

7 Years

Mount Paran Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA;
Rev. Dr. John Harris, pastor

What we digitize . . . and why

at YOUR
FINGERTIPS



Evan Jones was a missionary with the Cherokee. His correspondence was microfilmed to provide access without the possibility of damage to the often-fragile originals; the microfilm has now been digitized. 1840-1841_FM-0098_Page_02.

You might wonder how we decide what to digitize. There are a few different “pipelines” that determine what gets digitized.

The first pipeline contains access and preservation scanning. These are things we have decided to scan either to provide broad access or because the originals are degrading and copies need to be preserved. The type of item determines how it is handled. Copies of photographs are made using a flatbed scanner. Bound or fragile items are done on an overhead scanner and microfilm is digitized using a special microfilm scanner. Because we have a set of microfilm that is degrading and another set that is the access copy of one of our most requested collections, the microfilm scanner was our first big purchase with funds from the *At Your Fingertips* campaign. (It’s not too late to add your gift to this fund!)



Kiowa ledger drawing from the Isabel Alice Hartley Crawford Papers (RG-1024)

The second pipeline comprises collections that are heavily used, like missionary correspondence. We try to balance preservation issues with demand or interest in setting digitization priorities. Items most at risk or that have the most potential interest get highest priority. Materials digitized for preservation and access are preserved on a specialized digital archive platform.

We also digitize for Historical Society use. For example, at the beginning of June we scanned 77 images to use in online exhibits for the Biennial.

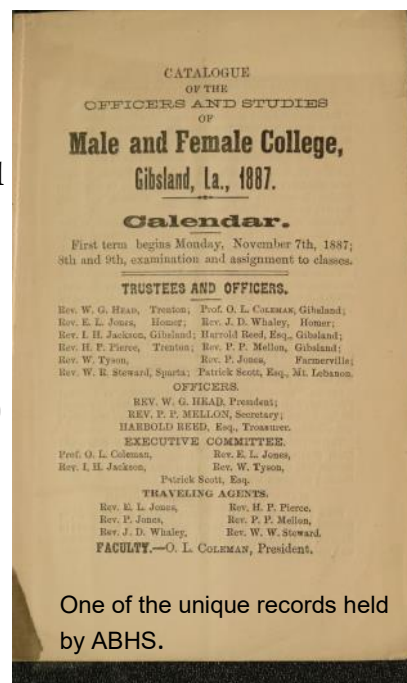
The last pipeline is “on-demand,” responding to requests for a copy of something we have in our collections. Because we were short-staffed at the beginning of this year, we did little on-demand scanning. From June-Aug, we scanned two bound items, four reels of microfilm, and



Display of the American Baptist Publication Society at the 1961 convention

numerous photos on demand.

In all, over the summer, we digitized 90 images, 279 pages of bound documents and 19 reels of microfilm.



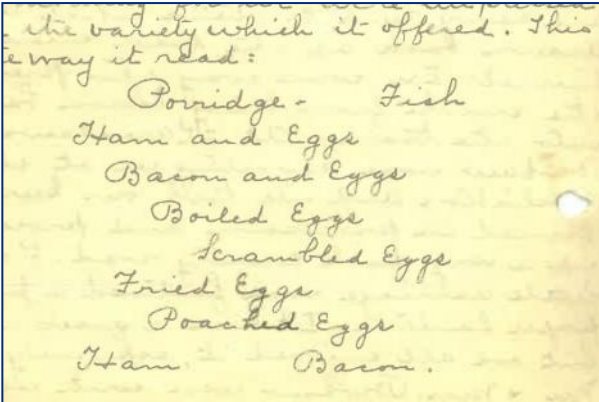
One of the unique records held by ABHS.

Your donation \$\$\$ at work

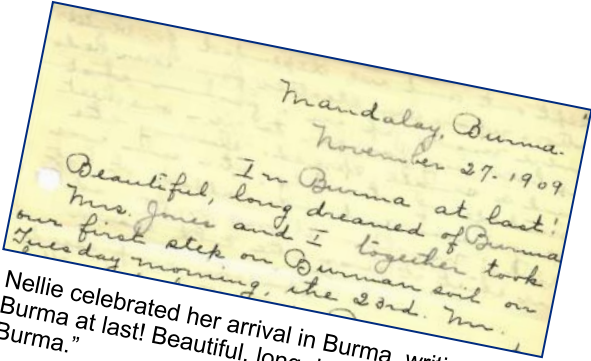
From the Archives

Nellie G. Prescott Travel Diaries

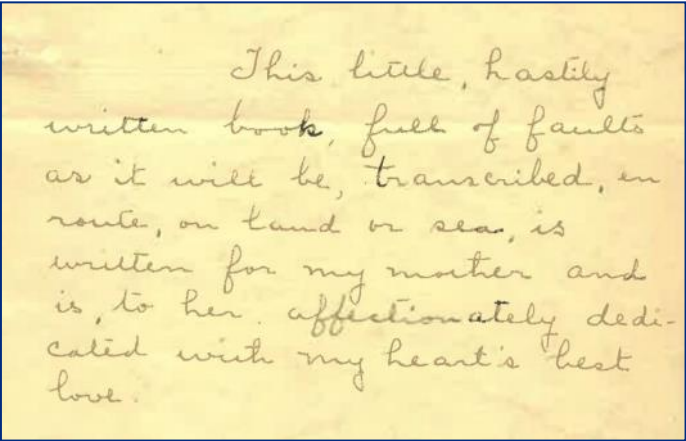
Not all of the interesting items in ABHS collections are inherently religious – Nellie G. Prescott wrote two detailed travel diaries of her trip around the world in 1909-1910.



On Tuesday, August 24, 1909, Nellie recorded the breakfast menu at a hotel in Japan, after she and her companion were amused by the “variety it offered.”



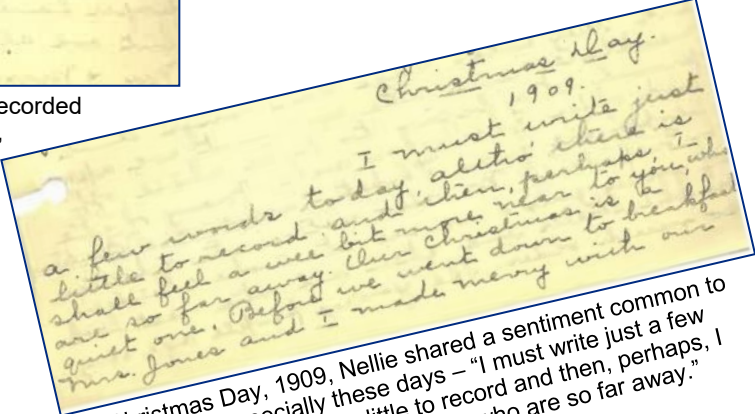
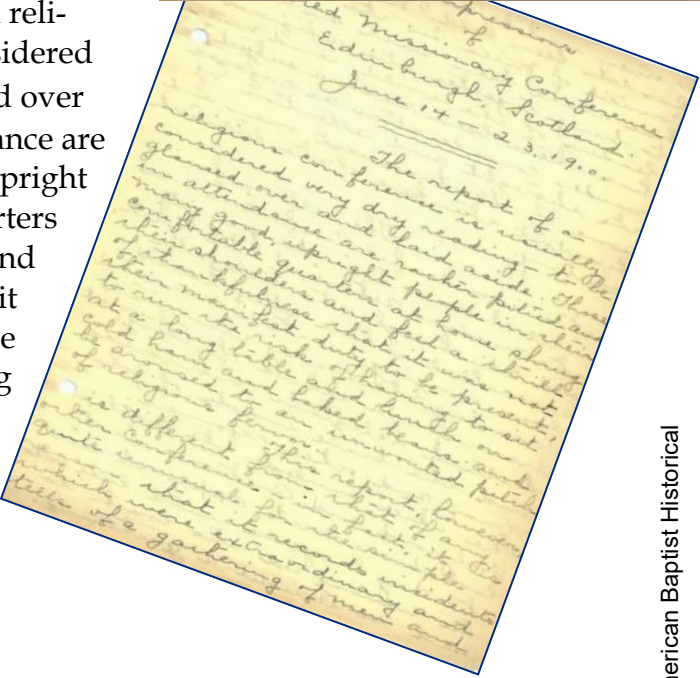
Nellie celebrated her arrival in Burma, writing “In Burma.”



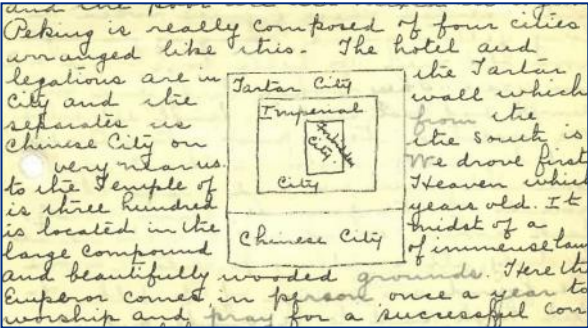
The diaries were written for her mother and mailed home to Rochester, New York, as she travelled.



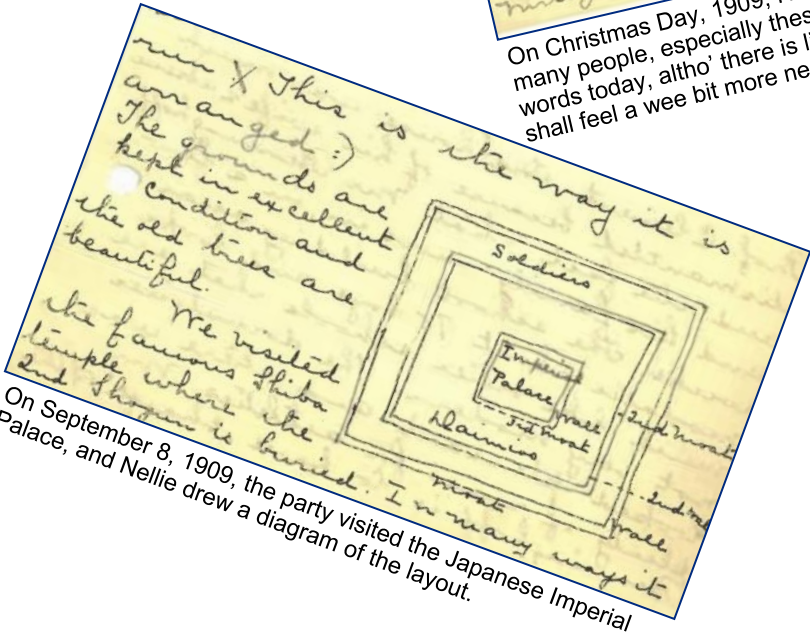
One reason for Prescott’s travels in 1910 was her attendance at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her impressions of the conference begin with a disclaimer about the way it will differ from the usual conference report – a style she firmly rejected, saying “The report of a religious conference is usually considered very dry reading – to be glanced over and laid aside. Those in attendance are rather pitied, and many good, upright people in their comfortable quarters at home shrug their shoulders and feel a thrill of thankfulness that it was not their manifest duty to be present, to run the risk of having to sit at a long table and lunch on cold ham and baked beans and be around an unwanted pitch of religious fervor.”



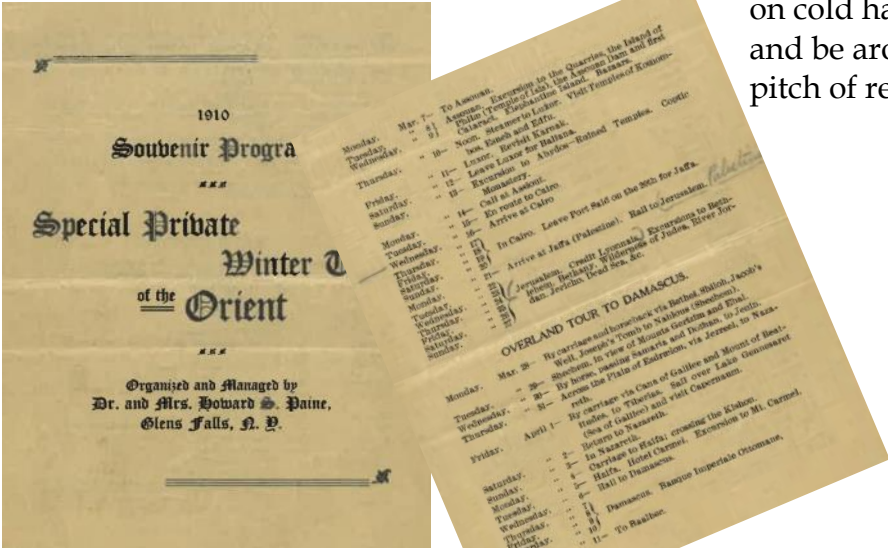
On Christmas Day, 1909, Nellie shared a sentiment common to many people, especially these days – “I must write just a few words today, altho’ there is little to record and then, perhaps, I shall feel a wee bit more near to you, who are so far away.”



In her entry for October 14, 1909, Nellie included a diagram of the layout of Peking (now called Beijing), and describes their visit to the “Lama Temple” thusly: “about as old and dilapidated a series of buildings as we have seen, was however very interesting, altho’ we had decided that we were tired of temples.”



On September 8, 1909, the party visited the Japanese Imperial Palace, and Nellie drew a diagram of the layout.



Her voyage included a “Special Private Winter Tour” to the Holy Land.

In 1914, Prescott was appointed Associate Foreign Secretary of the Woman’s American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, and was promoted to Foreign Secretary in 1916, serving until 1922. In her capacity as WABFMS Foreign Secretary, Prescott travelled in 1919 to mission stations in Japan, China, and the Philippines. Following all these travels, Nellie G. Prescott authored *The Baptist Family in Foreign Mission Fields* (1926).

ABHS Board Members Work on National History Projects

Heidi Holmstrom, Secretary of the ABHS Board of Managers, has a related day job: she is an archivist at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration working in the Motion Picture Preservation Lab, which is responsible for performing conservation and preservation work on motion picture records held across the National Archives. Heidi is currently working on a project that explores the early usage of film by the government.

Mitch Homma, Vice-President of the ABHS Board of Managers, has been very involved with an exhibit co-presented by the University of Southern California Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture and the Japanese American National Museum, entitled "Sutra and Bible: Faith and the Japanese American Incarceration." The project explores the role that religious teachings, practices, and communities played in the WWII Japanese American experience, and references an American Baptist Home Mission Society hostel in Cleveland, OH, the famous Seattle Japanese Baptist Church bus, Rev. Emery Andrews, and memories from retired American Baptist minister, Rev. Brooks Andrews. The exhibit will also contain a painting of Psalm 121 on woodblock, a collection of pre-WWII American Baptist mission church photos, and a WWII Bible from American Baptist minister, Rev. Masahiko Wada. A book will accompany the exhibit.



Q: What do the Walt Disney Family Museum and the American Baptist Historical Society have in common?

A: They both participate in *Time Travelers*, the reciprocal membership network for historical museums and societies throughout the U.S. Some ABHS membership benefits include participation in the Time Travelers program. Your ABHS/*Time Travelers* membership card entitles you to free admission at The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco, a savings of \$80 for a family of four.

The mission of the Walt Disney Family Museum is two-fold: to inform present and future generations about Walter Elias Disney and, through his story, to inspire them to heed their imagination and persevere in pursuing their goals. To learn more about The Walt Disney Family Museum, see their website: <https://www.waltdisney.org/>.



Research Snapshot – Research-by-Mail

Pandemic precautions required closing to onsite researchers for much of 2021, and ABHS has received many Research-by-Mail requests. One genealogist sought information on Ellen Josephine Peterson to enhance items in the family's possession.

Ellen J. Peterson served in China as a missionary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society from 1913 to 1942 and again from 1945 to 1949. She initially served in leadership roles at the Baptist Girls' School in Shaohsing and later as principal of the Hangchow Union Girls' School.

During the Japanese occupation of China during WWII, the schools were closed and Miss Peterson served at the relief center in Hangchow. There, 1600 people of all ages were fed daily, and clothing and blankets were distributed along with the sharing of the Christian message. Baths were offered as well; a 1942 newsletter noted that 30,811 baths were made possible in one month alone. Eventually the Japanese military forced an evacuation; Peterson returned to China in 1945 to serve until the Chinese Communist regime took over in 1949.



Join the Historical Society and Become a Time Traveler

American Baptist Historical Society membership circles are named for some of our significant Baptist forebears.



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| ★ pair of tickets to Biennial breakfast | |
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| ★ 2 hours free consultation with staff archivist | |
| Living Heritage Society | inclusion in estate plan |
| ★ inclusion on a special plaque in ABHS Reading Room | |



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Digital Preservation*

American Baptist Quarterly Call for Papers

ABQ is the scholarly journal published by ABHS. Both established and emerging scholars are invited to propose papers written from original research. Articles and essays should be between 6,000 and 10,000 words.

If you are interested in proposing a paper for one of the upcoming issues, please contact editor Curtis Freeman (CFreeman@div.duke.edu) with an abstract as soon as possible.

| Upcoming Themes | Deadline for abstract submission |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Theological Reflections on Pandemic | 1 Dec 2021 |
| Seeing the Sacred in a Secular Society | 1 Feb 2022 |
| 21st-Century Reformations: New Forms of Ministry for a Changed World | 1 Mar 2022 |
| Bible Translations, Old and New | 1 May 2022 |

Our Vision

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