

Caring for Your Congregation's Archives

Part 1: Where do we begin?

The records of your congregation's life and ministry tell the story of how God is at work in and through your church. This is a story to tell! In order to tell that story now and in the future, records will be needed.

Congregational records identify your unique congregation, record its decisions, and leave a visible trail of your ministry. Identifying and preserving records of value is an important task for each local church. Records also enable a congregation to fulfill its legal and financial obligations. In addition, historical records can:

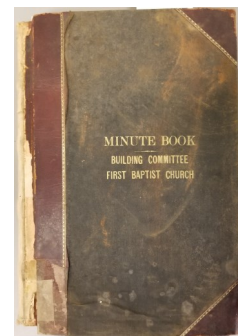
- ★ Serve as a resource for current ministry;
- ★ Remind people of God's faithfulness through difficult times;
- ★ Provide illustrations for publications;
- ★ Supply information for writing the history of your community;
- ★ Document the role of your congregation in political and social movements;
- ★ Enrich anniversary celebrations.

What do we do with all this stuff?

A roomful of records and memorabilia presents a challenge to even the most intrepid church historian. An important initial step in organizing the records is creating an inventory or spreadsheet that separates records into categories by type (legal, congregational, organizational, etc.) and allows for brief descriptions of materials. When the inventory is completed, the historian or history committee will have a good idea of the scope and content of the church's records.

Getting Started

- ★ Select a History Committee and Church Historian
- ★ Establish Guidelines for which materials will be saved
- ★ Find and designate a place for storing the archives; determine start-up funding and budget for future expenses



What to preserve:

Records that should be preserved include all documents made or received by the church in its ministry and operation and judged to be valuable for legal, informational, or illustrative purposes.

The key records to preserve are:

Legal Documents like deeds, mortgages, and contracts; church constitution and bylaws; minutes of congregational business meetings and annual reports; analogous records from any subsidiaries owned by the church, for example, a daycare, school, or low income or elderly housing.

Congregational Records like membership rosters, church newsletters, records of ordinations and commissionings.

Auxiliary Organizational Records from Sunday School; women's, men's, and youth groups; music ministry; other church committees.

Published materials like church histories, membership directories, programs from special events (e.g. anniversaries, installations, retirements).

Ephemera/Memorabilia like tangible objects (e.g. hymnbooks used through the years, communion sets), scrapbooks, albums with photos clearly identified.

Church Anniversaries July – September

We celebrate the faithful ministry of American Baptist Congregations and their pastors! The following churches notified ABHS that they are celebrating anniversaries this quarter:

270 Years

First Baptist Church of Morristown, NJ;
Rev. Dr. Kathleen L. Roney and Rev. Osvaldo Jimenez, pastors

200 Years

Bethel Baptist Church, Spencer, IN; J. Douglas Sanders, pastor
First Baptist Church of Fort Wayne, IN; Rev. Peter Janzen, interim pastor
First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, IN; Rev. Evan Bever, senior pastor and Rev. Laura Harris-Adam, pastor
First Baptist Church of Woodstown, NJ;
Rev. Timothy D. Joyce, pastor
Mill Creek Baptist Church, Salem, IN; Rev. Dr. Darrell R. James, pastor
Newport Baptist Church, Newport, OH; Rev. Kent Hall, pastor

175 Years

Putnam Baptist Church, Putnam, CT;
Rev. Jacqueline Harvey, pastor
First Baptist Church, Keokuk, IA; Rev. Robert Brandhagen, pastor

175 Years, cont'd

First Baptist Church of Evansville, IN;
Rev. Dr. Steven Claspell, pastor
First Baptist Church of Oregon City, OR; Rev. John Withum, senior pastor

150 Years

First Baptist Church of Colorado Springs, CO;
Rev. Dan Schumacher, senior pastor and Rev. Katie Hambrick, pastoral resident
Juniata Community Church, Juniata, NE; Thomas D. Murray, pastor and Herbert E. Scott, lay leader
Riley Chapel Baptist Church, Warsaw, OH;
Rev. Sheila Kent, pastor
First Baptist Church, Mason City, IA; Rev. James Bringman, pastor
Renwick Baptist Church, Renwick, IA; David Richardson, interim pastor

125 Years

First Baptist Church, of Warren, IN; Rev. Rusty Strickler, pastor

80 Years

Bethlehem Baptist Community Church, Holyoke, MA; Rev. Paula E. Alexander, pastor

75 Years

Diamond Baptist Church, Diamond, WV; Keith A. George, pastor

First Community Baptist Church, Desert Hot Springs, CA; Rev. Dr. James Baylark, pastor

If your church is celebrating a significant anniversary, request a certificate from ABHS.

Nominations Open for George D. Younger Award for Excellence in Local Baptist History

George D. Younger (1926-2001) was a historian, minister, ecumenical leader, and lifelong enthusiast for Baptist history. To honor his achievements and continue his legacy of encouraging others to share their own part in Baptist history, in 2004 the ABHS Board of Managers created the George D. Younger Award.

The next George D. Younger Award will be presented at the 2023 ABC Mission Summit. The deadline for submission is May 1, 2023. Check the ABHS website for criteria and instructions on submitting a project for the award.

Primary Source

is published quarterly by the
American Baptist Historical Society
Priscilla E. Eppinger, Executive Director
Kay Eland, Financial and Subscription Secretary
Denise Hanusek, Rare Book Cataloguer
Jenny L. Manasco, Digital Collections Specialist
Jean McDaniel, Administrative Assistant

Website: www.ABHSarchives.org

For Research appointments, donations to collections,
reference desk, general questions: (678) 547-6680 or
ABHSoffice@ABHSarchives.org

For ABHS memberships or American Baptist Quarterly
subscriptions: (610) 768-2269 or Kay.Eland@abc-usa.org

Postal Address: 3001 Mercer University Drive
Atlanta, GA 30341

Location: 2930 Flowers Road South, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30341

One of the most interesting things about working at ABHS is hearing about the ways researchers use our materials. Some examples: We received a request for a copy of the title page from Adoniram Judson's Burmese translation of the Bible because there is some debate about the spelling of his name in Burmese.

Another researcher inquired about textiles (we have a number of textiles, especially from Myanmar) and, more recently, someone was researching the development of typefaces (fonts) in the Lisu language.

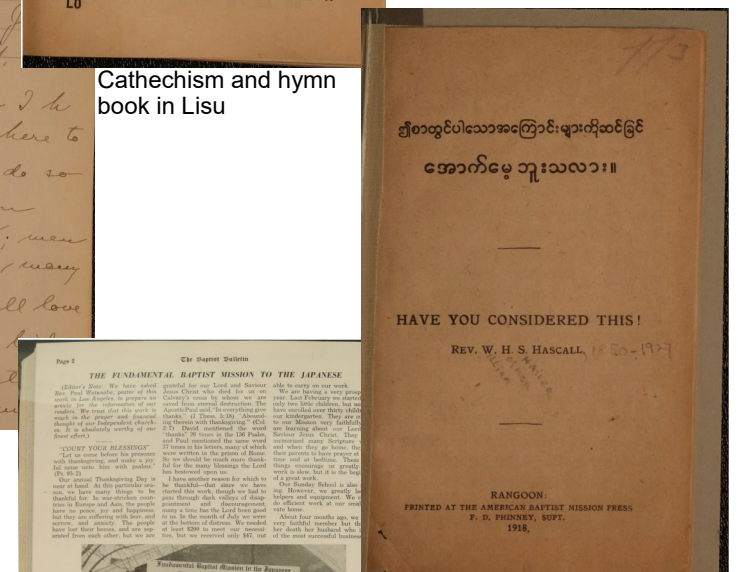
In the course of digitizing materials for researchers, one thing that came to our attention is the number of non-English language materials in the collection. Delving just a bit deeper, we discovered we hold materials in at least 20 languages and dialects from Myanmar and nearly as many from India. We also discovered that some of these languages are starting to die out, which makes the materials we hold and the ability to get them to researchers even more critical.

To that end, digital archivist Jenny Manasco has been working to get our digital repository access up and running. This involves working with IT staff from Mercer University and Mercer Libraries who host our catalog and support staff at Preservica, our repository vendor, so that the catalog and digital repository can talk to each other. There is also the process of loading thousands of files into the repository. It may be taking longer than hoped, but I promise it will be worth the wait. Here are a few of the items we have digitized for researchers in the past few months.

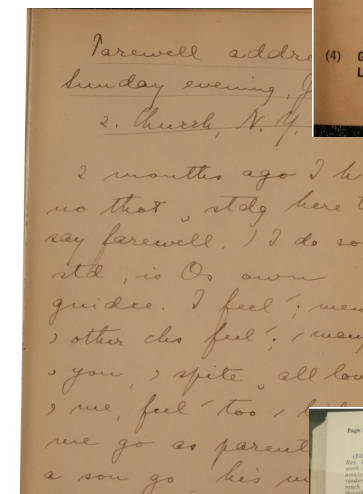
at **YOUR**
FINGERTIPS



Title page of Adoniram Judson's translation of the Bible into Burmese



Catechism and hymn book in Lisu



Manuscript from RG 1003, Rauschenbusch collection



W.H.S. Hascall, "Have You Considered This" (Rangoon: American Baptist Mission Press, 1918)



The Burman Messenger

Your "At Your Fingertips" donation \$\$\$ at work

From the Archives: Scandinavian Baptists

Bringing our legacy to light

De danske Baptister i Amerika



Student Orchestra, Danish-Norwegian Baptist Theological Seminary, Morgan Park, IL, 1911

Baptist work in Demark began with the conversion of Julius Köbner, who was baptized in 1839 by German Baptist J.G. Oncken, who had established a church in Copenhagen. Köbner was a writer and hymnist who, by 1844, was working under the American Baptist Missionary Union as a missionary to German-speaking countries. ABHS holds 3 folders of Köbner's missionary correspondence. Opposition from the State Church in Denmark led to religious persecution of the fledging Baptist churches, and early converts soon began emigrating to the United States. Nine of those immigrants from Zealand, Denmark formed the first Danish Baptist Church in the United States, in Abbot Township, Potter County, Pennsylvania in 1855.



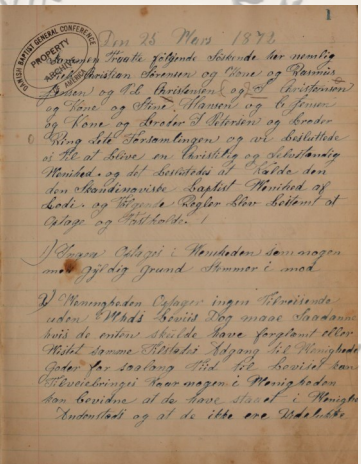
Norwegian Baptist Church, Fargo, N.D.

Danish Baptists established churches wherever they settled as they moved west in the latter half of the 19th century. Early Danish Baptist churches were supported by American Baptist churches and colporters from the American Baptist Publication Society, and soon began forming state conferences or state associations. It was not until 1910 that they formed a national body, the Danish Baptist General Conference. In 1956, the DBGC closed and many of the churches, some of which were already dually aligned, affiliated with the Northern Baptist Convention.

Even before the national conference was formed, Danish Baptists supported theological education, mission activity, and publication of a national newspaper. Fortunately, they also recognized the importance of preserving their history. At the very first meeting, the DBGC established the Danish Baptist Archives, and August Broholm and C.P. Olsen were appointed the archivists. Before long, Immanuel Fredmund took over and worked to catalog hundreds of articles and records. The archives were eventually placed in a specially-built vault in the Baptist Memorial Home in Harlan, IA. After the DBGC closed, most of the Danish Baptist Archives were transferred to ABHS.



Baptismal Service at Double Lake, MN (near Storden), 1898. Rev. H.H. Byers baptized 28 new converts. Note the ice on the lake.



Record of the founding of Scandinavian Baptist Church, Lodi, SD, in 1872. The church, eventually known as Bethel Baptist Church of Wakonda, closed in 2018.



Map: Danish Baptist churches in America, 1921
All images are from Group 504, Danish-Norwegian Baptist Churches.



Gratitude for the Life and Ministry of Beverly Carlson

In February of 1986, Beverly Carlson was hired as Administrative Secretary of the American Baptist Historical Society. Eight months later she found herself named Archivist/Interim Administrator; the “interim” was subsequently removed. Carlson had been a teacher, not an archivist, but she enthusiastically embraced her new role. It is thanks to Bev Carlson that American Baptist denominational archives took shape.

Until 1985 ABHS was located at Rochester, NY, on the campus of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 300 miles from the ABC/USA headquarters at Valley Forge, PA, where records of denominational mission agencies were stored with little organization. ABHS Executive Director William Brackney proposed establishing an Archives Center at Valley Forge. The year after the dedication of the Archives Center, Brackney resigned to return to academia and Carlson was promoted to the executive position, serving from 1986-1998.

In the following few years she attended the Modern Archives Institute at the National Archives in Washington, DC, and a seminar in historic administration at Williamsburg, VA, increasing her knowledge of archival processes and management. Under Carlson’s leadership hundreds of boxes of file folders and loose papers as well as the Judson Press historical collection were transferred to the Archives Center where they were sorted and catalogued. She also processed and catalogued the extensive Baptist World Alliance collection and the collection of artifacts belonging to International Ministries. She recounted that she organized archival holdings because one had to be able to *find* things.

During Carlson’s tenure she oversaw the work of ABHS at three sites: Valley Forge, Rochester, and Green Lake, WI, where ABHS had rotating missions exhibits at the American Baptist Assembly. Although she had not set out to be an archivist, Carlson considered this work her calling and found it very fulfilling. She especially enjoyed interacting with visiting researchers and denominational staff to answer questions and uncover interesting little-known or long-forgotten facts or events in Baptist history.

Beverly Clark Carlson, 84, of Waynesboro, PA, died on June 13, 2022. Beverly requested that any Memorial Contributions be made to the American Baptist Historical Society. Donations made in Bev’s memory will be added to the ABHS endowment fund, and may be made by check payable to ABHS (in memory of Beverly Carlson in memo line) or online at https://bit.ly/ABHS_Give_Now.

Research Snapshot— Glen B. Chapman

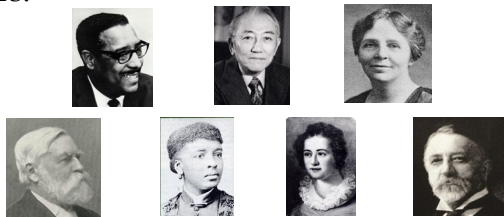
Glen Chapman is a newly retired missionary who served as an American Baptist Missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the past 35 years. Before this he was a “missionary kid” who went to the Belgian Congo in 1957 with his parents.

His current project is a retracing of the early routes of missionaries in Congo. His visit to ABHS was to research the early years of missions in Congo when means of transportation were limited and missionaries could not utilize the rivers because of the rapids and waterfalls. He came to ABHS because “this is where the records are,” including early journals where Chapman found accounts of the journeys that included how long it took to get from one village to the next, prominent geographic features ... all aids to help him trace out the trail. “ABHS is a gold mine of a reference place to do research.”



Join the Historical Society and Become a Time Traveler

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



| Membership Circles (Memberships are for the calendar year) | Annual Gift of |
|---|--------------------------|
| Ann Hasseltine Judson Circle | \$1-50 |
| ★ subscription (digital or print) to <i>Primary Source</i> | |
| Henry Lyman Morehouse Circle | \$51-125 |
| ★ subscription (digital or print) to <i>Primary Source</i> ★ participation in “Time Travelers,” reciprocal museum/archives program http://timetravelers.mohistory.org/ | |
| Louise “Lulu” Cecilia Fleming Circle | \$126-250 |
| ★ benefits listed above, plus ★ 1 hour of “Research-by-mail” discounted by 50% ★ listing as donor in annual report | |
| Jitsuo Morikawa Circle | \$251-500 |
| ★ benefits listed above, plus ★ Baptist history publication -- potluck! ★ pair of tickets to Biennial event | |
| Samuel DeWitt Proctor Circle | \$501-1000 |
| ★ benefits listed above, plus ★ subscription to <i>American Baptist Quarterly</i> discounted by 50% | |
| Helen Barrett Montgomery Circle | \$1001-5000 |
| ★ benefits listed above, plus ★ private archives tour (subject to staff availability) | |
| Samuel Colgate Donors | \$5001 & above |
| ★ benefits listed above, plus ★ 2 hours free consultation with staff archivist | |
| Living Heritage Society | inclusion in estate plan |
| ★ inclusion on a special plaque in ABHS Reading Room | |
| | |



Yes! I/We want to support the American Baptist Historical Society by becoming a member.

Please Print

Name_____

Email_____

Address_____

Telephone_____

Birthday(s)_____

Donations of \$100 or more may be given as a tribute.

This donation is given ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of

Membership \$_____

American Baptist Quarterly subscription: \$50/annually \$_____
Add \$75/year for postage to Canada, \$100/year to other non-US countries

Gift to Endowment \$_____

Total enclosed \$_____

Make checks payable to ABHS and send to: ABHS, 1015 W. 9th Ave., King of Prussia, PA 19406. To use a credit card go to our secure website: www.ABHSarchives.org and select “Give Now.”

ABHS is a 501(c)(3) organization; your membership donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. ABQ subscriptions are not tax-deductible.

PRIMARY SOURCE

American Baptist Historical Society
3001 Mercer University Drive
Atlanta GA 30341

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Athens, GA
Permit No. 11

**INSIDE: Caring for
Your Congregation's
Archives, part 1**

Torbet Prize Open for Submissions

**The American Baptist Historical Society invites submissions for the
Torbet Prize for the Best Essay in any area of Baptist History.**

Robert George Torbet (1912-1995) was an American Baptist historian and educator. A graduate of Wheaton College, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the University of Pennsylvania, his career in higher education and ecumenical relations (Eastern Seminary, 1944-52; ABBEP, 1952-58; Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958-67; ABCUSA, 1967-1977) highlighted the value of church history.

Torbet's significant contributions to Baptist research and publication led ABHS to establish a prize in his honor to encourage development of young scholars in the field of Baptist history studies. The Research and Publication Committee of the ABHS Board of Managers serves as judges, and the winning essay is eligible for publication in an upcoming issue of the *American Baptist Quarterly* and its author awarded \$500.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

- ★ Author has not already published a major scholarly work;
- ★ Citations, format, and style follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*;
- ★ Essay is no more than 25 double-spaced pages (excluding notes);
- ★ Professional and academic writing standards are met, especially re: attributions and citations;
- ★ Submissions make a unique contribution to the field of Baptist history and/or theology;
- ★ Submission is in final draft form, free from errors and ready for publication.

Send entries to ABHSoffice@ABHSarchives.org.

The submission deadline for the next award is September 1, 2022.

For more information go to: http://abhsarchives.org/Torbet_Prize/.