

Caring for Your Congregation's Archives

Part 2: Gathering the Records

(For Part 1: Where to begin, consult the *Summer Primary Source*.)

Locate the Records

After having established guidelines of what should be preserved, the next step is to gather the records together. People have discovered important documents in some unusual places, like beneath the platform in the sanctuary. This step may be a sort of "treasure hunt" for your historical committee!

- ★ Survey the building, looking into filing cabinets, storerooms, cupboards, attics, basements, etc.
- ★ Look for bound record books and any other loose records material. Records may be defined as documentary evidence, kept by an official of the church or organization, which illustrates the life and official business of the church or organization.
- ★ Clearly mark "to be saved" any historical items you find
- ★ Put a notice in bulletins or newsletters, asking people to remember and let you know where they have seen things stored or put for future reference.
- ★ Contact former officers & pastors, as they may hold reports, correspondence, baptism/marriage/funeral records in their possession.



sort through the records collected. Group like items together – Annual Reports, Membership Records, Special Events, Legal Documents, etc.

If church members have contributed to the archival collections you may find duplicate materials. No more than 2 copies are needed of anything; discard duplicates and materials falling outside of the guidelines you have set.



Born Digital

Many records produced since 2000 may be digital files. Don't limit your search to paper documents.

- ★ Computers in the church and pastor's offices likely hold records in the form of spreadsheets, email correspondence, word processing documents, and digital photos or even audio and video files.
- ★ Church officers' and committee chairs' home computers may hold church records; copies should be obtained.
- ★ Don't neglect digital analogs, i.e. a website blog that takes the place of yesteryear's monthly or weekly pastor's letter. Either the word processing document or the content of the blog should be saved.
- ★ Save static documents (word processor, spreadsheets, images) in .PDF format. PDF documents present fewer problems in accessibility as software changes.

Sort Your Historical Materials

Using the guidelines established by the church's history committee and information from ABHS,

Church Anniversaries October – December

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

225 Years

First Baptist Church, Manchester, NY; Rev. Ron Silver, pastor

212 Years

Meridian Baptist Church, Meridian, NY; Bonnie Seitz, pastor

200 Years

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Aurora, IN; Bill Lakes, church moderator
Milesburg Baptist Church, Milesburg, PA; Rev. B. Jeffrey Trawinski, pastor

185 Years

Crooked Creek Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN; Rev. Donald M. Scott, interim pastor

180 Years

First Baptist Church of Berwick, Berwick, PA; Rev. Deb Copeland, pastor

175 Years

Olive Branch Baptist Church, Dillsboro, IN; Patrick Lanman, pastor

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Priscilla E. Eppinger, Executive Director
Kay Eland, Financial and Subscription Secretary
Mariah Hamby, Head of Archives and Special Collections
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

155 Years

First Baptist Church, Lexington, VA; Rev. McKinley A. Williams, pastor

151 Years

Genesee Baptist Church, Rochester, NY; Rev. Steven G. Wilson, Sr., pastor

150 Years

Asylum Avenue Baptist Church, Hartford, CT
Jerusalem Baptist Church, Norfolk, VA; Rev. Wendell A. Johnson, pastor
Lenox Road Baptist Church, Brooklyn, NY; Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick Cohall, pastor
The Pine Street Church (The First Baptist Church), Boulder, CO; Rev. J. Andrew Daugherty, senior pastor

125 Years

East Hampstead Union Christian Church, East Hampstead, NJ; Rev. Jamie S. Moynihan, pastor
First Baptist Church Greenwich, Greenwich, CT; Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Nins, senior pastor
Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Madison, IN; Rev. Philip A. Lee & Rev. Ronald H. Lee, co-pastors
Mount Zion Baptist Church of Holmesburg, Philadelphia, PA; Rev. Darren L. Umble, pastor
Warren First Baptist Church, Warren, IN; Rev. Rusty Strickler, senior pastor

105 Years

Mount Olive Church Ministries, Hartford, CT; Rev. Dr. Victor Thomas, interim pastor

100 Years

Community Baptist Church, New Canaan, CT
First Baptist Church of Hardin, Hardin, MT; Jonathan Phillips, pastor
First Mexican Baptist Church, Del Rey, CA; Rev. Juan Infante, pastor

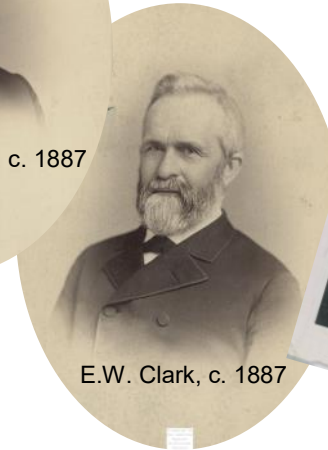
In the Summer issue of *Primary Source* the First Baptist Church of Woodstown NJ was misidentified as being in RI. ABHS regrets the error.

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

at YOUR
FINGERTIPS



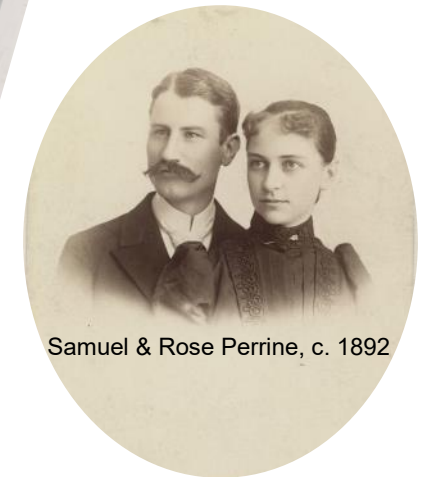
Mary Mead Clark, c. 1887



E.W. Clark, c. 1887



Impur Ao Naga Church, 1938



Samuel & Rose Perrine, c. 1892

One of the biggest reasons for our digitization program is to provide remote researchers access to our collections. Sometimes VERY remote.

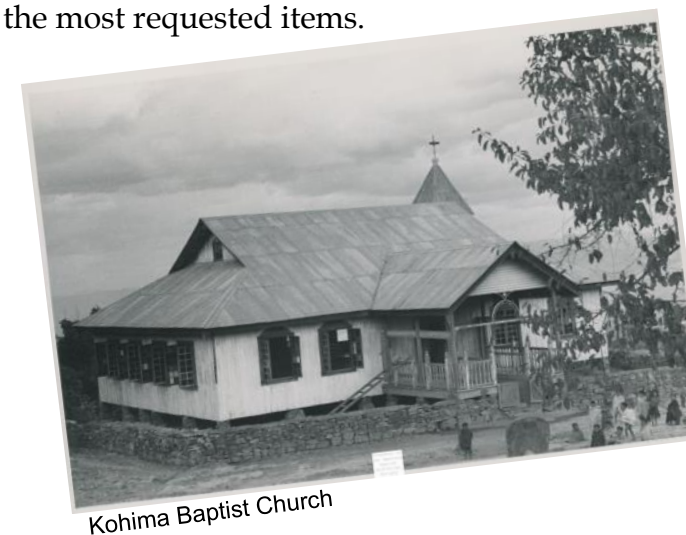
This year marks the 150th anniversary of Baptist churches in Nagaland. Edward Winter Clark and his wife Mary Mead Clark were initially assigned to Sibsagor (Sivasagar) where he was superintendent of the Mission Press. After his first travels into Nagaland, Clark stated that he had “found my life-work.” The first Baptist church in the Naga region was established in December, 1872 by Naga people who had been baptized in Sibsagor and then returned to their home village.

In the past two years we have received several requests for missionary correspondence (including that of E.W. Clark), photos of missionaries and photos of mission stations as the Nagaland Baptist Church Council prepares to celebrate 150 years of Christianity in Nagaland.

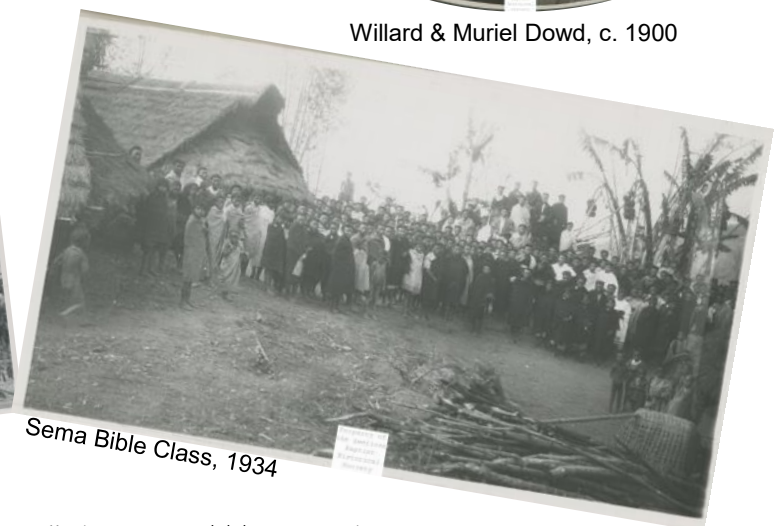
Scanning missionary correspondence requested by researchers has allowed us to scan 55 of the 475 reels of microfilm in that collection. Photos of missionaries such as these are also some of the most requested items.



Willard & Muriel Dowd, c. 1900



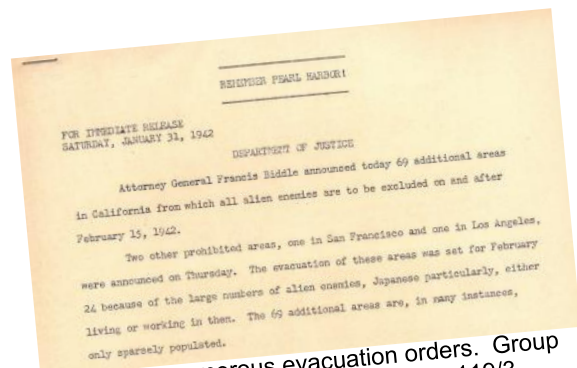
Kohima Baptist Church



Sema Bible Class, 1934

Your “At Your Fingertips” donation \$\$\$ at work

From the Archives: Past and Present Coincide



One of the numerous evacuation orders. Group 4 ABHMS, Japanese Relocation, Box 119/3.

In 1941 after the attack on Pearl Harbor, many Americans looked with suspicion upon all people of Japanese ancestry. The U.S. government feared that persons of Japanese descent might be spies or saboteurs, regardless of their citizenship or the length of time they had lived in the U.S.

Under the authority of Executive Order 9066, the entire west coast was declared an exclusion zone. All people of Japanese descent were evacuated and sent to internment camps and prisons, solely due to their ethnicity. Families were given but a few days to get their affairs in order before assembling at designated locations, from which they were transported to the interior of the country to concentration camps. No Japanese American was ever found guilty of espionage or sabotage. To the contrary, many young Japanese American men enlisted in the U.S. military and fought in the European theater.

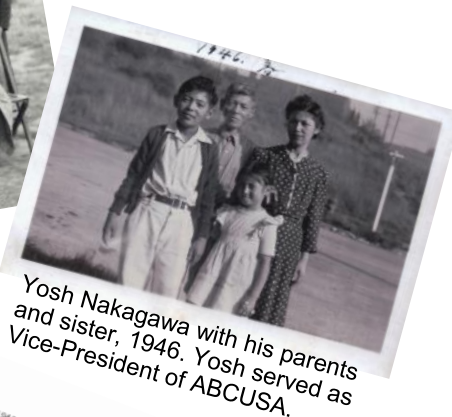
In total, over 125,000 people were incarcerated without due process, many of them U.S. citizens by birth.

In 1976 President Gerald Ford formally apologized for the internment. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which concluded that the incarceration of Japanese Americans was based on "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." In 1988 President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, granting reparations to Japanese Americans who had been wrongfully interned.

Although it was not without controversy, American Baptists ministered with internees. Pastors and missionaries led Bible studies and worship services, denominational officials advocated for travel authorization for interned pastors to preach at other camps, and the Home Mission Societies established a hostel to provide temporary housing and employment, requirements for people's release from internment. The American Baptist Board of Education and Publication worked to arrange college admissions, another condition that could get people released. Several American Baptist Foreign Mission Society missionaries to Japan returned to the U.S. when war threatened, and made use of their knowledge of Japanese language and culture to minister with incarcerated Japanese Americans.



"Mothers' Union Friendship Circle, April 19, 1944 at Minidoka Project, Hunt, Idaho." Note the rows of barbed wire in the background.



Yosh Nakagawa with his parents and sister, 1946. Yosh served as Vice-President of ABCUSA.



Internment-related records include reports from the Cleveland Hostel (above) listing people whom they sponsored with lodging and jobs. Group 4 ABHMS, Cleveland Hostel, Box 122/6.



Priscilla Eppinger with Andy Quient, Executive Minister of the ABC of Los Angeles, the Southwest, and Hawai'i and Ken Fong, retired ABC pastor.



Priscilla Eppinger with Mitch Homma, member of the ABHS Board of Managers and president of the Amache Alliance. At the dedication ceremony they represented women incarcerated at the Federal Detention Station at Seagoville, TX, where one of Mitch's grandmothers was held.



The large book (left) contains names of all of the Japanese Americans interned during World War II, over 125,000 individuals. It is the sole comprehensive listing, compiled through years of research in the records of various government agencies. The memorial includes sotobas — wooden gravemarkers — (above) naming all of the 75 sites associated with the internment, with soil from each site.



ABHS Welcomes Mariah Hamby as Archivist



Following an extensive search for an archivist after the departure of Caroline Crowell to Alaska, ABHS invited Mariah Hamby to join the team.

Augustine.” During her time as a student, she worked as a graduate assistant for the Dover Library and University Archives, specifically focusing on digitizing collections for the online repository and providing archival services to local churches.

A native of North Carolina, Mariah graduated from Gardner-Webb University in 2017 with a B.A. in Biblical Studies and again in 2021 with an M.Div. and M.A. in Religion; her thesis was entitled, “The Reception of Hagar in the Writings of Origen, John Chrysostom, and

Inspired by her love of archives, Mariah decided to pursue a Graduate Certificate in Archival Studies from Louisiana State University after completing the thesis requirements for her M.A.. Mariah says, “I’m excited to begin my career at ABHS and to explore the Atlanta area with my husband, Jeremiah.”

Invitation to Support ABHS

The American Baptist Historical Society’s ministry is wide-ranging, from preservation of 500-year-old publications to preserving born-digital records from the 21st century. ABHS provides materials for denominational celebrations around the world as well as celebrating anniversaries of local congregations in the U.S. Honoring the memory of those who have gone before us, providing access to archival collections, and assisting congregations, regions, and other institutions to preserve documentation of their stories – despite the small staff and limited resources, ABHS does a lot!

- We invite you to join us in this ministry by
- ★ sending a cash contribution and becoming a member;
 - ★ naming ABHS as a beneficiary of your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF);
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- Won’t you join us in this interesting and important work?

Research Snapshot— Adrita Mitra

Adrita Mitra is a D.Phil. candidate at the University of Oxford who came to ABHS as a key part of her research project. Her doctoral thesis examines intellectual and activist networks of Black women (African-American, Caribbean, and African) in King Leopold II's Congo and explores how notions of identity, sovereignty, community, and consent were articulated in opposition to colonialism. Mitra also examines connections between Black women's networks in the Atlantic World and early Black internationalism. She had a particular interest in missionaries Joseph and Eliza Clark and the needy and orphaned children they took in – at least one of these Congolese girls attended Spelman College in Atlanta. Other materials of interest to Mitra included the personal papers and correspondence of missionaries Thomas & Clara Hill, James A. Finch, and William and Clara Leslie.



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- ★ “For Such a Time as This?: Baptist Beginnings in Puerto Rico”
- ★ “Build Your Ark Before the Flood: Protecting Your Church’s Legacy Before Disaster Strikes”

Exhibit Hall — visit the ABHS booth and learn more about ABHS resources and ministry

Join us in San Juan!