

Living History

Don Ng, ABHS Board of Managers

When we visit places like Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts or Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, we find re-enactors, dressed in period clothes. If you try to trick them by asking them something about what you know in the 21st century, they are never fooled by your antics! They stay in character. I know because I tried!

We call this “living history” to suggest that what happened long ago is appearing right in front of us. It’s like time travel. Even if we see the blacksmith hammering hot iron at the anvil to shape the iron piece, we know that most of what we buy at Home Depot came from China. Even if we romanticize living in a drafty house where the pilgrims lived at Plimouth Plantation, we know that we’ll get into our cars with heat or AC whenever we want. Imagining what was, is fun and sentimental.

But during today’s challenging times, going back in time when everything just seems to be better is not possible. You see, we are “living *in* history.” Every day is history. Every Sunday a church door opens to welcome in worshippers is history. Every ABC Biennial is history. And twice a year, when the ABHS Board of Managers comes together is history in the making.

When someone dies, a date etched on the tombstone along with the date of birth shows their history. God giving us Christ is history that has organized our calendar years. When the early Christians faced persecution, Paul reminded them that Christ interceded for them in a letter written probably when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 47 when there were already Christians in Rome. (See Romans 8:31-39.)

When we are confronted today with “rulers” who try to separate us from “doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God,” we know that in times like today, the rulers won’t be able “to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Our work as a historical society is done with the hope that there may be interest in looking back. We find it interesting to time travel to re-enactments with the hope that maybe, just maybe, we might better appreciate what we have today. We pray that what we do in the present would not be a waste of time but faithfully doing the Lord’s work.

The Swiss Catholic theologian, Hans Küng, wrote in his book *The Church* that indeed, the church has a future, it has *the* future. We are living in a time when God will complete God’s work of creation, the church will reach the goal of its pilgrimage and the world will recognize the Lord. Hallowed by the resurrection of Christ, Küng wrote, “then we shall have holiday and we shall see, we shall see and we shall love, we shall love and we shall praise. Behold, this is how it shall be at the end without end. For what else is our end, but to come to that kingdom which has no end.”

Because we know the resurrection of Christ, whatever has happened in the past and whatever is challenging us today, we are history in the making because *the* future in Christ is before us.

Now retired, Rev. Don Ng served with ABC Educational Ministries before pastoring the First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco. He has served on the Board of Managers of ABHS since 2022.

Church Anniversaries

April – June

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

Baptist Church of Grafton, Grafton, MA;
Rev. Dr. Richard J. Robinson, pastor

205 Years

Greenville Baptist Church, Greenville, RI;
Rev. Isaac Seelam, pastor

200 Years

First Baptist Church, Winchester, IL;
William J. Baughman, pastor
Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson, PA;
Gary W. Haskell, Sr., pastor
Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Cambridge, OH;
Rev. Craig Murray, pastor

190 Years

Market Street Baptist Church, Zanesville, OH;
Rev. Brian J. Owens, pastor

150

Second Mount Olive Baptist Church, Odon, IN;
Frank Adam Cissell, pastor

140 Years

Riverview Baptist Church, Richmond, VA;
Dr. Frank Branch III, pastor

125 Years

Phillips Memorial Baptist Church, Cranston, RI;
Rev. Dr. Amy L. Clinton PhD, pastor
Primera Iglesia Bautista de Adjuntas, Ponce, PR;
Luis A. Serrano Rodriguez, pastor

75 Years

Calvary Baptist Church, Newark, DE;
Rev. Dr. Corey Fields, pastor

If your church is celebrating a significant anniversary, notify ABHS and request a certificate. We want to celebrate with you!

ABHS Transitions

With gratitude, in March we bid farewell to Jean McDaniel, who served ABHS as Administrative Assistant since the spring of 2021. We wish Jean a good retirement.

The new friendly voice at the other end of the phone or email belongs to MaShani Allen, whom we hired after a thorough interview process and careful consideration. She joins us following a successful tenure as the Hospitality Manager at Pepperdine University.

MaShani holds a B.S. in Journalism from the University of Florida and a Master's in Christian Counseling. With more than a decade of experience in leadership, hospitality, and ministry, she brings a unique blend of creativity, empathy, and administrative excellence to her role.



An avid journaler and passionate writer, MaShani is the author of two books and has a heart for helping others discover their purpose and potential. With a strong foundation in communications, she excels at fostering connection, clarity, and collaboration – skills that will serve her well in her new role.

MaShani has a deep passion for faith-based service and is committed to supporting churches and ministries with excellence, compassion, and integrity. In her free time, she enjoys journaling, reading, and discovering hidden gems around Atlanta.

Please join us in warmly welcoming MaShani to the ABHS team!

Primary Source

is published quarterly by the
American Baptist Historical Society

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JACS Project Update

Jenny Manasco, Digital Collections Specialist

at YOUR
FINGERTIPS

We are wrapping up our work on the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant-funded project. An eight-panel traveling exhibit will debut at the ABC Biennial Mission Summit in Omaha; an online exhibit accessible to anyone will provide a more extensive look at the experience of Japanese American Baptists during World War II.

On December 7, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Presidential Proclamation 2525 that declared all people of Japanese descent, including those born in the United States, “enemy aliens.” A few months later, Executive Order 9066 led to the incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were American citizens. Among those, some 2000 were affiliated with American Baptist churches including several pastors who had come to the U.S. sponsored by the American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Several of those Japanese pastors were among the first arrested, along with other community leaders. They were detained in prison camps and most were not reunited with their families for months or years. Home missionaries who had been working in Seattle, Sacramento, and Los Angeles along with Ralph Mayberry of the Los Angeles City Mission Society and John Thomas, Director of Cities at ABHMS immediately went to work trying to intervene on their behalf. They wrote letters vouching for people, visited those who had been arrested, and provided what support they could for the families left behind. Eventually, the pastors joined their families and congregations in the incarceration camps.

These camps of hastily constructed barracks were mostly located in remote areas. Because the Japanese people did not know where they would end up when forced from their homes and were limited in what they were permitted to take with them, their clothing was often inadequate or unsuited to the climate. They were provided only with a cot and a mattress, which they usually had to stuff themselves from piles of straw. Restrooms and bath houses had no stalls for privacy. Those incarcerated in this manner had not been charged with any crime. They included infants, children, and the elderly. Many had been successful business owners, farmers, doctors, or other professionals, but they were “enemy aliens” simply because of their race.

We knew this story was one we needed to tell, but as we have been poring over images and records related to these events, the story has become even more relevant. The current use of the Alien Enemies Act to arrest and imprison people without evidence speaks to our profound historical amnesia. Perhaps this project will provide a reminder of what can happen when we allow people to be called “enemy” simply because they do not look like us.



A RESILIENT FAITH

Japanese American Baptists during World War II

During World War II, over 42,000 Japanese immigrants and 70,000 U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast of the United States were sent to incarceration camps. Among them were ordained Baptist pastors and their congregations, numbering about 2,000, who would hold on to their faith as they struggled to understand and find hope in their experience.

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Images from ABHS JACS traveling exhibit.

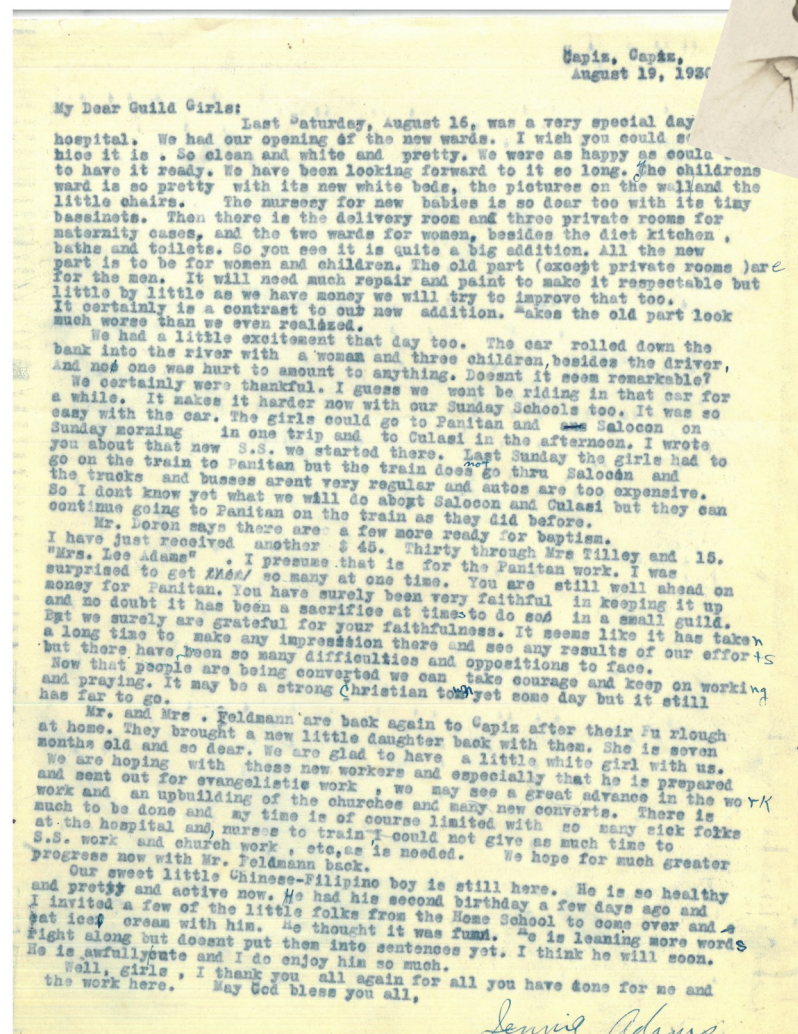
From the Archives: Missionaries from Nebraska

Mariah Hamby, Head of Archives and Special Collections

Jennie C. Adams attended the Western Reserve University School of Nursing, Bailey Training School for Nurses and the Nebraska Wesleyan University for her nursing care education. As a missionary nurse she became the superintendent of the Capiz Emmanuel Hospital from 1923 to 1943, until she was martyred at Hopevale.



When searching through the Sailing Cards of American Baptist missionaries, one may notice a surprising thread – a large number of missionaries share the home state of Nebraska. In honor and anticipation of this year's ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit in Omaha, NE, here is a sampling of some notable missionary collections at ABHS!



Letter from Jennie Adams to World Wide Guild in Chambers, Nebraska, August 19, 1930 (MP012, Jennie C. Adams, Box 1, Folder 17).



Ola and Minnie Hanson with Kachin Christians, from the Kachin Jubilee Scrapbook (MP070, Ola Hanson).

A Swedish immigrant, Ola Hanson settled in Oakland, NE in 1881. Hanson and his wife, Minnie, also from Oakland, NE, would serve as missionaries to the Kachin people from 1890-1928. The Hansons produced numerous pieces of literature in the Kachin language, including the Bible, hymn books, a speller, a dictionary, and a grammar.



Loren and Ruth Noren dedicated nearly four decades to missionary work in Shantou, China, and Hong Kong. Their service made headlines following Loren's time in solitary confinement (1951-1953; see reflection in *The Messenger* (top right) and letter from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (right)).

Selections from MP143 Loren and Ruth Noren Papers, Boxes 1, 5, and 6.



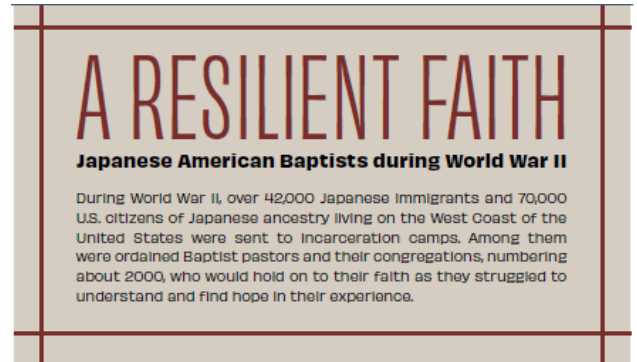
American Baptist Churches USA **BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT** July 3–6, 2025 | Omaha, NE

www.americanbaptists2025.com

We hope to see you in Omaha!

This is your chance to:

- ★ meet ABHS staff in person
- ★ learn more about ABHS's ministry
- ★ reserve a traveling exhibit for your region's annual meeting or for a special event at your church
- ★ enjoy table fellowship with ABHS supporters and lovers of Baptist history (ABHS dinner, Saturday, July 5)
- ★ gather resources for preserving your church's legacy of ministry (Exhibit Hall)
- ★ celebrate the debut of the exhibit "A Resilient Faith: Japanese American Baptists during World War II" (Exhibit Hall)
- ★ see the ABC Presidents' Bible up close after witnessing President Nikita McCalister sign the Bible (Opening worship service)
- ★ learn more about American Baptist history and polity (Workshop: ABC Basics, Saturday, July 5, 9:30am or Sunday, July 6, 2pm)



Research Snapshot – Doug Liao

Doug Liao is a PhD candidate at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. In doing research for his dissertation, Liao has utilized the Research-by-Mail services of ABHS; he made his first on-



site research visit in January. His interest is in tracing the earliest translations of the New Testament into Siamese (Thai). The first portion translated was the Gospel of Matthew, translated by Ann Judson.

At ABHS Liao primarily consulted correspondence from John Taylor Jones and the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Correspondence between Jones and other prominent missionaries, such as Adoniram Judson and Emily Chubbuck Judson, were also surveyed. Liao also had access to a sampling of Jones's Siamese Bible translations, published from 1849-1887.

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Jitsuo Morikawa Circle	\$251-500
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Samuel DeWitt Proctor Circle	\$501-1000
★ benefits listed above, plus ★ Baptist history publication -- potluck! ★ subscription to <i>American Baptist Quarterly</i> discounted by 50%	
Helen Barrett Montgomery Circle	\$1001-5000
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Living Heritage Society	inclusion in estate plan
★ inclusion on a special plaque in ABHS Reading Room	

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Torbet Prize Open for Submissions

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

- ★ Author has not already published a major scholarly work;
- ★ Submissions make a unique contribution to the field of Baptist history and/or theology;
- ★ Professional and academic writing standards are met, especially re: attributions and citations;
- ★ Citations, format, and style must follow latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*;
- ★ Maximum length: 25 double-spaced pages (excluding notes);
- ★ Submission must be in final draft form, free from errors and ready for publication.

The winning essay is eligible for publication in *Foundations* and its author awarded a \$500 prize.

Deadline for Entries is September 1

Send entry, contact information, and a brief bio including a list of prior publications to:

ABHSoffice@ABHSarchives.org

This annual prize was established in honor of Robert G. Torbet to encourage development of young scholars in the field of Baptist history studies, thus the work of emerging scholars will be especially considered.

Robert George Torbet (1912-1995) was an American Baptist historian and educator, who taught church history at Eastern Seminary (1944-1952), served as director of educational services for the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication (1952-1958), as dean and church history professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary (1958-1967), and as ABCUSA Associate General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations (1967-1977). To recognize his contributions to Baptist research and publication, ABHS established this prize to encourage development of young scholars in the field of Baptist history studies.