



November 2023

Executive Report to the Board of General Ministries,
sitting as the American Baptist Historical Society

ABC Biennial Mission Summit

ABHS was very active at the 2023 ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Archivist Mariah Hamby did extensive research into Baptists in Puerto Rico and prepared a display that was very well-received. At the close of the Biennial ABHS staff donated our exhibit to the *Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico* for use in their 125th anniversary celebrations next year.

ABHS and the Hispanic Caucus co-hosted a dinner with approximately 70 people in attendance. The program focused on women in ministry in Puerto Rico, and Abigail Medina Betancourt and Roshely Quinones Rodrigues were invited to speak. The George Younger Award was presented to Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church of Rochester, NY.

As at recent Biennials, the signing of the ABC Presidents' Bible took place during one of the plenary sessions.

ABHS staff presented two workshops: "For Such a Time As This?" on the history of Baptists in Puerto Rico, and "Build Your Ark Before the Flood: Protecting Your Church's Legacy Before Disaster Strikes."

ABHS was proud that *all* of our participation at the Biennial was presented in both Spanish and English, and surprised that we were the only group to do so, with the exception of IBPR. We were particularly proud to receive the appreciation of the Executive Minister of IBPR, who thanked us to have given voice to Puerto Rican Baptists.

Special Projects

We completed the project funded by a "**Preservation Assistance Grant for Smaller Institutions**" from the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. ABHS had requested funding to carry out a general preservation assessment of our preservation needs: building, environment (temperature, relative humidity, pollution and light), housekeeping, pest control, fire protection, security, and disaster preparedness; collection handling, exhibition, and treatment; and preservation planning.

A consultant from the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts did an extensive evaluation of ABHS's facilities and policies and has submitted a final General Preservation Assessment report with observations and recommendations to guide us in prioritizing strategies for upgrading current conditions and practices, as well as to plan for providing additional space for continued collection growth.

Total Project Cost: \$8,166

Funds Granted: \$8,021

We have been awarded a grant from the **National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS)** program for a project entitled "**Sharing the Story: Increasing Access to Records Documenting Northern Baptists' work with Japanese American Internees.**"

ABHS proposed to digitize materials from collections held by ABHS that relate to the experience of interned Japanese Americans and the work of Northern Baptists with them. These materials include documents and photos in the archives of the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society (collectively known as ABHMS), in manuscript collections, and in the archives of the

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (IM). The project will also include relevant materials held American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, the Southwest, and Hawaii (the successor organization to the LA Baptist City Society known as ABCOFLASH) and the Japanese Baptist Church of Seattle, WA. ABHS will also seek to identify collections in private hands to include those materials as well.

The project will run through October, 2025. The grant of \$120K requires matching funds of at least \$60K; we have received a \$10,000 lead gift for this campaign. With the donation from Roberta Stephens' estate, JACS campaign funds total \$29,385 at present.

Total Project Cost Anticipated: \$195,000

Funds Granted: \$119,153

Ancestry.com

Our collaborative project with Ancestry.com continues. Missionary biographical files have been digitized, and the Ancestry contractor is about halfway through original congregational records.

Funding and Fundraising

Donations

We have 14 new donors in 2023. Annual fund donations through July are down, compared with the same period of 2022. We received a bequest from Roberta Stephens' estate totalling \$131,746. The Development Committee approved applying \$19,235 to the ABHS matching funds portion of the JACS project (see above). The remaining \$112,511 was put into the endowment fund. We are very grateful for Roberta's generosity!

Collections Curation

We are working with a core group of clergywomen to develop a more complete collection of materials related to American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM).

Outreach

We continue outreach to congregations and regions by means of church anniversary certificates. Another aspect of outreach is hosting groups to visit; early in the year, a group from ABHMS visited ABHS. In July a small group from Northside Drive Baptist Church (Atlanta) toured the archives. They were so impressed that they immediately worked to put a visit to ABHS on the schedule for the retirees ministry at the church.

For Founder's Day of Morehouse School of Religion, the MSR board of trustees visited ABHS. PEppinger prepared a presentation about the history of MSR for them.

We are working to make stronger connections in the wider Atlanta community. As in recent years, ABHS was a sponsor of the DeKalb County (GA) History Center's luncheon program in honor of Black History month. In conjunction with the Cope Collection Opening event, we have contacted Chin congregations, both local and further afield. PEppinger represented ABHS at the opening of the Joseph Lowery Collection at Woodruff Library at Atlanta University Center.

PEppinger was the guest preacher for First Baptist Church of Somerville, NJ. She also gave an address at the 200th anniversary celebration of the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut.

It continues to be an honor and a blessing to minister with ABHS.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Eppinger

Executive Director