

## Handing Down Our Story

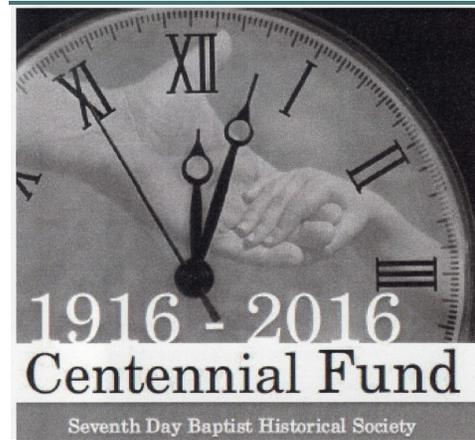
1926-1935

The Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Historical Society started sharing a summary history of its first 100 years, by decade, in last month's bulletin insert. At the end of the first decade, the society was making plans to establish a library and museum in the new denominational headquarters building in Plainfield, NJ. The society continued its preparations in the first half of the second decade. At last, in 1930, the Historical Society was able to move into its new space!

Although the Historical Society began in 1916, it shared the denominational historical work with the Committee on Denominational History. The Committee incorporated the Historical Society's activities into its annual report. In 1928, without any explanation as to why in the annual reports, the Committee disbanded. Starting in 1929, the Historical Society took over full responsibility for our denominational history.

Also in 1929, the Historical Society reported the beginning of a "modest" endowment fund to "perpetuat[e] the work of the Society."<sup>1</sup> This first endowment brought in an annual income of \$2.13 (equivalent to \$29.63 in today's terms)!

As in the previous decade, churches and generous individuals continued to donate or loan church records, historical books and tracts, and other items of historical interest. In 1933, Alfred University donated almost 1,000 books and manuscripts. Another exciting acquisition reported in 1933 was the loan, for safekeeping, of an old record book from London's Mill Yard Church, the first known Sabbathkeeping Baptist



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congregation. (For several years prior, the society had expressed its concern about losing valuable historical material regarding the Mill Yard Church.) Ninety-three years later, the Historical Society is still keeping this record book (with records dating back to 1673) safe and available to researchers.

The SDB Historical Society will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2016. While the technology for preserving and providing access to historical materials has changed dramatically in the last 100 years, the funding requirement (and shortage) has not changed much. In 1933, the society reported that it required an income of \$50,000 to fulfill its mission. In 2016, we estimate that we need an equivalent endowment, in today's dollars, to perpetually provide for the ongoing mission of the Historical Society. To date, we have about 71% of that amount. In honor of the society's centennial anniversary, we ask that you help us raise the last \$288,000 this year that we need to finally attain that endowment goal. You will join the legacy that Esle F. Randolph started with the first Historical Society endowment in 1929.

The society's gratefulness is another thing that has not changed in the past 100 years. The conclusion of the 1931 annual report is a fitting closing in 2016: "...we are by no means unmindful of the blessings which have attended the interests of this society throughout its entire history; and we are profoundly thankful to almighty God, our heavenly Father, for the many evidences of his favor in our work; and we face the future with a confidence and courage born of our trust in [H]im that [H]e does all things well."<sup>2</sup>

Learn more about the goal and the details of the Centennial Fund in the Centennial Fund flyer available through your church or the SDB Historical Society ([www.sdbhistory.org](http://www.sdbhistory.org)).

<sup>1</sup> Randolph, Corliss F. "Annual Statement of the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society." 1929 SDB Yearbook (1929): 74. Print.

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