This is the fourth chapter highlighting the first 100 years of the Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Historical Society. The decade of 1946 to 1955 was characterized by continuity and ended with the loss of the source of that continuity. The annual reports documented many additions to the library collection, many researchers utilizing the library resources, and many new publications about SDB history and leaders by the aforementioned researchers.

The researchers studied a wide array of SDB topics; here are just two examples:

1953: Oscar Burdick, while attending Alfred University’s School of Theology, wrote a treatise on the Stennett family—17th and 18th century English Sabbath-keepers who wrote hymns that we still sing today (e.g., “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand”).

1955: Six carloads of Alfred youth arrived at the library to study SDB history to answer three questions: why they were Protestants, why Baptists, and why SDBs. Their research culminated in a service at the Piscataway church that greatly encouraged the adults about the future denominational leaders.

In the 35th year of Corliss Fitz Randolph’s presidency of the Historical Society, the 1951 SDB Conference acknowledged Dr. Randolph’s meritorious service by presenting him with a special plaque. Three years later, Dr. Randolph, the first president and librarian of the SDB Historical Society, died.
Society, passed away. As stated in the 1955 annual report, “but for the foresight and labor and generosity of Dr. Randolph much Seventh Day Baptist history would be lost today.” In addition to being the force behind the formation of the SDB Historical Society and its constant champion of the library as the archive for records of SDB churches, agencies, and people, Dr. Randolph also authored nine publications that are available in the library today.

Rev. Albert N. Rogers succeeded Dr. Randolph as president of the Historical Society in 1955. Stay tuned for next month’s installment to learn about the society’s achievements during his tenure!

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).

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