In this centennial year of the Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Historical Society, we are strolling (or sprinting as the case may be!) through our history a decade at a time. A number of researchers from around the world completed much in-depth study between 1986 and 1995.

In 1986, Paul Campagna, an architect from Chicago visited the Historical Society library to research the SDB mission in China that operated from 1847 to 1950. (The mission ended with the arrival of Communism in China.) He was about to visit China with other architectural historians and hoped to locate the mission in Shanghai that his great grandparents (Nathan and Olive Wardner) helped to establish. Mr. Campagna returned to the Historical Society later in the year with pictures of his visit to the former mission. He found that the church still stood but without a roof. Other mission buildings were being used as a school.

In 1987, Scott Smith transitioned to full-time employment with the American Sabbath Tract and Communication Council. Rev. Don Sanford became the part-time historian. Rev. Sanford immediately tackled the research for a “popular history” of SDBs.
Rev. Oscar Burdick continued his research on SDB origins in England. He traveled multiple times to Europe to conduct research there as well. Those trips also benefitted the Historical Society because Rev. Burdick provided copies of many 17th and 18th century materials to the Historical Society library. In 1987, Rev. Burdick tracked a 17th century colony of SDBs from England to a Jesuit monastery near Heidelberg, Germany. (Not all SDBs migrated from England to America!) The SDBs lived at the monastery from 1664 to 1669. On his 1988 trip to Germany, Rev. Burdick found the site which had become a Protestant church.

Another researcher, Dr. Bernard Yurke, used the Historical Society library to study the histories of the Raritan Valley and Irvington German SDB Churches (both in New Jersey). The Historical Society archives include 200 letters written by German SDBs from 1946 to 1949 to the Irvington pastor, Rev. John Schmid, when he coordinated the SDB German Relief Project to assist German SDBs devastated by World War II. Dr. Yurke was kind enough to translate the letters into English for the library.

In 1991, Rev. Sanford completed the “popular history” of SDBs titled *A Choosing People: The History of the Seventh Day Baptists* and a shorter history titled *Conscience Taken Captive*. These are two of the major works of Rev. Sanford’s prolific writing.

All of these researchers received valuable assistance from Janet Thorngate, the librarian. In 1992, however, Rev. Sanford and other researchers lost this great support when Mrs. Thorngate resigned after 11 years of service to move to Salem, West Virginia.

Please help the Historical Society continue to share the denomination’s dynamic history with SDBs and non-SDBs alike. 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).