Carson-Newman Dedicates Baptist Archives

On October 19, 1999 Carson-Newman College celebrated its 51st Founders’ Day service. The program featured the dedication of the Baptist Archives and unveiling of the Sesquicentennial logo. (See page 3 for more on C-N’s Sesquicentennial). Over 2000 invitations were mailed out inviting guests to attend the chapel, tour the archives, and attend the luncheon following.

Located in the Mildred L. Iddins Special Collections of the Stephens-Burnett Memorial Library, the Baptist Archives houses historical records and materials relating to Baptist heritage and seeks to make that heritage a living influence for the college and churches of East Tennessee.

The collection contains the minutes, records, annuals, and histories of various churches and associations, along with the papers, diaries, letters, and sermons of various pastors, laymen, and missionaries. Also included are Tennessee Baptist periodicals and selected regional Baptist publications. Rounding out the collection are a wide variety of books dealing with Baptist history, doctrine, missions, and biography.

Participants included Dr. Randy Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Morristown, Bill Sumners, Archivist at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Charles DeWeese, Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Historical Society, Imogene Brewer, Librarian Emeritus, Dr. Paul Brewer, Professor Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy, Dr. Merrill Hawkins, Assistant Professor of Religion, and Sue Lynn Stone, University Archivist at Western Kentucky University.

Special recognitions were made to Dr. Stanley Benson, Librarian Emeritus and Rev. Glenn Toomey, pastor, historian, and author for their contributions to the development of the Archives.
Stanley Benson Honored

Dr. Stanley Benson was presented with a plaque of appreciation during the Founders’ Day chapel for his contribution to the development of Carson-Newman’s Baptist Archives.

In 1985 Dr. Benson became the Director and Dean of Library Services for the Stephens - Burnett Memorial Library. With an impressive list of credentials – B.S., Southern Illinois University; B.D., Th.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; M.L.S., University of Texas, Austin; Ph.D., University of Oklahoma – Benson led the library through a transitional period into the “electronic age.” He retired in 1997.

In 1986, the T.B.C. commissioned Union University, Belmont University, and Carson-Newman to collect, preserve, and make available materials relating to Baptist heritage from their respective regions. This decision helped give shape to a small collection that had been developed by librarians Mildred Iddins and Imogene Brewer. Under Dr. Benson, Sue Lynn Stone was hired as the first official archivist and the Baptist Archives began to grow. Carson-Newman is grateful to Dr. Benson “who worked diligently to help develop a repository to preserve the history and heritage of East Tennessee Baptists, and by whose direction the Baptist Archives became a reality.”

C-N to Celebrate 150 Years

In 1849 five men met to discuss their vision for Baptist education in Tennessee. Two years later that vision was realized with the formation of Mossy Creek Missionary Baptist Seminary. Carson-Newman will celebrate its Sesquicentennial during the 2001 - 2002 school year, honoring its heritage and planning for the future.

Toomey’s Efforts Recognized

Rev. Glenn Toomey is well known to Tennessee Baptists. Answering the call to ministry at nineteen, he has spent his life in denominational service. The pastor of several churches and servant of various associations, this noted historian found time to author over a dozen books with several other manuscripts remaining unpublished.

Among his books are: The Sesquicentennial History of the Nolachucky Baptist Association and Its Affiliated Churches, 1830-1890, Bicentennial History of the First Baptist Church, Dandridge, Tennessee (1786-1986), and Journey Into Century Three (Bent Creek Baptist Church).

Rev. Toomey served as a volunteer archivist at the Stephens-Burnett Memorial Library, working with what was then a small collection. He generously added to it by giving many of his manuscripts and materials from a lifetime of work. Included are unpublished reference works on various associations and their churches detailing memberships, baptisms,
pastors, moderators, clerks, and meeting places. These have proved invaluable in helping researchers studying Baptist history and genealogy.

After the Tennessee Baptist Convention’s 1986 decision to have the state’s three Baptist schools preserve Baptist heritage for their respective regions, the collection received an influx of material. Rev. Toomey continued to work with archivist Sue Lynn Stone until 1994. This faithful servant is certainly worthy of our deepest gratitude as one “who gave generously the talents of his heart, head, and hands, to build a strong core collection of materials concerning the history and heritage of East Tennessee Baptists. By these gifts the Carson-Newman College Library shares the blessings of the knowledge of the faith of our fathers through the Baptist Archives, built upon the foundation Rev. Toomey laid.”

Dr. Earl Wilson Speaks at Founders’ Day Luncheon

Earl Wilson, retired director of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation, TBC, spoke at the luncheon held after the Founders’ Day service and tour of the Baptist Archives. He addressed the importance of remembering our Baptist heritage and those who went before us. Wilson emphasized that many of our Baptist forefathers willingly gave themselves to persecution and even death for the sake of the religious principles that they held so dear as the basis for a blessed life in Christ.

We have unfortunately forgotten many of these principles in today’s day and age, Wilson admonished, and in so doing have forfeited a joy that could be ours. Wilson’s comments were gratefully received by approximately eighty guests including pastors, church media directors, area archivists, and local historians.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Formed in 1938 under the leadership of W.O. Carver at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Society functioned from 1951 to 1995 as an auxiliary of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. When the SBC decided in 1995 to eliminate the Commission, the Society became an independent organization. Today, the Society operates on its own, does not receive Cooperative funds, and is self-supporting. The Society is a voluntary, non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to provide leadership and direction for the study, preservation, and communication of Baptist history and heritage. Membership entitles members to receive the journal *Baptist History and Heritage*, the *Baptist Heritage Update* newsletter, a 10% discount on other Society publications and products, and reduced fees for participating in the annual meeting.
For more information, contact Charles W. Deweese, Executive Director & Treasurer.
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TENNESSEE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Tennessee Baptist Historical Society is composed of individuals, churches, associations, institutions, and other organizations that are willing to share their resources and interests for the cause of Baptist history in Tennessee. Membership entitles members to receive publications of the Society and attend the annual meeting that is usually scheduled in conjunction with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.
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