

THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1981 VOL.1 NO.2

CHAIRMAN: DR. K.R. MANLEY

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

EDITOR: M.J. PETRAS

120 HERRING ROAD,
EASTWOOD NSW 2122

The Society was formed on 18th April, 1974 and set down a number of objectives which were adopted. We should keep in mind that those objectives were:

1. To encourage research into the history of Baptists, especially those in N.S.W.
2. To seek and obtain custody of important Baptist records, and to provide for their careful preservation.
3. To encourage the collating and recording of Baptist history.
4. To foster interest in Baptist history at the local Church level.
5. To assist research students at schools, colleges and universities.
6. To publish articles and historical information.
7. To be alert to Church jubilees, centenaries and other significant anniversaries for Baptists, and where possible, to assist in the provision of relevant historical details.
8. To promote care of buildings and sites of historical interest to Baptists.

THE BAPTIST RECORDER

OUR INTEREST IN OUR HISTORY

This is a year of celebration for Australian Baptists. In 1831 an inconspicuous start was made to the beginning of Baptist witness in the colony of New South Wales. Now, 150 years later, there are some 700 churches and over 55,000 Baptist churches members scattered over Australia. But such is the place of history in Baptist thinking and the sense of distance throughout our land that this significant milestone will probably go largely unnoticed outside of Sydney or perhaps, New South Wales.

What interest have Australian Baptists shown in their heritage? It is regrettable that our own historical society, now entering its eighth year, is today the only one in existence. As early as September 1908 it was resolved to form an Australasian Baptist historical society at the first Australasian Baptist Congress meeting in Sydney but nothing ever eventuated. Then, in the 1950's, a national society formed had only a brief life before it expired. Doubtless, this has been because of the twin problems mentioned before, a fitful interest in history and the tyranny of distance, both interstate and intrastate, which has prevented likeminded people from meeting together on a regular basis.

We must needs beware, for the continuance of our own Society is not automatically guaranteed. Membership is quite small. One church is a member but the membership of all churches is needed for the Society exists for the benefit of all. Not only do we need new members but there are one or two key positions to be filled. We desperately need an archivist who will catalogue incoming material. The need is pressing as we shall shortly need to re-locate our archives with the enlargement of the college library. Do you know a librarian who could possibly help?

As we reflect at this significant milestone in our history we might cast an eye forward to that occasion seven years from now when we observe our nation's bicentenary. Perhaps someone like the Baptist Union of Australia could suitably

commemorate it by the commissioning of the writing of a history of Australian Baptists. How else could it be commemorated? What do you think?

SUCCESS OF RIDLEY BOOK

The Society's first publication, Soldier and Evangelist: The Story of Rev. John G. Ridley M.C., by H.E. Evans, was successfully launched on 17th September, 1980 at the annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of N.S.W. So far about three-quarters of the number of copies printed have been sold and these sales are helping to finance future publishing ventures.

THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN BAPTISTS

This is the title of our second publication which will be launched at our annual meeting by our speaker, Professor K.J. Cable, M.A., President of the Royal Australian Historical Society of N.S.W. The book has been written by the Society's Chairman, Dr. Ken Manley, and Treasurer, Mr. Michael Petras. We believe it will be a credit to the Society and the denomination as we celebrate our sesquicentenary.

Copies of the book are available from the Society, c/- Baptist Theological College of N.S.W., 120 Herring Road, Eastwood N.S.W. 2122. Cost is \$4.00. Remember - we are relying on your support to sell the book. Please make its existence known in your church, among your family and friends, or at your local library.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Some members have had books or articles published during this past year. We congratulate them on their achievements. Our chairman Dr. K.R. Manley had an article, "Pattern of a Pastorate: John Rippon at Carter Lane, Southwark (1773-1836)", published in the Journal of Religious History. Mrs. Lorna Ollif has written Women in Kakhi to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of Women's Services in the Australian Army. The book was published by the Australian Women's Army Service Association of N.S.W. and launched on 22nd April. Mrs. Ollif contributed "A Stitch in Time : Australia's Early Needlewomen" to the highly acclaimed

Lives Obscurely Great, published by the Society of Women Writers last year. Also, a third edition of her There Must be a River is currently being published by Angus and Robertson. Ronald Cardwell has privately published The A.I.F. Cricket Team, 1919.

BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF N.S.W.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

for the year ended 31st March, 1981.

INCOME

Balance brought forward, 1st April, 1981		547.80
Subscriptions		109.00
Donations		91.60
Grants: Baptist Foundation of N.S.W	\$ 200.00	
Mass Media Commission	<u>150.00</u>	
Book Sales: Soldier and Evangelist	1834.75	1843.05
Writing your Church's History	<u>8.30</u>	
RAHS Conference Expense - L. Ollif		30.00
Bank Interest		<u>39.74</u>
		\$3011.19

EXPENDITURE

Royal Australian Historical Society:		
Membership fee	17.50	
Conference Reg'n	<u>42.00</u>	59.50
Advertising		63.70
Postage and Stationary		70.49
Book Purchases		31.14
Printing of 'Soldier and Evangelist'		950.00
Research Fee		5.00
Refund grant from Mass Media Commission		<u>150.00</u>
		1329.83
Balance carried down		<u>1681.36</u>
		\$3011.19
		=====
1st April	Balance carried forward	1681.36

4.

M.J. PETRAS
TREASURER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please record the dates of these 1981 meetings in your personal diary and church calendar. Each meeting is held at the Baptist Theological College of N.S.W., 120 Herring Road, Eastwood at 8.00pm.

- February 19 A History of the Greenacre Church - Personal influences in the making of a suburban church. Paper by Rev. Seton Arndell, B.A., B.D.
- April 23 Annual Meeting. Guest Speaker: Assoc. Professor K.J. Cable, M.A., F.R.A.H.S, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society.
- June 18 Rev. Frederick Hibberd - The Forgotten Father of Baptists in New South Wales. Why, of all church leaders, isn't he remembered? Paper by Mr. Michael Petras, B.A.
- October 15 Tracing the Baptist Family Tree. Benealogical research is a popular pastime. Seminar led by Mrs. Margaret Manley.
-

Writing your Church's History

Sooner or later every church will celebrate a jubilee or centenary anniversary. It is a function of the Historical Society to assist churches on such occasions. Several useful publications are available for churches to aid them in the observation of their anniversary and a compilation of the church's history. While these are American publications a special Australian supplement has been prepared by the Society. Copies are now available from the Society (see Order Form on back page).

D.C. Woolley, Guide for Writing the History of a Church (\$1.50)
How to Observe and Write Church Anniversaries and History (10¢)
Suggestions for History Committee (10¢)

WRITING YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORY

Sooner or later every church will celebrate a silver or golden jubilee or a centenary. It is a function of the Baptist Historical Society to assist churches on such occasions. Several useful publications are available for churches to help them in the observation of their anniversary and in the compilation of the church's history. While these are American publications a special Australian supplement is being prepared by the Society. Copies are available from the Society, c/- 120 Herring Road, Eastwood, N.S.W. 2122.

D.C. Woolley, Guide for Writing the History of a Church (\$1.50)
How to Observe and Write Church Anniversaries and History (10¢)
Suggestions for History Committee (10¢)
Supplement (50¢)

ARCHIVIST NEEDED

The Historical Society is in need of someone who could carry out the duties of an archivist. Ideally it would be someone who has had some library experience and has reasonable access to the Baptist College at Eastwood. If experience is lacking, don't worry, help is available from the Royal Australian Historical Society. If you could possibly assist in any way please see the Society's chairman, Dr. K.R. Manley.

MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW DUE

Members of the Society are reminded their annual subscription is now due. It is \$5.00 per annum (\$2.00 for pensioners and students). It may be forwarded to the Treasurer. (For the address see back page).

New members are most cordially welcome. Please complete the form on the back page and forward it to the Treasurer.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE EIGHT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF N.S.W. 1981

Probably with the exception of the year in which the Society commenced, 1974-5, the past year has been the most significant in the life of the Baptist Historical Society.

One item which springs to mind is the apparently healthy state of the treasury, our present bank balance being the largest we have ever had. We are in a sounder financial position than we have ever been previously, though it would be more correct to say we have handled more money, for by the time our members receive this report our bank balance will no doubt be, temporarily at least, back to its customary low.

Of course, the reason for the increase has been our publication of Soldier and Evangelist, the story of Rev. John G. Ridley, M.C. With Foundation of N.S.W. we managed to have almost enough money in hand to pay for our first book when it left the Printer.

Our first sales supplied the balance. This book has sold very well, and anybody who wishes to have one, and has not yet ordered it, should consider that the edition will soon be sold out. With all expenses paid, the balance went into our Publication Fund, and with a little more valued assistance from our two friends, by the time our second book leaves the printer, we hope to have sufficient money to pay for it.

The First Australian Baptists will probably be the most significant book we will ever publish. As part of the sesqui-centenary celebrations of the denomination, our second book will be launched at the Annual Meeting on 23rd April, and tells us all the average Baptist would want to know about our beginnings. It should give each of us a clear understanding of these earliest days and of the two men who, in the different setting of their times, struggled, each in his own way, to stem the forces of evil and commence a work of God for the good of the nation. Containing hitherto unpublished material, The First Australian Baptists is a MUST for all thinking members of the denomination; a book to own, and to retain for inspiration.

Meetings have been held throughout the year, sometimes with more than their usual interest. In July, a special meeting was held to enable Dr. Craig Skinner to give us the benefit of his research on Thomas Spurgeon. Another impressive address was the biography of Joshua Robertson, MA, delivered by Mr. Peter Young, MA, in October. One address that

especially appealed to the secretary was the February meeting, when Rev. Seton Arndell gave an illustrated address on the history of the Greenacre Church.

Mr. Arndell mentioned that the story of Greenacre was essentially the story of a remarkable woman, Mrs. Margaret Jane Cameron. It was good to know that a woman had been used to found, and for many years organise, what eventually became the Greenacre Church. It might be an interesting study to discover how many of our churches were founded by, or largely by, women. It is a task usually considered to be a man's job, and it certainly was in 1831. However, it is good to note that there are now men in the denomination who are happy to give credit where it is due, and if God saw fit to use a woman, then to say so, and Mr. Arndell has done just this in his history of Greenacre Church, which is now on sale.

On the subject of churches, it is still some slight disappointment to the Society that more do not join us. The small annual subscription cannot be much of a deterrent. If you are too far from the College for delegates to attend meetings, you may feel you do not get much return for your money, but the Society is a valuable asset to the denomination, and even if the subscription is regarded simply as a small annual donation, any church joining can feel assured that its interest is of valuable assistance to the few people who give of their money, and much more valuable, their time, to maintain this important adjunct to the denomination.

Hitherto, we have been very cramped for space, but when the new College Library is completed, we will be provided with a large room which can be locked, so that valuable material may be kept in the best condition we can achieve. We are badly in need of at least one competent Archivist; I've no doubt we could use two, if two volunteered. Ideally, it would be a school-teacher or librarian just retired, who lives fairly close to the Theological College and could spend a good deal of time there. They would not even require to know how to preserve and catalogue, for we can obtain advice from experts. . . . if we have somebody with the time and dedication.

By the time this report is read, members will be in possession of their Sesqui-centenary issue of The Australian Baptist, and doubtless will have noted that several of the Society's members have contributed historical articles, which doubtless will shed a little more light on what we celebrate in 1981.

SECRETARY

RECENT AQUISITIONS

The Society has acquired from the Church family the following material of the late Reverend William Higlett.

1. Notes of My Voyage to Australia, 1882.
2. Correspondence relating to the call from Towoomba Baptist Church in 1882.
Several letters from Chas. H. Spurgeon during the period 1883 to 1894.

We have also received the golden jubilee histories of Glen Innes and Grafton churches, plus a variety of other historical material.

FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 1981

The meetings of the Society are held at the Baptist Theological College of N.S.W., 120 Herring Road, Eastwood at 8:00pm. The following meetings are to be held this year:-

Thursday 18 June: Reverend Frederick Hibberd - The Forgotten Father of Baptists in New South Wales. In this sesqui-centenary year why hasn't he been remembered? Paper by Mr. Michael Petras, B.A., B.D.

Thursday 15 October: The Baptist Family Tree - Genealogical research is fast becoming a popular pursuit. Seminar led by Mrs. Margaret Manley.

CENTENARIES IN 1982

Australian Baptist Missionary Society
Petersham Church

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20-22 O'Connell Street, (15th Floor), Sydney 2000
Telephone: 231.1719

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (W) _____

(H) _____

Please find enclosed my membership fee for the
Baptist Historical Society of New South Wales.

FULL MEMBERSHIP \$ 5.00

PENSIONER & STUDNETS \$ 2.00

PLEASE RETURN TO: The Hon. Treasurer
Baptist Historical Society
c/- Baptist Theological College
120 Herring Road,
EASTWOOD 2122 N.S.W.