

HERITAGE HORIZONS

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST HERITAGE COMMISSION

Celebrating a Rich Past . . . Inspiring a Promising Future

When the NAB Heritage Commission was officially founded at the 1991 Triennial Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, it was given the mission of collecting and preserving documents and artifacts that tell the stories / STORY of God at work in and through the North American Baptist Conference since its earliest beginnings in the mid-1840s.

There are two part-time and paid staff (Randy and Darlene) who manage the Heritage Commission Archives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Much of their current work involves digitization of the many photo-slides in our possession. They are also working on a project to digitize approximately seventy-five rolls of micro-film that contain copies of *Der Sendbote* – the news and devotional publication of the German Baptist / North American Baptist Conference, dating back to the 1890s. A generous gift from a friend of the Heritage Commission is making this a feasible project.

The article reprinted below outlines some ways in which individuals and local churches can assist the archival staff in their work.

Help Preserve the Story of God at Work in the NAB Conference

Church Stories

Help preserve the story of God at work in the NAB Conference. The local congregation is an important part of this story. The best way to preserve history is the recording of events as they happen. We do have the story as reflected in church anniversary books for about half of

the churches, which are more than one hundred years old. We have some recent stories, but fewer numbers. We would like this collection to be more complete and include all our churches, starting when the church is recognized as a church plant.



Programs with stories of major milestones.
Examples of major milestones include:

Church Beginnings

- Did a group of NAB persons settle in an area and begin a church?
- Were you a church plant from another NAB church?
- Did you celebrate the first ten years with a program and historical sketch?

Building Dedications

- First church structure
- Additions to structure
- Other building projects

Pastoral Transitions

- Welcoming a new pastor
- Farewell to a pastor at end of ministry

Relocations

- Factors that led to relocation
- New ministry opportunities as a result of relocation

Name Changes

- Old and new name and reason for change (often to enhance ministry, sometimes because name was location specific)

Church Endings

- The story of church closing – what happened to the members? Records tell the church story and need a home.

Men's and Women's Ministries

Kinds of documents that are helpful:

- Printed anniversary books
- Newspaper clippings
- Pictures (with persons and date identified)



Lenore Lang – A Faithful Servant

by Randy Tschetter

Often, this space in Heritage Horizons is filled with a tribute to someone who, in the words of 2 Timothy 4:7, has “fought the good fight” and “finished the race.” In this issue we highlight the life of a faithful servant of God who, at age 96, continues to “run with perseverance the race marked out for [her]” (Hebrews 12:1). Meet Lenore Lang – mother, grandmother, missionary, nurse, pastor’s wife, life-long-learner, writer, encourager, and friend-to-hundreds.



As a child of 7 or 8, the sight of a white-clad nurse walking down the hospital steps at the end of her shift in her hometown of Burlington, Iowa, inspired Lenore to pursue a career as a “single-missionary nurse.” Following three years of nurse’s training came the realization that being an effective missionary-nurse would be well-served with some theological training. That calling led her to Chicago, where she met and then married George W. Lang, who was a seminary student preparing for church ministry at Northern Baptist Seminary.

Sensing God’s call to serve as missionaries, the couple and their young son, Daniel, boarded a

ship in New York City on December 1, 1955, bound for Cameroon in West Africa. With a bit of inner turmoil, they began their journey to a new continent, fully aware of another missionary family who had made a similar voyage a few years earlier in which their three-month old daughter became ill, died, and was buried at sea.

In Cameroon, Lenore supported George’s teaching and administrative ministries and soon found her own opportunities to serve. Part of her work was to teach the wives of aspiring pastors who were studying at Ndu – where she taught lessons on the Bible, health, and Christian-living. Language differences between the coastal areas and the grasslands created additional challenges. Her appointment as a Woman’s Worker for the Cameroon Baptist Convention enabled her to give oversight to the election of officers and other activities. When she was asked for help, Lenore wrote a handbook for a ministry, which was to



become known as the “3-H.” Based on the motto of “Head, Heart, and Hands for Jesus,” the 3-H Clubs taught girls how to be Christian homemakers.

Not to be forgotten is Lenore’s call to being a missionary nurse. Although she was never

employed as a nurse in any Cameroonian hospital, she was able to provide nursing care to people in the various places her family lived. Wherever her family was asked to serve, it was only a matter of time before people discovered there was a “nurse-sista” in the area. She recounts that it was not unusual to hear a knock on her door at any time of the day or night requesting her assistance for a mother giving birth to a child or for other medical emergencies – requests she never refused.

When the Lang’s missionary service ended, they established their new home in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where George would serve as a librarian, professor, and director of the NAB Archives. Lenore continued her career in nursing and began to take individual courses at Sioux Falls Seminary. When she had completed about twenty credit hours, the seminary’s registrar suggested perhaps she should set a goal of earning a seminary degree. Gradually, one semester at a time, Lenore attended classes with students young enough to be her children or grandchildren. At age 80, she graduated with a master’s degree in Religious Studies – one of the oldest graduates in the seminary’s 150-year history. Her enthusiasm for education and commitment to being a life-long learner continue to serve as an inspiration to her family and friends.



In addition to her educational endeavors, Lenore also volunteered many hours at the Heritage Commission. Her special contribution was serving as editor of the Heritage Horizons newsletter.

Now in her 90s, Lenore continues to bless the lives of her friends and family on an almost daily basis. Those who know her have come to expect a phone call on their birthday or anniversary with a word of encouragement or a “Lenore-rendition of Happy Birthday” – accompanied by her special giggle.

With this issue, we honor Lenore Lang – a faithful servant of God of whom it can be said: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). 📖



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