

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORIAN  
A Special Issue  
*Preserving and Writing Church History*

INTRODUCTION

by

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Researching history is much like detective work. Information must be dug out of many unexpected locations. Following a clue and finding a fugitive fact can be as exciting as the courtroom climax of a Perry Mason thriller.

Writing church history can be fun. It need not be drudgery. It may be hard work, but should never be boring. A bored writer cannot generate a reader's enthusiasm. A well researched and carefully written history can be as interesting as a good novel.

In 1964 *The Alabama Baptist Historian* was launched with one of its objectives being to promote the preservation and writing of Baptist history in the state. Through the years a number of historiographical articles have been printed in the publication. Some have told readers how to do research; others have shared personal experiences in the preparation of manuscripts; and others have suggested unusual sources of materials.

In this special issue of the *Historian*, an effort has been made to present a systematic approach to the methods used in writing church history. In the course of the more than twenty years of publication, essays have appeared which provide a helpful manual for church historians, whether fledgling or experienced. Under the leadership of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, a committee has assembled some of these articles for presentation in a more usable format.

Brief introductory sections have been inserted before each essay, where appropriate, that link them into a comprehensive guide to the preparation of church histories. The articles are being reprinted with information about the writers as such information applied at the time of publication. Where possible, the present assignment and location of the author is also given.

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