

Maple Scholar Takes Oral History Collection to Next Level

MAPLE SCHOLAR Adrian Candia Ayllon used a set of innovative digital tools to advance progress on the Jaime Prieto Interview Collection this summer. The interview collection includes more than 250 digitized interviews with Latin American Anabaptists, conducted by Costa Rican historian Jaime Prieto in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Previous Goshen College students created the initial database for the collection and transcribed a portion of the interviews, but Candia's integration of new digital tools took the processing of the collection to a new level.

Traditional processing for oral history interviews involves manually transcribing each interview to produce an exact transcript. This is stored with the audio and a general guide—or index—to the interview and its contents. These additional materials are intended to serve researchers who may want to consult interviews in the collection.

Candia, a sophomore business major at Goshen College, applied to Maple Scholars because he was hoping to strengthen his organization and research skills over the summer.

"As [the project] progressed," said Candia, "I was able to integrate various digital tools that helped me understand and process the interviews. In my career, these lessons will be particularly useful for developing code applied to working with archives, organizing documents, and creating websites."

Working under the supervision of ISGA Director Elizabeth Miller, Candia developed a workflow that used artificial intelligence tools to transcribe audio files

of interviews conducted in Guatemala.

Names, places, and acronyms are particularly difficult for AI tools to correctly render, so Candia Ayllon used secondary literature and cross-referencing to correct names and other errors in the AI-generated transcriptions. Candia's language abilities as a native Spanish speaker were invaluable to the transcription work.

The final transcriptions were used to identify the relevant metadata for each interview and enter them into the database. Finally, Candia developed an index summarizing the main content of each interview, so that future researchers can easily skim an interview's content. The database will eventually be loaded into Goshen College's digital repository, so that it can be consulted by researchers from anywhere in the world.

"What gives me the greatest satisfaction is being able to preserve the information from the interviews in the Guatemala collection and showcase the project's progress on a map," said



Maple Scholar Adrian Candia Ayllon used innovative digital tools to process the Jaime Prieto Interview Collection.

Candia. Using geographic information systems software, Candia expanded an interactive map of the more than 40 Guatemalan and Brazilian interviews from the collection. The map may be viewed at tinyurl.com/isga2026.

Candia will continue working with the collection throughout the 2026-2027 academic year. 🌿



Sociologist Researches Race and Anabaptism at Goshen College's Mennonite Historical Library

TIMOTHY EPP, Professor of Sociology at Redeemer University in Ontario, received a Schafer-Friesen Research Fellowship from the Mennonite Historical Library to conduct onsite research at the library this past summer. His project, tentatively titled "Blackness, whiteness, and the Anabaptist imagined community in printed mission," explores how Anabaptist groups conceptualized race during a pivotal era in North American history.

Epp's research focuses on the period between 1880 and 1940, which he described as the "nadir of race relations in North America." Although his research scope was initially limited to Canada, he quickly recognized that this was a transborder story. Epp's research now covers six provinces and twelve U.S. states.

Epp is investigating how ideas about race influenced the interactions between White Anabaptists and racialized populations in this period. His research focuses on Mennonite periodicals because Epp believes they

were important forums for identity construction. Published articles and letters from readers defined who were insiders and outsiders within the religious community, sometimes in terms of race.

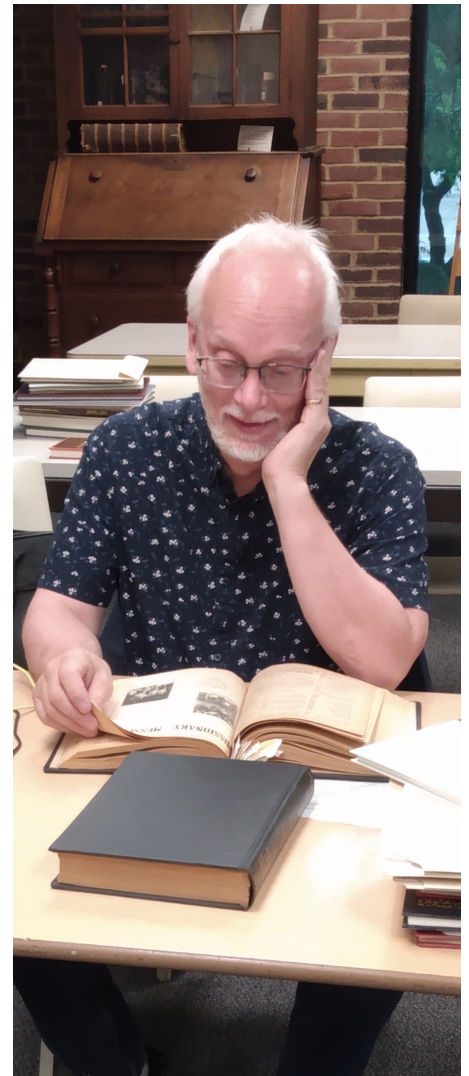
The Mennonite Historical Library (MHL) at Goshen College was a crucial stop in Epp's research tour. "Goshen has a reputation as being one of the key Anabaptist resources," said Epp. MHL Head Librarian Eric Bradley worked closely with Epp to locate sources in the collection that would be of particular value for Epp's project.

One of the periodicals Epp consulted was *Missionary Messenger*, the periodical of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (now Eastern Mennonite Missions). *Missionary Messenger* was a particularly valuable source for Epp's project, because it published reports from different mission sites in the early 20th century, including among racialized populations in the U.S.

Epp noted that the editorial decisions in church publications often involved a complex negotiation of perspectives. "There's a full range of responses," noted Epp. "From standing up against the KKK, standing up against oppression, to statements that really amount to white supremacy".

"The one thing that I'm hoping is that it sparks a conversation," concluded Epp. "[I hope] that it will point towards having more of a conversation about Anabaptist identity, race relations... and lessons we can draw from the past for today."

When Epp first began his research, he faced skepticism from others who told him there was "nothing to find" regarding Mennonites and Black history. His work at the MHL and other archives has proven otherwise. "The one thing



Schafer-Friesen Research Fellow Timothy Epp conducted research at the Mennonite Historical Library over the summer.

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Epp's travel expenses were covered by the Schafer-Friesen Research Fellowship, administered by the Mennonite Historical Library. The fellowship was made possible by a generous endowment gift from Abraham and Geraldine Schafer Friesen. 🌿

Schafer-Friesen Research Fellowship Supports New Anabaptist Publications

THE SCHAFER-FRIESEN Research Fellowship continues to support a range of new publications in Anabaptist topics. In addition to funding Timothy Epp's research visit to the Mennonite Historical Library, the fund covered a portion of the publication and printing costs for the following publications:

Carlos Martínez-García, *El movimiento anabautista del siglo XVI, una mirada latinoamericana*, published by Librería Papiro 52.

Nicole Grochowina, *Reformation: From the Sources of the Radical Reformation*, to be published in English with Pandora Press. 🌿

ISGA to Continue the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series

THE INSTITUTE for the Study of Global Anabaptism will continue the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History (SAMH) book series, following the closure of the Mennonite Historical Society (MHS) in June 2026. The ISGA's acquisition of the series creates new possibilities for publishing global Anabaptist scholarship in multiple formats.

For more than 100 years, the MHS was an important driver of Anabaptist scholarship, drawing together scholars and church leaders from across North America with the goal of promoting "public understanding of and interest in Anabaptist/Mennonite history and contemporary Mennonite life and thought." Although MHS is no longer in operation, the society's legacy lives on through various publishing initiatives, now distributed among a range of institutions.

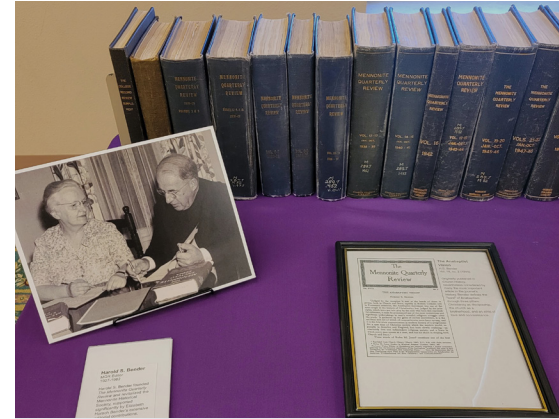
MHS founded SAMH in 1929, and the series now counts more than 50 volumes. Over the years, SAMH has been

responsible for publishing such notable volumes as Theron Schlabach's *Gospel Versus Gospel: Mission and the Mennonite Church*, Werner O. Packull's *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement*, and Anita Hooley Yoder's *Circles of Sisterhood: A History of Mission, Service, and Fellowship in Mennonite Women's Organizations*, among others.

Alongside the board of editors, the ISGA will work to uphold and expand SAMH's vision to "present historical perspectives on faith and life and make scholarship on Anabaptist and Mennonite themes more widely available." The ISGA hopes to use the series to highlight emergent themes in global Anabaptism.

Other institutions will continue MHS's publication streams with renewed vision, as well. *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, MHS's flagship publication, has joined with *Conrad Grebel Review* to form a new open-access journal entitled *Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies Review*.

AMSR will be published by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.). Bluffton University (Bluffton, Oh.) will carry on publication of the C. Henry Smith Series, now called the C. Henry Smith Series in Anabaptist Culture and Thought. 🌿



MHL and ISGA Host Celebration of the Mennonite Historical Society

IN MARCH, the Mennonite Historical Library and Institute for the Study of Anabaptism hosted a celebration to mark the closure of the Mennonite Historical Society (MHS). The MHS was founded at Goshen College in 1922 and eventually grew to become an independent society with members from across North America and Europe.

Due to declining engagement over the last number of years, MHS members voted in late 2025 to dissolve the society.

The March event was a chance to celebrate the long legacy of the society and dream about new futures for Anabaptist scholarship. Around 40 people attended the event.

The Mennonite Historical Library is independent of MHS and continues its normal operations on Goshen College campus. 🌿

Participants enjoyed an opening lecture from Dr. John D. Roth, discussions in table groups, and an update on the new *Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies Review* journal.



ISGA Director Represents BiDA at Semilla Graduation

IN MAY, ISGA Director Elizabeth Miller attended the graduation ceremony for the Diploma of Christian Education cohort at Semilla, the Mennonite seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Semilla is one of a number of seminaries throughout the Americas that use the resources available in the Biblioteca Digital Anabautista (BiDA) for their students. The ISGA maintains the BiDA for Semilla and others. At the graduation, Miller was able to officially offer greetings from the BiDA and celebrate the increased publishing work that many Semilla students have participated in. Since most of the BiDA coordination happens on a computer, it was a rare gift to be present for the graduation of individuals who have consulted or contributed to the BiDA. 🌿



Students who completed Semilla's Diploma in Christian Education celebrated their graduation in May 2026.



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