

A “Special Collection” in Nineteenth-Century New York: The American Bible Society and Its Library

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The American Bible Society established an institutional library in the early nineteenth century as part of its broader Christian charge to promote a wider circulation of the Bible without doctrinal note or comment. By the early twentieth century, this special library had grown into a significant academic resource for historians of the book, religious scholars, librarians, and the general public. Within the institution, however, the library occupied a confused and often ambiguous bureaucratic position. This article explores the peculiar niche of special libraries in nonacademic environments and draws some historical lessons from the ABS's experience for library administrators.

Established in 1816 with the goal of promoting “a wider circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment,” the American Bible Society (ABS) rapidly emerged as a major institution within the panoply of interdenominational Christian reform movements active in the early nineteenth century. The society's New York headquarters used the most advanced technological methods to produce inexpensive Bibles in massive quantities, helping to effect a revolution in the printing and publishing trades. Its paid traveling agents coordinated a nationwide distribution network, bringing Bibles to remote rural hamlets and densely packed urban neighborhoods throughout the new nation. A voluntary network of affiliated auxiliary Bible societies provided the ABS with a local presence in cities, towns, and counties in all corners of antebellum America. Translators, supported by the society, prepared texts in Asia, Latin America, and the South Pacific. Innovative fundraising techniques, cooperative endeavors with Protestant denominations, and a careful focus on institutional mission enabled the ABS to thrive and prosper throughout the nineteenth century. By the 1850s the society had secured its position as one of the leading publishers in the United States and was viewed as one of the nation's most stable and successful philanthropies.¹

Scholars have recognized the ABS's innovative role in the printing and publishing trades but have largely neglected its pioneering efforts to create a unique "special library" in nineteenth-century America. Social agencies, educational institutions, and private collectors dominated the library milieu during the antebellum years. Sunday schools, temperance associations, and such interdenominational organizations as the Young Men's Christian Association established collections as part of their broader religious outreach efforts. Paternalistic philanthropists created mechanics' and apprentices' libraries to "uplift" working-class city dwellers. Socioeconomic groups banded together to form mercantile libraries, athenaeums, and similar voluntary societies dedicated to self-improvement. The American Bible Society's collection, however, occupies a special niche in this diverse bibliophilic environment. Its establishment owed to a mixture of corporate, philanthropic, and educational motives. A confusion of purpose and aims often resulted, causing significant discontinuities in the library's history.

Ultimately, the founders of the ABS library created a unique resource that comprehensively documented Scripture translation and production over five centuries. Classic biblical editions, rare translations in obscure languages and dialects, beautifully illustrated manuscripts, and handsomely bound volumes all found their way into the society's collections. A first edition of John Eliot's Massachusetts Indian Bible (1661–1663), a series of fifteenth-century Latin Bibles from various European printing centers, several sixteenth-century Luther Bibles, and a 1440 Wycliffe New Testament constitute only a few items that have whetted bibliographic appetites over the past century. By the early 1990s the society had amassed over fifty thousand Bibles and books of the Bible, representing nearly two thousand languages and dating from the thirteenth century through the present.

The founders proved less effective, however, in articulating a coherent purpose and mission for the collection, thus leaving it vulnerable to administrative and bureaucratic shifts within the ABS. Tensions often erupted between purely corporate goals and broader academic responsibilities. At times, the library appeared as a collection in search of a substantial research public. Even as the managers expanded their acquisitions and attempted to attract an external research clientele, they had great difficulty in defining who might use the resources and in articulating the library's educational purposes. The story of this "special library" thus offers an instructive and intriguing tale for modern institutional librarians. In the beginning, the ABS's founders envisioned the collection as an important component of their Christian charge.²

Defining the Library, 1816–1836

The American Bible Society established a library even before moving into its first relatively permanent home on New York's Nassau Street in 1823. Early ABS board members operated within an international Anglo-American framework of commerce and ideas, and they took much of their philanthropic inspiration from such institutions as the British & Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), which had been established in London in 1804. The ABS's structure and organization relied heavily on existing BFBS practice, and the very concept of a "special library" owed a special debt to British precedent. When Henry Otis Dwight, an American Bible Society administrator, compiled his centennial history of the society in 1916, he observed that "the idea and even the name of the library which was to be established for the benefit of the literary department of the ABS was copied from that of the British society."³

The person most instrumental in establishing a vital library for the society was John Pintard, a prominent New York City citizen and bibliophile. The library historian Larry Sullivan has described Pintard as "a driving force behind a multitude of cultural, social, political, reform, and library organizations [in New York City] of the first half of the nineteenth century." Other American intellectual historians have also noted Pintard's central role in helping to coalesce the elite, patrician culture that dominated intellectual life in early Federal New York. Pintard derived his salary from his position as an executive of the Mutual Assurance Company of New York, the city's first fire insurance concern. His real passion, however, derived from his participation in an extraordinarily diverse array of civic and humanitarian endeavors during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A partial list of his affiliations includes the Erie Canal, the New-York Historical Society, the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, the New York Bank for Savings, the Brooklyn Steamboat and Sailors Company, and the American Bible Society, of which he served as recording secretary from 1816 until 1832. Pintard's interest in the ABS emerged from a fervent dedication to spreading the Gospel message. Sullivan notes that "the Bible was the cornerstone of Pintard's religious reading," and this Federalist patrician viewed the ABS as one of the institutional cornerstones of New York City.⁴

Pintard outlined his vision concerning the ABS library in a letter to Samuel Bayard, a fellow ABS manager: "we will make this an important department—promote it wherever you can. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, any tongue or dialect—ancient or modern—will suit as we want the various Editions of the Scriptures—in one collection." Writing to his daughter, Eliza Noel Davidson, Pintard described the library in 1817 as "a child of my own" that "accumulated beyond my expectations." He also provided

some insight into his own role in developing the collection, observing that he had recently “lugged with me all the way from Burlington [New Jersey]” several volumes donated by ABS president Elias Boudinot. Indeed, Pintard pursued an aggressive acquisition policy. In January 1817 he spearheaded a board resolution stipulating “that a copy of each edition of the Bible printed for the American Bible Society in their various bindings [should] be deposited in this Society’s Biblical Library.” The following month, the managers expanded this collection policy to include all early editions of the Bible and encouraged board members “to set an example by presenting any such copies as may be in their possession, and which they can conveniently spare.” By the end of 1817, Pintard secured donations of French and Dutch Bibles from the New-York Historical Society.⁵

Writing “to a dear cousin” late in his life, Pintard described his close relationship to the ABS in these terms: “I regard my offices as a Vice President of the American Bible Society, and president of [the New York Bank for Savings] as the two paddles of my frail bark canoe, to keep it straight and steady as it glides down the current of time to the ocean of eternity.” Until his death in 1844, Pintard made the continued growth of the American Bible Society and its library one of his most serious priorities and helped to promote the organization throughout the United States. Pintard’s work with the library involved building up a comprehensive collection of contemporary translations, defining it primarily as a repository for Scripture, and relying on both the managers and his own elite social connections to enlarge the holdings. In fact, both his collecting focus and his reliance on New York City bibliophiles remained cornerstones of ABS library policy throughout the nineteenth century.⁶

No formal space was allocated specifically for a library at the ABS’s Nassau Street facility, but the Scripture collection expanded considerably during the society’s first twenty years. Besides accepting donations from various board members, the ABS also actively embarked on its own ambitious acquisitions program. At the February 1823 meeting of the board, for example, agent John Nitchie was authorized to “purchase from the British and Foreign Bible Society, from the Russian and other Bible Societies printing the Scriptures in foreign languages, a regular series of the Bibles and Testaments printed by them, other than in the English language.” The board also decided to underwrite a printed catalogue of the Biblical library, naturally entrusting this task to Pintard.⁷

Reforming the Library, 1836–1896

Administrative change stimulated the society to appoint its first librarian in 1836. Increasingly, the ABS abandoned its original voluntaristic

structure and relied on salaried professionals to conduct its affairs. Patriotic generalists such as John Pintard, committed to broad notions of civic humanitarianism, gradually gave way to more narrowly focused corporate administrators on the board. Staff positions evolved into full-time occupations, and as ABS affairs grew more complex the payroll expanded. A series of staffing shifts in 1836 culminated in the appointment of the Reverend George Bush as editor of the society's publications, with responsibilities for the library. Born in Norwich, Vermont, the forty-year-old minister held degrees from Dartmouth and Princeton. Bush's career included service as a Presbyterian missionary in Indiana, and since 1832 he had chaired the Oriental Languages Department at New York University (NYU), while also teaching Hebrew language and literature.⁸

Bush's selection indicated that the managers had somewhat revised their conception of the library's role. The key elements in his background centered around his theological training and his familiarity with languages. His own expertise, and the institution's new needs, caused Bush to subtly alter the collecting policies. Although Bibles remained central, Bush refined his acquisition efforts to collect more secondary materials concerning various languages. The accessions list for 1837, for example, included an "Ojibway Hymn and Spelling Book" presented by a Wesleyan missionary, Robert Morrison's Chinese grammar donated by the wife of a prominent New York City merchant, and several reference works contributed by the ABS's overseas representative in Constantinople.⁹

Beginning in the 1830s, the ABS expanded its worldwide mission and devoted a larger amount of its resources and attention to translation work abroad. The society opened its first overseas agency in the Near East in 1836 and began funding various denomination-based missionary projects throughout the world. Part of Bush's work involved monitoring the perplexing array of translations endeavors that were being carried out in various obscure languages and dialects. The board consciously began viewing the library more as a translations resource than as an artifactual collection. Further, denominational controversy split the ABS during the 1830s. Baptists disagreed with certain society translation policies and broke off to establish their own Bible society. Other Christians questioned the authenticity of the ABS's products, and discussion arose concerning errors that had crept into the text of the King James Version. Bush bore the responsibility for examining the ABS's King James text, comparing it with other available English language publications, and authorizing its accuracy. He thus needed access to the standard English language translations, to various Greek and Hebrew texts, and to reference works that explained the process of English language translation.

For the first time, the library began serving primarily a nonarchival, administrative function. If the managers retreated somewhat from their originally broad conception of the library, they nonetheless tied it much more closely to vital institutional functions.

Bush's tenure, however, proved relatively brief. The financial depression that followed the Panic of 1837 caused a wave of layoffs and administrative consolidation at the ABS, as revenues dropped and donations decreased. Bush had published a complete catalogue of the more than one thousand books comprising the library collection in 1837 and had completed his editorial work on the King James Version, and he proved a casualty of the financial downturn. His position was terminated in October 1839. Returning to his position at NYU, he eventually became a key convert to the Church of the New Jerusalem and wrote a series of significant Swedenborgian commentaries on Scripture. Still, the library had been placed on a firm administrative footing. The ABS's 1845 by-laws formally codified the library as the repository of "all books not for sale, belonging to the society, and all manuscripts and other interesting papers which the society, Board of Managers, Committees, or Corresponding Secretary may deem worthy of preservation."¹⁰

In 1853 another significant institutional shift altered the library's purpose. During that year the ABS relocated from its modest Nassau Street headquarters to a grand and fashionable uptown location on Astor Place. The new five-story "Bible House" constituted an architectural, technological, and administrative marvel. Occupying a full city block, the cast-iron structure included a salesroom, modern printing facility, and extensive bindery. Financed by contributions from the wealthiest and most prominent Christians in New York, its completion announced the American Bible Society's arrival as one of the most powerful and significant reform organizations in the nation. Thousands of Christian tourists annually visited the ABS, and even Mark Twain observed after an exploration of the Bible House "that I enjoyed the time more than I could possibly have done in any circus."¹¹

The board quickly seized on its new prominence as an opportunity to highlight the library's public and museum-like function. Considerable thought was given to the issue of displaying books in the Astor Place facility. Ultimately, the managers decided to provide "a large and convenient apartment" for the library under the Manager's Hall. The room at the time was thought to be "fire-proof, well-warmed, lighted, and ventilated, and being back from the street, free from noise." Glass-fronted and small-paned display cases standing seven and one-half feet high were installed around the room to house the Bible collection. Above the cases the society placed portraits of its early presidents. At the same

time that the actual collections were being redefined in terms of translations and linguistics, the ABS began viewing its collection as a Biblical Museum as well.¹²

Several ongoing administrative problems emerged as a result of the library's greater public visibility. A July 1855 attempt to codify library rules and regulations hints at some of the difficulties. The Committee on Versions, a group of board members concerned with oversight of the ABS's translations program, assumed responsibility for the library and promulgated the new rules. This committee observed that books were now located "in the different alcoves" and that the ABS needed to both refine the arrangement and revise the catalogue so "that the books . . . may be found by reference to the letter over the alcove and the corresponding letter in the Catalogue." Security also appeared to be a troublesome issue. The committee urged the ABS's librarian (in effect, one of the corresponding secretaries who was charged with this duty) "to take charge of the keys" and to make sure "that no book be loaned out of the Library room," while noting that the books "all may be freely consulted . . . by any member or friend of the society on application . . . during the ordinary business hours." Preservation was also defined as a new need, with the committee stipulating that books "be dusted and ventilated when necessary and kept in good condition." A concern for physical care of the collections, apprehension concerning use, and an acknowledgment that current accessioning and cataloguing methods appeared inadequate runs through all of these regulations.¹³

By 1857, less than four years following the construction of the Bible House, another problem loomed: the Committee on Versions discussed "a want of room in the library for the various documents which were there collected." Space limitations continued to create difficulties, and the managers deliberately sought to limit library acquisitions. An 1879 report indicated that they had adopted a much narrower collection development policy, and the Committee on Versions authorized the board in 1883 to sell several books "of a miscellaneous character" that had no direct relevance to ABS work.¹⁴

In 1896 the society faced a crossroads in conjunction with its library. The space problem had worsened considerably. The extraordinary advances in book production and Bible translation work that characterized the missionary era of the nineteenth century had created a situation whereby the ABS's library numbered over 5,300 books. The board began questioning whether space allocated for library purposes really constituted an optimal use of the ABS's limited accommodations and resources. Edward Gilman, the ABS's corresponding secretary, was charged to undertake a study of the library, and the results determined the program's immediate future. "The character of the library is biblical,

thoroughly so," commented Gilman. "Books of a miscellaneous character," defined as non-Scripture reference works, had not been solicited regularly since the advent of the space crisis. Commentaries were collected sporadically. Although some bibliographic matter relating to the history of English versions had been solicited, the overwhelming bulk of the collection consisted of Bibles and Testaments. As the museum function ascended in importance, the collection's value as an administrative reference tool declined.¹⁵

Gilman identified three potential uses for the collection in 1896. First, it proved somewhat convenient for the ABS's translations staff, who needed "ready consultation of such copies of the Scriptures and related material as would aid them in discharging their duties whether in correcting the press, assisting translators, or preparing information for the public." Second, Gilman asserted the importance of maintaining a museum "with a view to enlisting new enthusiasm" for the ABS by the general public. Finally, he had identified one external research clientele: "Bible students" who might use the collection "for reference and consultation." Gilman perceived no conflict between these functions, but he recognized that the cramped conditions at the Bible House made them impractical to fulfill. The supporting glossaries, dictionaries, grammars, and lexicons were scattered throughout several rooms, making consultation inconvenient for the administrators. No one could find or easily retrieve the holdings. The exhibit function lagged as well. Rare books and curiosities were not maintained in the library at all, but rather were exhibited "in the show cases in the Sales Room, where ancient volumes in manuscript and in print and other objects of interest attract the eye of any who come to buy." Finally, for Bible students there was no reading room available for study, no accurate catalogue of the holdings, and no librarian to provide access to the collections."¹⁶

Other problems also handicapped the society's efforts to maintain its special library. Despite the obvious strength of the Scripture holdings, the ABS could not compete with the more complete and better staffed collection at nearby General Theological Seminary. James Lenox, a former ABS president and wealthy bibliophile, had also amassed a superior and more valuable private collection through his own dealers in Europe, and he never contemplated merging his library with the ABS's holdings. Gilman questioned whether New York City really needed so many outstanding private Scripture collections. Further, the threat of fire damage created some anxiety, and security proved a perennial problem. Gilman noted the mysterious disappearance of a first edition of John Eliot's Massachusetts Indian Bible, an extremely rare and valuable item that had been donated to the society in 1817. He observed that the library was exposed to "robbery by thieves who haunt the building and at times

invade the offices of the society and its rented rooms, ready to lay hands on any inviting thing." Gilman believed that, in the dangerous climate of late-nineteenth-century New York, "it would be no very difficult matter for a sneak thief to watch his chance of entering and concealing himself, and making way with some book of value if he could identify it." Clearly, a new approach appeared desirable.¹⁷

New Approaches for a New Age, 1896–1936

These obstacles to maintaining a special library appeared too formidable in 1896, and the board elected to deposit four thousand volumes of the collection with the Lenox Library, thus uniting perhaps the two premiere biblical collections in the United States. Although the managers now viewed their biblical library as somewhat peripheral to the society's ongoing work, they retained ownership of the collections and codified their right to terminate the agreement with one year's notice, in the event that they acquired "a new building with a fire-proof library." This deposit arrangement resulted in the typical tensions and misunderstandings inherent in such agreements, especially after the Lenox Library was subsumed under the New York Public Library (NYPL) in 1897. A testy series of correspondence between ABS administrators and NYPL librarians in 1912 revealed the society's dissatisfaction with the library's failure to invite ABS officials to the dedication ceremonies of the 42nd Street library, complaints concerning the dispersion of the ABS collection into the general stacks, impatience with the NYPL's unwillingness to generate special catalogue cards for the ABS, and displeasure "that the correspondence from your library is so purely formal and apparently disturbed in some way." Sporadic complaints continued through the early 1930s, as the ABS discovered that NYPL librarians had removed a Mayan bible portion from the ABS collection, placed it in the "American History" section, and catalogued it without any indication that it was a Scripture item.¹⁸

By the early 1930s the society was ready once again to reconsider its stance toward the Scripture collection. Eric North, a scholarly and visionary ABS administrator with deep familial roots in the society's past, had ascended to the position of general secretary. His translations assistant, Margaret T. Hills, held a graduate degree in history and would ultimately produce a comprehensive reference work, *The English Bible in America*, which remains a standard bibliographic treatment. Both North and Hills appreciated the collection's academic significance. Further, between 1896 and the early 1930s, the society had begun to accumulate books once again, and the volume of material at Bible House in 1930

actually exceeded the number of books originally transferred to the Lenox Library. As early as 1931, North revealed to the NYPL staff that “the division of the collection into two parts” troubled him and that eventually he hoped to “unite the two collections and have as a result a special library of unusual distinctiveness and importance.” He clearly viewed the biblical collection as a significant institutional resource and noted that many other ABS “plans for educational activities we hope may center” around a reunited collection.¹⁹

By 1935 the society had secured a new, fire-proof building at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and 57th Street in New York’s increasingly fashionable upper east side. This move placed the ABS in the heart of Manhattan’s burgeoning public relations and advertising sector, and the society hoped to use its prime location in this modern, market-oriented neighborhood as a corporate asset. Here, in North’s view, the library could realize its potential as a public educational resource. A new and expanded museum, with an illuminated globe that charted the progress of Protestant missionary activity and biblical translation work around the world, would attract passersby. The society thus recalled its library from the New York Public Library, and within two years the transfer was complete. The NYPL’s cataloguing staff estimated that it would take 568 hours to gather the material together, and a test search revealed that approximately one-third of the items could not be located “as the books had been scattered among the Library’s own property” and “the separate collection record of the deposit was incomplete.” Further, the NYPL had elected to rebind approximately 1,000 of the original books in black buckram. Although the librarians viewed this as a source of pride and good preservation technique, future researchers and conservators would cringe at the loss of original sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bindings. Ultimately, however, the library failed to locate only twenty-two of the ABS’s items, and several of these subsequently surfaced and were sent to the society periodically through the early 1940s.²⁰

Despite the society’s hopes, the reuniting of the Scripture collection did not resolve the library’s problems. The library did remain an important scholarly resource, especially valuable for linguists, biblical translators, historians, and bibliographers. It continued to occupy a peculiar place, however, within its own institutional milieu. Increasingly, the ABS functioned as a support service for denominational agencies. The library had no direct connection with the increasingly important distribution, production, and fundraising functions of the institution. Its translation clientele was small and increasingly fragmented, especially as most scholarly work now took place far removed from the corridors of Bible House. Administrators periodically questioned whether “mission resources”

should be allocated to an essentially academic function. Further, the ABS's hopes for a biblical museum lagged. Within the large, well-financed, popularly accessible museum milieu of New York City, the society could only occupy a small and relatively insignificant place. Its space limitations and specialized exhibits could not attract the widespread attention that North desired. The problem perhaps even worsened in 1966, when the society relocated again near the entertainment and cultural complex around Lincoln Center.

The principal dilemma that has plagued the American Bible Society throughout its history is a familiar one for special librarians operating in primarily nonacademic environments. Effectively linking library functions with institutional needs is a tricky and difficult process. The founders established the ABS's library as an educational resource during a period of intense civic humanitarian optimism in early-nineteenth-century New York. Their library continues to occupy a secure niche and satisfy an important purpose within the larger library universe. As the society's own place within the American institutional milieu became more specialized, privatized, and clearly defined, however, administrators began viewing the library in somewhat narrower and more constricted terms. The library's place within its own organization often appeared tenuous, confused, and muddled. As nineteenth- and twentieth-century ABS administrators grappled with these problems, they adopted a series of unsatisfactory responses: bureaucratic reorganization, deposit with another agency, an emphasis on public relations. None of these efforts resolved the core issue. In the final analysis, the most permanent solution appears to be the most difficult to achieve. The library needs to be viewed as a core component of institutional mission, as a form of outreach to a scholarly and academic audience that appears largely disinterested in the ABS's other work, and as a public resource that documents the translation and production of Scripture over several centuries. Placing such a collection in an academic or public library dwarfs its own significance and destroys its coherence. Maintaining it as a separate and "special" resource helps to recapture a public character and an integrity for the institution that is difficult to defend in purely administrative terms, but extraordinarily significant in scope and breadth.

Notes

1. Secondary histories of the American Bible Society include Peter J. Wosh, *Spreading the Word: The Bible Business in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Charles I. Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960); Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960); Creighton Lacy, *The*

Word-Carrying Giant: The Growth of the American Bible Society (1816-1966) (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977); and Henry Otis Dwight, *The Centennial History of the American Bible Society* (New York: MacMillan, 1916). An important article is David Paul Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America," *Journalism Monographs* 88 (May 1984).

2. Margaret T. Hills, *The English Bible in America: A Bibliography of Editions of the Bible & the New Testament Published in America, 1777-1957* (New York: American Bible Society and the New York Public Library, 1962), and T. H. Darlow and H. G. Moule, *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of The British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1903), provide a basic overview of the nature and range of Bibles in the overlapping ABS and (British & Foreign Bible Society) BFBS collections. Liana Lupas and Erroll Rhodes, eds., *Scriptures of the World* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992) provides a listing of languages into which the Bible, or individual books of the Bible, have been translated.

3. Dwight, *Centennial History*, 52–53.

4. Larry E. Sullivan, "Bibles, Power, and the Development of Libraries in the New Republic: The Prison and Other Journals of John Pintard of New York," *Journal of Library History* 21:2 (Spring 1986): 407.

5. John Pintard to Samuel Bayard, 22 March 1817, Pintard Papers, New-York Historical Society; Dorothy Barck, ed., *Letters From John Pintard To His Daughter Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1940), 1:38; Minutes of the ABS Board of Managers, 15 January, 5 February 1817, American Bible Society Archives, New York, N.Y.

6. *American Bible Society Record* (May 1855), 1.

7. Minutes of Meeting of the ABS Board of Managers, 6 February 1823, ABS Archives.

8. On changes in the board and the growth in administrative positions, see Wosh, *Spreading the Word*, 48–61; Minutes of Meeting of the ABS Board of Managers, 7 April 1836, ABS Archives. Woodbury M. Fernald, *Memoirs and Reminiscences of the Late Prof. George Bush: Being for the Most Part, Voluntary Contributions From Different Friends, Who Have Kindly Consented To This Memorial of His Worth* (Boston: Otis Clapp, 1860).

9. American Bible Society, *Twenty-first Annual Report* (1837).

10. Minutes of Meetings of the ABS Board of Managers, 6 June and 4 July 1836; American Bible Society, Constitution and By-Laws, 1845, ABS Archives.

11. Wosh, *Spreading the Word*, 7–34; Samuel L. Clemens, *Mark Twain's Travels With Mr. Brown* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), 202.

12. Minutes of Meeting of the ABS Committee on Versions, 26 March 1898, ABS Archives; Eric M. North, "Notes and Sketches On A Possible New Bible House," unpublished American Bible Society Historical Essay, March 1963, ABS Archives.

13. Minutes of the ABS Committee on Versions, 3 July 1855, ABS Archives.

14. Minutes of the ABS Committee on Versions, 17 March 1857, 1 February 1879, 30 April 1881; Edward Gilman, "The Library of the ABS," 28 March 1896, Corresponding Secretary's Papers, ABS Archives.

15. Minutes of the ABS Committee on Versions, 26 March 1896, ABS Archives.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. The relationship can be traced through the correspondence between William I. Haven and John S. Billings, Director's Office, American Bible Society Correspondence (1911–1914), New York Public Library Archives, New York, N.Y.

See also Eric North to Keyes D. Metcalf, 21 August 1931, and North to H. M. Lydenberg, 25 August 1931, Director's Office, American Bible Society correspondence (1934–1954), New York Public Library Archives.

19. North's father-in-law, William I. Haven, had served as an ABS general secretary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and initiated the testy 1912 correspondence with the New York Public Library referred to above. For information concerning North and Hills, see "Biographical Files," ABS Archives. Hills, *English Bible in America*. Eric M. North to H. M. Lydenberg, 25 August 1931, Director's Office, American Bible Society correspondence (1934–1954), New York Public Library Archives.

20. Memo from L. Quincy Mumford, 25 March 1938, Director's Office, American Bible Society correspondence (1934–1944), New York Public Library Archives. "Final Report of the Return of the American Bible Society Deposit Collection, 1936–1940," New York Public Library Archives.