

# HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS IN MAINE

WILLIAM CATHCART  
(1826 - 1908)

The oldest incorporated town in what is now the State of Maine was Kittery. The presence of Baptist sentiments was recognized not far from the year 1681. A few Baptists were among the earlier settlers of this place. Among the more prominent of these was William Screven, who suffered no small amount of persecution from the "standing order" on account of his persistent adherence to Baptist principles. A church was formed in 1682, but in less than a year it was broken up and its members scattered.

From the dissolution of the church in Kittery, a period of eighty-five years elapsed before the appearance of any other organized body of Baptists. In 1768 a church was formed in Berwick from persons converted under the preaching of Eld. Hezekiah Smith. That church lived through all the fiery trials of persecution, and is today the flourishing church of South Berwick. In a few years other churches were formed. As the district of Maine was settled, Baptist principles everywhere  
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## Maine Baptists

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spread and new churches were organized. In the State there are now 13 Associations, embracing 261 churches, with a membership of nearly 21,000 persons.

The Maine Baptist Convention was formed in 1824. Its officers were: President, Eld. H. E. Robbins; Vice-President, Eld. S. L. B. Chase; Recording Secretary, Eld. H. S. Burrage; Corresponding Secretary, J. Ricker. Its permanent invested funds are \$9700, and its income from all sources as reported at its last meeting \$8400.91.

The Maine Baptist Charitable Society has for its object to contribute to the wants of indigent ministers and to the needy families of deceased ministers. The president is P. Bonney, Esq.

The Maine Baptist Education Society furnishes aid to young men in a course of preparation for the Christian ministry. Its funds amount to nearly \$3000. The president of the society is Eld. J. McWhinnie.

The Baptists of Maine constitute one of the strongest and most efficient denominational bodies in the country. Their college, Colby University, with the three academic institutions having a vital connection with it, the Waterville Classical Institute, Hebron Academy, and Hootton Academy, furnished the best facilities for the higher education of the young. An able ministry is guiding and moulding the churches. The spirit of benevolence pervades these churches, and they will compare favorably with other churches in

their contributions to all good causes. Every year marks progress and religious enterprise. The Baptists of Maine have no reason to be ashamed of their past record, or of the position which they now hold among the other religious communities of the State.

(BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA, Vol. II, pp. 739-740, 1881 Edition).