Creator: William Baxter
Title: Baxter-Sutton Collection
Inclusive dates: 1851-2006
Extent: 3 linear feet
MSS #: 144

Language: Material is in English
Acquisition: Purchased July 2008 from Stephen Anshutz
Access: The collection is open without restriction.
Photographs: The collection includes 8 boxes of photographs, along with oversized items.
A-V Material: There is no A-V material
Digital Material: There is no digital material
Copyright: Copyright is held by Earlham College.
Processed By: Anne Thomason, Assistant Archivist, August 2008
Preferred Citation: <item>, Baxter-Sutton Collection, Friends Collection and Archives, Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana
Abstract
Correspondence, business records, deeds, and photographs documenting the Baxter and Sutton families, primarily 1855-1910.

Biography/History
William Baxter was an influential Quaker, businessman, and politician of Richmond, Indiana. This collection documents his life, that of his wife Mary (Barker) Baxter, and his children, especially his daughter Mary Ellen (Baxter) Sutton and the family of her husband, John G. Sutton.

William Baxter was born in Appletreewick, Yorkshire, February 11, 1824, the son of John and Mary Baxter. He immigrated to the United States in 1848 and settled in Philadelphia. As his biography in the 1872 Wayne County history states: “By his unusual industry, application, and business capacity, he soon gained the unbounded confidence of his employers, and after the short space of eight months, one of the partners retiring from the firm, offered him a partnership in the wool trade. . . . In 1864 he retired with an ample fortune.”

William Baxter’s first wife was Mary Wickett, who died soon after they arrived in Philadelphia. In 1856 Baxter was married under the care of the Whitewater Monthly Meeting here in Richmond to Mary Barker (1830-1918), daughter of Enoch and Sophia (Davis) Barker. They had seven children. In 1864, the family returned to Richmond, where William Baxter took up the life of a gentleman farmer west of the city at a home the family christened “Cliffside.” He also invested heavily in the Wayne Agricultural Works company, of which he was the vice-president.

In Richmond, Baxter became active in civic affairs, especially in the cause of temperance. In 1872, he was elected as a Republican to the Indiana House of Representatives, and in 1876 was elected to the state senate. He was best known as the author of the controversial “Baxter Law,” passed by the legislature in 1873, which required applicants for liquor licenses to obtain signatures from a majority of the legal voters in the ward or precinct in which sales would take place. It proved so unpopular that it was repealed in 1875.

William Baxter died of typhoid fever in Richmond, September 6, 1886. He had already sold most of his farm to support his Wayne Works investment, and the rest had to be disposed of to settle his estate.

The second child of William and Mary (Barker) Baxter was Mary Ellen, born in Philadelphia November 1, 1860, and died in Richmond November 24, 1945. She was married January 11, 1882, to John Gough Sutton (1854-1925), a nephew of David Sutton (1827-1902), whose family often appears in the collection. John G. and Mary (Baxter) Sutton had one daughter, Helena Sutton (1888-1967), a teacher in Richmond.

Helena Sutton inherited her parents’ and grandparents’ papers as well as a large collection of papers of the Coffin family, through Lucy (Baxter) Coffin, a daughter of
William and Mary Baxter who married Percival B. Coffin. After her death, her heirs donated some of the Baxter and nearly all of the Coffin papers to the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College. Others were acquired by Stephen Anshutz, Earlham class of 1967, who sold them to the Friends Collection in 2008.

Sources: Andrew W. Young, History of Wayne County, Indiana; Henry Clay Fox, Memoirs of Wayne County, Indiana, vol. II; Obituary, Christian Worker, 2nd Mo. 3, 1887; Beverly Yount, Tombstone Inscriptions in Wayne County, Indiana, vol. I; Stephen Anshutz.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of correspondence, business materials, and photographs from the Baxter and Sutton families. The collection is arranged into two series, one of correspondence and business records, and one of photographs. The letters to William Baxter by Mary Barker prior to their marriage are especially rich. The correspondence primarily consists of letters to William Baxter. Some of the other correspondents include Alfred Baxter and Esther Wilson. The series also includes cemetery lot information, deeds and preservation issues associated with the Sutton House and Cliffside, and miscellaneous business records primarily from Wayne County. The series also includes some grammar and arithmetic books owned by William and Mary Baxter.

The photographs include members of the Baxter and Sutton family. There are also numerous pictures of property including Cliffside, Brooks Farm, and land in Iowa along with a few travel photos. There are also some negatives and some postcards. The series is arranged first by individuals that were clearly identified. Unidentified photos were then placed together. Eventually the pictures may be identified, but to make the collection available to researchers we did not identify every individual photo. Researchers are free to look at the unidentified photos.

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence and Business Records

Box 1

- Folder 1: Mary Barker, 1854
- Folder 2: Mary Barker, 1855
- Folder 3: Mary Barker, 1856
- Folder 4: Mary and William Baxter, 1856-1880
- Folder 5: Correspondence with Family, 1848-1861
- Folder 6: Alfred Baxter, 1851
- Folder 8: Ralph Fawcett, 1854
- Folder 9: Esther Wilson, 1853-1854
- Folder 11: Baxter and Suttons, 1870s
- Folder 12: Puzzles/Tests, undated
- Folder 13: Hymns, undated
Folder 14  William Baxter Biographical Information
Folder 15  Temperance and Capital Punishment Material, 1871-1878
Folder 16  Baxter Library Ledger, undated
Folder 17  Earlham Cemetery Lots, William and Mary Baxter, 1867 and 1896
Folder 18  Sutton House Preservation Efforts, 1976-1995
Folder 19  Sutton Funerals, David Sutton and Anne H. Sutton, 1900-1902
Folder 20  Helena Sutton material, 1968-1969 (bulk)

**Box 2**
Folder 1  Mary Baxter Real Estate, Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 1863-1903
Folder 2  Mary Baxter Real Estate S. 18th, 1900-1903
Folder 10  Real Estate, Miscellaneous, 1857-1874
Folder 11  Wayne Agricultural Company, 1875-1886
Folder 12  Wayne County Business, 1880s, 2001
Folder 13  Miscellaneous Financial Material, 1870-1880
Folder 14  Bad Accounts, 1886
Folder 15  Stocks and Bonds, 1875-1883
Folder 15  Shipping Information, 1884
Folder 16  Wool trade, 1875-1878
Folder 17  General Financial Correspondence, 1873-1878
Folder 18  Tennessee Real Estate, 1870-1878
Folder 19  Cliffside Furnishings and Decoration, 1864
Folder 20  Cliffside Supplies and Acquisitions, 1864
Folder 21  Cliffside Articles and Plans, 1876, 1940
Folder 23  Cliffside Transactions, 1863-1865
Folder 24  First National Bank, 1864, 2006
Folder 25  Miscellaneous
Folder 26  Postcards
Folder 27  Postcards

**Box 3**
Folder 1  Percival Coffin Correspondence (2 letters, 1 illegible)
Folder 2  Principles of English Grammar belonging to William Baxter
Folder 3  Arithmetic Book belonging to Mary Barker
Folder 4  Index Rerum, belonging to William Baxter
Folder 5  Bookplate belonging to William Baxter

**Series 2 Photographs**
Folder 6  Photograph album

**Box 4**
Mary Ellen Baxter Sutton (3 folders)
Maria Baxter

**Box 5**
Helena Baxter  
Esther Fletcher  
Lucy Baxter Coffin and Percival Coffin  
Hettie Elliott  
Emily Baxter  
William Herbert Baxter  

**Box 6**  
Group picture: Standing Mary Ellen Baxter Sutton, Sarah B. Fletcher, Emily Baxter  
Seated: Lucy B. Coffin, Mariah B. (per notes by Steve)  
Cliffside  
William and Mary Baxter  
Maria Baxter  
Sutton Family Photos (2 folders)  

**Box 7**  
Postcards  
William Baxter  
Mary Baxter  
Hugh Moffit  
Cliffside oversized  

**Box 8**  
Property: Brooks Farm  
Property: Brooks Farm  
Property: Brooks Farm, Cliffside, Other  
Property: Possibly Cliffside, Brooks Farm, Iowa, Other  

**Box 9**  
School photos (1 folder)  
Unidentified Photos (3 folders)  

**Box 10**  
Unidentified Photos, 3 folders  
Oversized photos, unidentified  

**Box 11**  
Negatives, unidentified  
Glass Plates, unidentified  

**Oversized Items**  
**Oversized Box 1**  
Photo Album Black Background.  

**Oversized Box 2**  
Three Large Portraits of William Baxter (two are identical but one framed, other framed)
4 Generations of Coffins