

**ARTHUR AND KATHLEEN POSTLE ARCHIVES AND  
FRIENDS COLLECTION  
EARLHAM COLLEGE, LILLY LIBRARY, RICHMOND IN**

**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>, William Baxter 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. 18<sup>th</sup>, 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