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Hugh Potter Baker Papers

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1919-1951

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[Series 1. Subject Files](#)

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President of the Massachusetts State College (now UMass Amherst) from 1933-1947. Includes correspondence with college, state, and federal officials, college suppliers, and alumni; speeches and articles; reports and other papers on topics at issue during Baker's college presidency, 1933-1947, particularly the building program; biographical sketches and memorial tributes; clippings and other papers, relating to Baker's career as professor of forestry at several colleges, trade association executive, and college president.

See similar SCUA collections:

Botany and horticulture

Mass Agricultural College (1863-1931)

Mass State College (1931-1947)

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World War

Background on Hugh Potter Baker

1878

Born January 20 at St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, the fifth of six sons of Joseph S. and Alice (Potter) Baker.

1894-1895

Attended Macalester College.

1897

Entered Michigan Agricultural College.

1901

B.S., Michigan Agricultural College; worked briefly with K.L. Butterfield.

1904-1907

Assistant and Associate Professor of Forestry, Iowa State College.

1904

Master of Forestry, Yale University; married Fleta Paddock of Three Oaks, Michigan, December 27.

1907-1912

Professor of Forestry, Pennsylvania State College.

1910

Doctor of Economics, University of Munich.

1912-1920

Dean, New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse University.

1920-1928

Executive Secretary, American Paper and Pulp Association.

1928

First wife died.

1928-1930

Manager, Trade Association Dept., U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

1929

Married Richarda Sahls of Buckeburg, Germany, November 27

1930-1933

Dean, New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse University.

1931-1932

Member, advisory committee, Timber Conservation Board.

1933

LL.D., Syracuse University.

1933-1947

President, Massachusetts State College.

1942

LL.D., Rhode Island State College.

1944

President, New England Forestry Foundation.

1945

D. Sc., Boston University.

1947

Massachusetts State College renamed University of Massachusetts; LL.D., Amherst College; LL.D.,

University of Massachusetts; Resigned presidency of University of Massachusetts, effective in Sept.

1950

Died May 24 at Orlando, Florida.

Scope of collection

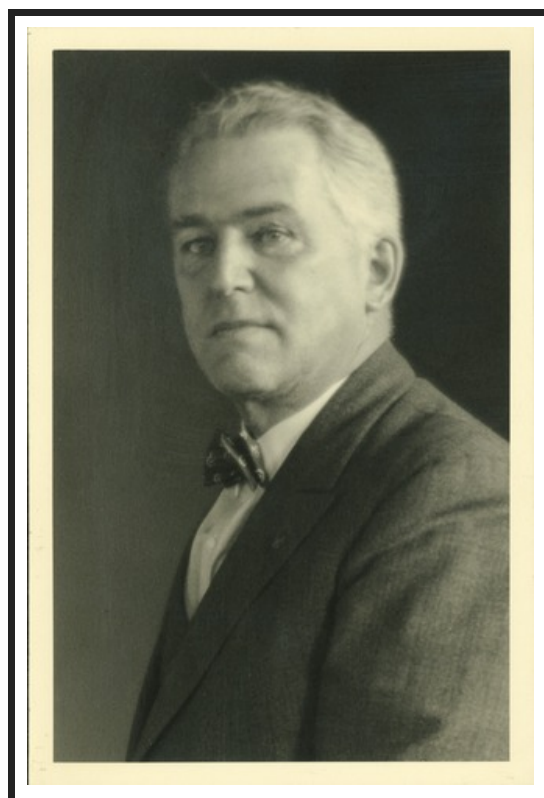
The Hugh P. Baker Papers, 1919-1951, are made up of biographical materials, copies of some of Baker's writings, and administrative and official papers from his presidency at the Massachusetts State College, which began in 1933, soon after the institution had been renamed Massachusetts State College in 1931, and ended a few months after the institution became the University of Massachusetts, in 1947.

The papers consist of correspondence and memoranda exchanged with members of the faculty and staff and with state and federal officials, as well as reports on problems connected with the fiscal drought of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the labor-short and student-short period of World War II. The bulk of the administrative papers document the College building program in which Baker's administration brought several new buildings to the campus and launched the planning of a number of others. Some construction was funded from federal sources, while other building was financed by the Massachusetts State College Building Association, which the General Court chartered in 1939. The activities of the Building Association in particular alleviated the shortage of student housing on campus, which had long been the major barrier to the expansion of the College's educational program. The building program not only accommodated the moderate growth of the College's enrollment during the 1930s, but laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of the institution which began with the end of World War II and continued into the 1970s.

The papers also include correspondence and other materials related to the donation and manufacture of the Old Chapel Chimes, installed in 1937; the celebration in 1938 of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the College; the dispute between the State Commission on Administration and Finance, and College and federal authorities over the use of Federal Land Grant Funds; and the development of the School of Home Economics.

Further information on the course of affairs at the institution during Baker's tenure may be found in the published Annual Reports of the institution in RG 1/00/2, and in the papers of other college officials of his day, such as those of Dean William L. Machmer, in RG 6/1.

Some Baker correspondence, probably related to his roles at the Syracuse University School of Forestry and the American Paper and Pulp Association, are in the Ralph S. Hosmer and the National Forestry Program Committee papers in the archives and manuscripts collections of the Cornell University Library.



Hugh Potter Baker

Arrangement

This collection is organized into two series:

Series 1. Subject Files, 1919-1951

Series 2. Massachusetts State College Administrative Papers, 1933-1947

Series descriptions

Series 1. Subject Files

1919-1951

1 box, 0.5 linear feet

The subject files of the Baker papers include general biographical materials and a variety of addresses and short articles he wrote between 1930 and 1947. The biographical materials extend from 1930 to 1951, and include biographical sketches and memorial tributes, materials related to degrees both earned and honorary, memorabilia, and several folders of newspaper and magazine clippings on his activities from 1930 to 1947.

For photographs of Baker see RG 110/1.

Series 2. MSC Administrative Papers

1933-1947

9 boxes, 4 linear feet

The administrative papers of the President's Office generated while Hugh P. Baker held the office from 1933 to 1947 make up this series. They includes memoranda and correspondence with college, state and federal officials, with the College's suppliers and alumni, and reports and papers generated by College administrators and faculty, all on a variety of topics at issue during Baker's presidency.

The papers came primarily from the Secretary's papers. These files had been managed by Secretary Robert D. Hawley until he became the College's Treasurer in 1939, then by James W. Burke, who succeeded as Secretary in 1939 and held the post until his retirement in 1958, and then by Secretary and Liaison Officer Robert McCartney, who died in 1975. As received, the papers

were filed largely by subject, and the arrangement used here is representative of that found in the original files. Although materials on many specific projects and problems Baker dealt with are found here, his papers do not seem to be as broadly representative of the issues he dealt with as the corresponding papers of earlier presidents.

The bulk of the administrative papers deals directly or indirectly with the College's building program, the pace of which picked up under Baker in spite of the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II. Federal money for buildings was channeled through the Massachusetts (State) Emergency Public Works Commission (folders 54-56), and money for other improvements in the physical plant became available through the U.S. Works Projects Administration (folders 111-119). Even U.S. Emergency Relief Administration funds, generally used to enhance payrolls and student aid funding, were occasionally mobilized for grounds projects (folders 103-104). Further, after two campaigns, [see Mass. (State) Legislation (folders 57-63)], the M.S.C Building Association (folders 45-46) was chartered to fund the construction of dormitories and other income generating buildings. Further information on the building program under Baker is found under the headings Buildings (folders 11-19), and Women's Program (folders 120-128). The following items from this subseries are located in map case 2, drawer 3: a 1933 organization chart in blue print of the College; plans for buildings 25, 33 and 35; diagrams of two projects at the Experiment Station at Waltham; and plans for a proposed armory and for road construction connected with project ST 5, both of which were proposed to the U.S.W.P.A., but only the latter was funded.

Other highlights of this series include correspondence and/or papers connected with the donation and manufacture of the Old Chapel Chimes, installed in 1937 (Chimes--Old Chapel, folders 20-21); the celebration in 1938 of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the College (Diamond Jubilee, folders 28-29); the lengthy dispute between the State Commission on Administration and Finance on one hand, and College and federal authorities on the other, over the use of Federal Land Grant Funds, folders 41-44; the dispute between State authorities and the College over its management of revolving funds and endowments (Mass. (State) Auditor, folder 48; Mass (State) Legislation, folders 57-63; and Trust Funds and Scholarships, folders 88-100); the hearings in 1938 following the firing of chief engineer Howard Bidwell (Personnel, folders 65-7-1); the Lotta Crabtree Agricultural Fund and the Hood Foundation scholarships (Trust Funds and Scholarships, folders 88-100), and the development of the School of Home Economics (Women's, Program, folders 120-128).

Other headings include Administrative Planning; Alumni; Appointments; Associations; Chapel; Conferences and Summer Schools; Course of Study; Departments; Extension Service; Gifts, Solicitations, etc.; Graduate School; Grounds; Inauguration; Mass. (State) Attorney General; Public Relations; Report to Board of Trustees; Resignation; Sigma Xi; Student Matters; Tuition and Fees; U.S. Bureau of Education; and U.S. Funds.

Inventory

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1 box, 0.5 linear feet

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1932-1938

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Addresses

1939

Box 1: 2

Addresses

1940-1941

Box 1: 3

Addresses

1942-1947

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n.d.

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Digitized content

Selected materials in this collection have been digitized and are available for viewing online through SCUA's digital repository, Credo.

Processing Information

Processed by W. B. Cook, Jr., 1982.

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Search terms

Subjects

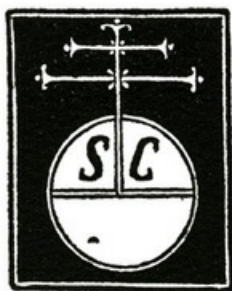
Baker, Hugh P. (Hugh Potter), 1878-1950
Clock chimes--Massachusetts--Amherst--History--Sources.
College buildings--Massachusetts--Amherst--History--Sources.
Massachusetts State College--Anniversaries, etc.
Massachusetts State College--Buildings.
Massachusetts State College--History--Sources.
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Massachusetts--Politics and government--1865-1950--Sources.
Old Chapel (Amherst, Mass.)--History--Sources.
Student housing--Massachusetts--Amherst--History--Sources.
University of Massachusetts (Amherst campus)--History--Sources.

Contributors

Baker, Hugh P. (Hugh Potter), 1878-1950 [main entry]

Link to similar SCUA collections

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