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Hugh Potter Baker Papers

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1919-1951
10 boxes (4.5 linear ft.)
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- [About SCUA](#)
 - [SCUA home](#)
 - [Credo digital](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Overview](#)
 - [Series 1. Subject Files](#)
 - [Series 2. MSC Administrative Papers](#)
- [Inventory](#)
 - [Series 1. Subject Files](#)
 - [Series 2. MSC Administrative Papers](#)
- [Admin info](#)
- [Download](#)
 - [xml version](#)
 - [print version \(pdf\)](#)



Read collection overview

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.

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[Mass Agricultural College \(1863-1931\)](#)
[Mass State College \(1931-1947\)](#)
[UMass \(1947- \)](#)
[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 Fleeta 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



Hugh Potter Baker

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.

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

Series 1. Subject Files

1919-1951

1 box, 0.5 linear feet

Addresses

1932-1938

Box 1: 1

Addresses

1939

Box 1: 2

Addresses

1940-1941

Box 1: 3

Addresses

1942-1947

Box 1: 4

Addresses

n.d.

Box 1: 5

Articles and Pamphlets

1919-1945

Box 1: 6

Baker House Dedication

1951

Box 1: 7

Biographical Material

1933-1946

Box 1: 8

Biographies and Memorials

1932-1951

Box 1: 9

Dedication -- "Shorthorn"

1939

Box 1: 10

Degrees and Honorary Degrees

1910-1947

Box 1: 11
Memorabilia
1930-1937, n.d.
Box 1: 12
Newspaper-Clips and Extracts
1930-1933
Box 1: 13
Newspaper-Clips and Extracts
1935-1941
Box 1: 14
Newspaper-Clips and Extracts
1942-1947, n.d.
Box 1: 15
Series 2. MSC Administrative Papers
1933-1947
9 boxes, 4 linear feet
Administrative Planning
1933-1944
Box 2: 1
Alumni
1933-1942
Box 2: 2
Appointment
1932
Box 2: 3
Associations: American Council on Education
1933-1941
Box 2: 4-55
Associations: Ass'n of Governing Boards
1934-1947
Box 2: 6-9
Associations: New England Council
1940
Box 2: 10
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35
1947
Box 2: 11
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Cornerstones and Dedications
1934-1941
Box 2: 12
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Dormitory Building
1932-1937
Box 2: 13
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: General
1933-1947
Box 2: 14
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Dormitories for Veterans
1945-1946
Box 2: 15
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Dormitory Operations
1935-1941
Box 2: 16
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Heating Plant and Repair Shop
1943-1945
Box 2: 17
Buildings: #'s 25, 33 and 35: Skinner Hall
1944-1948
Box 2: 18
Buildings: see also M.S.C. Building Ass'n; Mass.(State), Emergency Public Works Commission; Mass. (State) Legislation; W.S.W.P.A. and Women's Program

Box 2: 19
Chimes - Old Chapel Conferences and Summer Schools
1936-1937
Box 2: 20-21
General
1933-1946
Box 2: 22
Country Life Conference
1934
Box 2: 23
Course of Study: B.A. Degree Comm.
1937-1938
Box 2: 24
Course of Study: Public Health
1939-1942
Box 2: 25
Departments: Military
1936-1945
Box 2: 26
Departments: Veterinary Science
1946-1947
Box 2: 27
Diamond Jubilee - Committee minutes
1937-1938
Box 2: 28-29
Extension Service
1933-1944
Box 2: 30
Extension Service: Publications
1934-1935
Box 2: 31
Gifts, Solicitations, etc.
1933-1943
Box 2: 32
Gifts, Solicitations: Use of

1940
Box 2: 33
Gifts, Solicitations: Proceeds

Box 2: 33
Gifts, Solicitations: Booklets
1933, 1940
Box 2: 34
Graduate School
1937-1945
Box 2: 35
Grounds: General
1932-1934
Box 2: 36
Grounds: Blundell Report "Campus Planting-Arboretum"
1933
Box 2: 37
Grounds: Waltham
1943
Box 2: 38
Inauguration
1933
Box 2: 39
Inauguration: Papers, Invitations, etc.
1933
Box 2: 40
Land Grant Funds: Correspondence
1933-1942
Box 4: 41
Land Grant Funds: Leading Documents
1926-1942
Box 4: 42
Land Grant Funds: Papers
1935-1937
Box 4: 43
Land Grant Funds: Policy and Procedure
1926-1942
Box 4: 44
M.S.C. Building Association: Correspondence
1939
Box 4: 45
M.S.C. Building Association: Papers
1940-1946
Box 4: 46

[Mass. \(State\) Advisory Comm. on the Establishment of a Veterinary College see Departments: Veterinary Science](#)

Mass. (State)- Attorney General
1935-1946
Box 4: 47
Mass. (State)- Auditor
1933-1944
Box 4: 48
Mass. (State)- Commission on Administration and Finance
1941-1947
Box 4: 49
Mass. (State)- Commission on Administration and Finance
1936-1937
Box 4: 50
Mass. (State)- Commission on Administration and Finance
1933-1935
Box 4: 51
Mass. (State)- Commission on Administration and Finance
1938-1940
Box 4: 52
Mass. (State)- Commission on Administration and Finance
1943
Box 4: 53
Mass. (State) Emergency Public Works Comm., Thatcher Dorm and Goodell Library
1933-1934
Box 4: 54-55
Mass. (State) Emergency Public Works Comm.
1935-1948
Box 4: 56

[see also Buildings](#)

Mass. (State) Legislation:- "Dormitory Bill" Corr.
1933
Box 5: 57
Mass. (State) Legislation - "Dormitory Bill" Papers
1932-1933
Box 5: 58
Mass. (State) Legislation - "Dormitory Bill" Corr.
1938-1939
Box 5: 59-60
Mass. (State) Legislation -Revolv. Fund
1938
Box 5: 61-62
Mass. (State) Legislation -General
1938-1945
Box 5: 63
Personnel: General
1933-1947
Box 5: 64
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-General and Reports

1930
Box 6: 65
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-General
1933-1937
Box 6: 66
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Corr. re:Proced.
1938
Box 6: 67
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Employees Petitions; Time and Pay
1938
Box 6: 68
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Notes on Reqs. and Inventory
1933-1937
Box 6: 69
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Administrators Briefs and Notes
1938
Box 6: 70
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-his Testimony
1938
Box 6: 71
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Transcript of Hearing V.1
1938
Box 6: 72
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Transcript of Hearing V.2
1938
Box 6: 73
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Transcript of Hearing V.3
1938
Box 6: 74
Personnel: Bidwell Case:-Transcript of Hearing V.4
1938
Box 6: 75
Personnel: Retirement System
1940-1945
Box 7: 76
Personnel: Retirement System: Retirements
1936-1944
Box 7: 77
Public Relations
1937-1945
Box 7: 78
Report to Board of Trustees (draft)
1945
Box 7: 79
Resignation
1947
Box 7: 80
Sigma Xi: Faculty Honorary Society- Pet.
1935
Box 7: 81
Sigma Xi: Faculty Honorary Society- Pet.
1937-1942
Box 7: 82
Student Matters: Fraternities, etc.
1934-1935
Box 7: 83
Student Matters: Fraternities, etc.: General
1933-1946
Box 7: 84
Student Matters: Fraternities, etc.: Org. of Athletics
1935
Box 7: 85
Student Matters: Fraternities, etc.: Revolving Funds
1937
Box 7: 86
Student Matters: Fraternities, etc.: Tau Kappa Alpha debating fraternity
1934-1936
Box 7: 87
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- General
1938-1947
Box 7: 88
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- General Report on Endowed Funds
1933-1937
Box 7: 89
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Crabtree
1934-1939
Box 7: 90
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Crabtree
1940-1943
Box 7: 91
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Greene
1939
Box 7: 92
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Hood Dairy Foundation
1933-1936
Box 8: 93
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Hood Dairy Foundation
1937-1940
Box 8: 94
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Hood Dairy Foundation
1940-1946
Box 8: 95
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Pinkerton Scholarships
1934-1937
Box 8: 96
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Plumb Fell.

1939
Box 8: 97
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Sessions Fund
1937
Box 8: 98
Trust Funds and Scholarships:- Student Loan Funds
1938
Box 8: 99
Trust Funds: Trustee Comm. on Finance - Extracts of Minutes
1875-1934
Box 8: 100
Tuition and Fees
1933-1944
Box 8: 101
U.S. Bureau of Education
1933-1936
Box 8: 102
U.S. Emergency Relief Admin. - Employment
1935
Box 8: 103
U.S. Emergency Relief Admin. - General
1934-1935
Box 8: 104
U.S. Funds: Bankhead-Jones Corr.
3/1935--7/1935
Box 8: 105
U.S. Funds: Bankhead-Jones Corr.
8/1935-1936
Box 8: 106
U.S. Funds: Bankhead-Jones Papers and Mem.
1935-1937
Box 8: 107
U.S. Funds: Jones Papers and Mem.
1937-1941
Box 8: 108
U.S. Funds: Thomas Bill (Extension Serv)
1944
Box 8: 109
U.S. Funds: Hatch Act (Political Activ)
1940
Box 8: 110
U.S.W.P.A.: Corr. and Circulars
1935-1941
Box 9: 111
U.S.W.P.A.: Grounds Projects
1935-1938
Box 9: 112
U.S.W.P.A.: Project ST-5 (Road)
1935-1936
Box 9: 113
U.S.W.P.A.: Projected Buildings
1934-1936
Box 9: 114
U.S.W.P.A.: Projects M.S.C. 11 and 18 (roads)
1938
Box 9: 115
U.S.W.P.A.: Proposed Armory Corr.
1940-1941
Box 9: 116
U.S.W.P.A.: Proposed Armory Papers
1940-1941
Box 9: 117
U.S.W.P.A.: Steam Lines (Charles T. Main)
1933-1935
Box 9: 118
U.S.W.P.A.: "White Collar Projects"
1938-1939
Box 9: 119
Advisory Council of Women: Corr. A-C
1933-1941
Box 9: 120
Advisory Council of Women: D-G
1933-1941
Box 9: 121
Advisory Council of Women: H-L
1933-1941
Box 9: 122
Advisory Council of Women: M-W
1933-1941
Box 9: 123
Women's Program-General
1933-1945
Box 9: 124
Women's Program-Mailings
1933-1939
Box 10: 125
Women's Program-Meetings 13-25
1933-1940
Box 10: 126
Women's Program-Meetings 26-32
1941-1946
Box 10: 127
Women's Program-Home Economics Building
1939-1941
Box 10: 128
[World War II and its Aftermath](#)

1941-1946
Box 10: 129
[World War II Veterans](#)
1944-1946
Box 10: 130

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](#).

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English

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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.
- Massachusetts State College--Presidents--Archives.
- Massachusetts State College--Student housing.
- Massachusetts State College. School of Home Economics --History--Sources.
- 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]

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