

Title:	Baker family fonds, 1848-1918		
Creator:	Stephens Baker, Stephens O. Baker, Douglas Morgan Baker		
Dates of Material:	1848-1883, 1917-1918	Record Group Number:	RG 657
Summary of Contents:	<p>Fonds consists mostly of the journals and diaries of silversmith Stephens Baker of Beverly, Massachusetts, 1848-1883. This includes two travel journals and seven daily diaries. Also included are the World War I journals of his great-grandsons, Pvt. Stephens O. Baker and 1st Lieut. Dr. Douglas Morgan Baker.</p> <p>1.1 Travel journal, "Tour to Cincinnati in August and September 1848". The title on the first page reads "Journal of the Journey from Beverly to Cincinnati of Stephens Baker and wife". The journal consists of 34 pages, with entries dated from August 14- September 1, 1848. Baker describes the cities he visited on the trip, including Niagara Falls. In an entry dated Thursday [August 17], 8 o'clock, he writes "went on board the steamer 'Maid of the Mist' and passed within two nods [knots] of the highest Falls, the boat trembled exceedingly from the effect of the fall of water, and the spray was thrown over us so as very much to alarm some of the female passengers. It is impossible to describe the effect produced on the mind by this greatest of natural curiosities. It was truly magnificent. The suspension Bridge from the deck of the Steamer looked like fine network and a man passing over it at the time like a Lilliputian. It rained most of the time, making mortar of the soil which clung closely to our boots making it very difficult to get along, the clay adhering closely and being slippery withal." He describes the suspension bridge over the Niagara River, writing that "the bridge over the Falls is substantially built and all who will take the trouble to examine the manner in which it is secured on the banks, will not hesitate to cross it." He also describes the Cataract House in Niagara Falls, New York, stating that "the Cataract House at this place is a noble building filled with visitors. A band of music is constantly employed, which perform while the boarders are at their meals. The servants march on their attendance upon the tables, keeping time with the music and much time is spent at the table."</p> <p>He also visits Sandusky, Stuebenville, Pittsburg, several towns in Kentucky and Virginia, Baltimore and New York. He describes the factories, churches and public buildings he visited in Cincinnati, as well as his visit with Nicholas Longworth at his mansion. Baker was a Mason, and describes the Masonic temples he visited on his journey.</p> <p>1.2 Travel journal "Ten days tour to Vermont, Canada, the Lakes & c." The journal consists of 24 pages with entries dated from August 21-30, 1850. The journal describes his journey through Vermont to Montreal, Niagara Falls, and cities along the Genesee and Mohawk Rivers, to Albany. The entry dated</p>		

August 27 contains a lengthy description of his trip through Niagara, with descriptions of the suspension bridge, the burning spring, and Lundy's Lane. He writes that "...we took the cars for Niagara and were drawn over the mountain by horses, three being attached to each car. At this place there is an apology for a monument erected to Gen. Brock...The land on this mountain very fertile and the view of the Lake from its summit very interesting...arrived at the Falls 9 o'clock and stopped at the Falls House and very soon took a carriage with an intelligent driver to show us all that was worthy [of] attention at this place. We rode to the Suspension Bridge and after paying \$1 for the carriage and 25 cents each making 2.25 we sent the carriage on and walked over. The toll seemed to me high, but when we considered that the cost of the Bridge was \$190,000 we concluded all right. The Bridge appears to be substantially secured and is a great work of art. From the bridge we have a tolerable view of part of the Falls. After crossing the bridge we rode to the top of the Falls and had a very fine view of the Horseshoe Falls and table rock, part of which had fallen into the chasm. We also went up into the lookout to view the Falls from that place. It was truly a sublime sight. After purchasing a pair of Indian moccasins rode to the burning spring, this is also a great natural curiosity which on touching the water with a lighter match a very bright flame issued, the smell of the gas being very strong and unpleasant. Drank of the water which was good. From thence to Lundy's Lane at which place there is an observatory on the top of which is a survivor of that battle who will show you all the grounds and give a complete history of the Battle at the place, the fee being 20 cents. Returning we rode after the Bridge to the House to dinner after which we looked in at the principal hotels. There are a vast many people at this place, more it was said than at any former season." He concludes the journal by making a reference to the famous Parkman-Webster murder case, delaying his entry into Boston in order to avoid the crowds attending the hanging of Professor Webster. He writes on August 30 that he "...arrived at Boston 245 miles from Albany, 12 ¼ o'clock. This being the day set apart for the hanging of Professor Webster did not wish to get into Boston until this awful tragedy was over..."

- 1.3-1.9** Seven daily diaries kept by Stephens Baker for the years 1871, 1874, 1876, 1879, 1881-1883. Diary entries cover the weather, domestic and social affairs, cash accounts, business activities including rental property, lists of purchases, Masonic affairs, inventory of his wealth, and comments on local events.
- 1.10** Notebook, 1848-1881. A pocket notebook containing notes about domestic affairs, income and rents, letters received, and genealogical information.
- 1.11** Diary of 1st Lieut. Douglas M. Baker, 1918. Contains brief entries dated January 20-November 21, 1918. Baker was stationed in France.
- 1.12** Diary of Private Stephens O. Baker, 1917-1918. Contains a brief narrative of his time with Battery C, 73rd Artillery C.A.C., U.S. Army.

Physical Description / Condition:	2 travel journals, 25 x 20 cm. 7 daily diaries, 15 x 9 cm or smaller 1 pocket notebook 2 World War I diaries		
Other Notes:	<p>Stephens Baker (1791-1883) was a silversmith from Beverly, Massachusetts. Baker served as a postmaster, county commissioner, justice of the peace, public notary, and was a charter member of the Liberty Masonic Lodge. He married Adeline Batchelder (1801-1867) in 1827, and had at least four children. In 1871, he married Mary Ann Foster (widow of Ebenezer Webber).</p> <p>Douglas M. Baker (1895-1972) and Stephens O. Baker (1890-1953) were brothers, and great-grandsons of Stephens Baker. Both men served overseas during World War I.</p>		
Location:	Brock University Library		
Source Information:	Material was purchased in 2018.		
Described by:	Chantal Cameron	Date:	July 2018