

Where B. U. started.

Beginnings of
BAKER

By **Brenda Day**, 1990, University Archivist and Director of Old Castle Museum Complex at Baker University

Their names adorn athletic fields, buildings, hallways, residence halls and classrooms. Their faces peer out at us from sepia-toned photographs taken from the Archives. Their dusty diaries with precise and tiny writings mesmerize us. Their stories are many.

Time makes it hard for most to remember the founders of Baker University, let alone to recollect that they were flesh and blood men and women with all the foibles of human beings today. They were people with hopes, dreams and ambitions tempered by tragedy, whose fears were overcome by education.

In that way, the founders of Baker who helped build the University through her 150-year history are very much like those who walk her hallowed halls today.

My favorite destination on a Baker campus tour is Old Castle Museum. The original building, constructed of local limestone and three stories tall, pulls your eyes and thoughts upward toward the blue Kansas sky and the heavens. Lofty thoughts come as naturally as breathing.

Old Castle is symbolic of the University's, and every student's, journey. They begin rough and hand-hewn but grow and change as their education continues. Their purpose in life begins to unfold before them until they graduate just a few feet away from where it all started — the soul of the University, Old Castle.

Throughout history, preachers, teachers, leaders and explorers arrived at Baker with uncertain futures. In the following pages, you will meet the founders, presidents, professors, students and administrators who have found their purpose, their passion at Baker — their castles in the sky — and helped the University find her own.



Old Castle Hall - late 1800s

THE STILL FAMILY

A FOUNDING FAMILY OF BAKER UNIVERSITY

Abraham Still's family is but one of many who can be credited with founding Baker University. Still gave the land on which the University resides and provided considerable early support. Many of his children went on to greatness and wrote memoirs in which they describe Still's open, honest countenance, powerful preaching, hatred of slavery, dedication to the people of this area, including the Shawnee, and his deep love for Baker University.

The Still family gift of more than a section of land to establish the new university secured its location in Palmyra, now Baldwin City. Lots were established and sold to raise money for the fledgling college. Everyone gave what they could. Some local farmers bought these lots and built small houses called "Sunday Houses" that were used when a farm family came to town on Saturday to buy supplies and stay overnight to attend church. Other lots were purchased by people who moved to Baldwin City to enable their children to attend Baker.

As abolitionists, many members of the Still family preached, taught and lived out their lives in this area. Their early home on Blue Mound often served as a refuge and hospital where they doctored many victims of the border ruffians of the time. Abraham's daughter, Mary, one of the earliest female preachers in the area, was the first female teacher at Baker. She and her friends published one of the area's earliest newspapers, *The Kansas Messenger*. Son Andrew not only gave land to the fledgling University but founded the field of osteopathy through his experiences and studies gleaned here. Today, Andrew Still's purpose in life, his School of Osteopathy, is the pride of Kirksville, Mo.

The Stills and other founders of Baker University worked tirelessly to ensure Baker's success, often through trying financial times, natural disasters and constant social change. Their hard work, passion, courage and innovation provided an example to follow for the early settlers of this area and for Baker University.



Mary Still



President Davis

G. G. Shellabarger, North Main Street, HORTON, KAN.



10' clock bell - 1870s

WERTER DAVIS

FIRST PRESIDENT OF BAKER UNIVERSITY

The first president of Baker University looked much like what he was — a soldier and preacher. His son-in-law, William Alfred Quayle, described Davis in his eulogy as a man of erect, military bearing with snapping blue eyes.

Davis, who was appointed University President at age 43, was many things to Baker and Kansas. Born in Circleville, Ohio, on April 1, 1815, he served as the University's first president from 1858-1862 and returned as a trustee to guide the University through the rough waters of the early days. One day, a man stopped at the college building and asked Davis what kinds of grains were ground here, insinuating the lovely college building was a grist mill. Davis told him, "Why, man, we grow up men here, not grind grain."

Raised in Ohio, as were nine other Baker presidents, Davis enlisted as a lieutenant colonel in Company S, Sixteenth Kansas Cavalry at Ft. Leavenworth on March 10, 1864, and

earned the rank of Colonel with the Sixteenth on Nov. 28, 1865. The men in the Sixteenth and Fifteenth Cavalries enlisted as a result of Quantrill's murderous raid on Lawrence the summer before.

The Sixteenth participated in the Battle of the Big Blue that chased General Sterling Price from Kansas City and tangled with one of the most notorious area guerillas, "Coon" Thornton (formally named John C. Calhoun Thornton) when he raided Parkville, Mo., in July 1864. General Price, or "Old Pap," entered Missouri in September 1864 hoping to deliver Missouri from "Yankee thralldom." Certainly, serving as president of an infant university taught Dr. Davis lessons that he used as colonel in the Sixteenth Kansas to protect the infant state.

BISHOP OSMON CLEANDER BAKER

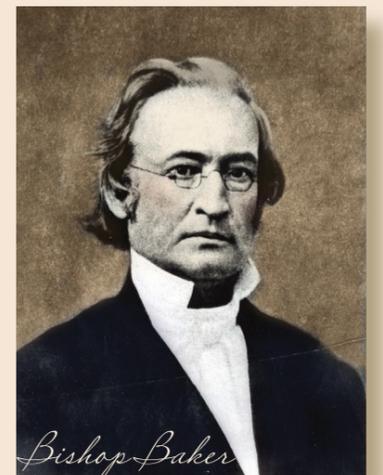
BAKER UNIVERSITY'S NAMESAKE

The Rev. Osmon C. Baker was a true pioneer in higher education. Born in New Hampshire in 1812, he was an academic from an early age. Baker entered Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., in one of the first classes. In his third year, ill health forced him to drop out, but he was granted a degree due to his proficiency.

Shortly after earning his degree, Baker was appointed presiding elder and chosen a professor at the General Biblical Institute in Concord, Mass., which later became the Boston University School of Theology. Elected president of the school, he left in 1852 when he was made Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Following his appointment, Baker sent the Rev. William Goode to the Kansas Territory after it was opened for settlement in May of 1854. Goode arrived less than six weeks later to preach the first sermon to settlers in Kibbee Cabin on July 9, 1854. Following Baker's command to bring academia to the new land, Kansas' first university opened its doors in 1858, adorning the name of the supportive Bishop.

Baker was by all accounts a scholarly, unassuming man but an excellent presiding and administrative officer who proved himself highly efficient. He was an earnest advocate of thorough theological training for all ministers. His gift of a bell to the University was placed in the cupola of the Old Castle, where its peal alerted many an individual to hurry to an appointment. 📣



Bishop Baker



JAMES "PERCY" AULT

EXPLORER AND ADVENTURER

James Percy Ault, 1904, graduated from Baker University, just like the rest of his siblings. He blazed the way for his brother Warren, who became Baker's first Rhodes Scholar. Through the inspiration of a young science professor, William Charles Bauer, Percy Ault and his classmates were guided into the Carnegie Institution.

While at Baker, Ault served as observatory assistant in the magnetic observatory of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. Upon his graduation, Ault joined the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. as a magnetic observer with the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism. A year later, he joined the crew of the *Galilee*, a sailing vessel chartered by Carnegie to undertake magnetic research around the globe. In 1907, he made magnetic observations in northern Mexico, and in 1908, Ault took a three-month canoe trip into Canada to make magnetic observations. The following year, he received his master's degree from Columbia University and joined the crew of the newly-commissioned research vessel *The Carnegie*.

A research vessel specifically designed and built for magnetic research, *The Carnegie* was constructed of wood and non-ferrous metals so as not to affect magnetic observations. He was appointed Captain of *The Carnegie* on its third cruise. This magnificent ship took Ault and his crew around the world several times, including a circumnavigation of Antarctica in 1915-1916. In 1918, he worked for the Army on the aerial navigation of airplanes using compasses, sextants and astronomical observation. Ault sailed the world seeking data on magnetism and atmospheric electricity. Some of his more important discoveries include submarine mountain ranges off the South American Coast and proof that the North Pole wobbles as the earth spins on its axis. Percy arrived at Baker a young, raw recruit. Here he found the passion and courage to sail the seven seas. Captain Ault's life was lost due to a refueling explosion in Apia, Samoa, in 1929.

Photograph courtesy of Carnegie Institution of Washington, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism

OLIVIA KEZIA "DOLLY" WILLEY

MEMBER OF THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

Everybody loved and supported **Dolly Willey, 1866**, one of three students in Baker's first graduating class. She was known by pet names such as Olivia, Dolly and Olive. Each person in her circle used his or her own unique version of her name when referring to her. Classmates wrote of Willey as being special to them, voicing their understanding of the journey she had traveled as the first woman to earn a college degree from Baker University. Fellow classmate James Crooks Hall loved her so much he married her and ignited the "match factory," a tradition of classmate connections that continues today. According to the catalogs, for eight years Willey enrolled in the classical program, a program that required mastery of Greek and Latin. Many remarked on her skill at oratory, as Willey delivered addresses on a variety of subjects during her time as a Baker student.

A lover of picnics at the Dell and Hole in the Rock and a crack shot, Willey and her classmates explored their world under the watchful eyes of the faculty and administration. Sometimes, however, the faculty could cause its own brand of trouble, such as the time they convinced Willey and her classmates to introduce accompaniment into the *a cappella* pieces they had been singing. The result was that the old-timers walked out of Old Castle, which was used as the Methodist Episcopal Church on Sundays. Like many young women of her time, and many yet to come, she belonged to a literary society, not unlike a sorority, and she used her education as a wife and mother. During a time when educated women were a rarity, she joined two men to form Baker University's first graduating class. Degrees were granted in a long and lovely ceremony in early June in the college park where one of the highlights was a cornerstone laying ceremony for Parmenter Hall, which still serves the University today.



Baker's Campus - 1886
Parmenter and
Centenary Halls