



## GOLD FEVER!

DR. JOHN W.H. BAKER IN MOKELUMNE HILL, 1853–1855

*By Timothy Takaro, M.D.*

There were four ways to reach California during the gold rush: two by sea, one by land, and the last, mostly imaginary, by air. In 1849, the year after gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, the founder of Scientific American sold shares in a scheme to construct an "aerial locomotive"—a dirigible-type aircraft—to fly passengers to California in three days. His idea was only six decades in advance of its time.

By one means or another, more than 90,000 people made their way to California in the two years following the discovery of gold, and 300,000 had headed west by 1854. One of them, in August of 1853, was Dr. John W.H. Baker. He chose what was then the quickest and best route—by way of the Isthmus of Panama. He'd graduated from Dartmouth Medical School in 1843 and decided

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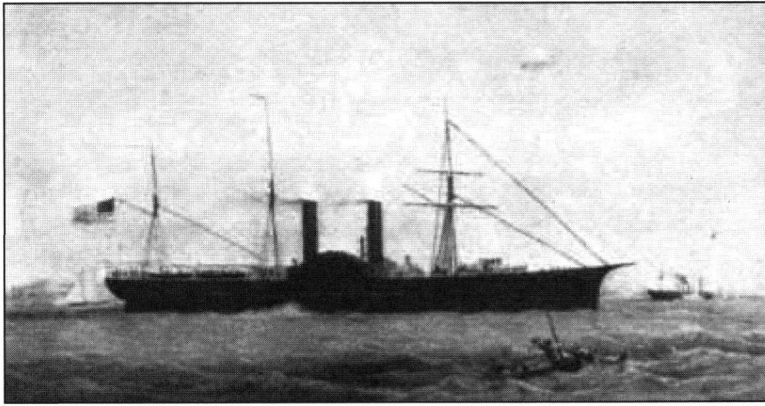
*When a Dartmouth Medical School graduate ran across a cache of letters written 150 years ago by a fellow DMS alumnus—from the goldfields of California back to his family in New Hampshire—it was like finding latter-day gold. Here's an insider's view of that feverish time in American history.*

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to join the westward migration not to pan for gold himself but to doctor to the thousands of people seeking their fortunes in California. He hoped to improve on the meager income he'd been able to realize from his 10 years of practice in Meriden, N.H.

At best, the trip was perilous—a fact of which Baker was aware. He wrote

to the wife he was leaving behind, along with their three children, on the eve of his departure from New York City: "I am feeling quite resigned to my prospect and think I must make the best of the hardships of our separation, hoping that by the mercy and goodness of God we may be permitted to meet again some day not too far distant." He ended—as he did all his letters—on a formal note: "With this I must bid you good night from your husband, John W.H. Baker."



The steamship *Illinois*, owned by the United Mail Steamship Company, carried Dr Baker and his cousin Mary from New York to Panama. Circa 1850.

## Journey

Baker—who was escorting a cousin on the way west to join her husband—booked passage for the two of them on the *Illinois*, a wooden side-wheeler with berths for 500 passengers. “By the way, I ought to say that Mary and myself had had a severe time of it with seasickness... so much so that the stewardess on board the boat from New York predicted my death before my arrival at the Isthmus. By the Providence of God I was spared to see the end of my journey and to recover my health.” Baker kept that bit of information from Julia until a letter written 10 weeks later, however.

The journey across the Isthmus was also difficult and dangerous, but again Baker kept the details from Julia. In Panama City he wrote: “We arrived here day before yesterday, having made the passage from the Atlantic side to the Pacific in two days. We spent the night at Cruces,” which was as far as boats could navigate on the Chagres River. He added that 400 prospectors returning east had arrived in Cruces the same day, “which made the accommodations at the place very poor.

“We took mules at Cruces,” he went on, “and came through the distance of about 25 miles in about 10 hours. ... We got along very well from the fact that we got no rain that day, but mud was abundant. Our trunks came in about dark last night in a terrible muddy condition externally but pretty well off within. They look as though they had encountered some hardships.

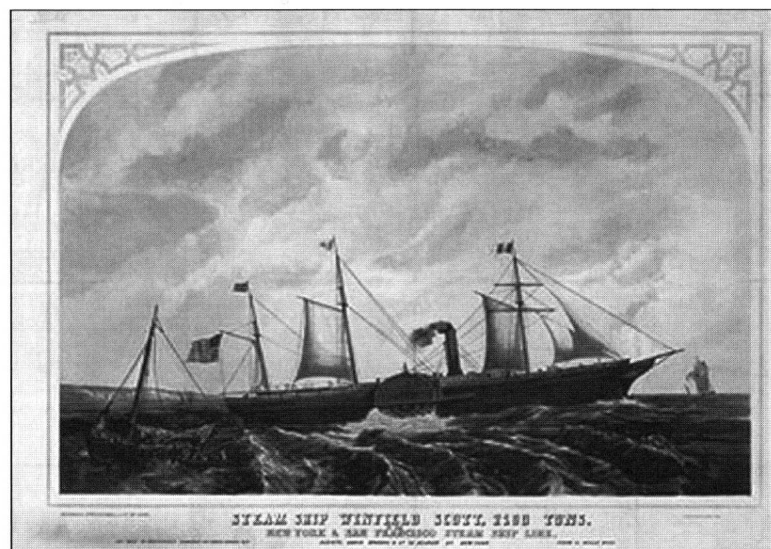
“We are expecting to go aboard the steamer *Winfield Scott* [which was lost off the California coast a few months later—an indi-

cation of the hazards, not just the discomforts, of the journey] this p.m. and start on the way to California, where we shall probably arrive in 15 or in 18 days. Our journey has thus far been full of interesting incidents, but I cannot relate them now. Mary displayed a great deal of courage and most excellent skill at keeping in the saddle while passing through the deep ravines and gulches from Cruces.”

## Encampment

Baker was met in California by his younger brother, Oliver, who had an encampment about four miles from the town of Mokelumne Hill, Baker’s ultimate destination. This was, at the time, one of the most important gold camps in the area. “I can say that I am very well pleased with the appearance of the Hill for a place of business,” Baker wrote his wife. “I think you perhaps would think different of the place as a residence, but everyone here lives to make their ‘pile,’ as they call it, and for that reason live just as they choose, whether in a tent or cloth houses or wooden houses. But a wooden house when well finished is not so good as my barn was at our house in Meriden.”

In that same letter, Baker also put his finger on a significant and lasting effect of the gold rush—the development of an ethnically diverse populace in California. He explained to Julia that “the population consists of Chileans, Mexicans, Americans, Peruvians,



The steamship *Winfield Scott* was operated by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and carried passengers, mail and provisions from the Panama Isthmus crossing to San Francisco. It was shipwrecked off the California coast on 1 December 1853 just months after it had Dr Baker and his niece. Lithograph courtesy Santa Barbara Maritime Museum and NOAA.

*Dutchmen, Italians, and Indians. And they present to me a mixed mass, I can assure you. The principal language is Spanish."*

Even before setting up his practice in Mokelumne Hill, Baker embarked on what would prove to be one of the most lucrative of his activities: dentistry. *"I have done one day's work at dentistry, which gave me \$48 at a cost to me of only \$3 or \$4, making my labor about \$43 or \$44. I have some more work engaged here and shall probably be doing it during the present week. I get \$5 per cavity, \$5 for cleaning. Holbrook [his partner-to-be] says I can obtain a good quantity of work of that kind at the Hill."*

Baker bought out the interest of Holbrook's former partner, who was leaving for the East, and took up practice with the older man in Mokelumne Hill. Between the two, they cornered the market on medical, dental, and apothecary services in the growing town. *"To be sure, 'quacks' abound,"* Baker wrote to Julia, *"but I have a better library of medicine than all the other physicians at the Hill and probably better experience of any of them, with the exception of Dr. Holbrook... I see no reason why I cannot do well here, and if business turns up as good as presented I shall be able to send you all the funds you will want within a few months."*

In fact, in buying out the departing physician's share of the business, Baker had had to borrow \$1,500 from his brother, Oliver. *"So you see I am in debt again, but with the prospect of working it out in a few months... You will be obliged therefore to get along for the next four or five months with the means I left you, or if you come short I want you to get Father to assist you in obtaining money for such things as you need. After I have paid my debt, I will send drafts of money in such amounts from time to time as you may need."*

*"We are obliged to do most of our business on Sunday,"* he explained, *"as that is the day when the miners come for prescriptions and medicines, and we must of course do our business on that day. I did about \$40 worth of dentistry yesterday, and it was a very good day for our office business. Aside from that I filled three cavities for a man yesterday, for which I received \$18. The man went out three times and drank a glass of brandy each time, and by the time he was through he was quite drunk. But such men are not uncommon... Almost every house in this place is furnished with a bar and full supply of liquors, and such places are well patronized on the Sabbath and tolerably well supplied with customers on other days of the week. Liquors are sold at 25 cents per glass."*

## Department of serendipity

*The author of the adjacent feature, a 1942 DMS graduate, explains here how he came across the collection of letters on which this article is based.*

**W**e were visiting our son Mark and his wife, Charis, in Chico, Calif., where they were spending a year's leave of absence from their jobs at the library of the University of California at Berkeley. Charis was able to retain her post as an archivist for UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library by telecommuting. She dutifully placed herself in front of her computer each morning after breakfast. I was curious to know just what archivists do, and she let me watch her at her work.

It was much more interesting than just lovingly dusting off old documents, not to mention the fact that you can't do that from 150 miles away. The Bancroft Library, which specializes in California history, had recently acquired a collection of letters written by a doctor who had worked in California during the gold rush. It was Charis's job to read those 150-year-old letters and to summarize and categorize the subjects they alluded to.

John W.H. Baker, as he unfailingly signed himself in his long letters, wrote to his wife, Julia, every two weeks—in time to catch the fortnightly steamers that carried mail between the West and East Coasts. Baker was a conscientious correspondent, if not, as it turned out, a totally candid reporter. (He tended to shield Julia from the more sordid details of his experiences.) Unfortunately, Julia's letters to John, apparently equal in number, do not seem to have survived.

Meriden, N.H., where his family remained, is not far from Hanover, N.H. I wondered if by chance Baker was a graduate of Dartmouth Medical School. Sure enough, I found that Baker and I had an alma mater in common. I learned that his father had been a DMS alumnus as well (Dr. Oliver Baker, Jr., Class of 1807), and that his father (Oliver, Sr.) had also been a doctor.

I decided to transcribe the letters—there are nearly 50 of them—and to mine them for whatever latter-day gold I might find. Mark undertook the tedious task of copying the handwritten letters and sending them to me. I owe many thanks to both Mark and Charis for their contributions to this project. T.T.

## Reputation

"I have already made quite a start on my old reputation for pulling teeth," he went on. "We received \$11 today for tooth-pulling. So you see we are bound to make money... Dr. Teall [Holbrook's former partner] left this place on Thursday last for home, with from \$6,000 to \$10,000 which he has made here in the last three years." This appears to have been only a wild guess on Baker's part, but the prospect and hope of making that much money kept him going for nearly two years.

A couple of months later he wrote: "I returned from Jesus Maria [Oliver's camp] about noon. I received the call about 10 o'clock last evening. It was to see a Chilianian who had received an injury from the fall of a bag of earth upon him. The principle injury was a partial dislocation of the hip joint and a contusion of the ribs. The dislocation was easily reduced and the application of some linament to the side and administration of an anodyne powder completed the treatment. (I did not go over until early this morn, as I did not like to travel much at night.) For my services in that case, I obtain \$25. At the same time I saw another Chilano, for whom I prescribed and received \$5. In fact I am in the way to do quite a business in Jesus Maria."

## Industriousness

"The more I see of this country," Baker went on, "the more impressed I am with the idea of the beauty of it, and the many facili-

1850 lithograph entitled 'Gold washers at Moklemne River in California',  
courtesy Bancroft Library.



ties for accumulating a fortune if a man is contented, industrious, persevering, and economical. And for once I should be all of those, but from necessity I am obliged to omit one of the qualities, and that is the industrious one. I used to think of my life as a very sedentary one at times in Meriden, but when I look at the amount of labor I used to perform there and compare [it] with my labor here, I am astonished and think I was unusually industrious there. I never began to lead so lazy a life as I now lead. But it is a necessary laziness, which almost all professional men are obliged to undergo, as professional business is most essentially a home-business. But no matter, I say, if I do not get rusty and in the end obtain a competency." Back then, "competency" meant sufficient resources for the necessities and conveniences of life—especially in the sense of providing for one's family.

"Some of the miners about this town have been having good luck of late," he told Julia. "One man found a single piece [of gold] last week worth \$1,500; another a piece weighing 22 ounces; another a piece of 14 ounces; and another a piece worth \$85. But those were offset [by] hundreds who did not obtain much more than enough to pay their board. Thus you see an occasionally lucky one, while the mass of people are enjoying small success." Indeed, although \$465 million of gold was discovered in California from 1848 to 1856, many prospectors found little more than hardship, danger, and even death in the mining camps.

Baker's sense of justice was often offended by events in Mokolunne Hill. "I have just returned from giving testimony before a jury of inquest held upon the body of a Spaniard who was shot by the under officer of the sheriff while attempting to escape after having been arrested for disorderly conduct. The affair happened in town night before last, or Christmas Eve. I was called to see the man immediately after the man was shot and found him with a wound made by a pistol ball entering at the back below the ribs and passing directly through the body. The ball was lying just beneath a small opening upon the abdomen, having made a small opening in the skin but not sufficient to pass out. I was satisfied that there was no help for the man, but still removed the ball and gave him stimulants, etc. He lived about 30 hours.

"The man who killed him was an American," Baker went on, "and that fact would free him in the case. And I presume to say that nothing will be done in the matter further than the little show of an inquest, which I consider almost a mockery. But the thing shows how little the life of a foreigner is estimated to be worth here.

While should an American of the class calling themselves men of authority be killed even accidentally by a Spaniard, there would be no end of the matter until the unlucky foreigner suffered death. I see no reason for shooting this man. He had been arrested for a petty disturbance, and if he had escaped no law would have suffered and no base crime have been committed, but men having little authority committed to them are very great people here and can shoot a man with perfect immunity. Woe! To consequences so hardened. The murderer, I understand, rejoices at his shot, for if he had not killed the man his reputation as a good shot would have been injured."

A few weeks later, Baker described another case to Julia. "One of the visits I made a few minutes since was to a Spanish woman. She was in a 'family way' and thought she was about to 'loose her hold.' I found her exercised with severe pain, which I judged to be more like colic than labor, and asked them if she had had a movement from her bowels lately. And they said she had none for six months. And you may imagine that about that time I laughed. And with a long talk, after getting one or two interpreters, I at last beat it into their numbheads what I wanted to know. I can get along with most of them very well, but when I asked them that question they were in a quandary. I gave her some powders of calomel and opium and think she will be better tomorrow. The Spaniards brought her over to this village upon a litter carried upon their shoulders... The distance is some four miles. How would you like such a ride as that while in severe pain all the time?"

### **Bonnets**

"But that is Spanish," he went on, making it clear his view of "foreigners" was not wholly open-minded. "Most of them are miserable and ignorant creatures, enjoying themselves so long as they have enough to furnish them with smoking, drinking, and dancing. All the women are smoking constantly their cigaritas (made of tobacco rolled up in small pieces of paper to about the size of a common quill). The Spanish women always go bareheaded. I do not know that I ever have seen one with a bonnet upon her head. It would be quite a sight to see one of them walking in the village of Meriden with her cigar in her mouth and a shawl thrown over her shoulders,... but here it is so common that we mind nothing about it but rather seem astonished, or at least have our attention attracted, when a lady passes wearing a bonnet and dressed 'à la mode' New England."

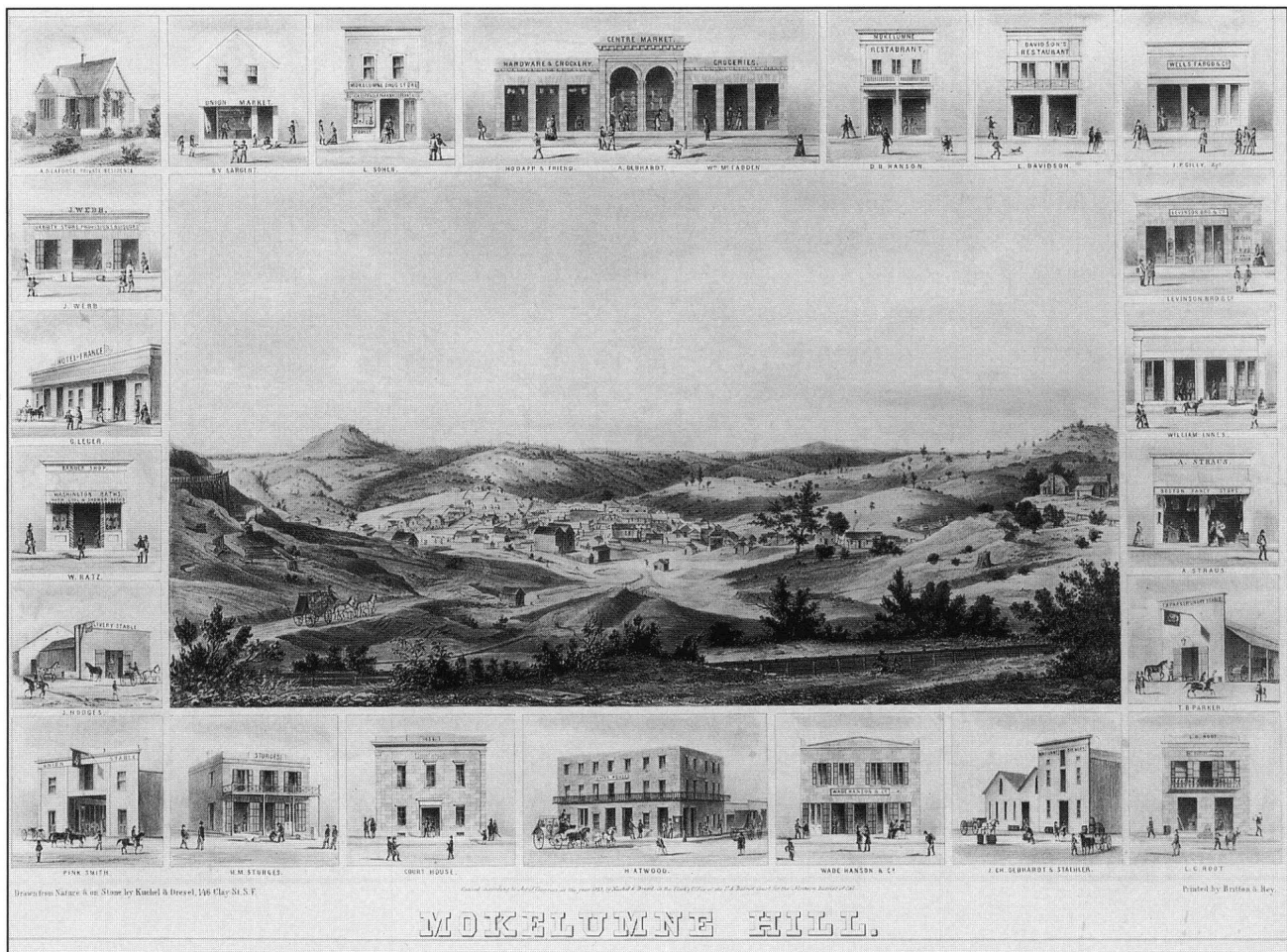
Sometimes the doctor became the patient. "Since writing my last date of this letter previous to this, I have had an attack of sick headache; was very much in the condition that I have frequently been in Meriden. But after vomiting and resting overnight felt better. I should feel quite well today had I not been called up some four times last night to wait upon a patient who is having a slight attack of delirium tremens."

A month later, he wrote: "I have been troubled with headache several times within some two months past and I then think if I was at home I should have some attentions that I do not obtain here. I should today have enjoyed having my head thoroughly combed and wet, in order to remove the slight headache which has troubled me the whole day—but so slight a thing is not to be had here."

But by the next day, he wrote, "my headache has disappeared and the pure invigorating air of this mountain country gives me a new vigor and energy.

This is the most delightful season of the whole year in Cal." This was in late May of 1854.

Soon after, Baker reviewed his progress, both in expanding his horizons and in improving his financial condition. "I am still in the land of Indians, Chinese, Negroes, Spaniards, Germans, French, English, etc., etc. In seven days more, a space of time marking the lapse of one year will have gone since I left my dear wife and much-loved children for the purpose of obtaining the means for our mutual advantage and support in life. I have passed through many scenes since that time which were new and wonderful to me. I have become acquainted with some of the customs and habits of various nations; in fine, I have received a very enlarged view of the manner in which other people than those of my native state live and flourish and in some cases die. I had very little idea of the difference of climate, soil, and productions (in fact, no one can realize the actual difference in those things without



This 1855 lithograph shows what buildings in Mokelumne Hill looked like after the 1854 fire, but did not show the stone building built by Dr Holbrook for his practice with Dr Baker. Perhaps they did not find it worth the investment, as one had to pay for their buildings to be represented on this advertisement. Courtesy Bancroft Library.

actual observation)—of the different portions of the earth previous to my leaving my N. England home.”

But despite his expanded worldview, he missed his family: “I have seen times when I could have given all I had of earthly goods to have been with you and my children,” he wrote. “Again, I have thought it my duty to persevere in my undertaking, hoping it would prove success. So far, I must say I have been more successful than I thought I might when I left home... I now reckon myself worth about \$2,000, whereas when I left Meriden I could only reckon myself at \$600 or \$700, which was the amount I had cleared over and above my support and necessities for the long space of nine years, accompanied by the severe labor and many hard usages of a N. England physician. I now think if my life is spared and prosperity given me, I shall be able to return in a year and a half from this time with a property worth from \$3,000 to \$5,000, with which I think I can locate myself very comfortably.”

### **Disaster**

Soon after this optimistic appraisal, disaster struck. “Our town was about entirely destroyed by fire on Sunday morning last. And among many others, I have suffered by the same calamity. Our store and contents were entirely destroyed. The alarm was given about 2-1/2 o’clock in the morn, and I had only time to save my trunk and a part of my clothing, with my dental instruments and library—our beds and bedding and everything else being burned up. We lost about \$4,000 by the fire as near as we can calculate. But I am thankful for one thing, which is that I am not so destitute as many of my fellow sufferers are. For I have enough to establish myself comfortably again, while many are left without either money or property. I had about \$600 or \$700 in money on hand at the time, which I saved... I shall remain at the Hill at present or until we can make some collections. Where I shall locate is very uncertain. I believe I wrote you that I had some idea of going to Camp Seco, a camp 12 miles distant, but that camp suffered the same ordeal only a few days before the Hill and left the place a heap of smoking ruins.”

### **Proposal**

The next day, Dr. Holbrook made a proposal to Baker. The older doctor said he would put up a new fireproof stone office building at his own expense and furnish half of the required new medicines, and would give Baker half of the proceeds from the business, if Baker would furnish

Timothy Takaro, MD, a 1942 DMS graduate, is a retired thoracic surgeon and the former chief of staff at the VA Hospital in Asheville, N.C. He is also the author of two previous articles in *Dartmouth Medicine*—an essay about the VA health system and a feature about a 1939 expedition on K2 that included three Dartmouth climbers. He would like to acknowledge the help of the following individuals in gathering material for this article: Eunice Schlichting, curator of history at the Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science in Davenport, Iowa; Amy Groskopf, special collections manager at the Davenport Public Library; Barbara Krieger, archival specialist at Dartmouth’s Rauner Special Collections; Daryl Morrison, head of the Holt-Atherton Special Collections at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif.; and William Moran of La Canada, Calif. A few changes in punctuation and capitalization have been made in the passages quoted from Baker’s letters, in order to enhance modern readers’ comprehension of them; no changes were made in wording or spelling, however. The Historical Society has transcripts of these letters should readers wish to view them further.

the other half of the medicines and stay for at least three to six months. Holbrook also promised to buy out Baker’s half of the business. This persuaded Baker to remain for an additional eight months.

The town was rebuilt immediately, with many more stone buildings, which served as firebreaks between the remaining wooden buildings. Baker soon wrote: “Our town is growing up rapidly. It is now only a little more than three weeks since it was burned, and we have now a large number of houses finished and many more nearly so... Dr. Holbrook has an office almost done. We shall probably move into it tomorrow or the next day. The office stands on the old ground, but is a much better building than the old one and will render us much better situated for business than before. We have a nice lot of furniture for our medicines and etc. in the shape of jars, tincture bottles, gallipots, scales, weights, etc., etc.; in fact we are going to keep a better variety than ever we kept before.

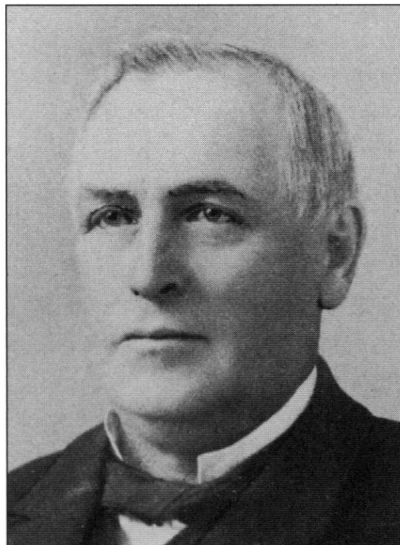
“I now consider my investment pretty safe,” he told Julia. “Since I own no buildings... whenever I am ready to leave I can do so without a sacrifice of money invested. I shall be able to send \$300–\$400 by the next mail, and nothing new occurring you may expect a draft by that mail... I am much grieved that I lost my diploma, with all my certificates of commendation, and many other papers

which I valued were burned... But as I said in my last, I shall not count on quite so extensive a 'pile' as I had counted on before the burning of my possessions. We are doing some business every day now, and might have done more since the fire had we been supplied with medicines. But a doctor is not much account in a place where he cannot obtain so much as a dose of salts."

Baker took an inventory after a visit to San Francisco to replenish their supplies and equipment: "My share of the medicines which we have on hand now cost me \$300 in San Francisco. These are in the same amount owned by Dr. Holbrook. I then own my dental instruments (\$50) and nice case of amputating instruments, containing in the same case two trephines; the whole cost me \$50 in San Francisco. I own the pocket case of instruments, for which I paid \$24; one scarificator and cup worth \$15; one injecting pump and a case of dissecting instruments worth \$10... I own an anal speculum for which I paid \$8."

A month after the fire, Baker could focus on other matters. "You speak of the scarcity of potatoes... We have very nice ones here. Only four cents a pound. 'Very cheap.' Apples, pears, oranges, and peaches are plenty here at 12-1/2 cents each. Very nice grapes at 50 cents per pound. I indulge but little in any such luxury, as it tastes a little too strong of money. Still, I must have a bite of some of them occasionally when I can earn from \$3 to \$5 by extracting a tooth; we could hardly buy a single pound of grapes with the amount received from pulling a tooth in N.H. While here for the same service we can purchase some six or eight pounds."

About California in general, though, he was equivocal: "The climate as a whole is far better than that of my native state. If I was well located to remain here in the country, where society was of a good cast, I should think of having you come and try life in California. But as it is you need never fear that I shall do it. For I much prefer subjecting my own health to all the influences of an eastern climate to that of placing my children under the immoral influence of a California life, for children in California, with very few exceptions, become in the course of a year's residence very expert in swearing, and talk and act as I hope I may never hear any of my children talking and acting."



**Dr John W. H. Baker, as he appeared later in life.** Photo courtesy Timothy Takaro and the Davenport Public Library.

## Misgivings

Soon after, Baker confirmed his misgivings about the region's morality. "I suppose you recollect of my writing some time since of the trial and sentence of two men here to be hung on the 10th of this month. That date came on Friday last and previous to the time, through the exertions of a portion of the citizens, a commutation of the sentence was obtained for one of the men: that one was a gambler by the name of Thompson and probably the worst kind of man. After his commutation, he boasted of the hairbreadth escapes he had undergone in his life and showed some individual five balls

which [were] remaining in different portions of his body where he had been shot in the course of his life.

"The other man was an Irishman by the name of O'Brien. He killed an Irishman with whom he had been having a fight (while intoxicated)... He made a confession of the crime and in a few words spoken to the multitude previous to his execution he said he was willing to suffer the penalty. He suffered the penalty of this crime between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock on the 10th of Nov., and I assure you it was a melancholy spectacle to see a young man in the prime of life and in good health die upon the gallows. It is the first execution of the kind I have ever seen and I hope it may be the last. I think he would have been as fortunate as Thompson had he possessed either money or influential friends or even had he been an American, I think he never would have been hung for that offense. Thus we see the distress caused by drunkenness, poverty, want of friends, and foreign birth in this land of crime and gold."

In an effort to increase his own share of that gold, Baker set up a drugstore and office in the nearby town of Jackson—but this enterprise was not successful. In a despondent mood, he wrote: "I can picture my little family sometimes of a winter's night seated around the stove talking of the absent one, and, as you say, wishing he would come home and see them; in the same way, I think I can hear Fred [the Bakers' young son] rejoicing over his anticipated 'house and horse.' I, too, could enjoy a house and a horse of our own and undoubtedly would feel quite as thankful, as he would, and hope ere long to come and buy a house and a horse."



"I sometimes think I shall return and settle in Meriden," he went on, "and I now really think I shall do so. I think our old house can be purchased and I believe I could enjoy myself as well there as anywhere in the world. I am thinking that a snug little house such as ours was will answer as well as a large mansion, and [it] certainly is less work to take care of such a place than to have the care of a large house. A few improvements such as I had intended making could be made at a small cost, and with those I could be satisfied. If Dr. Sam [the current owner] is dissatisfied there, I wish you would in some round about way find out what he will take for the house."

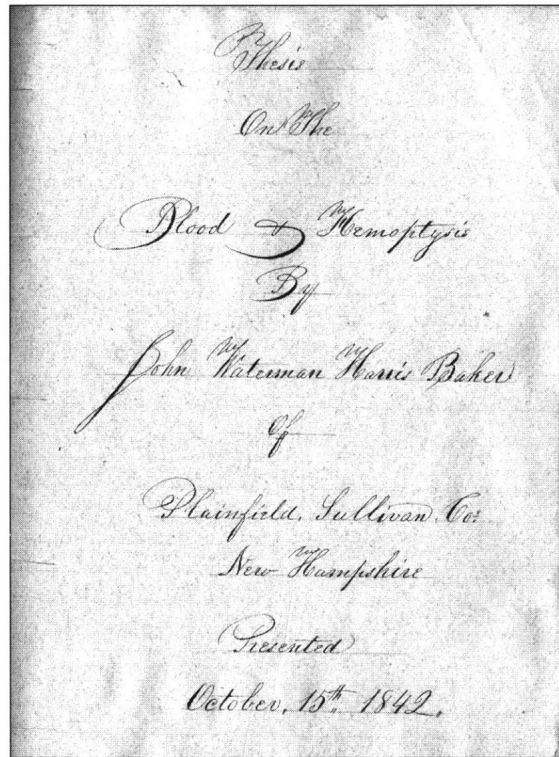
The next day, feeling more cheerful, he added: "I was somewhat troubled with the 'blues' last eve. But am feeling somewhat better today, although have a pretty bad cold."

In his last letter from Mokelumne Hill, after receiving notice that their old homestead was to be sold, Baker wrote to Julia: "Since the reception of this letter, I am more inclined to think I shall make a tour into the Western States before I locate anywhere, or at least before I give any positive assurance of locating myself."

"You say the children have altered very much and I expect I shall see the change which has taken place much more readily than you do. And I could but expect that a wonderful change would take place in a family of such children."

### Epilogue

By the time Baker returned home in May of 1855, a rail line had been completed across the Isthmus of Panama—so presumably his return trip was much less arduous. He did not resume his practice in Meriden but instead, as he had planned, explored the Midwest (the "Western states" to him) to seek other options. He eventually decided on Davenport, Iowa, and moved Julia and their three children west in November of 1855.



Cover page of Dr John W H Baker's 1842 Thesis from Dartmouth Medical School where he was an 1843 graduate, written in his own elegant hand. Courtesy Timothy Takaro and Dartmouth College Archives.

There, he established himself as a very successful general practitioner, with special expertise in obstetrics. His practice flourished, as did his family, which grew from three to six [children] in short order.

Baker's professionalism was recognized early on. He helped to organize the Scott County Medical Society within a year of his arrival and eventually served as its president and was elected president of the Iowa State Medical Society in 1866.

When Baker died in 1905 at the age of 84, after four decades of professional service in Davenport, the local newspaper ran a four-column obituary on his long and productive career. Three

of his sons carried on the family tradition of medicine into the fourth generation. Clearly, John W.H. Baker led a golden life figuratively, if not literally.

### Acknowledgement

This article first appeared in the Winter of 2001 edition of the *Dartmouth Medicine* magazine for alumni of the Dartmouth Medical School (available online at [dartmed.dartmouth.edu](http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu)). It was brought to the attention of *Las Calaveras* by Dr Peter Gierke, formerly of San Andreas, who was also an alumnus of that school. *Las Calaveras* thanks Dr Gierke for forwarding this article to us. Dr Gierke has returned to his home state of Iowa where he continues to practice medicine. We wish him well in his future endeavors. *Las Calaveras* is grateful to Dr Timothy Takaro and the magazine *Dartmouth Medicine* for kindly granting us permission to reprint his article here for the people of Calaveras County to enjoy.

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The Calaveras County Historical Society is a non-profit corporation. It meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the County. Locations and scheduled programs are announced in advance. Some meetings include a dinner program, and visitors are always welcome.

The Society operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10:00 to 4:00 in the historic County courthouse located at 30 Main Street in San Andreas; and the historic Red Barn Museum at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, also in San Andreas, which is open Thursday to Sunday, 10:00 to 4:00.

The Society's office is located in historic San Andreas, the Calaveras County seat. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the office for assistance with research, and are encouraged to visit the museums while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00, and the telephone number is (209) 754-1058, or contact us at: CCHS@goldrush.com; Red Barn Museum (209) 754-0800.

## January–March, 2011

### New Members

*The Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:*

Brian Lane—Ventura—Gift membership  
Eric Lane—Beaverton, Oregon—Gift membership  
David & Elizabeth Wagner—Mountain Ranch  
California State Library Serials Unit—Sacramento  
Mike Schroven—Valley Springs—Gift membership  
Ronald Kemp—Clements  
Ruth Huffman—Angels Camp  
Yvonne Stefan—Stockton—Gift membership

### Donations

*The Historical Society appreciates the following generous donations:*

Ted Laskin—copy of his newest book, *George A. Custer, Please Come to the White Courtesy Phone*, framed Black Bart Reward Poster, framed “Wanted” Poster for Frog Jump, and framed copy of the Declaration of Independence, copy of the Bill of Rights  
Joanne Koenig—Photo album belonging to Lillian Browning dated 1930–1932  
Napa County Historical Society—Copy of *West Point Centennial Plus Celebration, 1968*  
Judy Dean—copy of *Where We Lived, Discovering the Places We Once Called Home—The American Home From 1775 to 1840*, as well as numerous plants and materials for the Jail Yard at the Downtown Museum  
Virginia Freeman—Cash donation for Red Barn Museum  
Leo & Sharon Quintana—hand made ladle, small smelting pot, and larger pot  
Martha Bernie—letter written June 2, 1896 from Copperopolis found in a box of photographs  
Roger Withers—monetary donation, letter to A.B. Sherwood, Jenny Lind, dated July 8, 1871  
Cliff & Janet Jepsen—various newspapers pertaining to historical events from 1880s to 1950s, copies of *Life Magazines* from 1960s  
Dean White—antique high chair, antique fire extinguisher, needlepoint chair, 2 hand saws, antique dining chair, upholstered chair, 1920s Brunswick “phonograph”, drill set, clock, wash boards, antique fire stove, and two hitching posts  
D. Margaret Studley Foundation—monetary donations to the Downtown Museum and to the Red Barn Museum  
Eric Jung—copy of book, *Jedediah Smith—First Crossing of the Sierra Nevada Hiked*