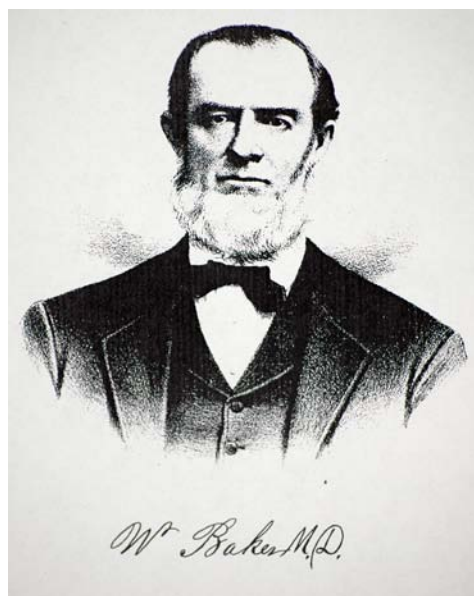


DR. WILLIAM BAKER OF DES MOINES

By Mark C. Wiseman



Dr. William Baker

The "Portrait and Biographical Album of Polk County, Iowa" published in 1890 gives the following description of the life of Dr. Baker.

"William Baker, M.D., was one of the pioneer physicians of Des Moines and a widely-known and esteemed citizen. A native of Kentucky, he was born in Lexington, in 1816, and belonged to one of the early and respected families of the State. In his native city he was reared and acquired his literary education, while his medical studies were pursued in the Transylvania Medical College, of which he was a graduate. He began his professional career in Lexington and on leaving that city was united in marriage with Miss Ella B. Poindexter, who was also there born. The year 1847, witnessed their removal to Carmi, Ill., and in the spring of 1851, they became residents of Des Moines. Here Dr. Baker engaged actively in the practice of his profession for some years, but the country was then new and sparsely settled and the fatigue and exposure attendant upon his labors soon began to seriously affect his health. To obtain relief from constant professional practice he resolved to vary his occupation and in 1854, in company with his brother-in-law,

W.A. Poindexter, he embarked in the drug business, under the firm name of William Baker & Co. The first location of the firm was on Second Street, but in the spring of 1859, they removed to the corner of Third Street and Court Avenue..."

The Iowa State Journal, of Fort Des Moines, Iowa, dated August 12, 1852 contains a Card advertisement:

"Medical Card, Doctor W. Baker, A graduate of Transylvania Medical College. Has permanently located in Ft. Des Moines and respectfully tenders his professional services to the public. Having an experience of nine years in the treatment of modern diseases, he hopes to give satisfaction to his patrons. He will pay especial attention to operative Surgery, Obstetrics, and the diseases peculiar to women and children. Office in his new building, opposite Jewett & Rainking's cabinet wareroom, Second Street. Night calls must be made at his residence on Third street below Court Avenue.(July 25)"

The "Annals of Polk County, Iowa, and City of Des Moines" by Will Porter written in 1896 indicates:

"Perhaps more old time reminiscences of this nature linger around a saloon opened by G. Munzenmaier in 1856, in a large log and frame building on the north side of Court Avenue, next to the alley between Second and Third. The house was one of the first built in town and for a time the residence of Dr. William Baker. The street having been filled, the first floor was then several feet below grade."

And: "In about 1856-57 or a little later, Dr. Wm. Baker & Co. built a three-story building on the southeast corner of Court Avenue and Third Street, to be occupied by their large drug store, and this building stands to-day (1896) substantially as it was originally built..."

The 1856 Special Census for Des Moines and Polk County, Iowa lists

William Baker, 38 years old, five years in Iowa, a Physician, from Kentucky. His wife Ella B. Baker is listed as 27 years old also five years in Iowa, from Kentucky, and a one year old daughter Annie born in Iowa.

The City of Des Moines started out as the settlement around the 1844 "Fort Des Moines" military post located on the west side of the river above the union of the Raccoon River and Des Moines River. There was settlement on the east side of the Des Moines River, East Des Moines (and South of the Raccoon River also). The town of Fort Des Moines original plat of 1846 is laid parallel to the Des Moines River on the east with Water street next to the river and Second street the first street to the west. The east/west streets are parallel the "Coon Row" of fort barracks later Elm Street, followed to the north by Market, Vine, and Cherry streets and Court Avenue. The original plat grid is not laid out true north/south or east/west but is parallel the Des Moines River bank. The city was Fort Des Moines until February 16, 1857 when the Charter as the City of Des Moines took effect.

I have been researching the earliest drug stores of Des Moines by reading the early newspapers on micro-film at the State Historical Library. The first advertisement I have for the drug store on Second Street is dated Fort Des Moines, September 4th, 1855. Unfortunately, the newspapers for Fort Des Moines in 1855 and 1856 are not available, so it is fortunate they ran the same ads in those days for very long time periods. This ad was in the April 4th 1857 Iowa State Journal and another version with the same text was still running in the Iowa State Journal of April 10th, 1858. The next ad is dated January 1, 1859 announcing the "The Cash System" with the business still on Second Street and was also in the Iowa State Journal.

CITY DRUG STORE
Dr. William Baker & Co.,
 WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DRUGGISTS,
Second Street, Fort Des Moines, Iowa,
 KEEP constantly on hand a large and well selected stock of Drugs, Medicines, Chemicals, and Surgical Instruments, Patent Medicines, Dye Stuffs, Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Brushes, Window Glass, Stationery, Fancy Articles, Spices, Fine Teas, Perfumeries, &c., &c.
 Also, Havana and Principe Cigars of the most approved brands, with a complete assortment of Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri Chewing Tobacco and Snuff; with all other articles usually kept in a drug store, all of which they purchase in the eastern markets of the importers and manufacturers FOR CASH, warranted genuine, which enables them to sell as low (if not lower,) than the same quality can be bought west of the Mississippi river. Physicians and others are particularly requested to call and examine their stock before purchasing elsewhere.
 N. B. Physicians' prescriptions and family recipes, in English, German and Latin languages, accurately compounded.
 Fort Des Moines, Sept. 4th, 1855. 231y.

City Drug Store.
DR. WM. BAKER & CO., Wholesale and Retail Druggist, Second street, Des Moines, Iowa, keeps constantly on hand a large and well selected stock of Drugs, Medicines, Chemicals and Surgical Instruments, Patent Medicines, Dye Stuffs, Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Brushes, Window Glass, Stationery, Fancy Articles, Spices, Fine Teas, Perfumeries, &c. Also, Havana and Principe Cigars of the most approved brands, with a complete assortment of Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri Chewing Tobacco and Snuff, with all other articles usually kept in a drug store, all of which they purchase in the eastern markets of the importers and manufacturers FOR CASH, warranted genuine, which enables them to sell as low, if not lower, than the same quality can be bought west of the Mississippi river. Physicians and others are particularly requested to call and examine their stock before purchasing elsewhere. Country Merchants' prescriptions and family recipes, in English, German and Latin languages, accurately compounded. n22y1.

Iowa State Journal, April 10th, 1858

CITY DRUG STORE,
SECOND STREET,
DES MOINES, IOWA.
 THE undersigned having constantly on hand a large and carefully selected stock of
Drugs, Medicines, ect.,
 Would respectfully state to their old Customers and the public generally, that they are prepared to offer anything in their line at greatly reduced prices, having this day established
THE CASH SYSTEM,
 indiscriminately, being convinced that it is the only just principle on which to do business.
 Country Merchants and Physicians are respectfully requested to call and examine our Goods before purchasing elsewhere.
WM. BAKER & CO.
 Des Moines, Ia, January 1, 1860.

The next ad dated February 25th, 1860, announces that William Baker & Co. had moved into their new building at the corner of Third Street and Court Avenue.

By June of 1860 the ad had been modified by adding the words "Baker's Corner" to the ad, and the "Bakers Corner" ads run into May of 1861. The Daily Commonwealth of May 15, 1861 contains two different ads for Dr. Wm. Baker & Co., both of these ads announce the arrival of fresh goods.

The 1860 census lists William Baker, age 40 as a Physician and Druggist (from Kentucky) having 8000 dollars worth of real estate and 2000

CITY DRUG STORE,
 CORNER OF THIRD ST. & COURT AVENUE,
DES MOINES, IOWA.
 THE undersigned having moved into their new and commodious building, on Court Avenue, now offer to the public a large and carefully selected stock of
Drugs,
Medicines,
Paints, Oils,
Dye-Stuffs,
Camphene, Fluid,
Glass,
Putty,
Fancy Articles, &c., &c.,
 At greatly reduced rates, having established
THE CASH SYSTEM,
 indiscriminately, being convinced that it is the only just principle on which to do business.
 Country Merchants and Physicians are respectfully requested to call and examine our goods before purchasing elsewhere.
WM. BAKER & CO.
 February 25th, 1860—v4n3m3.

CITY DRUG STORE
BAKER'S CORNER,
 Cor. of Court Avenue & Third St.,
DES MOINES, IOWA.
 THE undersigned having moved into their new and commodious building, on Court Avenue, now offer to the public a large and carefully selected stock of
Drugs, Medicines,
Paints, Oils,
Dye-Stuffs,
Camphene
Fluid,
Glass, Putty,
Fancy Articles, &c.,
AT GREATLY REDUCED RATES,
 Having Established the
THE CASH SYSTEM
 indiscriminately, being convinced that it is the only just principle on which to do business.
 Country Merchants and Physicians are respectfully requested to call and examine our goods before purchasing elsewhere.
WM. BAKER & CO.
 February 25th, 1860—v4n3.

The Iowa State Journal, June 25th, 1860

dollars of assets, his wife Ella is 38 years old, daughter Anna born in Iowa is age 3, and son Charles W.P. also born in Iowa is 1 year old.

Back to the 1890 "Portrait and Biographical Album of Polk County, Iowa": "Dr. Baker found it impossible to retire wholly from practice at once; his professional services were too fully appreciated and the demands of his friends were too urgent to permit him to engage alone in the drug business, but about 1865, he retired almost wholly from active professional work."

FRESH ARRIVAL
 OF
FRESH DRUGS,
MEDICINES, CHEMICALS,
 Perfumery, Fancy Goods, &c. &c.
 A FULL STOCK of all articles in our line constantly on hand,
 Warranted pure, warranted genuine, and unmistakably
CHEAP!
 The closest attention is paid to the selection of our goods, and every article is as represented. Satisfaction, we feel assured, will be given in every instance. The greatest care is given to the compounding of physicians' prescriptions and family recipes.
 Included in our stock will be found the following long-established and celebrated remedies, prepared by Dr. C. M. JACKSON & Co., Philadelphia, Pa. We have the genuine articles, with the signature of C. M. JACKSON on each bottle and box.
Hoofland's German Bitters.
 A safe, reliable, and certain cure for diseases of the Liver, Stomach, and Kidneys, such as
 Liver Complaint, Dyspepsia, Nervous Debility, Jaundice, Weakness, Depression of Spirits, &c. &c.
 and a positive preventive of
YELLOW AND BILIOUS FEVERS.
Hoofland's Balsamic Cordial,
 for the speedy cure of
 Coughs, Colds, Influenza, Croup, Hoarseness, Bronchitis, AND
INCIPIENT CONSUMPTION.
 Of all the remedies before the public for the cure of pectoral diseases, there is none superior to this. The most desperate cases are, in a reasonable time, brought under control, and an effectual and permanent cure performed.
Hoofland's German Pill.
 Those needing a good purgative medicine can with safety rely on this Pill. We are assured that no calomel or dangerous drug is used in its composition. Thousands of boxes sold annually, and satisfaction, we believe, given in every instance.
 A great amount of testimony, from all classes of society, can be found in the Almanac published by the proprietors; and we advise all to call at our store and get one.
DR. WM. BAKER & CO.

Des Moines Daily Commonwealth, May 15, 1861

There were no ads found in the 1862 newspapers for Dr. Baker & Co., However, a new ad was found in the Iowa State Register of May 27th, 1863. This ad indicates that Mr. C.A. Weaver was now part of the firm as a Druggist and Prescriptionist. Mr. Weaver was listed in the 1856 Des Moines Census as 24 years old, a druggist, one year in Iowa, from Pennsylvania. The 1860 Census lists Mr. Weaver as a 26 year old Clerk from Pennsylvania, with a wife and one child. In the first advertisement for the drug store of Weaver & Maish, in the Daily State register, dated September 2nd, 1869, is a "Card". The "Card" begins "The senior member of the firm, (for many years engaged in the "City Drug Store", on Court

CITY DRUG STORE!

—o—

1867. Fall Trade. 1867.

—o—

DR. WM. BAKER & CO.,

Wholesale & Retail

DRUGGISTS

AND DEALERS IN

PAINTS, OILS, VARNISHES,

Dye Stuffs, Window Glass

—o—

DRUGGISTS' GLASS-WARE,

SOAPS, PERFUMERY,

Fancy Goods, Cutlery, &c. &c.

—o—

WE ARE NOW RECEIVING LARGE SUPPLIES
for the

FALL TRADE!

which, with our previous stock, will comprise the
largest and most

COMPLETE ASSORTMENT

to be found in the city. We buy our goods direct from
the reporters and manufacturers.

FOR CASH,

and by our extended stock, we will enable us
to maintain the already very large reputation of our
store, by selling the best quality of goods at

The Daily State Register, August 21, 1867

Avenue) having had over twenty years experience in the Drug and Prescription business takes pleasure in informing his friends that he will hereafter be found at his store..." The addition of Mr. Charles A. Weaver in 1863 was an important added asset to Wm. Baker and Co.

The 1866 Des Moines City Directory lists: Dr. W. Baker & Co. (Dr. W. Baker, W.A. Poindexter) Druggists, Cor 3d and Court Avenue. The next advertisement found for the firm is from the Daily State Register of August 21, 1867, for the Fall Trade of 1867. With Mr. C.A. Weaver leaving in 1869, the "Portrait and Biographical Album" biography indicates:

"In 1869, he purchased the interest of Mr. Poindexter and continued the business alone until 1882, when his son was admitted as a partner and succeeded his father as sole proprietor."

The 1869 Des Moines City directory Lists: Dr. Wm. Baker & Co., Druggists, 48 Court Avenue, his home the north side of Pleasant between 10th and 11th Streets. The address number "48" is the earlier numbering system along Court Avenue. The 1869 Bishard's Business Directory of the Towns on the Des Moines Valley Railroad lists W. Baker under druggists in Des Moines. The 1870 Census lists William Baker age 52, druggist with 20,000 dollars in real estate and 8000 dollars in assets, from Kentucky, his wife Ella age 40, keeping house, daughter Anna age 15, and son Charles age 11. The 1871 Des Moines City Directory Lists: Wm. Baker, druggist, southeast corner of Court Avenue and Third, resides on the north side of Pleasant between Tenth and Eleventh. A "G.W. Wood" is listed as "with Dr. Wm. Baker", and a "H. Tobin" is listed as "with City Drug Store", Mr. Wood would be a future drug store owner in the City of Des Moines.

The Des Moines Republican, newspaper dated August 15, 1872 has a new ad for "Dr. W. Baker's Iron Tonic and Blood Vitalizer". The ad is modified on August 31, 1872 with the line "Just the Remedy for the Ladies in all cases of Anemia and General Debility" added. The known bottles of

"Dr. W. Baker's Iron Tonic and Blood Vitalizer" are very rare.

The only other known bottle from the firm is a clear paneled medicine bottle of approximately the same age side embossed "Dr. W. Baker", and "Des Moines, Iowa".

The 1873 Des Moines City Directory lists: "William Baker, druggist 3d corner Court Avenue, resides Pleasant foot 10th, and M.H. Baker, clerk William Baker.

The 1874-1875 Des Moines City Directory lists Dr. William Baker druggists at 222 Court Avenue, residing at 1001 Pleasant Street. The "222" address is the later address numbering system for the city. The "1876 Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa" contains an ad for the City Drug Store, Dr. Wm. Baker, Wholesale and Retail Dealer, and proprietor of Baker's Iron Tonic, Ague Prescription, and Honey Balsam.

MEDICAL.

DR. W. BAKER'S
IRON TONIC
AND
Blood Vitalizer.

It Cures Dyspepsia, General Debility,
Restores the Appetite, and Regener-
ates the System Throughout.

Prevents Dropsy and Tubercular Diseases
of the Lungs.

A sure preventive of Fever and Ague, and cures all
forms of Miasmatic Rheumatism.

Just the remedy for the Ladies in all cases of Anemia
and General Debility.

For sale, wholesale and retail, at the **City Drug**
Store, corner of Court Avenue and Third Street,
DES MOINES, IOWA. aug.14d&w3m.

The Des Moines Republican, August 31, 1872

TO-DAY'S ADVERTISEMENTS.

DR. W. BAKER'S
IRON TONIC
AND
Blood Vitalizer.

It Cures Dyspepsia, General Debility,
Restores the Appetite, and Regener-
ates the System Throughout.

Prevents Dropsy and Tubercular Diseases
of the Lungs.

A sure preventive of Fever and Ague, and cures all
forms of Miasmatic Rheumatism.

For sale, wholesale and retail, at the **City Drug**
Store, corner of Court Avenue and Third Street,
DES MOINES, IOWA. aug.14d&w3m.

The Des Moines Republican, August 15, 1872



The following City Directory listings indicate the people who were involved in the firm of Wm. Baker & Co. from 1876 through 1888.

The 1876-1877 Des Moines City Directory lists: Dr. William Baker, druggist, wholesale druggist, and drugs and medicines, 3d corner Court Avenue. R.M. Lackey, is listed as a druggist at William Baker. The 1877-78 Des Moines City Directory lists: Dr. William Baker, druggist, 222 Court Avenue, and R.M. Lackey a clerk at Dr. William Baker. The 1879-1880 Des Moines City Directory lists William Baker, druggist at 222 Court Avenue. The 1880 Census lists William Baker age 62, a drug dealer, wife Ella age 57, daughter Anna age 24, and son Charles Baker, age 21 listed as a druggist. The 1881 Des Moines City directory lists William Baker druggist at 222 Court avenue, C.W. Baker druggist at Wm. Baker, and George C. Tidrick a druggist at Wm. Baker. The 1882 Riverside Des Moines City Directory lists Wm. Baker druggist at 222 Court Ave., C. R. Baker

clerk at Wm. Baker, and I.C. Likes clerk at Baker's Drug store. The 1882-83 Des Moines City Directory lists William Baker drugs and proprietary medicines at 221 Court Avenue, C.W. Baker druggist at W. Baker, and H.R. Baker druggist at W. Baker. The 1884-1885 Des Moines City Directory lists William Baker drugs and proprietary medicines, at 222 west Court Avenue, Charles W. Baker a clerk at William Baker, and E.C. Branson a clerk at William Baker. The 1886-1887 Des Moines City Directory lists Dr. W. Baker & Co. (W. Baker, C.W. Baker and Ella B. Baker) drugs and medicines at 222 west Court Avenue, and H.R. Baker and H.R. Rollin are listed as clerks at Dr. W. Baker & Co. The 1888-1889 Des Moines City Directory lists William Baker druggist at 222 west Court Avenue, Charles W. Baker druggist 222 west Court Avenue, Henry R. Baker druggist William Baker, and Frank Schroeder druggist at William Baker.

The "Portrait and Biographical

Album" (of 1890) continues:

"The death of Dr. Baker occurred on the 13th of July, 1888.... Dr. Baker and his wife were the parents of five children, two sons and three daughters, but only one is left to share with the mother the great loss which she has sustained. William P. the eldest, died in infancy; Sally died in childhood; Anna M. in 1883, at the age of twenty-six years; and Laura died in early life; Charles William, the youngest, is the only survivor. He was born in Des Moines, in 1859, educated in the schools of this city, at Peekskill, N.Y., and at Lake Forest, Ill., and received his business training in his father's store. As before stated he was admitted to the partnership in 1882, and succeeded to the business as sole proprietor on the death of his father. The worthy and estimable wife of Dr. Baker resides with her son at their pleasant home in Des Moines. The Doctor was held in high esteem by all who knew him. His absolute integrity of character was never for a moment questioned and during his



residence in Des Moines, covering a period of more than thirty-seven years, he possessed the confidence and respect of all in the fullest degree. He was an able practitioner and ranked equally high in business circles.”

From the 1889-1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, and 1894 Des Moines City Directories the firm is still listed as the William Baker & Co. druggists at 222 west Court Avenue, under the ownership of Charles W. Baker and Ella W. Baker. Clerks and druggists at the firm in this time period include Henry R. Baker, R.B. Holman, G.M. Young, Jesse O. Peek, and Samuel E. Peek. In 1894 Frederick Schroeder is listed as a druggist at 222 Court Avenue and S.A. Schroeder is listed as a clerk at Fred Schroeder. It appears this is the final transition to the proprietorship of the Wm. Baker & Co. business at 220 Court Avenue to Frederick Schroeder. In the 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, and 1899 Des Moines City Directory listings the Wm Baker & Co. drug store is listed as under the proprietorship of Fred Schroeder. Charles W. Baker and Ella Baker are not listed in the Des Moines

City Directories. Siegfried A. Schroeder is listed as clerk at Wm. Baker & Co. in the 1895, and 1896 city directories and as a clerk at the Sandholm Drug co. in the 1899 Des Moines City Directory. Frederick Schroeder is listed as running a drug store at 223 Locust Street in the Des Moines City Directories from 1900 to 1908. (X)

ESTABLISHED IN 1854.

The City Drug Store.

DR. WM. BAKER,

Wholesale and Retail Dealer in

PURE DRUGS, MEDICINES, CHEMICALS,

French Plate, Crystal Sheet and American Window Glass.

Putty, Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Brushes, Fancy Goods, Toilet Articles, Etc. Pure Wines, Brandies and Old Kentucky Whiskies, for Medicinal Purposes. Proprietor of Baker's Iron Tonic, Ague Prescription, and Honey Balsam.

CORNER COURT AVENUE & THIRD STREET,

DES MOINES, - IOWA.

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