
LONGYEAR FOUNDATION

Quarterly News

SUMMER, 1967

Reflections

In early childhood's merry days,
When all was mirth and joy and glee
And e'en when manhood's early dawn,
From blossom'd youth its nectar drew,
I lov'd the scene at close of day,
When twilight cast her evening shade,
In mournful silence, o'er the plain —
O'er hill and dale, o'er lawn and mead
When nature seemed in sweet repose,
Lull'd by breezes soft and mild,
Of evening's balmy breath.

How sweet those moments, yet
How soon their joys were past —
How soon a change came o'er
youth's dream!

From the Journal of
GEORGE SULLIVAN BAKER
youngest brother of MARY BAKER EDDY

Exhibitions

Reception Area: THE MARBLE BUST of Mary Baker Eddy by Louella Varney Serrao is now shown in a newly designed area for single exhibits.

Baker Room: THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION of furniture, books, documents, paintings, and other objects associated with the Mark Baker family, has been augmented and rearranged in the gallery formerly occupied by the Study Room.

Sales Area: THE SOLARIUM, overlooking the formal garden and Cyrus Dallin's statue of Mary Baker Eddy, provides an attractive and well lighted location for the display and sale of Longyear material.

George Sullivan Baker

GEORGE SULLIVAN BAKER was the youngest of the three brothers of Mary Baker Eddy. He was nine years her senior and between them were two sisters, Abigail, about three and a half years younger than he, and Martha, a little over six years his junior. By the time George was fourteen—in 1826—his eldest brother Samuel had already left for Boston. Albert, next in line and now sixteen, was a new student at Pembroke Academy on the other side of the Merrimack River which flowed between Bow and Pembroke. Four years later when he went to Dartmouth College, George was still at home, the mainstay of his father on the farm.

The children of Mark and Abigail Baker had a warm affection for one another, but a particularly close relationship developed between the sisters and their brother George during the years spent together at the Bow homestead. Albert, as a student and later as a practicing attorney at Hillsborough kept in touch with his family, whom he dearly loved, but his relationship was that of older brother and counsellor. George was witty, resourceful and responsive, qualities which made him a key figure in the circle at Bow.

Mark Baker had always expected George to remain on the farm, as Mark himself had stayed on the homestead to aid his father, Joseph. But George was a poet and thinker by nature and had no urge toward a trade or profession. While Samuel was learning masonry by experience and Albert was studying to be a lawyer, George had kept his feet in the furrows of the farm — but his eyes were on the horizon.

In his early twenties he began to show some ability as a writer. Like all rural children, he had attended the district school. There was good conversation to be heard at home and he had access to good books, which the Baker family always seemed to have, although in limited numbers. But where did he acquire a taste for Shakespeare, and some knowledge of Bulwer and Scott? How did he master a vocabulary ample to express subtle shades of philosophic thought? There may be a clue to his process of learning in a short essay

found in his Journal that says in part: "The art of living must be accomplish'd as the child acquires a knowledge of orthography, by first learning to spell one word which assists it in acquiring another, and so on until a vocabulary of almost any extent is obtain'd. . . ."

When he was twenty he had charge of a district school at nearby Allentown, and was invited that same year to accept a similar position at Billerica, which he seems to have refused. But such teaching was off-season employment and did not interfere with the work on the farm, which still loomed large in the plans of his father for him.



GEORGE SULLIVAN BAKER
*From an original painting
in the Longyear Museum Collection*

At the age of twenty-three, however, George was not only in rebellion against farming as his vocation, but against the religious demands of his father. This, in addition to a poor state of health together with a much discussed love affair in which he was rejected, seems to have precipitated an impulsive move from Bow in 1835. George fled from the maturing potato crop, leaving it to be harvested by Albert who was just ending his summer vacation at home. Thus George gained his first freedom from parental jurisdiction.

George went directly to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where a model prison had been built a few years earlier under the direction of Captain Moses Pilsbury and his son Amos. Although George



THE BIBLE with LINDLEY MURRAY'S GRAMMAR AND READER
The signature, George S. Baker, appears in the Bible and the *Grammar*.

has left no clue as to why he went to Wethersfield, it seems probable that he knew of the important reforms in management made by Captain Pilsbury at the New Hampshire State Prison in Concord from 1818-1829, and of his work at Wethersfield. It seems almost certain, also, that George had met Captain Pilsbury and his family in 1826, when Emily Heath, daughter of the Laban Heaths of Bow and neighbors of the Bakers, was married to Amos Pilsbury. At any rate, he found his first regular employment, as overseer of prison shops, at Wethersfield, where Amos Pilsbury was Superintendent.

George was unhappy at deserting his father, for whom he had great respect and love despite their innate differences. It was, therefore, a relief when Mary wrote him that his father seemed reconciled to his going. "I think," she wrote, "from what we have heard him say in the family, and tell others, he was sensible [aware] as well as all of us, the exchange was necessary for your health." And Abigail, his sister, wrote a little later: "Father has received your information that you cannot return to him this spring. He was disappointed, you may depend, and indeed as we all were, for I should deem your company a special privilege." In a later letter she mentions pending visits of Sister Eliza, Samuel's wife, and of Samuel, and Albert, adding: "O! do come and see us . . . for we certainly want to see you more than all the rest." A frequent exchange of letters between George and his family kept him in close touch with

their changing life as they moved from Bow to Sanbornton Bridge.

George sent gifts to his family as often as possible. He also contributed to the expenses of the farm in lieu of his own services, and sent money to Martha for her tuition. Martha wrote on October 15, 1837: "Why were you so abundantly prodigal of your gifts? Your too generous heart would, I fear, wrong itself, for the sake of another, but the gift will not be misapplied; and if I do not teach next season, I will attend school." That this loving concern for his sisters lasted out the years is shown by a letter Martha addressed to George and his wife, Martha Rand, fourteen years later in which she said: "Never — never can I forget your kindness which I do believe was an important means of saving my life, for you not only 'smoothed the pillow', but also 'soothed the mind.'" Meanwhile, Mark Baker continued writing George, consulting him on business matters and offering inducements for him to return to the farm, but added, "You acted your pleasure in going away and so you must in coming back again." Mark's letters were always signed, "Your Affectionate Father, Mark Baker."

Soon after going to Wethersfield, George began making entries in a Journal which continued at scattered intervals from 1836 to 1852. The tides of emotion which swept over him, his moments of gentleness and affection, his appreciation of nature, and especially the misanthropic tinge of his mind, are reflected in these poignant

pages written in a firm, legible hand. Here is a man of action and frustration, of friendship and disappointment, of ideals and stark human reality. Sensitive to the stresses and strains of privilege and poverty, of hypocrisy and expediency, he became a seeker throughout life for true friendship. The theme runs throughout his Journal. Had he stayed in one field and fought the enemy to a halt, life might have been different for him, but his answer to an inharmonious situation was to move to another field of activity.

Something of his philosophy appears in these lines from a short essay in his Journal: "The art of living, or practical philosophy is to let general principles, established by previous resolutions, actuate the mind, guide the desires and direct the effort . . . Resolutions should never be hastily taken, lest the discovery of error should properly suggest their abandonment, but when taken correctly, should never be yield'd. Let one general resolution be taken and firmly fix'd in the mind, viz., to do right in all things toward ourselves as well as others . . . This I conceive to be the philosophy of life which shows the origin of every ill which befalls man to be the result of some error of his own, instead of being an infliction from an offended Deity for original transgression."

George visited his family in Sanborn-ton Bridge in September, 1836, about a year after leaving Bow. Back in Wethersfield, he made this entry following his visit:

"Why should I blush that fortune's frown

Dooms me life's humbler paths to tread. . . ."

Many of his original entries are signed *Gamma*, third letter of the Greek alphabet, probably referring to his place as third son in the family. All entries are in his handwriting. One is often in doubt about the authorship of unattributed entries. Each one appears, however, to have some autobiographical implication at the time of entry.

In October, 1838, he wrote: "I have abandoned novels and am reading Shakespeare. For a knowledge of human nature (the great study of my life) I think him preferable to any other author . . . He shows it in all its

naked deformity, as I see it daily practi-
c'd with scarcely one redeeming qual-
ity!" The prison atmosphere was
indeed a hostile school for such a one
as George, searching for an encounter
with the ideal.

George grew restive at Wethersfield
despite the fact that his work as fore-
man of the prison shops was giving his
employers complete satisfaction. His
personal dilemma reaches us in this
entry: "What are my prospects? Whilst
on one side a delicate constitution and
impaired health enfeeble, on the other,
poverty lays her iron grasp." And on
January 27, 1838, he wrote his father:
"Honor'd Father. . . . Should I return I
might find ease from care, anxiety, and
suspense . . . but must exchange it for
bodily fatigue, which, at present, I can-
not endure" . . . and he continued, "I
am sick of the business (here), and
weary of the place, disgusted with the
people, and tir'd almost of life itself.
. . . Shakespeare says:

'The time of life is short
To spend that shortness basely,
'Twere too long!'

and accordingly I intend to wear, rather
than rust out . . . I resolve to hope

where one of the most significant revo-
lutions in prison practices was being
perfected under the leadership of Amos
Pilsbury.

At about this time his brother Albert
wrote him: "One would think from the
style of your letter that all the furies
were at work within you, and that you
had given vent to your feeling which,
like the lava of a volcano, could no
longer be smothered . . . Every day's
experience will teach you more and
more the necessity of curbing the im-
petuosity of your feelings. You are too
ardent; you love too hard, and hate too
hard. And this honesty of your nature
will render you liable to be practiced
upon by the designing. Men are not all
saints or sinners. No one is so bad but
he may sometimes be good, nor so
good he may sometimes be bad. Can-
not you learn to *manage*? Manage your-
self, I mean, as well as your friends
and enemies."

But Albert's was a finely tempered
mind, while George's nature was ar-
resting, spontaneous, and emotional. In
any estimate of George, one must view
him not only from the standpoint of his
inherent nature, but from the rebellious

The young men are born with knives in
their brain." And he sums up the age
thus: "Our forefathers had fear of sin
and terror of the Day of Judgment . . .
followed in this generation by our tor-
ment of Unbelief, the Uncertainty of
what we ought to do, the Distrust of
the value of what we do, and the dis-
trust that the Necessity is fair and
beneficent."

On March 16, 1838, George, at his
own request, received his discharge
from his services as shop foreman at
Wethersfield, Connecticut.

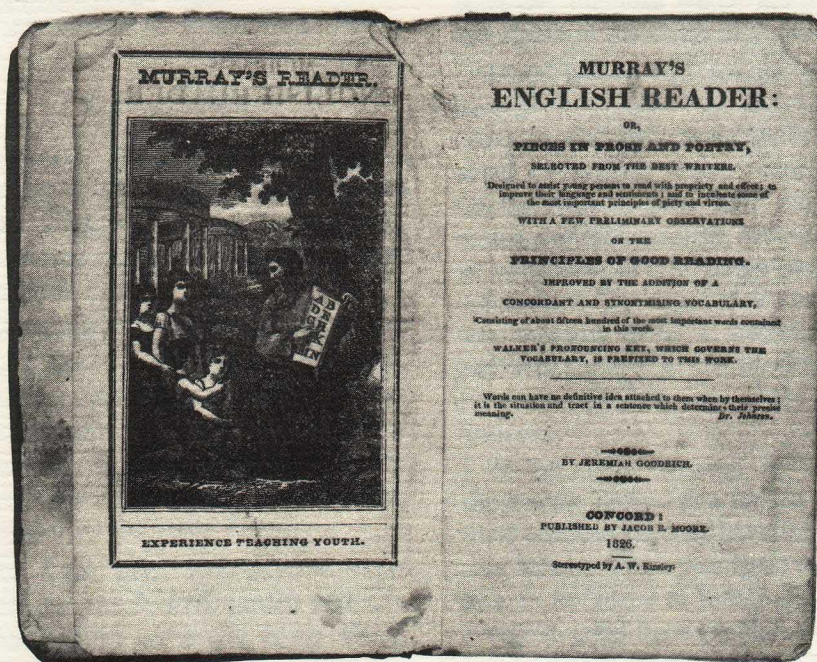
(To be concluded in the next issue)

Changes at Longyear

IN 1920 MARY BEECHER LONG-
YEAR organized the Zion Research
Foundation, as a first step in establish-
ing a library for the historical study of
the Bible and in amassing a collection
of objects and records to give proof
of the human life and work of Mary
Baker Eddy. By July 1921 Mrs. Long-
year recorded in her diary that a Mary
Baker Eddy Historical Association
must be separated from Zion Research
Foundation, and in 1926 it was
brought into being as the Longyear
Foundation. Since that time the two
institutions have grown to maturity,
side by side, in the Longyear mansion
on Fisher Hill, Brookline. The Zion
Research Library has over these years
amassed a notable collection for the
study of the Bible and the history of
the Christian Church, available, in
Mrs. Longyear's words "for all people
of all nations".

In October, 1966, Zion Research
Library moved to the Mugar Memo-
rial Library, Boston University, where
on the fifth floor, it is easily accessible
to students and theologians as well as
laymen. Here it maintains its identity
established by Mrs. Longyear, with its
own Board of Trustees and separate
status, while functioning as a valuable
addition to the larger Mugar Library.

Meanwhile Longyear Foundation
has utilized the rooms thus left vacant
for its Museum activities, relocating
the Study Area in the wing overlook-
ing the rose garden and pool, and
moving the Baker Room to the first
floor.



THE LINDLEY MURRAY READER, used by GEORGE S. BAKER
when teaching in the early 1830's.

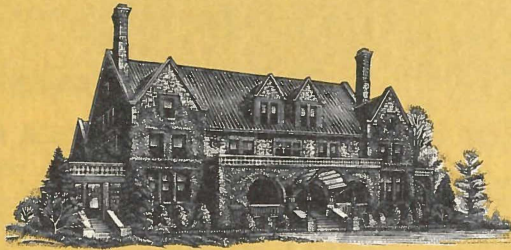
nothing, expect little, but exert my ut-
most to effect *something*." Had George
been a humanitarian at heart instead of
a self-absorbed philosopher, he might
have found fulfillment at Wethersfield,

outlook of the time. In the deepest
sense he was a nineteenth century rebel
about whom Emerson wrote: "The key
to the period appears to be that the
mind has become aware of itself . . .

LONGYEAR FOUNDATION

Quarterly News

SUMMER 1967



120 SEAVER STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

LONGYEAR FOUNDATION: *Board of Trustees:* Mrs. Marian H. Holbrook, Robert Hall Collins, Don S. Greer. *Manager,* Claude M. Cane; *Administrative Assistant,* Mrs. Charlis F. Vogel; *Director of Research,* Mrs. Anne Holliday Webb. QUARTERLY NEWS is published four times annually, in the Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, at the headquarters of Longyear Foundation, 120 Seaver Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Inquiries about memberships, subscriptions, and its services are welcomed.