

Baldwin Brothers
Account Books, 1849-1867
XMSC 22, MSA 845:1-3

Biographical Sketch

Elisha Baldwin Sr., born in Stratford, New Hampshire, on September 19, 1788, was the father of Elisha Alger, William Lothrop, and Jedediah Miller Baldwin (among nine other children). The business ventures of Elisha Sr. and these three sons constituted the firm of Baldwin Brothers. The structure of the firm seems to have been Jedediah and Elisha Sr. providing the financial capital for new projects, guided by William's financial acumen and Elisha A.'s mechanical knowledge. The Baldwins (especially Elisha A. and William) ran a lumber business connected to the saw- and grist- mills they built. In the early 1840s, their business was chiefly repair work connected to smaller mills' carpenter shops. The construction of Nulhegan mill in Bloomfield, Vermont, in 1849 brought employment, population increase, and overall economic development to the North Stratford-Bloomfield area. In 1857 the company suffered from that year's financial crisis. In 1873, now under different proprietors, the mill ceased operation due to that year's financial crisis and its pond filling up with sediment. William, Elisha A. and Jedediah also constructed a toll bridge over the Connecticut under the auspices of the Baldwin Bridge Company, which opened for travel in June 1852.

Beginning in the early 1850s with a general store held at the Elisha Baldwin homestead in North Stratford, New Hampshire, Baldwin general stores were maintained in both North Stratford (from approximately 1852-1857) and in nearby Bloomfield, Vermont (from approximately 1852-1867). The names in this collection's account books progress from "E.A. & W.L. Baldwin & Co." to "E. & J.M. Baldwin" or solely "J.M. Baldwin" to, finally, "E. & J.M. Baldwin per W.L. Baldwin, Agent", indicating that all people in the firm helped to keep up the store, probably under William's business guidance. In 1863, William Baldwin and Carlton Fuller leased a newly built building in North Stratford and carried out a store until 1871, when it was sold by the proprietor (this collection, however, reflects only the first two stores).

Elisha Alger Baldwin (December 30, 1818-May 15, 1895) was born in Stratford, New Hampshire, to Elisha and Huldah (Alger) Baldwin. After attending the area's common schools and Lancaster Academy, he studied architecture and building in Boston for several years. His mechanical education provided the mechanical know-how in the firm of Baldwin Brothers, the auspices under which he and his brother William Lothrop, funded by brother Jedediah and father Elisha, built "most of the mills" in the upper region of Coös county. A member and deacon of the First Baptist Church in North Stratford and a member of the Good Templars, he married Eliza Beach of Colebrook, New Hampshire, on his birthday in 1846 and had four children, all of whom lived to adulthood.

William Lothrop Baldwin (May 18, 1820-December 27, 1878) was born in Stratford, New Hampshire, to Elisha and Huldah (Alger) Baldwin. Initially agriculturally inclined, his poor health necessitated a switch to teaching, which he did in the vicinity of

Stratford, as well as in Rhode Island and Quebec. In 1848 he returned to Stratford to engage in business endeavors in the firm of Baldwin Brothers. In 1851 he changed his residence to nearby Bloomfield, Vermont, where he held several public offices, including selectman and justice; he was also North Stratford's first postmaster from 1850 to 1853. After 1865, he returned to North Stratford and centered his business activity there. A charter member of the First Baptist Church in North Stratford, he had six children (only one of whom reached adulthood) with wife Maria Jane Holmes from Colebrook, New Hampshire.

Jedediah Miller Baldwin (March 9, 1827-February 2, 1887) was born in Stratford, New Hampshire, to Elisha and Huldah (Alger) Baldwin. He was a farmer and played a primarily monetary role in the firm of Baldwin Brothers. He was an active member of the First Baptist Church in North Stratford, and a member of the local Masonic Lodge. He married, first, Sarah Cutler Bennett in 1855; after her death in 1870 he married Mrs. Sarah L. (Morse) Wotton. He had three children from each marriage, half of whom reached adulthood.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 19 volumes recording transactions carried out in the Baldwins' North Stratford, New Hampshire, general store from 1853 to 1857 (two small account books, MSA 845:1 & 2, and the beginning of a daybook, XMSC 22:16) and their Bloomfield, Vermont, general store from 1852 to 1867 (14 account books). One large ledger (XMSC 22:15), one small account book (MSA 845:3), and the second portion of a daybook (XMSC 22:16) are devoted to E.A. and W.L. Baldwin's lumber business and building projects from 1849 to 1864.

The bulk of the North Stratford, New Hampshire, store entries are dated before 1854, and given William Baldwin's move to Bloomfield, Vermont, shortly before that time, it seems likely the Bloomfield store became the Baldwins' primary establishment. Three daybooks dating from 1852 to 1856 (XMSC 22:1-3) have transactions entered in a ledger (XMSC 22:4). Also, another daybook (XMSC 22:6) corresponds to a ledger (XMSC 22:7). As well, another daybook (XMSC 22:12), dating from May 1863 to March 1864, corresponds to a blotter (XMSC 22:13). Overall, beginning with the Bloomfield store the Baldwins seem to have kept a daybook-blotter-ledger recording system, although the sequence of daybook/blotter was not clear and only the account books mentioned above were found to correspond. The Bloomfield, Vermont, account books run from XMSC 22:1 to 22:14.

While also recording goods transactions, the two small North Stratford, New Hampshire account books (MSA 845:1-2), are notable for recording in the first, the purchases of a list of "Railroad men" (the Stratford portion of the Grand Trunk Railway was completed in 1853), and in the second, the building expenses of the "Committee of North Stratford Meeting House" (W.L., E.A., and Elisha Baldwin). MSA 845:2 also records further expenditures for the "Meeting House" such as window blinds and a Bible stand. The beginning section of XMSC 22:16 records the Baldwin Bridge Company's

expenses for building the Nulhegan Bridge. Among the lumber account books (XMSC 22:15-16, and MSA 845:3), XMSC 22:16 is notable for recording the labor and building costs of the Nulhegan Mill and the lumber transactions made in connection with it.

Inventory

- XMSC 22.1 Bloomfield, Vermont, daybook, June 30, 1852-Dec. 31, 1853
 2 _____, _____, Jan. 2, 1854-Jan. 1, 1855
 3 _____, _____, Jan. 1, 1855-July 31, 1856
 4 _____, ledger, 1852-1856
 5 _____, daybook, Aug. 1, 1856-Sept. 12, 1858 (also includes blotter, 1862)
 6 _____, _____, Jan. 1, 1859-April 14, 1860 (includes 1 page of Paul Stearn Bridge Co. accounts)
 7 _____, ledger, 1859-1860
 8 _____, daybook, April 16, 1860-April 1, 1861
 9 _____, _____, July 5, 1861-Dec. 31, 1861
 10 _____, _____, Jan. 1, 1861-Sept. 19, 1862
 11 _____, _____, Sept. 20, 1862-May 19, 1863
 12 _____, _____, May 19, 1863-March 26, 1864
 13 _____, blotter, May 30, 1863-March 26, 1864
 14 _____, blotter, Jan. 2, 1865-Dec. 31, 1867
 15 E. A. & W. L. Baldwin, lumbering account book, 1852-1856 (p. 89 begins mill accounts, 1853-1857, as well as accounts from 1850-1851 at the end)
 16 _____, lumber daybook, 1849-1864 (p. 1-81 contain accounts from North Stratford, N.H. store owned by W. L. Baldwin, 1852-1857)
- MSA 845:1 North Stratford, N.H., daybook, Nov. 10, 1851-June 1852 (includes accounts for "railroad men")
 2 _____, account book, July 5, 1852-Oct. 1853 (includes North Stratford meeting house accounts, Town of Bloomfield accounts)
 3 W. L. Baldwin, lumber daybook, April 1855-Sept. 1857 (includes 1 page of Town of Bloomfield liquor accounts)

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