

Guide to the Catharine Barker Memoirs

- Repository:** Marietta College Library, Slack Research Collections
Phone: 740-376-4545
<http://library.marietta.edu/spc/index.html>
- Creator:** Barker, Catharine (Barker); Barker, William H. H.; Bates, Dana Barker
- Title:** Catharine Barker Memoirs
- Dates:** 1806-1886
- Bulk Dates:** 1804-1886
- Quantity:** 2 mss boxes
- Abstract:** The collection contains seven volumes of Catharine (Barker) Barker's (1806-1885) Memoirs, written between 1880 and 1885, as well as hand-written copies of earlier correspondence. She describes her childhood in Washington County, Ohio, and the hardships of her later life on a farm in Iowa.
- Identification:**
- Language:** English.

Biography/History

Born in Union (now Muskingum) Township, Washington County, Ohio, 31 August 1806, Catharine Barker was the daughter of Joseph Barker and Elizabeth (Dana) Barker. Her parents were New England farmers who had traveled west to Ohio in 1789, when the Marietta settlement was new.

Catharine's childhood was similar to that of many rural girls of her time period. She attended the local schools and learned from her mother to spin wool and flax. Many of the youthful adventures she describes in her memoir were shared with her sister Frances, who later became famous as Frances Dana Barker Gage, the woman's rights activist.

The marriage of Catharine Barker to Francis Augustus Barker (no relation) occurred 10 April 1827. Catharine then moved to Morgan County, Ohio, with her husband, who was a merchant. Her own days were filled with caring for children and meeting with neighborhood women in prayer groups.

Unable to overcome business difficulties in Ohio, the Barkers and their children moved to the area of Marion County, Iowa, in 1844. The family faced many privations and hardships on the far western frontier, and Catharine recounts these in her autobiography. In Iowa, Francis Barker farmed and held numerous political positions. The couple raised seven children to adulthood.

In 1868-69, Catharine and Francis returned to Ohio for an extended visit with family and friends. Francis had suffered a stroke during the Civil War and never fully recovered his health. He died in Iowa, 17 January 1871. Catharine spent her later years coping with her own failing health, but helped care for several of her grandchildren. She died 26 October 1885, near Carthage, Illinois.

Scope and Content

Between 1880 and 1885, Catharine (Barker) Barker filled seven volumes with her memoirs and handwritten copies of earlier correspondence she had saved. Her son, William Henry Harrison Barker, finished copying the letters in 1886, after Catharine's death.

Catharine's memoirs begin with her early nineteenth-century childhood on the family's farm in Washington County, Ohio, and include recollections of family members, chores, education, and the social

life of the community. She describes her marriage and residence in Morgan County, Ohio, and issues related to raising her children after she and her husband moved to Iowa. Many details of the family's hardships and pioneer living conditions in the west are provided. Religion and the Temperance Movement are constant themes. Woven throughout the account of Catharine's life are copies of correspondence with family and friends.

A copy of summaries and excerpts from the memoirs, with corresponding volume and page numbers listed, was made by D. Barker Bates in 1990. A genealogy chart, also compiled by Bates, supplies helpful information on family relationships. In 1995, Bates transcribed and edited a travel journal kept by Catharine's son, Edward Barker, which describes the latter's trip west from Kansas City in 1858. This work, also included, is called, "Westward in 1858, Diary and Letters of Edward Barker."

Statement of Arrangement

Catharine's story was written, for the most part, in chronological order, beginning with her childhood and ending at her death in 1885. The hand-copied letters, however, are not in any particular order. Originally kept in seven separate volumes, Catharine's memoirs were bound into two books by her granddaughter, Dr. Nelle Barker Bates, and Dr. Bates' son, Dana Barker Bates, in 1948-49. They entitled the work, "1880-1885 Written By Hand." The two books are stored in separate manuscript boxes. The additional work by D. Barker Bates is boxed with the bound memoirs, but in separate folders.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection. Copyright restrictions may apply to materials. Permission to publish materials must be obtained from the repository and from the copyright holder.

Indexing Terms

Persons

Barker, Catharine Barker, 1806-1885
Barker, Edward DeLevan
Barker, Francis Augustus, 1798-1871
Barker, William H. H.
Bates, Dana Barker
Gage, Frances Dana Barker, 1808-1884

Places

Marion County (Iowa)
Morgan County (Ohio)
Washington County (Ohio)

Material Types

Memoirs
Copies of Original Works

Preferred Citation

Catharine Barker Memoirs, Marietta College Library

Acquisition Information

Gift of Dr. Nelle Barker Bates and Dana Barker Bates, 1973.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box 1/Folder 1

Volumes 1 through 4 of Catharine Barker's memoirs. (Typescript available.)

Box 2/Folder 1

Volumes 5 through 7 of Catharine Barker's memoirs. (Typescript available.)

Box 2/Folder 2

1. Photograph – Francis Augustus Barker and Catharine (Barker) Barker, made at Cadwallader's Fine Art Gallery, Marietta, Ohio – undated
2. Summaries and excerpts from Catharine Barker's memoirs, made by Dana Barker Bates, 1990
3. Barker genealogy chart, compiled by Dana Barker Bates

Box 2/Folder 3

"Westward in 1858, Diary and Letters of Edward Barker," travel journal of Edward DeLevan Barker, transcribed and edited by Dana Barker Bates, 1995.