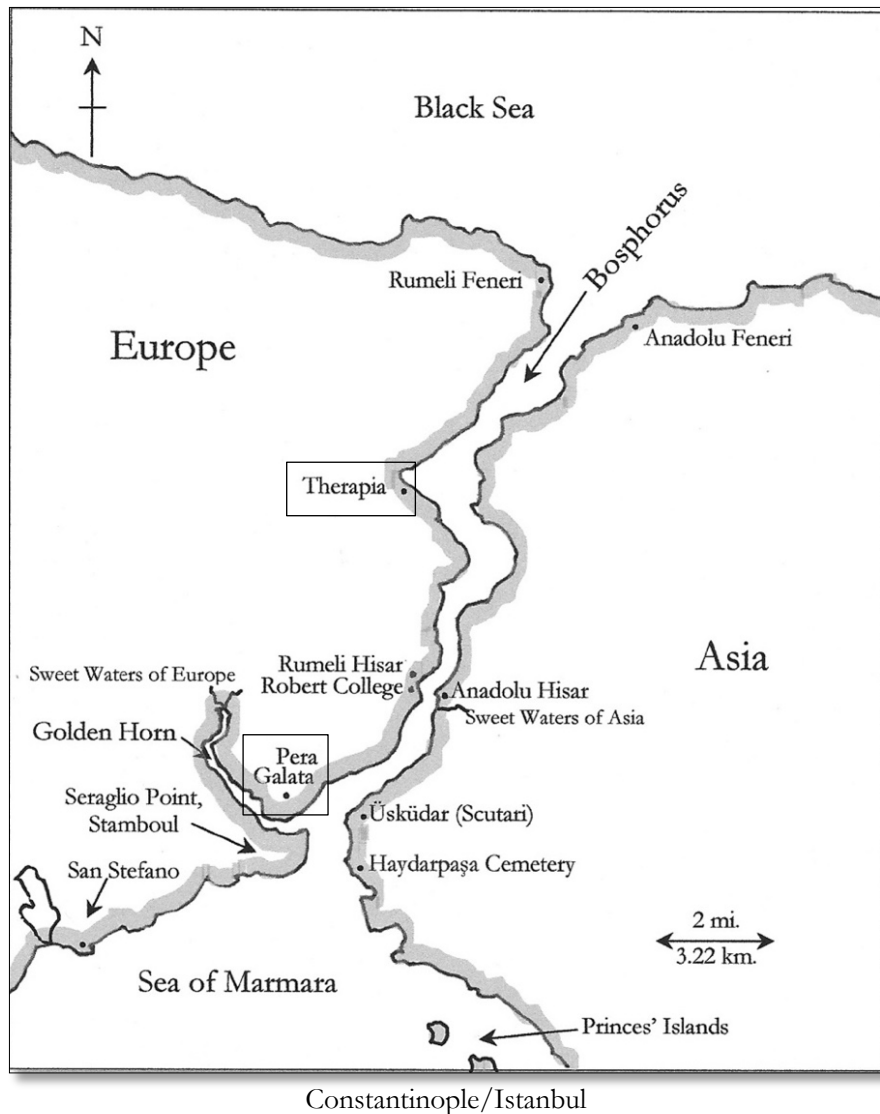
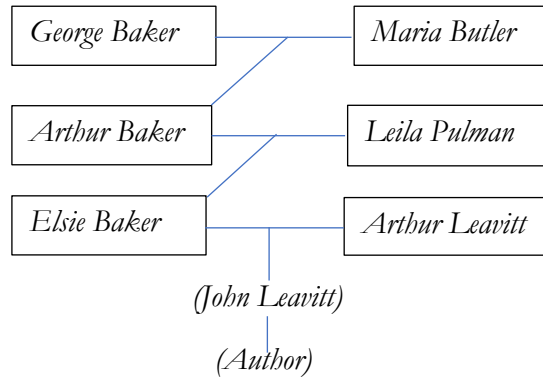


Baker Threads

Chronologies relating to George Baker (1822-1905) and the evolution of the Baker business (1854-1964),
a summary of *Baker Threads* © (in three volumes), May 2023
by descendant Gillian Leavitt Mueller, (gillianm55@gmail.com)

Three Generations



The George Baker Family



GEORGE Baker (1822-1905)

Born in Totteridge, London, England.
Sailed to Constantinople in 1848 to be
head gardener at the British Embassy.
Established the Baker trading companies.
Buried at the British Crimean War Memorial
Cemetery in Istanbul, Turkey.



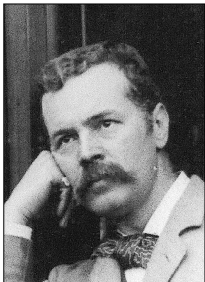
MARIA Butler (1833-1903)

Born in Hull, England.
Went to Constantinople in c. 1850 as
governess to Theodore and Eliza Baltazzi.
Married George Baker in 1853.
Buried with him at the British Crimean War
Memorial Cemetery in Istanbul, Turkey.



1. LOUISA "Loo" or "Louie" (1854-1938)

Married Charles "Charlie" Edwards (1843-1898), who became George
Baker's business partner and established Edwards & Sons.
Children: Middleton "Mid" (1873-1950), Vivian (1876-1923), Mabel (1878-
1969), Cecil (1881-1953) and Mildred "Millie" (1883-1957).
Mid ran Edwards & Sons after his father died.



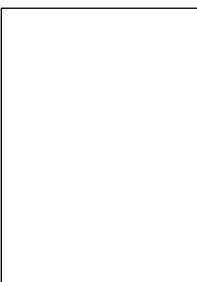
2. GEORGE Percival "G.P." (1856-1951)

Married Emily Mary "Minnie" Davis (1858-1938).
Ran the London branch of Bakers before establishing G.P. & J. Baker with his
brother James in 1884.
Children: Violet (1885-1954), Robin (1887-1970), Cyril (1888-1917),
Daisy (1892-1894), Douglas (1894-1916), Francis (1896-1938), and Brian (1900-1979).



3. Henry "HARRY" (1857-1908)

Married Mary Jew (? -1941).
Children: Winifred (1883-1963) and George Noel (1884-1962).
Managed the flour mill under his uncle, James Heywood, taking it over in
1891.



4. FREDERICK (1) (1859-1860)
Died in infancy.



5. ARTHUR (1861-1939)

Married Leila Pulman (1861-1959), his maternal cousin.

Inherited G. & A. Baker from his father George in 1905. Ran the business in Constantinople/Istanbul until he retired in 1926.

Children: Edith Elsie (1887-1962), Dorothy "Dollie" Leila (1889-1955), Arthur Warden (1893-1958), Ruby Kathleen (1896-2001) and Vivian May (1898-1969).

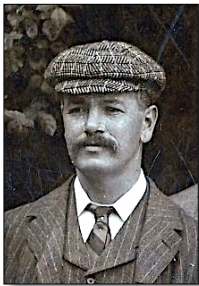


6. Frederick (2) "FRED" "FRANK" William (1862-1947)

Married Winifred Grace Rickard.

A financier who made and lost fortunes on the London stock market. The only "Baker Boy" not to enlist in the family firm. Built "Baker's Folly" at Newquay on the Cornish coast of England.

Children: Cecil (?-1965), Forbes (?-1916), Winifred "Bay" (1894-1983) and Hugh (1895-1971).



7. James "JIM" (1864-1944)

Married Edith Pulman (1858-?), his maternal cousin and Leila Pulman's sister.

Partnered with G.P. in G.P. & J. Baker. When G.P. & J. Baker joined forces with the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers in 1908, Jim was its first managing director.

An excellent swimmer, Jim survived the sinking of the Lusitania.

Children: Joyce (1894-1968) and A. Ronald (1897-?).



8. Amelia "MILLY" "MILLIE" (1866-1937)

Married Stafford Anderson (1850-1930), a mountaineering friend of G.P.'s.

Children: George (1891-1970) and Margery (1898-1968).

She and Stafford lived in Leicester, England, and were not involved with the family firm. Their daughter Margery married Fawcett Benion, whose brother was Charles Benion, who was Lilius Jarvis's uncle.



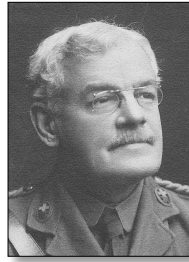
9. Albert (1868-1869)

Died in infancy.

The Arthur Baker Family



LEILA Pulman (1861-1959)



ARTHUR Baker (1861-1939)

1. Edith ELSIE (1887-1962)

Married Arthur Leavitt (1884-1981).
Children: Peter (1913-2010), Ruth (1916-2014), John (1918-2009) and Anne (1921-2014).



4. RUBY Kathleen (1896-2001)

Married Charles "Charlie" Gray (1896-1966).
Children: John (1923-1945).



2. Dorothy "DOLLIE" Leila (1889-1955)

Married Hugh Cotton (1889-1956).
Children: Anne (1931- 2020).



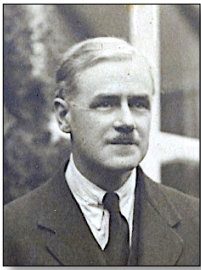
5. Vivian MAY (1898-1969)

Married Ian Morten (1882-1970).
Children: Jack (1924-2011), Jean (1924-2008) and Margaret "Maggie" Ruth (1925-2015).



3. Arthur WARDEN (1893-1958)

Married Jessica Taylor.
Child: Sylvia (1917-).
Married Natalie Panutin (c. 1896-1931).
Children: George (1926-?) and Hugh (1931-).
Married Mary "May" Lovegrove (?-1951), no issue.
Married Cora Chubb, no issue.



The Arthur Leavitt Family



Edith ELSIE Baker (1887-1962)

Born in Constantinople, Turkey.
Married Arthur in Constantinople in 1912.



ARTHUR Howland Leavitt (1884-1981)

Born in Spencer, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
Went to Constantinople in 1909 as a Student
Interpreter for the U.S. Embassy.
Joined G. & A. Baker in 1919.

1. PETER Percival Leavitt
(1913-2010)
Born in Constantinople,
Turkey.



3. JOHN Howland Leavitt
(1918-2009)
Born in Paris, France.



2. RUTH Margaret Leavitt
(1916-2014)
Born in Constantinople,
Turkey.



4. ANNE Elizabeth Leavitt
(1921-2014)
Born in Constantinople,
Turkey.

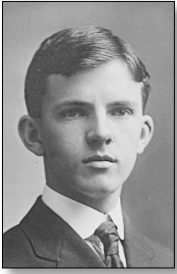


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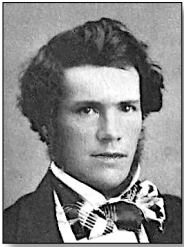
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Overview



Arthur Leavitt



George Baker



Arthur Baker

In 1909, a 25 year-old American named Arthur Leavitt left his quiet New England town of Spencer, Massachusetts, to be a translator at the American Embassy in Constantinople, Turkey. It was then capital of the great Ottoman Empire, which was on the verge of collapse. Within hours of stepping off the Orient Express at Sirkeci Station, he spotted Elsie Baker playing tennis at Robert College, a school established by American missionaries on a hill overlooking Mehmet the Conqueror's 15th century fortress of Rumeli Hisar. She was wearing a white dress and pretty, and of their first encounter he said, "I knew immediately that I would marry her."

Elsie was the granddaughter of Englishman George Baker. As a boy, George had escaped the impoverished underbelly of Victorian society to train as a master gardener. In 1848, the British Government sent him to Constantinople to lay out gardens for the British Embassy under construction in Pera and a new Summer Residence planned up the Bosphorus at Therapia. In due course, he married Maria Butler, an English nanny to the Sultan's Greek banker and his British wife.

Abandoning his landscaping career (and turning down an offer from Sir Henry Austen Layard to join his archaeological expedition to Nineveh in 1849), George ventured into trade. Charming Sultan Abdül Mejid I, he was invited to supply the Royal Harem with linens and toiletries and the Turkish army with 'blankets and boots'. The Crimean War (1853-1856) so boosted his fortunes that he resigned from the Embassy to open a shop, one of the first British retail outlets in the city. The business flourished into an assortment of import, export, wholesale and retail operations to include, by one account, Turkey's 'first departmental store'. By the end of the century, George was a powerful merchant at the helm of a consortium of businesses that extended from Canada to India. On George's death in 1905, his son Arthur took over 'The Shop', called G. & A. Baker Ltd.

By then, Arthur Baker had married his cousin Leila Pulman. Her father had been the architect who came to Constantinople in about 1853 to build the new British Summer Residence. Elsie was their eldest child. But when, in 1911, Elsie sought her

parents' permission to marry the softspoken Mr. Leavitt, the Bakers balked. Hustling Elsie back to England, they insisted she cease communicating with the American for one year. If after that time her heart was still set on marrying him, they would not stand in her way. Yet despite the Baker's determination to quash the liaison, this distressing situation kept it very much alive and generated a trove of 'secret' love letters.

World War I interrupted the Bakers' sojourn in the Levant. When, in October 1914, the ruling 'Three Pashas' declared war on Britain, the Bakers found themselves suddenly enemy aliens in a hostile land. They abandoned their homes, possessions, pets, shops, warehouses, and a legion of servants and employees to flee to England. The women and children left first, Arthur Baker three weeks later. In a spontaneous leap of faith the night before his departure, he left G. & A. Baker Ltd.—now poised at its pinnacle—in the capable care of his three Greek and one Armenian managers. Though among nationalities most distrusted by the Turks, they and the business somehow survived the war.

Arthur Baker's Turkish trading partners had a lot to do with it. They included two of the three ruling Pashas, the Justice Minister, and an army major. It also helped that he had recently bought a home from the city's Chief of Police. Notwithstanding Baker's revised status as Turkey's foe, they trusted him and wanted him to stay. They were relying on his cloth and camping equipment to gear Turkey up for war. They vowed to protect him and his assets, and they did, though none of them would survive the war.

On November 1st, 1914, the Baker women and children boarded evacuation trains at Sirkeci Station specially organized by American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and his consular assistant Arthur Leavitt. Along with thousands of other British refugees, they headed 'home' to England, the irony being that Constantinople was the only real home they'd ever known. Arthur Baker escaped three weeks later, thanks to his quick-witted American son-in-law and sympathetic Turkish friends, who conspired to get him out, thereby evading internment or possible assassination. Leavitt stayed behind, working round the clock at the American Embassy keeping an eye on American, British, and Baker business interests. But when America entered the war in the spring of 1917, he too had to go.

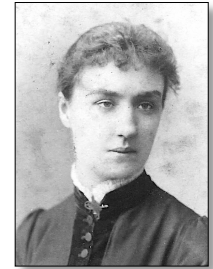
In 1919, the Bakers and Leavitts reassembled in the now Allied-occupied Constantinople. They hoped to resume their gilded life and restore the Baker business to its former glory. A new world order had been installed, however, and come 1923 a re-



Elsie Baker



Maria Butler



Leila Pulman

envisioned Turkish Republic replaced the now defunct Ottoman Empire. All the rules had changed. And so, while George and Maria Baker had spent most of their lives in Istanbul and are buried there, Arthur and Leila Baker, both born and raised in the city, retired to England in 1926 to finish out their lives. Elsie and Arthur Leavitt followed suit, returning to his hometown of Spencer, Massachusetts, to begin life anew. By 1964, one hundred and ten years after George Baker established the family firm, all vestiges had disappeared from the Turkish landscape, though the English side of the business continues to this day.

Backstory (1822-1848)

1822 George Baker was born into poverty in a small cottage on the village green of Totteridge, North London. Once the bucolic countryside of Hertfordshire, it has since been absorbed into London's suburban sprawl. He had nine siblings, of which Catherine and James would play a role in his trajectory.

His family consisted of parents Francis Baker (1788-1868) and Sarah Virgo (1788-1878), and their ten children:

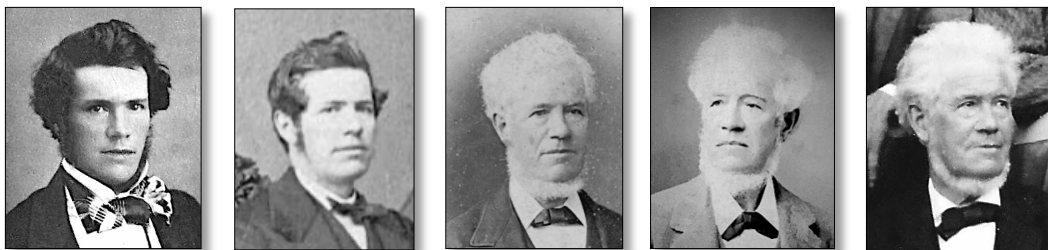
1. William Virgo (b. 6 Oct 1811, Artillery Workhouse, Spitalfields; d. 10 Mar 1902, Wonersh). Raised by his grandfather, James Virgo, William inherited the Virgo Nurseries on his grandfather's death.
2. Elizabeth/Catherine/Katherine (b. 1814, St. George's Workhouse, Hanover Square; d. c. 1848). She married John Wallace (d. 1856), who studied with George at Kew Gardens. The Wallaces emigrated to the U.S. in 1848.
3. Sarah (b. 1815, Wonersh; d. 1901). She married James Scott from East Barnet, whose father was a 'gardener'. Sarah was a 'servant' and Scott a 'coachman' when they married.
4. James (b. 1818, Totteridge; d. 1874, Penge). He married Mary Ann Twycross and became George's procurement officer and shipping agent in London.
5. Francis "Frank" (b. 1820, Totteridge; d. 1887, Barnet). He was twice married to women named Sarah and had a tailor shop on the Barnet High Street opposite the church.
6. George (b. 22 Jul 1822, Totteridge; d. 1905, Constantinople). He married Maria Butler and became a merchant in the Levant.
7. Emma (b. 1824, Totteridge; d. 1900, Lancashire). She married John Willoughby, who kept a hotel at Stockport.
8. Mary Ann (b. 1827, Totteridge; d. 1915). She was working for her older sister Catherine (Baker) and John Wallace in 1841 in Exbury, Hampshire, but did not emigrate to the U.S. with them in 1848. She apparently never married.
9. John Thomas (b. 1830, Totteridge; d. 1881, Lambeth, London)
10. Alfred David (b. 1833, Totteridge; d. 1897, Lambeth, London)

Two of George's siblings were born in the workhouse and two (John Thomas and Alfred David) may have died there. His mother Sarah gave birth to William at the Spitalfields workhouse in London's East End. No father was named on the birth record and William assumed Sarah's maiden name of Virgo. The assumption is that, when her pregnancy became apparent, her father James Virgo (1766-1845) banished her from home and their village of Wonersh. Having nowhere to go, she ended up at the Spitalfields workhouse. James Virgo was a nurseryman and owned 20 or more acres in Wonersh, Guilford, Surrey, where he ran several nurseries. Since Francis was a garden and nursery laborer, it's surmised that Sarah and Francis came to know each other through his employment at the Virgo Nurseries.

As William was approaching his second birthday—when children were separated from their mothers and often adopted out to places as far afield as Canada and Australia—Sarah was summoned home again to marry Francis, William's presumed father. While there, she relinquished custody of William to her father, who adopted him unofficially as his son. Sarah's mother, Elizabeth Pigott (1770-1792), had died giving birth to her sister Mary, when Sarah was three or four years old. Her father James Virgo never remarried.

William was raised by James Virgo and his housekeeper, whoever she was at the time. She may have been Jane Snelling, because in 1798 she had given birth to a son by Virgo named Samuel. Samuel started life with the surname Snelling, Jane's married name, but it was later changed to Virgo. Samuel was 15 years older than William (his half-nephew) and worked at the Virgo Nurseries his entire life. When William took over the business, Samuel (his half-uncle) was working for him. William's brother George Baker also worked for him for a couple of years, but since Sarah was estranged from her father it's unclear if they even knew they were brothers.

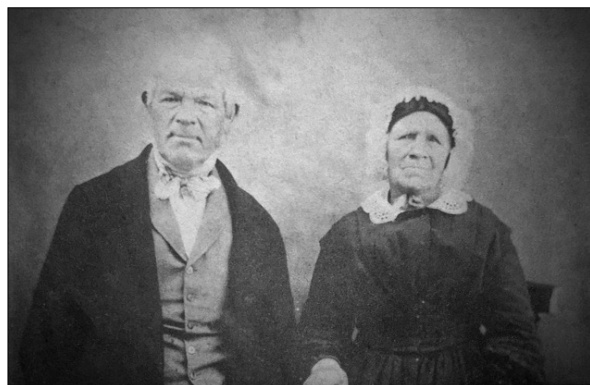
When James Virgo died in 1845, his grandson William Virgo inherited his estate. It was worth £23,796, or about £3,701,817 in 2023 terms. James Virgo's housekeeper at the time, Elizabeth Smith, received his silver watch and chain, a codicil added to his will shortly before he died to induce her to stay and look after him. In the 1851 census, five years after Virgo's death, Jane Snelling and Elizabeth Smith turn up again in the public records at the Union Workhouse, in Wandsworth, London, Smith identified as a 'charwoman'. Of their father's estate, Sarah and her sister



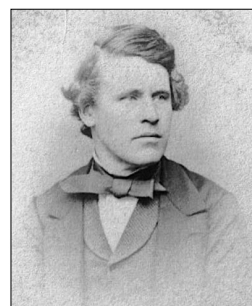
George Baker (l-r) in 1853 (30), 1858 (35), 1885 (63), 1888 (66) and 1900 (78).



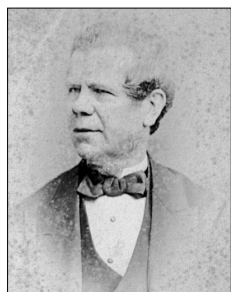
A later portrait of Sarah (Virgo) Baker, looking pleased with herself



George Baker's parents, Francis and Sarah (Virgo) Baker



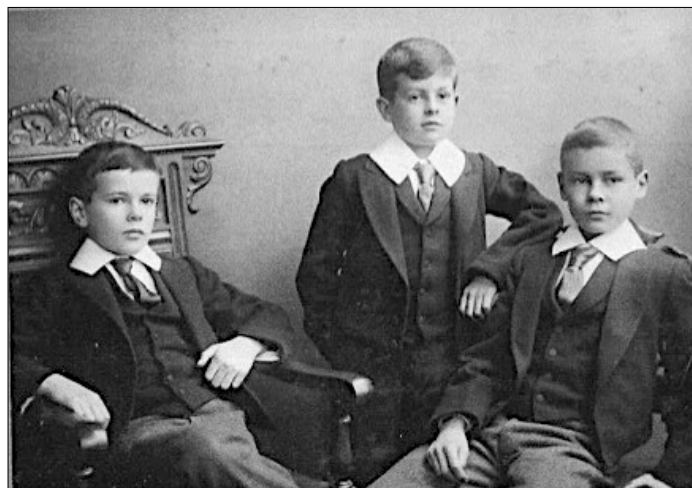
William Virgo, George Baker's illegitimate brother



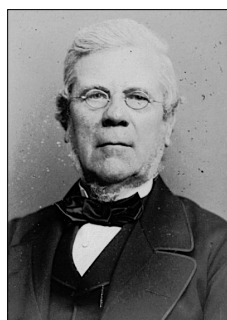
Above and below: James Baker, George Baker's brother



Mary Ann (Tynycross), James Baker's wife



George Baker's sons (l-r) George Percival "G.P.", Arthur, and Henry "Harry" in 1866, when the boys visited their grand-parents for the first and only time. George took them and daughter Louisa to England to enter her and G.P. into boarding school.



Left: Francis "Frank" Baker, George Baker's brother



Right: Clara (Baker) Lambert, James Baker's daughter, whom we have to thank for many of these photographs.

inherited a few pieces of furniture. Their half-brother Samuel got nothing. By the way, Sarah's mother Elizabeth was six months pregnant with Sarah when she married James Virgo.

After Sarah and Francis Baker married in Wondersh, Virgo must have fired Francis from the nursery, because nine months later they turn up at another workhouse run by St. George's church at Hanover Square, London. Here George's sister Elizabeth was born, presumably named after Sarah's mother, Elizabeth Pigott. Later her name became Catherine (in the U.K.) and Katherine (in the U.S.), which may have been an unrecorded middle name. Francis is identified on her birth record as her father. His profession is listed as 'laborer'—no surprise, since all workhouse internees were laborers.

Though the workhouse institution was well-intentioned in concept—to give the down-and-out shelter, work, and a safe space to regroup—in practice it was a labor camp, the inmates slaves of the church or state and money-generators for the people who ran them.

I don't know how George's parents escaped their workhouse detention. Once in the system, it was difficult to break out again. It required people on the outside willing to help. Detainees saw little or none of their labor earnings, which went toward feeding and clothing them, maintaining the buildings, and lining the administrators' pockets. Though the inmates could leave at any time, they had no money to save to support themselves on the outside. Indications are that Francis's family helped him and Sarah on their release, because their third child Sarah was born in Wondersh, where the Bakers lived. (Virgo lived in Wondersh, too, but having seen his daughter go twice to the workhouse, I'm inclined to think their interactions were limited.) The witnesses at Francis and Sarah's wedding are another indicator; the couple's surname was Batchelor, which was Francis's mother's maiden name, so perhaps her brother and sister-in-law. Francis's parents were John James Baker (b. 1757, d. 1824) and Amelia Batchelor (b. 1759) of West Clandon and Wondersh.

After Sarah was born, his parents moved to Totteridge where George and the rest of his siblings came along. Francis is identified on a few of the birth records as 'gardener' or 'garden laborer'. It seems that the Bakers were always poor, George's eldest son George Percival "G.P." remarking on it from a distant memory of visiting his grandparents as a boy in **1866**. Son Arthur remembered the visit too. What follows is the sum total of what George Baker's children knew about his parents and family background.

G.P. Baker: When I was small, I remember he [Francis Baker] lived with his wife [Sarah] in a small house on Totteridge Green in retirement. His origins must have been unpretentious, for he was engaged in nursery gardening for a livelihood. I remember seeing a sword in the house, which might mean that in his young days he might have been in the Army. The couple were being supported by his three sons [namely James, Frank, and George].

Arthur Baker: [My brother] George [Percival] and I visited Grandfather there [in Totteridge] in [1866]. The old man's name was Francis. He was bedridden. We saw him in the house where Father [George Baker] was born, it was said. I do not know what his [Francis's] occupation was.

1825 Stratford Canning (ennobled Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in 1852) was appointed British Ambassador to the Ottoman Court and would continue as such on and off for the next 32 years. Through his personal encouragement, and due to his diplomatic agenda of expanding British trade in the region, Canning was one of three men instrumental to George's transition from gardening into trade. The other two were George's brother James and Sultan Abdül Mejid.

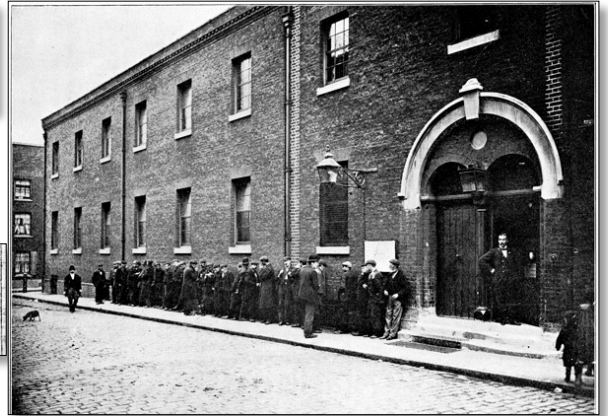
1831 In Constantinople, a fire swept through Pera destroying the British Embassy. Plans were made to replace it, but it would take some 24 years. The new residence came to be called the 'British Palace'. Today it is the British Consulate and called 'Pera House'. During the prolonged construction period, the Ambassador and his staff were forced to live and work out of the British Summer Residence at Therapia (today's Tarabya), ten miles north of the city up the Bosphorus. It was a significant distance from the European community in Pera and the Turkish seat of government, called the Porte, in the old sector of Stamboul. The commute was a inconvenience and constraint on Stratford Canning's diplomacy.

1838 The Anglo-Turkish Commercial Treaty was signed, opening the Ottoman Empire to British investment.

1839 On ascending to the throne, Abdül Mejid I decreed the Noble Rescript. It underscored his commitment to his father Mahmut II's Tanzimat Reforms, namely judicial, military, financial, and administrative improvements along European models of organization. At the same time, he avowed that all races and faiths in the Empire were equal.

6	Ann Stonerstone of Samuel	do	do	Big Elm	June 24 1811
8	William Virgo of Sarah	do	do	Artillery Workhouse	Sept 1 1811
9	Benjamin George Williams of John	do	do	Publican Sam's St Big Mary	Sept 8 1811

Birth record of George Baker's illegitimate brother William Virgo from Spitalfields Workhouse: "William Virgo of Sarah Artillery Workhouse..... [b.] Sept 1 1811."



Day laborers lined up outside the Spitalfields Workhouse. The door to the right was the women's entrance, where Sarah Virgo entered Spitalfields in 1811.

346	Elizabeth	Francis	Sarah	Baker	do	do
347	Elizabeth	Francis	Sarah	Baker	do	do
348	June 1814					
349	Geo Douglas	Douglas	John	Richardson's	Marges	I Greville

Birth record of George Baker's sister Elizabeth/Catherine/Katherine Baker, from St. George's Hanover Square Workhouse: "346 Elizabeth [born between January and May 1814 to] Francis & Sarah Baker, do. [ditto, workhouse] Laborer do. [ditto] I. Greville."



Left: St. George's Hanover Square Workhouse



Women's ward at the Spitalfields infirmary, where Sarah may have given birth to William.



Scenes from the workhouse (l-r): men chopping wood, women picking oakum, 'God is Just, God is Good' mess hall.



Left: Workhouse men at the main, often only, midday meal. Notice that no one is talking. The two men on the right have no food in front of them and are being punished for some infraction.

Shortly before he died, Mahmud II had ordered the American missionaries expelled because they were causing disruption among the Empire's Christian minorities. Under Abdül Mejid, the missionaries were allowed to stay and continue their work, predominantly in Armenian communities. Given the task to establish a boys seminary in Constantinople, Cyrus Hamlin had the loftier ambition of creating 'a New England style Christian college' in the capital city. Once the seminary was up and running in Bebek, he continued lobbying Turkish authorities for three decades inside the courts and out for permission to build the college at Rumeli Hisar. It was called Robert College (today's Boğaziçi University) and George Baker had a small but interesting part in Hamlin's founding of it.

1842 Stratford Canning returned as ambassador, Ambassador Ponsonby having been recalled in part for refusing to agree to locate the new embassy in Pera. He preferred Therapia.

1847 A second fire in Pera in January ruined building materials imported from England for the new British Palace and destroyed St. Helena's Chapel on the embassy compound. Other embassy buildings in Galata were badly damaged, including the temporary quarters Ambassador Canning was using to work from in town. He and his staff were again forced to relocate to the summer compound at Therapia.

For strategic and political gains, and perhaps feeling badly about Canning's housing problem, Abdül Mejid deeded a large parcel of land at Therapia to the British Crown on May 24th, Queen Victoria's birthday. The land was familiar to the Embassy because, by the invitation of the Sultan, it had been using two villas on the premises as its official Summer Residence since the early 1800s. On receiving the gift, the Embassy and Foreign Office began discussing options for a new Residence at Therapia, in addition to the new Palace underway at Pera. George's assignment on reaching Turkey was to install new gardens at both locations. His mission was thwarted, however, by chronic delays in both building projects.

Master Gardener in Training (1832-1848)

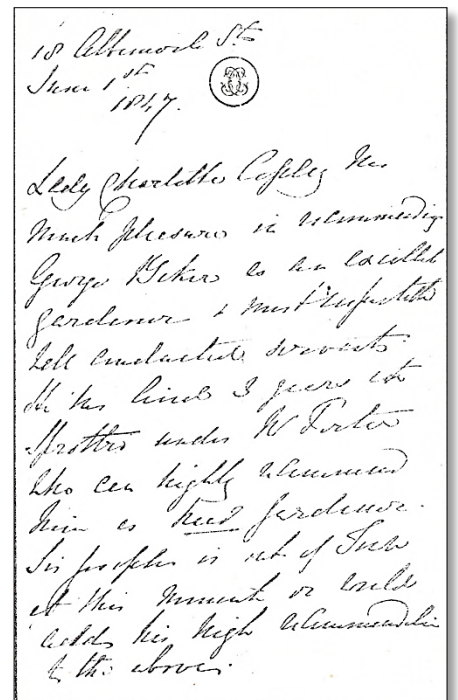
Ironically, since they did not seem to get along, George was forced into the gardening profession by his father. When George was about ten, his father started taking him to work. Francis was a garden/agricultural/nursery laborer, meaning he was a laborer first and had little-to-no formal training. It was fortuitous for George because he took easily to the vocation and was good at it. The timing was also propitious in that it coincided with an explosion of in the gardening and landscaping industry, which had become a national obsession of the Victorian elite ignited by competition with the French aristocracy and impossible examples like the gardens at Versailles.

Correspondence relating to George's application as embassy gardener to Constantinople outlines the progression of his training and career.

1832-1834 Aged 10-12, George was apparently working for his father. If true, his father would have kept any wages he was earning.

1834 Aged 12, George ran away from home. According to family legend, he had only the clothes on his back and a shilling in his pocket. Deciding the shilling brought him good luck, because of what happened next, he never spent it. He later suspended it from his watchchain, where it hung in his pocket for the rest of his life. His lucky break was to be taken in by nurseryman William George Middleton. Middleton took George in until he could be persuaded to return home again. But more so than that, he was George's mentor, father figure, and guardian angel.

1834-1836 Aged 12-14, George may have apprenticed or lived with Middleton, as described by family source Victor Binns, after which he went back to live with his parents. Opposing this notion is the fact that Middleton is not listed among George's previous employers on his application. It's murky, but perhaps Middleton saw him more as a surrogate son, than an employee, and did not pay him



wages. Middleton had had two sons—William and George—who had died of cholera. It offers an inkling of why Middleton decided to take George under his wing.

It's evident George felt deeply indebted to Middleton from the full-length portrait painting of him that he later commissioned, shipped to Turkey, and hung in the front hall of his villa at Rumeli Hisar; that, and the fact that his daughter Louisa named her firstborn William George Middleton, or 'Mid', after him. It suggests that Middleton had a formidable influence on the next fourteen years of George's life, before he left for Turkey.

1836–1838

Aged 14–16, George worked for his father in the gardens of Mr. Thoroughgood in Totteridge.

1838–1839

Aged 16–17, George apprenticed with his brother William and grandfather James Virgo at the Virgo Nurseries in Wonersh. While there, he passed an exam and was promoted to Journeyman. William was running the business. Their grandfather was still alive, but semi-retired. It is also unclear to what extent George knew William was his brother. G.P. vaguely recalled, or perhaps guessed, that William was George's "stepbrother" and that his mother Sarah had been married once, before Francis (which would have made William his half-brother). But public records show this is erroneous. There is William's Spitalfields birth record, but also James Virgo's will in which William, the recipient of his estate, is identified as his daughter Sarah's son. Since James Virgo was maintaining the pretense that William was his son—going so far as to alter church records to reflect William's birth at Wonersh, instead of at the workhouse, and in the previous year—it may be that George thought William was his uncle, even though they were brothers.

1839–1840

Aged 17–18, George was Journeyman to nurseryman Mr. Allman in Horsham, Sussex. As with his other jobs, this one was likely facilitated by Middleton, a fellow nurseryman.

1840–1841

Aged 18–19, George was back in London as Head Gardener to C. Hyde Esquire in Kentish Town.

1841–1844

Aged 19–22, George had graduated to Foreman for Lord de Mauley in Canford, Dorset. Despite his previous position as Head Gardener, a higher grade than Foreman, he'd decided to go to Lord de Mauley "for improvement." Foreman on Lord de Mauley's estate carried more weight than Head Gardener for C. Hyde Esq., likely because Lord de Mauley was a nobleman.

Exotic Nursery
Kings Road Chelsea
3rd Aug^t 1847.

My Lady

Since I was applied to by some Ladies last evening, for a Gardener to go to Constantinople, I have had some further conversation on the Subject of Gardening: am more convinced I have made a good choice of a very studious clever young Man in George Baker; one who if spared for a long life will rise to the head of his profession, his knowledge in the various branches of his profession is first rate his manners modest & good his industry & trustworthiness cannot be surpassed. I enclose a Note in his favour from Lady Charlotte Copley.

I have the Honour to be
your Ladyships Ob'd Ob. Humble
Serv't Jos^h Knight.

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Serv't Jos^h Knight

1844-1847

Aged 22-25, George was again Foreman, this time for Head Gardener Andrew Porter at Lord Copley's estate, Sprothro Hall, in Yorkshire. His relationship with Joseph Knight, proprietor of the Royal Exotic Nursery in Chelsea, may have commenced at this time, if not earlier. His introduction to Knight was again likely made by Middleton, who became a manager at Knight's nursery some years later.

Jan 1847

Royal Exotic Nursery co-owners Knight and Perry requested an assessment of Baker's experience, character, and gardening proficiencies from Andrew Porter, who complied.

Jun 1847

Prompted by Knight, Lady Copley provided a letter "highly" recommending George "as head gardener."

Aug 1847

Knight put George's name forward as the ideal candidate "for a Gardener to go to Constantinople."

1847-1848

Aged 24-25, George trained at Kew Gardens, possibly in conjunction with his brother-in-law John Wallace, who was a market gardener by profession. Indeed, Wallace had been appointed to go to Turkey first, but turned the offer down.

23 Apr 1848

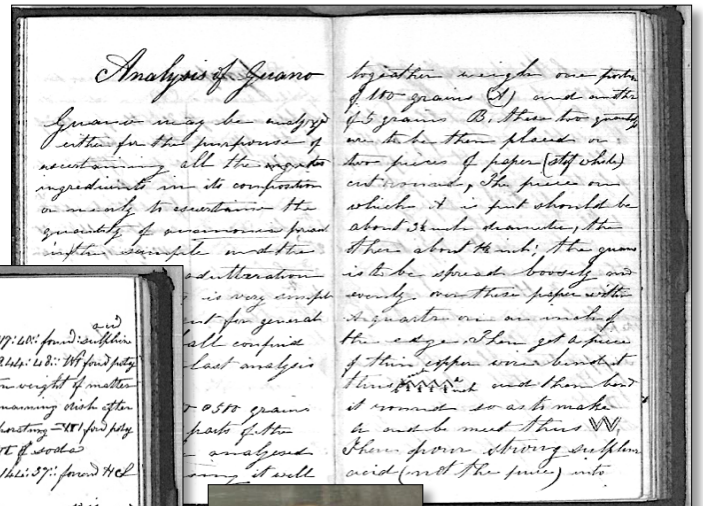
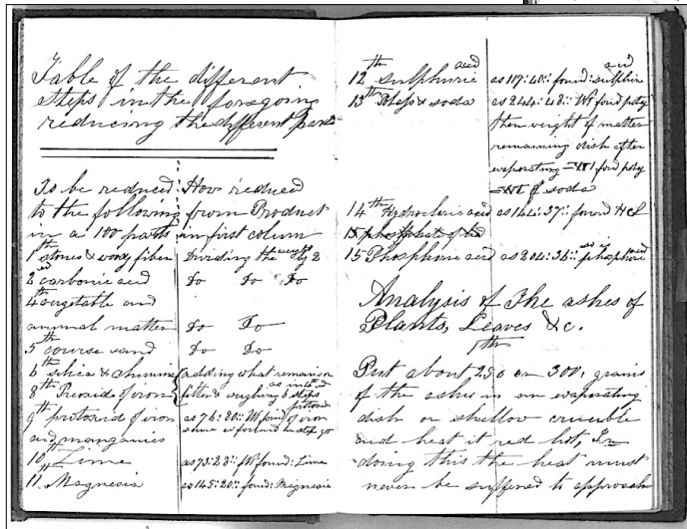
Approaching his 26th birthday, George sailed for Constantinople, traveling via Gibraltar and Malta. He took with him seeds, cuttings, plants, saplings, and notably a collection of exotic fruit trees for delivery to Sultan Abdül Mejid as a gift from Queen Victoria. The rest were to be used ostensibly in the new embassy gardens at Pera and Therapia.

20 May 1848

According to his contemporaneous journal, George stepped ashore on this day. The year contradicts the inscription on his gravestone, which states that he "came to Constantinople in 1847," a detail daughter Louisa and son Arthur must have been unsure of when they buried him. On his arrival, George got to work propagating duplicates from the samples he'd brought, not so much for planting on the embassy premises, but for selling to clients in a nursery business he hoped to get underway. The haphazard notebook shows that Knight continued to send him shipments of plants, destined not for the Embassy's gardens so much as those of the Sultan's and his family, and prominent members of the English and European expatriate community.

Before Joseph Knight proposed George Baker to go as gardener to Turkey, George's brother-in-law John Wallace had been appointed to the post. His wife Catherine "did not wish to go Turkey," however, and put her foot down. By withdrawing his name, Wallace left the slot open for George to take and may have recommended him in his stead. Descendants are firm in the belief that it was his sister Catherine, who ultimately got George to Turkey, but clearly Middleton and Knight had something to do with it too.

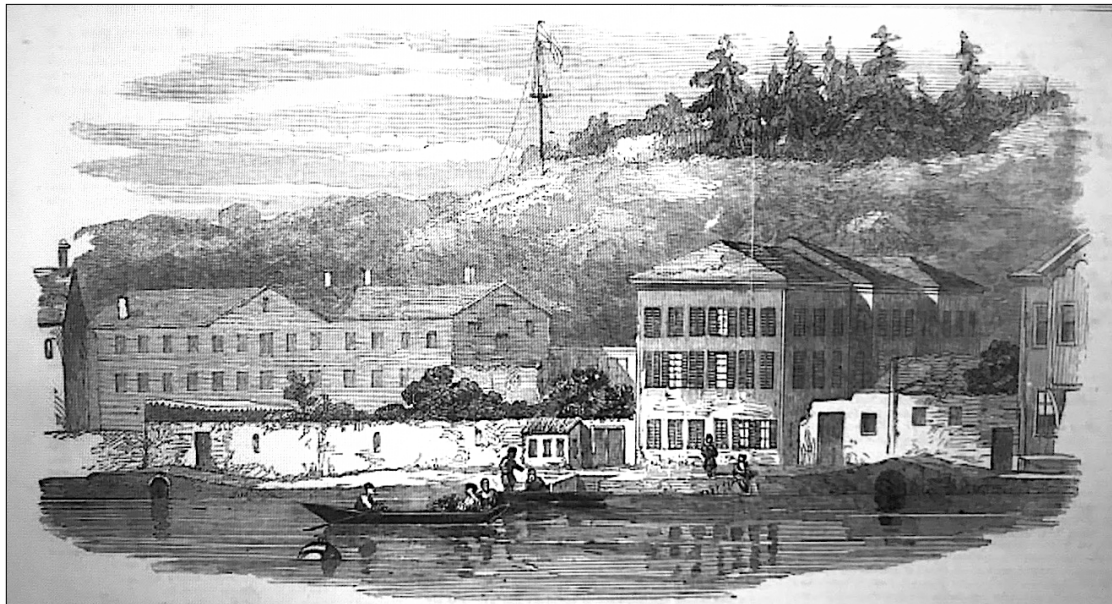
George Baker's notes, apparently from his studies at Kew Gardens.



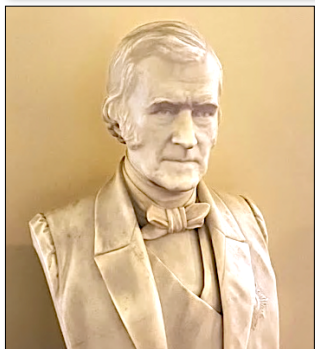
Joseph Knight (1788-1855), proprietor of the Royal Exotic Nursery in Chelsea.



Watercolor of the British Summer Residence and conservatory in August 1848, by Edward Lear.



Attic of the Attaché's House, where George Baker boarded.



The British Summer Residence (1855). The Attaché's House is half obscured to the right, the Ambassador's Residence to the left of it, and between them two kitchens and a boathouse. Further to the left is a warehouse previously owned by the Austrian Steamship Company.

Left: Sir Stratford Canning, ennobled Lord Stratford de Redcliff in 1852, on display at the British Consulate General (2022).



Right: Sultan Abdül Mejid I

The Wallaces wanted to try their luck in America, but getting there in 1848 they were beset by tragedy. They immigrated to Tarrytown, New York, where he was ‘a landscape gardener for prosperous families along the Hudson River’. Catherine/Katherine died shortly after they got there, leaving Wallace to care for their five children, the youngest an infant. He quickly remarried and moved the family to Chicago, where he worked for the wealthy real estate mogul, Sam Kerfoot. John Wallace died in 1856, apparently killed in a train yard accident. Unloading fencing from a slow moving railcar, he fell between two cars and was run over. It left Kerfoot to contend with the orphaned Wallace children.

The two Wallace sons and the eldest daughter remained in America. Traveling alone, the two younger girls were sent back to England. The older of the two was housekeeper to her two Wallace uncles, market gardeners originally from Scotland. She lost her mind and had to be institutionalized. The youngest, Kate, worked for her Wallace aunt, a ‘Ladies Maid’, and her husband until they died, then rejoined her sister in the U.S., married, and had a family.

In a farewell letter to George, his brother Frank accused him of running away from civilized England and ill-advisedly heading into the land of heathens, filth, and disease. Was he sure he wanted to go? Quite sure, it seems. Anything to get away from the workhouse swamp from which his parents came.

From Gardener into Trade (1848-1856)

1848 Defying the odds of his low social status and minimal grade school education, George arrived in Turkey as a Kew-trained Master Gardener. Employed by the British Office of Works, his mission was to establish new gardens for the British Palace under construction in Pera, and formal gardens for a new summer villa at Therapia under debate with London. The Cannings moved into the Palace at the end of **1855**, and George resigned in the spring-summer of **1856**, so it is fairly certain he was able to meet his objectives there; i.e., that the layout at the British Consulate General today roughly approximates what he installed in the early 1850s. It would take another decade and a half to erect the new Summer Residence, however, by which time George had moved on. He thus had far less to do with any landscaping at Therapia, and certainly nothing to do with the formal gardens put in after the villa was built. That said, a September 1853 article in *The Illustrated London News* praises his handiwork (see etching below).



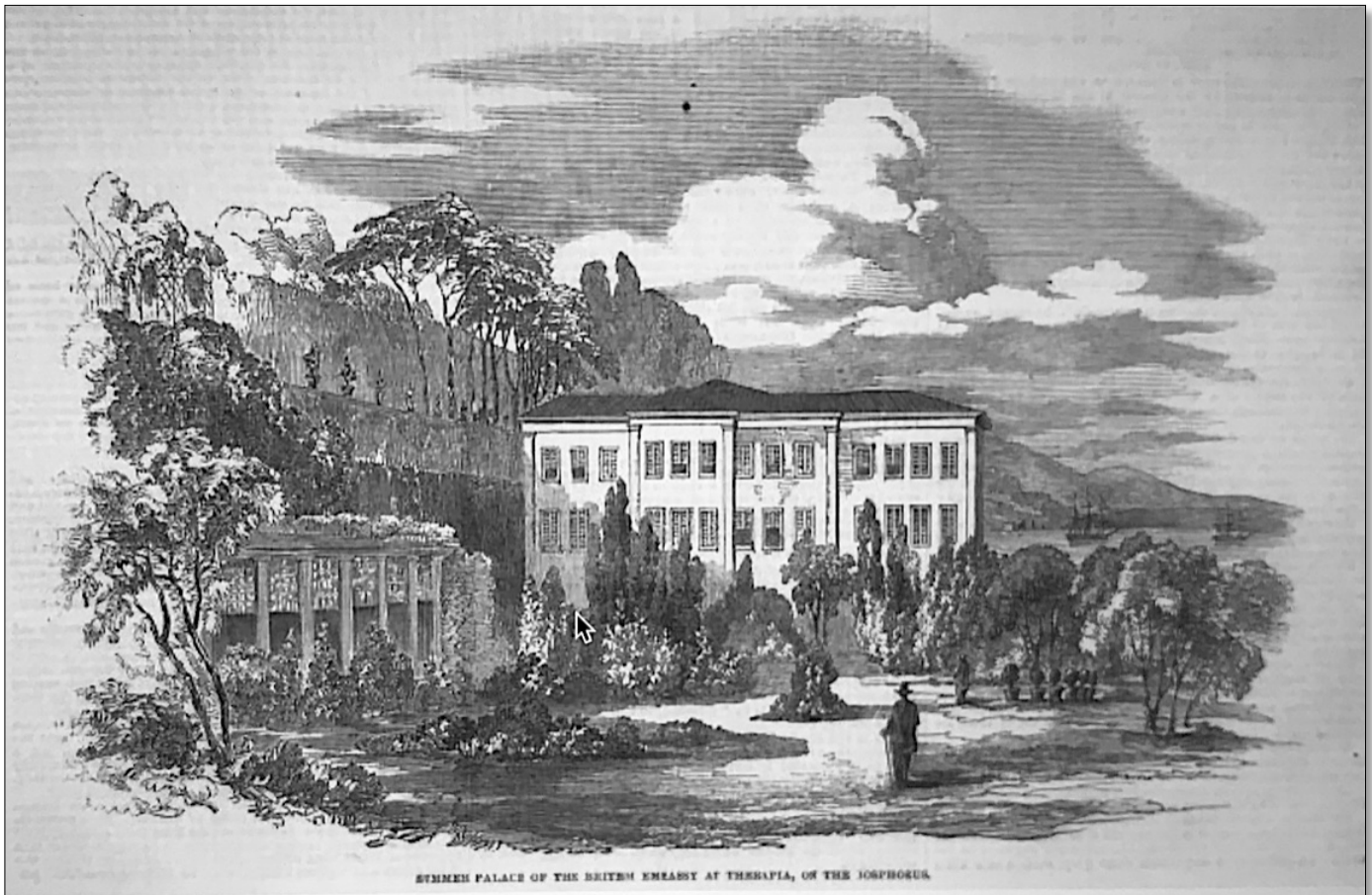
Haydarpasha Crimean War Memorial Cemetery and monument

Another garden George probably had something to do with was the Haydarpasha Crimean War Memorial Cemetery at Scutari (today’s Üsküdar). Abdül Mejid gifted the land to the British during the Crimean War (1853-1856) and, since George was still Head Gardener at the Embassy, it’s fair to assume he was involved in its planning. It’s an L-shaped property. Most of the graves are clustered in the foot of the L, the war dead at the toe and civilians like George and Maria at the heel. The long end of the L is an expanse of rolling lawn, bordered by stately cedars, the space dotted with old trees of a sort not native to Turkey. Both the grass and unusual trees are hallmarks of George Baker’s. Halfway along is an obelisk on a stout square base with inscriptions on each of the four sides commemorating the fallen soldiers and Queen Victoria’s grace in coming to Turkey’s defense against the Russian aggression. At the top of the L near the entrance is the grave of Edward Barton, the first British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire.

Buried at this cemetery from the Baker family are George and Maria Baker; their son Harry Baker (but not his wife Mary (Jew)); their daughter Louisa (Baker) and Charles Edwards, with their infant son Charles Henry Cecil;

Louisa and Charlie’s son William George Middleton and his wife Winnifred (Seager) Edwards; and Maria and George’s brother-in-law James Heywood, husband of Maria’s sister Amelia (Butler) Heywood.

George lived at Therapia in the so-called ‘Attaché’s House’ on the quay and did most of his work there, since the Palace grounds in town were a construction site. On the Pera compound was a conservatory that dated back to the original Residence. George used it to store palm, lemon, and orange trees through the winter. These eventually adorned the Palace’s interior, reflecting the fashion among wealthy Victorians of bringing the outdoors inside. The inner courtyard, which George filled with palm trees, came to be called ‘Palm Court’.



An etching from *The Illustrated London News* dated 24 September 1853. The attendant article reads in part: “The Summer Residence of the British Ambassador at Therapia (all the Embassies are called “serais” or palaces here) is beautifully situated at Therapia on the European shore of the Bosphorus into the Black Sea, whence cooling and grateful breezes prevail during the greater part of the summer. The mansion is spacious, though of simple, unpretending style of architecture; but the gardens with their terrace-walls rising one above the other, all covered and crowded with luxuriant flowers, shrubs, and hanging plants, [create] a delicious retreat. Their condition does great credit to Lord Stratford de Redcliff’s gardener, who, we believe, is an Englishman. On certain evenings in the week these gardens are, by his Excellency’s generosity, thrown fairly freely open to all respectable persons who feel inclined to visit them; on which evenings a band—composed chiefly of Italian and German refugees—plays in an elevated orchestra of goodly dimensions, a short distance from the house. From this spot the sketch was made...”

Following is a sample entry in George Baker’s journal:

*Mr Barkers Fruit trees 1849 April 2 Grafted at Therapea
first lot from Theran [Tebran]
1st Apricot of Balk*

*2nd Do. Bocharra looks like pear
3 Do Do Condabar [Kandabar]
4 Peach of Condabar
5 Do. of [Makottat/Mabottat/Mabottet?]
7 Pear of Condabar
8 [?] Triest
9 Red Nectarine
10 White [?]
11 Sweet [Kesem?]
12 Girminsk Khanj apple
13 two kinds of Pears
First second no good dead
3 Peaches grafted at Pera Marked with Round sticks
from Tabrazed [?] Packed in damp moss in good
condition
4 four Varieties of apples including seed [sarab ?]
2 Black Tabrazed apricots
3rd white apricot
4 Ordebade do. Lay wood
5th [Tockham?] Mahommedag not best
6 White peach sweet Kemel
7 Red do. forth and last from Theran grafted in this
garden with [garble] lable Bockhara
[delivered to] Mr Barker care of
Messrs [garble] & Fontaine Constantinople*

With Ambassador Canning's blessing, George launched a nursery business on the side. He ordered trees and plants from Joseph Knight, reproduced them on site at Therapia, and sold them to Turkish Royals and prominent members in the British community like the Barkers, Hansons, Whittalls, Sarells, Baltazzis, and La Fontaines. It's logical to assume that he supplied his landscaping ideas, horticultural expertise, and installation labor for free, as there are no accountings in his notebook for such income, whereas there are accountings relating to his embassy work and errands run for Mrs. Canning. Double dipping would have been antithetical to government practices. There is also the implication that George intended to model his garden business on the best example he knew—Joseph Knight's Royal Exotic Nursery of London; that he hoped, as it were, to create Baker's Royal Exotic Nursery of Constantinople. A year or two into it, though, he pivoted instead into trade. Central to this transition were Stratford Canning, Abdül Mejid, and his brother James at the linen factory in London.

Three of Ambassador Canning's priorities were first, to promote and expand British trade in the region, the endgame being to colonize India and render her the proverbial 'Jewel in the Crown'. Building the Suez Canal (1859-69) was part of this strategy, thereby connecting the North Atlantic with the Indian Ocean, through the Mediterranean, and speeding travel time by a couple of weeks. Second, to safeguard free and unimpeded passage through the Bosphorus strait, because without it trade between England and Eastern Europe and the Middle East was difficult, if not impossible. And third, among other things, to open British retail establishments in the Empire, a proposal then under negotiation with the Porte.

By comparison, the Sultan's priorities were first, to strengthen Turkey's alliance with Britain and France to offset the threat of another Russian invasion, in Russia's perennial efforts to take Turkish territories and seize control of the Bosphorus. The Russians invaded anyway, in the Crimean War (1853-56), but thanks to Mejid, Britain and France came to Turkey's defense. Second, to bring the Empire up to European standards in education, administration, the military, the judiciary, and urban development. His reforms, which his father Mahmut II had started, affected every aspect of life. And third, among other things, to please his mother and his women in the Royal Harem. Mejid was notorious for being especially fond of his Harem. According John Freely, former Robert College professor and authority on Turkish history, Mejid produced more children by more women than any Sultan before or after him.

Working in Canning's and the Sultan's favor (and George Baker's by extension) was the uniquely congenial and respectful rapport the two men shared. Mejid called Canning *Büyükelçi*, which translates as 'the Great Ambassador', suggesting in Western minds at least that the young Sultan considered Canning the greatest ambassador Britain had ever sent to the Porte.

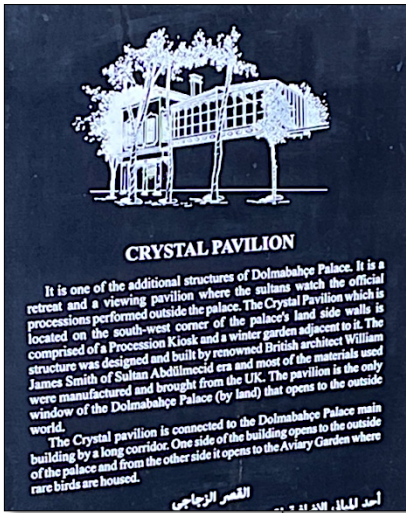
Meanwhile, George's brother James was working at the linen manufacturing company of Morley, Powel & Britton. He'd started out as an errand boy and was working his way up. Similarly defying his family's humble origins, he would become "a principal partner" of the firm, in large measure due to his partnership with George. Once the business got underway in the early 1850s, it brought in a steady stream of linen orders. Separately and on his own, James set himself up as George's London-based procurement officer and shipping agent.

There are two family narratives to explain how George transitioned from gardening into trade. One was circulated by Victor Binns, descendant of George's daughter Louisa (Baker) Edwards. The other came from George's sons G.P. and Arthur and their children. G.P. and Arthur believed, but could not say for sure, that it was James Baker in London who first sent linen samples to George and urged him to try selling them locally.

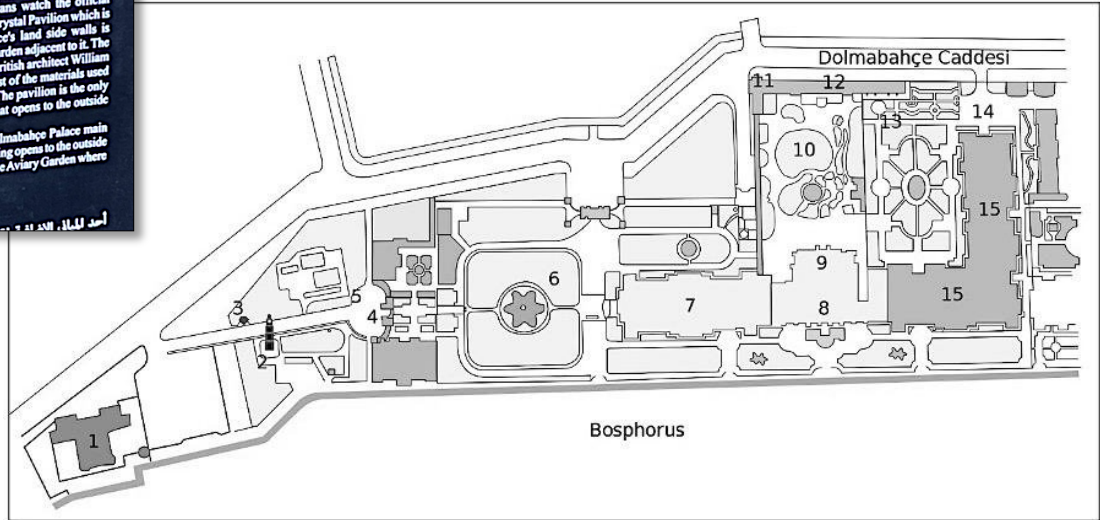
Arthur Baker: His first attempts at trading was either suggested to him by his brother James or, I am inclined to think (I am speaking from memory), forced upon him by James Baker. Father had sent him some earnings and J.B. sent out a parcel of linens, towels, napkins etc., there sold at good prices. The order was repeated and in time a room was taken in one of the back streets of Pera [at No. 2 Kule Kapisi on Galata Tower Square].

G.P. Baker: As to when Father started importing British goods, I never heard beyond the fact that his brother James, being in the linen trade as a Manager and later as a partner of the firm of Morley and Powell, would be sending him parcels of linens on consignment; and that, meeting with success, this would induce him to add other fabrics, and so from one importation to another.

Victor Binns maintained to the contrary that it was the Sultan, in fact, who got the ball rolling; that Abdül Mejid placed the first linen order and was George's first customer (even counting his plant sales). To this I would add that Mejid was just a year younger than George and they both shared a passion for gardening. It seems that the Sultan



Below: Plan of Dolmabahçe Palace gardens. 11 is the Crystal Pavilion, 12 is the birdhouse and wintergarden, and opposite 13 is the conservatory. 13 marks the line of a half wall and iron fence along which wisteria is trained. The sign (left) explains that the Crystal Pavilion "...is a retreat and a viewing pavilion where the sultans watch[ed] the official processions performed outside the palace. The Crystal Pavilion, which is located on the south-west corner of the palace's land side walls, is comprised of a Procession Kiosk and a winter garden adjacent to it. The structure was designed and built by renowned British architect William James Smith of the Sultan Abdülmecid era and most of the materials used were manufactured and brought from the UK."



11 - Crystal Pavilion built by British architect William J. Smith in the early 1850s.



13 – Conservatory also installed by William J. Smith and wisteria tree opposite it (below).



took a shine to George, was impressed by his knowledge and character, and consulted him on gardening matters after their first meeting. A prime example are the gardens at Dolmabahçe Palace, the Royal Residence Mejid was building for himself at the time. According to Binns, George designed them and saw to their installation:

He laid out some gardens along the Bosphorus and was invited to design and landscape the new gardens and innumerable lawns for the Sultan's palaces. When finished, the Dolmabahçe Palace had acres of roses dotted with fountains, where the silver water turned to emerald, ruby, and gold as it ran over the colored mosaics decorating the fountains. Sultan Abdül Mejid is reputed to have commented that George Baker had laid out such beautiful flower beds that there were now colored carpets both inside and outside the palaces!

To this Arthur Baker added,

He [Father] laid out several of the Bosphorus gardens. One we daily passed on our way to town belonged to Mahmoud Pasha, a former Grand Vizier. Some 3 or 4 Cedars of Lebanon were there when I was last in Constantinople. They were probably planted between 1852 and 1858. Today they are higher than the Palace. G.P.B. had a water colour of this Palace which was and still is at Kurutchism [Kuruçeşme Park and Galata Sarayı]....

G.B. credited himself with bringing one of the best known apples in Turkey, to Turkey. It was originally from Arnassia. It was a large apple 2½ to 3 inches in diameter, yellow with black spot needle points. He took cuttings and sold them. He introduced the Wisteria and charged £5. a plant for the first lot; also Fuchsia were sold at £2. or more a cutting.

Also according to Victor Binns, Arthur Baker and his brother G.P., George initiated the practice of incorporating well-watered, finely manicured lawns into the design, not just at the British Palace, Summer Residence and Crimean War Memorial Cemetery, but in the Turkish and European gardens he worked on. It may be coincidental, but unusual non-native tree varieties, patches of lawn, and a large wisteria tree are features of the Dolmabahçe Palace gardens today. Since British architect William J. Smith built the Chrystal Pavilion, wintergarden, birdhouse and conservatory (see plan above), and George was involved with the layout of the gardens, it seems likely they collaborated. George would have been consulted on how to design the structures and best situate them in the broader garden layout.

1848 Shortly after getting to Turkey, George Baker delivered Queen Victoria's gift to Abdül Mejid at Topkapi Palace, son Arthur writing:

He took with him [to Turkey]... a collection of fruit trees for Sultan Abdül Mejid. A list of the trees in his diary shows that Kew had collected trees from many parts, even from Central Asia.... Father's diary speaks of taking the collection to the [Topkapi] Palace gardens and seeing the Sultan, Abdül Mejid, digging. He notes that his trousers were badly cut and that he needed a tailor. He [George] did not know that [the Ottoman style of] clothing was then in a transition state; they [the Turks] were going away from the old baggy breeches [in favor of slimmer European slacks].

This page of George's notebook is missing, but in subsequent pages and years there are similar descriptions of meeting with the Sultan in the Topkapi gardens.

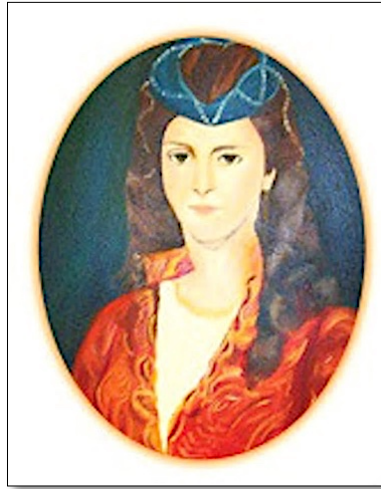
Continuing with Binns's story, on becoming aware of the Sultan's new British acquaintance—perhaps observing them talking in the garden through their latticed palace windows—the women in the Royal Harem begged the Padishah to enquire with George whether he might be able to obtain Irish linen for them from England. Irish linen was widely regarded as being of the highest quality in the world. It is not immediately evident why the ladies desired linen so badly, but my theory is because they couldn't get it. Silk, cotton, and wool were plentiful in the region and easily procured, but linen was as yet beyond their reach. And, since the posh Europeans in Pera were using it for their clothes, bed linens and drapery, the Harem women—headed by Mejid's mother, who was famously a trend-setter in her day—wanted some for themselves. And, like a genie in the bottle, George could fulfill their wish because his brother James had just suggested it to him, or was about to. It was oddly serendipitous how everything came together for George, thanks to his brother and Mejid and Canning.

George began to supply the Royal Harem with linen and other finished fabrics, and a growing array of ladies' toiletries such as soap, colognes, perfumes, and handkerchiefs. Canning did not object to George's budding entrepreneurship; indeed, he probably encouraged it. He would have supported George's pivot into retail trade precisely because he was negotiating a retail trade agreement with Abdül Mejid. He may have even suggested the idea.

Conversely, Canning was aggravated by William J. Smith's extensive moonlighting for the Sultan at Dolmabahçe Palace and elsewhere in town, all the while taking forever to finish the British Palace. The former was prolonging the



Scene from the Royal Harem at Topkapi Palace (above) and "The Sultana in her State Araba" (below), by Thomas Allom (c. 1840).



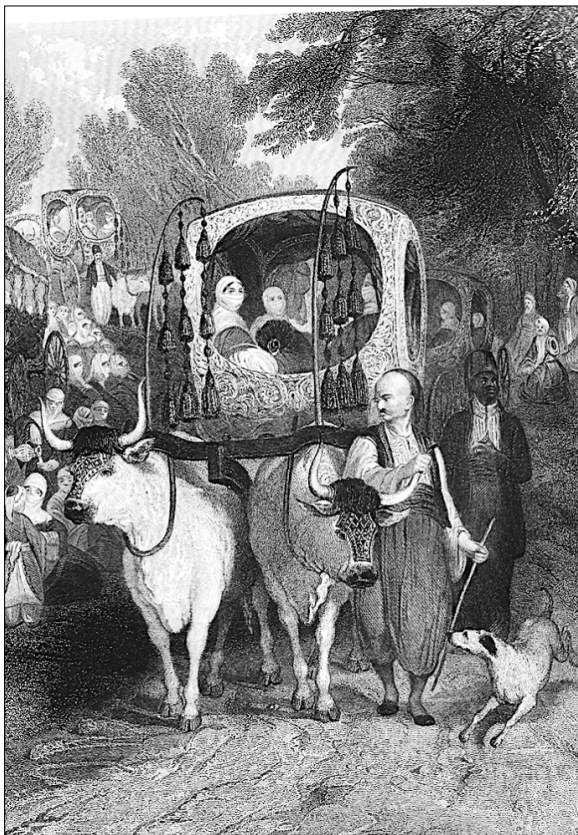
Abdül Mejid's mother, Bezmialem Valide Sultan



Abdül Mejid's in 1846



At Topkapi Palace, a room in Bezmialem Valide Sultan's apartment (above) and the common area in the Royal Harem (below), both featuring windows with views of the Palace gardens, where George Baker met with Abdül Mejid multiple times.



latter. Worse still, Canning discovered that Smith was not declaring gifts and compensation he was receiving for his extracurricular activities. That was the last straw. Canning called for him to be fired and had him recalled to London. Another architect, Henry Pulman, and an interior designer, Robert Hayden, were dispatched to finish the job. Pulman soon became George's brother-in-law and Hayden his first business partner.

But there was another reason Canning ignored George's work for the Royal Family. The fellowship he was cultivating with the Sultan and his minions allowed him to collect scuttlebutt circulating at Topkapi Palace. George was another pair of eyes and ears in Canning's documented coterie of casual informants. These included George's housemate, famed archaeologist, embassy attaché, and future British Ambassador to Turkey Sir Austen H. Layard, with whom George became good friends. Also Charles Alison, who would marry Eliza Baltazzi and go to Tehran as ambassador.

During the Crimean War, George's cloth and toiletry sales to the Palace expanded to include 'blankets and boots' to the Turkish military, and possibly other types of camping equipment (tents?) and hospital supplies (sheets?), which would later become standing orders. At this point in his notebook, George began taking loans from local lender and gardening client, Charles Hanson, in order to build up his stock. At the same time, he was sending money and orders back to his brother James in London. Around this time as well, business accounts show up in his notebook suggesting that Canning was letting him keep his profits.

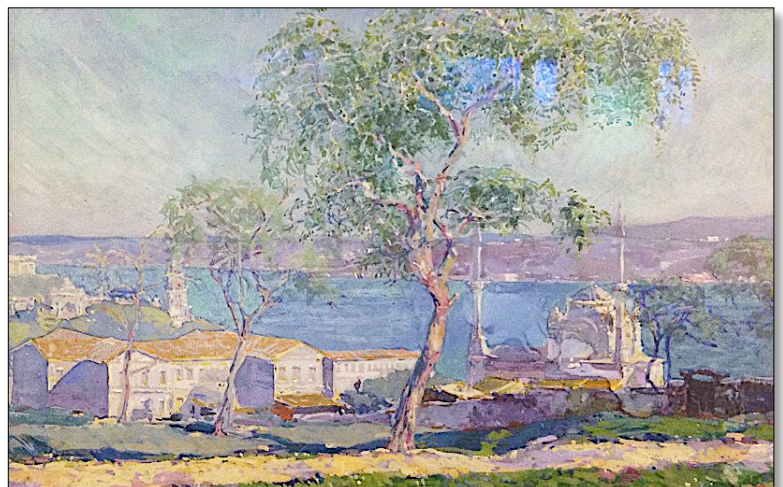
This relationship that George established with the Sultan and Porte in the early 1850s would transfer to his son Arthur after his death in **1905**. Even in November 1914, as the British were evacuating Turkey at the onset of World War I, the Turkish leadership was asking Arthur to stay, so he might continue supplying the Turkish army. They needed his imports to gear up for war.

1849 In September, George turned down an offer from his housemate Austen H. Layard to go on his second archaeological expedition to Nineveh, capital of the ancient Assyrian empire in present day Iraq. George's reasons for doing so were twofold. First, Maria Butler had shown up that summer and he'd decided he was going to marry her. She was a mariner's daughter from Hull, on England's east coast, and a nanny hired by the mega-wealthy Anglo-Greek family, the Baltazzis. Eliza Baltazzi (1823-1863) was the daughter of the wealthy English merchant, investor and erstwhile diplomat, Richard Sarell. Twenty years her senior, Theodore Baltazzi (1798-1860) was ethnically Greek and the Sultan's personal banker, a post he'd inherited from his father. While Theodore spent most of his time at work in Pera, Eliza preferred to live at Therapia with the children and their Butler nanny. This put Maria in close proximity to George, who was billeted at the British Summer Residence two villas down the quay.

Maria was one of a handful of young, available English women awash in a tide of arriving young Englishmen—contractors like George tied to the construction of the British Palace and other buildings going up in Pera, diplomats at the Embassy like Henry Austen Layard, visitors filtering through like explorer Richard Burton; missionaries, legal and financial advisors to the Turkish government, and military advisors in the lead up to the Crimean War. But Maria was just turning 16 that summer and George apparently felt he had to wait—or she put him off for that long—because they didn't marry for another four years. Nevertheless, he understood that to capture her heart and hand, he would have to stay put and keep the courtship alive. He could not go gallivanting off to Nineveh with Layard, though another friend staying at the Attaché's House, noted explorer Richard Burton, was encouraging him to do so.

Second, with Maria decided, he needed to stay focused on his goal of establishing a nursery and to present himself as an attractive prospect. The dream was looking bright because Mejid was promising a swath of land behind Dolmabahçe Palace precisely for this purpose. Land purchases by foreigners were strictly by permission of the Court. Arthur Baker:

Father, at times, would tell of his nursery and an idea he had of buying land (vegetable gardens) behind

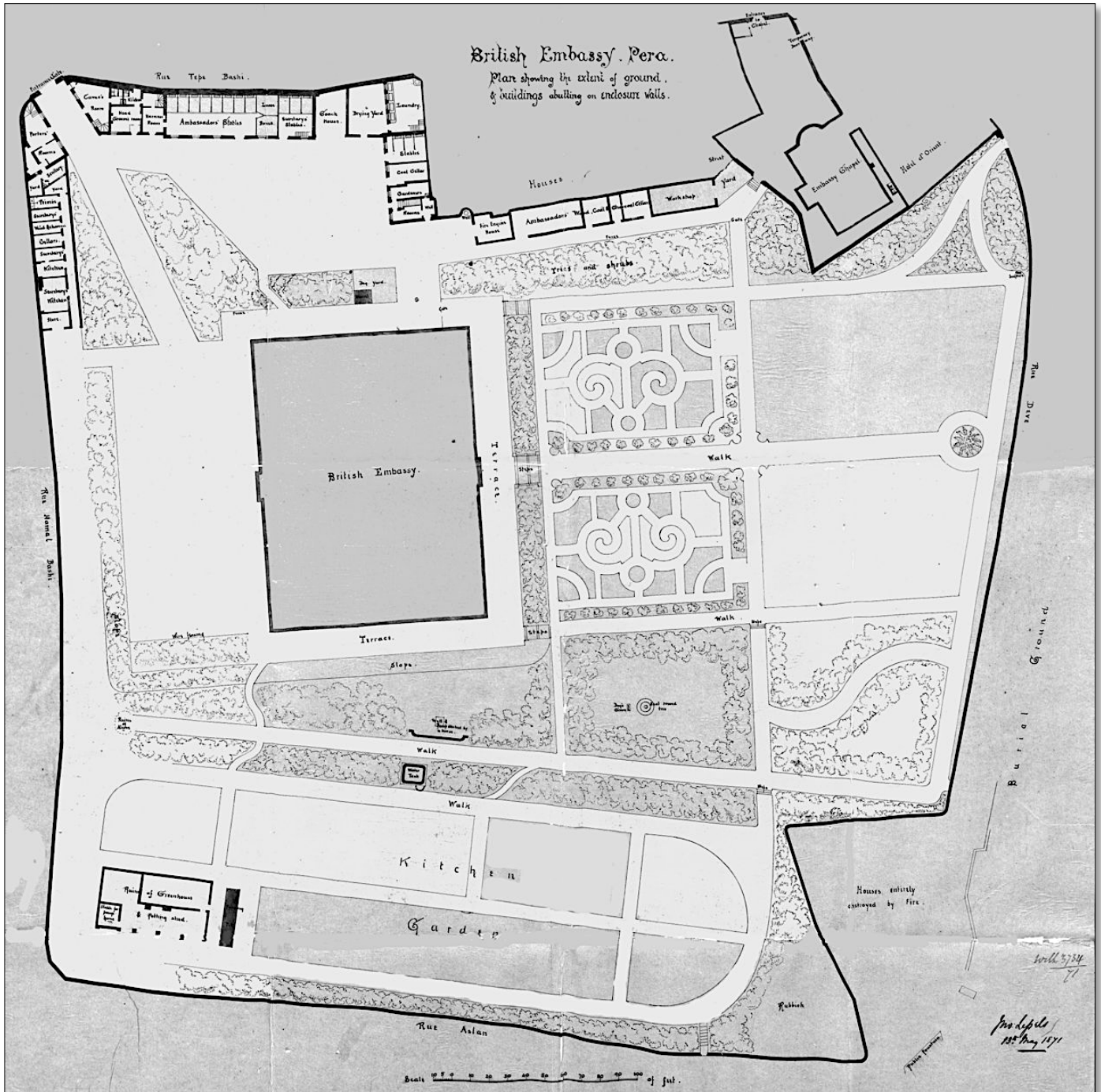


Behind Dolmabahçe Palace, Bezmialem's mosque to the right, the clocktower and palace to the left. By an unknown artist (possibly a family member).

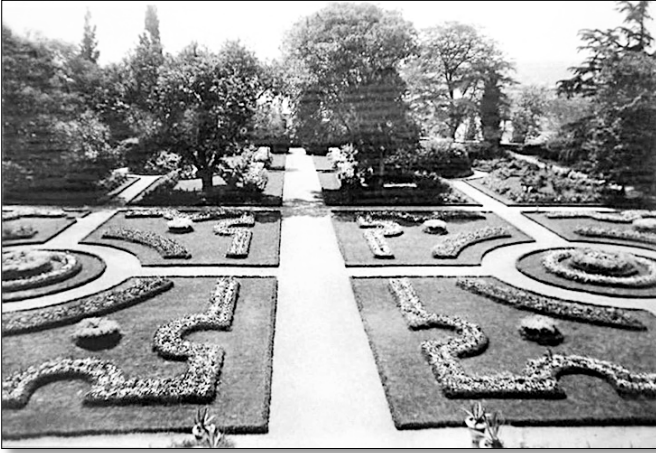
Becgitch near the Dolma Baztche Palace. Had he done so, the property would have become a fortune for, after the Palace was built, the valley was used for building purposes. Some idea can be got from the figure of 1d. per square 27 in. of land. The value of such land 50 years later was not less than 13/- to 15/- [or £2,239-£2,583 per sq. 27 inches in 2023 terms].

Yet other opportunities were brewing. Given the situation, it's easy to imagine Canning himself saying to George, 'My boy, forget this idea of Baker's Royal Exotic Nursery of Constantinople. You're better off going into trade. Why don't you open a shop! I'll help you.' Which is exactly what he did.

* * *



An 1871 survey of the British Palace grounds. The entrance and outbuildings are at the north-west corner; George's greenhouse and kitchen garden are along the southern perimeter; St. Helena's Chapel, built by George's brother-in-law Henry Pulman, is at the north-east corner, with the same footprint as today's, suggesting this was Henry Pulman's design; and stables, workspace, and staff housing were along the northern perimeter. When in town, and before the three men married, George bunked there with architect Pulman and 'draper' Robert Hayden.



The British Palace garden from the terrace in the 1920s (left) and from the garden looking back in c. 1914 (right). Note that the pattern of the formal garden is similar to that from the 1871 survey and was continued (or revived) in the 1920s. In George Baker's time, the formal garden at the front was populated by pines and ornamental trees (see prior 1905 photograph). These were felled by Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador from 1913 to November 1914, who thought the building deserved a more "stately" appearance. Then Consul General, Sir Telford Waugh, wrote:

[The British evacuation in November 1914] was the end of Sir Louis Mallet's Embassy. One person breathed a deep sigh of relief. Sir Louis was artistic and thought that the Embassy building in Pera, a stately house in Italian style, ought to have a garden to match. So he ordered Achille, the Belgian gardener, who had seen many Ambassadors come and go, to cut down some beautiful old trees [planted by George] and dig up the lawn in order to lay out symmetrical flower beds. Achille was in despair and delayed as long as he could, but the Ambassador was inexorable, and one after another of the stately pines and terebinth trees of great age and beauty, twenty-eight in all, were felled. There were still others to go. "Heureusement," said Achille, "a la fin la guerre est eclatee et Sir Louis est parti." [Fortunately, in the end, the war is here and Sir Louis is gone.] Those who now use the garden agree with Achille. (*Turkey Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow* (1930), p. 155.



'Palm Court' sans palms in 2023, the original floor tile pattern recently installed.



Left: Palm House at Kew Gardens

Right: View down the marble staircase into the 'Palm Court' of the British Palace in 1924, inspired by George Baker's training at Kew Gardens, where Palm House (left) was just opening to the public.

Architect Henry Pulman and the British Building Boom

In the 1700s, the trade and consular offices of the British Levant Company were concentrated in Galata, the old European commercial and financial sector of Pera. When the Levant Company folded in **1825**, these dilapidated buildings came under the Embassy's purview.

1841-1846 Mark Bertram, historian of British diplomatic properties worldwide, writes that architect William J. Smith, assistant surveyor for the London Crown Estates, was appointed in **1841** to go to Turkey to rebuild the British Palace in Pera that had burned down in **1831**. Bertram

Within a month of his arrival, Smith signed leases on two adjacent stone houses in Galata... to serve the Embassy until rebuilding at Pera could be completed. Ambassador Ponsonby was on the point of leaving... and Smith was instructed to remain in Constantinople until Sir Stratford Canning... arrived in early **1842**. In the same year, the Admiralty converted a house in Pera into a hospital. Smith submitted plans for a new hospital, the powers in London agreeing, 'not the least because it was thought that using surplus materials from construction of the Palace would reduce costs [not, however, if the same practice was used vis-à-vis Dolmabahçe Palace]. But the project made no headway.

A Seamans Hospital was nonetheless established in **1846**.

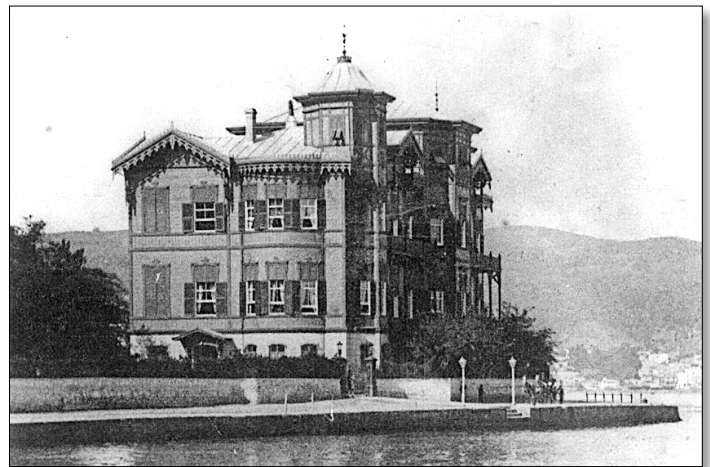
1849-1850 Bertram goes on to say that in **1849**, Smith found a suitable consular site in Galata, close to the Galata Tower, and that this was bought in **1850**. Smith drew up plans for a hospital for 40 patients, and for a similar-sized combined consulate general and supreme court building, with a two-story prison behind it, costing roughly £10,000. The prison address was No. 61 Galata Kulesi Sk.

1851-1861 The consular offices and Consul General's residence were destroyed by another fire in July **1851**, which 'put pressure to get the building work started. Final approval wasn't given until **1854**, when George Wood arrived as clerk of works under the architect Henry Pulman. The buildings were erected sequentially: the hospital... in August **1854**, taking two years to build; and the prison in **1856**. Three adjacent and nearby lots were then added to what was turning into a consular quarter. A house for the surgeon was built opposite the hospital in **1856**..., and the combined supreme court and consular building was begun in February **1857**. A prison yard was installed next to the prison from **1857-1859**... And between **1859-1861**, the Consulate General offices and shipping office were completed, both designed by Pulman.'

Henry Pulman and Robert Hayden arrived in Turkey around the time that Smith was recalled to London in **1853**. From London, Smith continued to work on the British Palace project from **1853-1855**, Pulman having replaced him in Constantinople, and then retired.

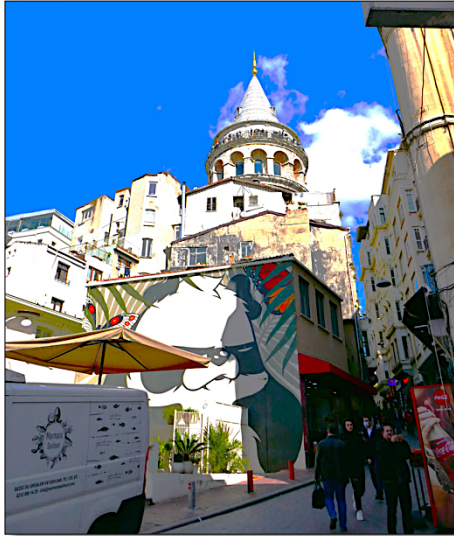
Before the Office of Works hired Pulman, he was apprenticing with Charles Barry, the London architect famous for rebuilding the Houses of Parliament. Barry was consulted throughout the Palace's lengthy construction phase and had a heavy hand in its design, which closely resembles others of his creations. While Pulman was with Barry, he did work relating the British Palace; for example, when the Foreign Office called for a review of building costs, because the project was seriously over budget, Pulman investigated and drafted the report. It is therefore possible that Smith and Pulman overlapped in London for a time. Suffice it to say that Pulman was up to speed on the British building boom unfolding in Constantinople by the time he arrived.

His first order of business was to rebuild St. Helena's Chapel. How much he had to do with the other projects, aside from building the consular and shipping offices, is unclear. At the very least, he was monitoring their progress and reporting to Canning and London. More importantly, family sources maintained that Pulman's main task in Turkey was to design and build the new Summer Residence. That was his mission, they said, and that's what he did. But the fact cannot be confirmed.



The British Summer Residence which, according to Henry Pulman, George Baker and their descendants, Pulman designed.

Though the plans survive, no one is quite sure who designed the building because the responsible architect is not identified on them. A local British architect, George Stampa, was hired to build it, so that question is settled. He began in the late 1860s—after Pulman left in **1864**—and finished in **1870**. However, neither is Stampa nor his company name on the plans, which is unusual since he was an independent contractor. It leaves the question of design up in the air. Just as Charles Barry designed the British Palace, but Smith was the one to build it, so too could Pulman have designed the Summer Residence and Stampa be commissioned to build it. Baker and Pulman’s children and grandchildren conveyed not a shred of doubt that Pulman was responsible for this fine architectural specimen, and they were in a position to know. They heard it from Pulman himself and wife Polly, and George and Maria Baker et al. They were growing up in Constantinople at the end of the 19th century and the fact was common knowledge, inside the family and out. In other words, the family wouldn’t have collectively conspired to make the story up.



Left: Site of the old British consular quarter descending the hill from Galata Square along Galata Kulesi Sk. No. 7/9, where the Bakers had their first residence and later a shop, may be the yellow building on the right.



Above: The old British Post office (2022).



Where Galata Kulesi Sk. bottoms out onto Bank Street. The old Consul General’s residence was on the left, the consular and shipping offices that Pulman designed to its left, but they are no longer there.



Above: The old Seaman’s Hospital (2022), taken from the observation tower of the old Post Office diagonally across the street.



Below: Shortly after it was built, from the Illustrated London Times (1859).



George & Maria's engagement portrait, December 1852



Mary Jane "Polly" (Butler) Pulman (1831-1897)



Polly and Henry Pulman's wedding portrait poorly amended with paint strokes



Henry Pulman (1834-1869)



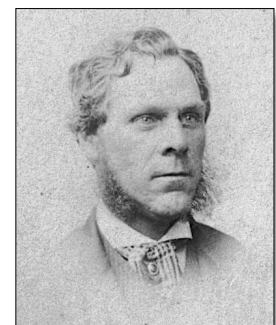
Eliza (Sarell) Baltazzi



Amelia (Butler) Heywood in c. 1858



St. Helena's Chapel at the British Embassy (above and below in 2022, 2011), built by Henry Pulman in 1854



James Wrack Butler, brother of Maria, Polly, and Amelia, who facilitated their employment at the Baltazzis

1859 According to Bertram, the combined supreme court/consular building was found to be too small to house the consulate offices, and an adjacent site was purchased in July. New consular offices and a shipping office were then erected at 20 Bank Street, both designed by Pulman. A new post office was simultaneously erected along the

same Galata Kulesi Sk. corridor. Appointed as its director was W. Jew, George's daughter-in-law Mary Jew's father. She married George's son Harry. This completed what functioned as the British consular complex in Galata for the next 40 years. At the top end was George Baker's first shop on Galata Square and his first residence just south of that on Galata Kulesi Sk. Given their location in the consular sector, it seems possible if not probable that his acquisition of them was engineered by Ambassador Canning. He was the only man in town with that sort of power.

1864 In the summer, Henry Pulman returned to London with his family to read in on his next assignment—to design and build a new British embassy palace in Tehran, Persia. Would the Foreign Office have trusted Pulman with such a large, prestigious project if his only prior accomplishments were a chapel and two sets of offices? Doubtful.

* * *

1853 George married Maria Butler at St. Helena's Chapel on May 25th. It's not clear what condition the Chapel was in, or whether a temporary chapel was in use, because St. Helena's had been destroyed by fire in January 1847. Henry Pulman would rebuild it when he got there shortly. Also coming onto the scene was Maria's sister, Mary Jane "Polly" Butler, she to replace Maria as nanny at the Baltazzi's. Four years later, Pulman married Polly in the Chapel he'd recently completed.

1853-1856 THE CRIMEAN WAR Britain, France, and the Kingdom of Sardinia came to the Ottomans' defense in combatting a Russian offensive to snatch control of the Bosphorus Strait and seize territories along the way. The conflict was part of a broader contest between the super powers of Europe—Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and Austro-Hungary—to influence the Ottomans and guarantee unimpeded passage through the Bosphorus for purposes of trade. Benefiting from his good standing at the British Embassy, and his excellent relationship with the Ottoman Court, George contracted with the Turks to supply 'blankets and boots' to the troops, also possibly canvas for tents and cotton and linens for hospital sheets and medical dressings. These were in short supply, at least as far as the British and French were concerned, as they were facing logistical challenges getting them from Europe to the front. I don't know that George supplied the British, but for the Turks he was the proverbial right man in the right place at the right time and was good at getting things done.

1857 Henry Pulman married Maria's sister Polly Butler at St. Helena's Chapel on December 17th. By this time he had rebuilt it, but whether he replaced it with the same design or a new one is also unclear, although the footprint of it on the 1871 survey of the embassy compound (above) is the same as today. On hand at Polly's wedding was her and Maria's younger sister Amelia Butler. She was replacing Polly at the Baltazzis.

How the Butler sisters came to be working for the Baltazzis involved their brother James Wrack Butler and their cousins the Rennisons. James Butler married his cousin Sarah Rennison. Her brothers Tom and William Rennison were linguists and interpreters for the British Army in the Crimean War. William distinguished himself as aide-de-camp and dragoman to General William Fenwick Williams at the Siege of Kars, the ill-fated conflict in **1855** in which the Turks and British were badly defeated by the Russians. Butler may have been involved in the war as well, but that could not be determined, and he did not stay on in Turkey like the others. Another Rennison cousin, Amelia, was married to a man named George Laurie, another former Office of Works contractor. What he did for the Embassy, or after he left its employment is unknown, but in the 1850s he helped raise money to build the Crimean Memorial Church in Pera as one of its four laypersons. Like the cemetery at Scutari and the Summer Residence at Therapia, the land for what is today called Christ Church was another gift from Abdül Mejid to the British at the end of the Crimean War. Mejid was generous in showing his gratitude. William Rennison, and perhaps James Butler, too, were acquainted with Theodore Baltazzi. Butler's wife Sarah (Rennison) and her sister Amelia (Rennison) Laurie were likewise probably acquainted with Eliza, since the women were a small minority in the British community. Between the four of them, somehow, Maria Butler was persuaded to go to work for the Baltazzis though all of 15 years old when the arrangements were made long distance to Hull.

Witnesses at the Bakers' wedding were George Laurie and Sarah Rennison (who was either James Butler's wife Sarah, before they married, or more likely William Rennison's wife Sarah). Witnesses at the Pulman's wedding were George Baker, William Rennison, Eliza Baltazzi, and Amelia Butler. Witnesses for Amelia's marriage to Heywood were George Baker, Robert Hayden, his wife Eliza, and Amelia (Rennison) Laurie.

In the late 1850s to early 1860s, before the Heywoods wed, George Baker, Robert Hayden, and an investor named Niven bought a flour mill and appointed Heywood to manage it. It does not appear that Heywood contributed much if any of his own money. In his hands the operation grew to become “the largest flour mill in the city,” according to Arthur Baker, though it never reaped great dividends for its investors. American missionary and founder of Robert College, Cyrus Hamlin, sold off his flour mill in **1856** at the end of the Crimean War; so it seems possible, though as yet unverified, that Hamlin’s mill may have been scooped up by Baker, Hayden, and Niven.

1863 Amelia Butler, Maria and Polly’s sister, left the Baltazzis to marry James Heywood, another contractor brought out by the Office of Works.

The British Boy’s School was established near Taxim Square, a schoolmaster brought out from England. G.P. started there at the age of eight, but in **1866** George took him and Louisa to England to enter them in boarding school.

1864 Amelia (Butler) Heywood had a baby, but it must have died at birth as the church record includes no name for the baby. Shortly after, Amelia boarded a boat headed home to Hull for the first time since **1857**. She died of cholera onboard and was buried at sea. Heywood erected a monument in her memory at the Protestant Cemetery at Feriköy, but is himself buried near the Bakers at the Crimean War Memorial Cemetery.

1864 James “Jim” Baker was born on December 4th in Constantinople. He died aged 80 on 4 December **1944** and was cremated at the Efford Cemetery and Crematorium, Plymouth Unitary Authority, Devon, England.

1867-1875 Tünel, a funicular connecting Karaköy quay on the Bosphorus with the bottom end of the Grand Rue de Pera, was installed by the French.

The Baker Children

George and Maria Baker had nine children. Seven survived to adulthood.

1. Louisa “Loo” “Louie” (1854-1938)

Married Charles “Charlie” Edwards (1843-1898), who became George’s business partner and established Edwards & Sons. Their son Mid ran Edwards & Sons after his father died.

Children: William George Middleton “Mid” (1873-1950), Charles (1875-1876), Vivian (1876-1923), Mabel (1878-1969), Arthur Cecil (1881-1953), and Mildred “Millie” (1883-1957).

2. George Percival “G.P.” (1856-1951)

Married Emily Mary “Minnie” Davis (1858-1938), whose father was his accountant at G.P. & J. Baker. G.P. ran the London branch of the Baker business before establishing G.P. & J. Baker with his brother James in 1892.

Children: Violet (1885-1954), Robin (1887-1970), Cyril (1888-1917), Daisy (1892-1894), Douglas (1894-1916), Francis “Frank” (1896-1938), and Brian (1900-1979). Daisy died as a toddler; Cyril, Douglas, and Frank died as a result of WWI.

3. Henry “Harry” (1857-1908)

Married Mary Jew (? -1941), whose father was the British postmaster in Constantinople. Harry worked for his uncle James Heywood at the flour mill and took it over in 1891 when Heywood died. Harry died prematurely of cholera.

Children: Winifred (1883-1963) and George Noel (1884-1962).

4. Frederick (1) (1859-1860)

Died of rheumatic fever at 10 months.

5. Arthur (1861-1939)

Married Leila Pulman (1861-1959), his maternal cousin and Edith Pulman’s sister. Arthur inherited G. & A. Baker from George in 1905. He ran the business in Turkey until he retired in 1926 and returned to England. His son Warden took over for a couple of years, but the business was already in decline due to the new political landscape created after WWI.

Children: Edith Elsie (1887-1962), Dorothy “Dollie” Leila (1889-1955), Arthur Warden (1893-1958), Ruby Kathleen (1896-2001), and Vivian May (1898-1969).



Louisa and G.P. Baker (above) and Harry with nanny (below) in 1858.



6. Frederick (2) “Fred” or “Frank” William (1862-1947)
Married Winifred Grace Rickard. The only “Baker Boy” not enlisted in the family firm, Fred/Frank made and lost fortunes on the London stock exchange. He is renowned for building ‘Baker’s Folly’ at Newquay, on the Cornish coast of England, which today is a posh hotel.
Children: Cecil (?-1965), Forbes (?-1916), Winifred “Bay” (1894-1983), and Hugh (1895-1971). Forbes was killed in WWI.

7. James “Jim” (1864-1944)
He married Edith Pulman (1858-1941), his maternal cousin and Leila Pulman’s sister. He partnered with brother G.P. in G.P. & J. Baker, he focusing on carpet imports, G.P. on printmaking and light furnishings. When the company joined forces with the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers (O.C.M.) in 1908, Jim was appointed its first managing director. An excellent swimmer and rower, Jim survived the sinking of the Lusitania.
Children: Joyce (1894-1968) and Arthur Ronald (1897-1967).

8. Amelia “Milly” or “Millie” (1866-1937)
She married Stafford Anderson (1850-1930), a mountaineering friend of G.P.’s. She and Stafford lived in Leicester, England. He was in the hosiery business.
Children: George (1891-1970) and Margery (1898-1968).

9. Albert (1868-1869)
Died in infancy.

Of George’s seven surviving children, he enlisted four of his five sons and one son-in-law into the business. In **1875**, he invited Louisa’s husband Charlie Edwards to join him and made him a partner in ‘Baker & Edwards’ a year later, to the consternation of son Harry. Since George had given G.P. the London office to run, as second son Harry expected to earn a place by George’s side in Constantinople, but this never happened.

Unlike his brothers, Fred/Frank did not have a driving need to please his father by fulfilling his expectations. When Fred finished his studies at Robert College, George wanted to make him manager of one of the stores. Fred wouldn’t have it, saying he could just as easily be a shopkeeper in the West End, but had higher aspirations. He and George had a falling out that was mentioned in letters Harry and Louisa exchanged with G.P. By mutual agreement, Fred returned to London to find his own way in the world—as and that was as a speculator on the stock market. He thus earned the title of ‘black sheep’ in the family. He and his brothers stayed in touch, though; he is always featured in the group photos taken during family reunions in England and he was best man at Arthur and Leila’s wedding. I hope I’m wrong, but my impression is that Fred and George rarely communicated after Fred left Turkey. You could say that Fred’s willful independence reflected a similar streak in his father. It took the same kind of courage for Fred to run away from his family, as it did for George to run away from home as a boy, and from England as a man. And just as Fred did not get along so well with George, so too did George and his father Francis have their differences. The similarities could not have been lost on George.

Though Millie and her husband Stafford had nothing to do with the family firm, by all accounts ‘Aunt Millie’ was a warm, kind, and jolly woman and a favorite destination for the next generation of Baker’s, when on holiday from boarding school. Arthur and Leila Baker’s children were also especially fond of Fred’s wife ‘Auntie Winnie’.



George (above) and Maria (below) Baker in 1858.



The Evolution of the Baker Business

GEORGE BAKER or BAKERS (1848-1860)
Imports and Retail

George Baker's business model can be summarized by four guiding principles:

1. Family: Hire family and friends you know and trust, before anyone else.
2. Teamwork: Help each other in all ways, to include sharing assets and resources when necessary.
3. Growth and Innovation: Always invest in these, even if you can't afford to and have to borrow money.
4. Diversify: Like any sound portfolio, the more diversity the business has, the more resilient it is.

1848-1856 Baker company letterhead maintained that 'Bakers'—an umbrella term often used for the business—was 'established in 1854'. But indications are that George had an informal arrangement going with the Royal Palace even before then. There was, for example, a large delivery of 'cloth' to the Harem in June of **1850**. It is mentioned in a letter to the Sultan from his mother, Bezmialem Valide Sultan, who had seen to its distribution and conveyed how excited the women were to receive it. It's circumstantial evidence, but what sort of cloth other than linen would have generated such enthusiasm within the Harem, when wool, cotton, and silk were easy to come by? During the Crimean War, George further supplied the Turkish military with 'blankets and boots', that we know of. It is unclear if these were imported from England or procured locally, as it could have been either or both. The premises where George opened his first shop was previously owned by a German who made boots and presumably other leather goods. Arthur Baker:

Father kept on his nursery business for a time, but not long.... Father's shop had been a boot factory, where a German and his men made boots for the Army. Machine made boots were not known in those days.

A connection here seems likely, with the German selling George boots during the war and then his shop in **1856**.

c. 1856 George resigned from the British Embassy and moved Maria and the children—Louisa and G.P.—to Galata. This is inferred from G.P.'s birth in Therapia in **1856** and Harry's in Galata in **1857**. They lived down a narrow lane off Galata Tower Square at No. 7/9 Kule Kapisi, possibly today's No. 9 Galata Kulesi Sk. He opened a shop at No. 2 Kule Kapisi (today's No. 2 Büyük Hendek) on the corner at the Square, opposite the entrance to Galata Tower.

The shop consisted of two rooms on the ground floor and a larger room above. There was a small area at the front where George displayed his merchandise, and a second windowless room at the back, or upstairs depending on the family source, where George had his desk, kept accounts, and stored his stock. It's clear from the following that he was calling on contacts in England for ideas on what to import and sell. Arthur Baker:

The shop had a depth of about 18 ft., two rooms on the ground floor and a staircase, one open room above. But the stock was surely the oddest collection of goods ever collected. Father still had some connection with his gardener friends, so seeds and some gardening tools were stocked. Radish seed was imported by him by the sack. The old connection with the undertaker called for ornaments and fittings for coffins. Silvered crosses and particularly silvered cherubs beloved by the early Victorians formed part of the stock. Again the old connection with the carpenters shop called for tools, nails, screws etc., but apart from these oddments, you could buy boots,



2 Kule Kapisi (above), today 2 Büyük Hendek Sk., across from the entrance to Galata Tower. 7/9 Kule Kapisi (below), today's 9 Galata Kulesi Sk. (2022).



collars, ties, cloth, cotton goods and blankets, hosiery, flat irons, sponge baths, quilts, beds, foolscap paper, copy books, quill pens, straw hats, or even a scotch cap or glengarry, for the Scotch boys working at the Arsenal always wore them. In those days there were some 800 of them working at the Admiralty.

Do not run away with the idea of a Departmental Store. The stock was in a glass panelled cupboard about 6ft. x 3ft. I cannot remember them all, but as [he was] a great believer in Cockles Pills there was never a shortage in spite of the fact that as boys we all were dosed with Cockles for almost all our ailments. My faith in them has not abated.

He never drew up a Balance Sheet, never reduced the prices of his stock and always kept to the good old rule of selling his goods at 75% on cost. The cost to him meant the purchase price. The additional cost of packing and expenses were never considered, so that a bedstead costing 20 to 33% to import was comparatively cheaper to the purchaser than a vest which only cost some 15% [to import].

The view from the shop's doorway was of the stone tower looming overhead slightly to the left, and, off to the right, an old Ottoman cemetery. Playing on the double meaning of the word 'prospect'—interesting overlook versus bright future—George called it 'Prospect Place' and painted the name on the cornerstone. Arthur Baker:

In Pera the houses were not numbered, some of the streets were not even named. Father called the square opposite him (it was really a cemetery) PROSPECT PLACE. The heading to his bills bore this address and on the corner of the shop the old painted name was visible some few years ago [from 1934 when he was writing his account]. I often used to take him tea of an afternoon—that would be from 65 to 68 years ago and some 63 years ago [in c. **1866**, **1869**, and **1871** respectively]. I remember going to write out accounts, for even in those days he gave credit. At times when I think of those days, I marvel how he managed to make money.

There is also an as yet unverified possibility that William George Middleton called his nursery Prospect Place.

As mentioned, this section of Galata was the British consular quarter, to include the consulate, consular courts, consul general's residence, jailhouse, hospital, shipping office, and post office. It seems possible that George's opportunity to lease or purchase the lower floors of No. 7/9 Kule Kapisi, with his windfall profits from the Crimean War that Canning was allowing him to keep, may have come to him through Canning's good graces. In this context, it's easy to imagine that this address had been part of the temporary quarters Canning and his staff were using in town, before the British Palace was completed and they moved into it in the fall of **1855**, thus leaving it vacant for George to snap up in **1856**. A connection seems feasible.

BAKER & HAYDEN (1860-1869)
Imports and Retail

1860 George Baker entered into partnership with Robert Hayden, a former contractor for the Office of Works. An interior designer, he had been hired to finish the interior fixtures and décor of Embassy Palace. Here Arthur indicates that the shop they opened together had not existed before, but the research indicates that George had opened the shop in circa **1856** or earlier, and then invited Hayden to join him in **1860**. Arthur Baker:

When the British Embassy was furnished, the contractors in England sent out a head carpenter, upholsterer, [Nicholson?] Burness, Duff, Hayden and many others. The three I mention remained behind, each starting a business. Hayden joined Baker and they opened a shop just below Galata Tower [No. 2 Kule Kapisi]. G.B. gave up his work at the Embassy. The firm continued buying from J.B. [James Baker] of Morley, Powel & Britton. Hayden's work was more in carpentering; he had a shop [of his own?] and one of the branches of this young and enterprising business was that of undertakers!

The collaboration reflected a mutual desire to enlarge their previous individual dabbles in trade to incorporate interior fixtures, drapery, furniture, fabrics, men's and women's clothing, dry goods, and gardening supplies, etc., all presumably procured and shipped by James Baker from England. According to Victor Binns, together Baker and Hayden then opened another 'departmental store' on Pera's main shopping artery, the Grand Rue de Pera (today's Istiklal Cd.). The store was located at No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera. When the Baker-Hayden partnership dissolved in **1869**, George retained No. 207, while Hayden retained his own store at No. 479 called 'Haydens'. Then, in **1919**, Arthur Baker bought No. 479 from the 'Hayden Brothers', sons of the late Robert Hayden, and retained Arthur John Hayden as manager. Arthur Baker:

Baker and Hayden dissolved [their] partnership in **1869**. Before this date they joined hands with Heywood and [Niven] who were putting up a flour mill and had got into difficulties. How much they paid I cannot say for I cannot remember ever seeing any account. The deed of partnership stated that no sum over £1,500 was to be spent without the approval of the



Büyüik Hendek off Galata Square (2022). The vine suspended across the road is not wisteria, but marks the entrance to the former Wisteria Restaurant.



Büyüik Hendek off Galata Square (undated), where the Baker's came to live.



Street entrance to what used to be the Wisteria Restaurant (2015).



Inside the courtyard, when the building was a French School (above, post Bakers) and the Wisteria Restaurant in 2011 (left and below).



partners. Heywood soon found that his mill was not large enough and started building [Ivan] Serai, which ultimately was the largest mill in Constantinople with a capacity of 1,200 sacks a day. They only did the grist business. It was completed before the war of **1876** [Russo-Turkish War (**1877-1878**)] and made good money, but Father never got any dividends for it [and it] was a mania with Heywood to continue building. One of the clauses of the contract stated that, at the death of a partner, the surviving partners were to pay his exors [executors] his share, as shown by the last Balance Sheet, plus interest from that time on his capital to his decease. This sounds all right, but for a year or two before Heywood's death the mill had not made profits, [and] no sooner had we fixed and started paying Heywoods estate than Hayden died. Some portion of these two amounts was paid from earnings of the mill, but the greater part was paid from profits of [the store at No.] 500. Hayden £7,600 [£1,100.789 in 2023], Heywood?

The Ivan Serai Mill was completed in **1876**. When George's second son Harry came of age in about **1875**, George appointed him to work for Heywood at the mill. When Heywood died in **1891**, Harry took it over. When Harry died in **1908**, the mill was sold.

Early 1860s The Bakers moved from No. 7/9 Kule Kapisi to Büyük Hendek, a few blocks west of Galata Tower. The former address was absorbed into the business and was listed on company letterhead in **1876**, perhaps as an annex to the shop at No. 2 on the corner.

The Bakers bought a house on Büyük Hendek, while the Pulmans and Heywoods lived together in a house behind them, off Küçük Hendek. It appears that George owned both properties. In Turkish, Büyük Hendek and Küçük Hendek mean Big Ditch and Little Ditch. According to authors John Freely and Harry Dwight, Büyük Hendek traces the base of the old Genoese citadel wall that defended their trading enclave atop Galata Hill in the 15th century. Küçük Hendek, they say, is the track Mehmet the Conqueror installed behind the wall during his Siege on Constantinople in **1453** to convey his navy over Galata Hill and into the Golden Horn, thereby prevailing in the Conquest. The two houses were thus built on the footprint left behind by Turkey's dramatic history, though a few contemporary scholars view the story of Mehmet's naval transport over Galata Hill as purely mythical.

Between the houses at the back was a large open common area. No doubt George filled it with fruit trees, shrubbery and dollops of lawn bordered by splashes of floral color in the English tradition. G.P. wrote that the houses were connected by a trellis over which George trained a wisteria vine (see photo on p. 64). The idea, I imagine, was to create a pleasant space where sisters Maria, Polly, and Amelia could gather in the garden and spend time together. G.P. Baker:

The next house [in back], where Leila [Pulman] was born, I remember was a large red painted house in a street parallel to the Rue Hendek [i.e., Küçük Hendek], where in the year **1864**, Uncle Heywood came to live with us [instead of at the Pulmans because], Aunt Milly had died. It had a very large garden, and a pergola connected with the back of [our] house on which grew a wisteria vine. I have recollections that I climbed on the Pergola and got into the house through one of the windows—a dangerous proceeding, as I see it today.

The wisteria is worth pausing over because, as Arthur maintained (and Kew Gardens did not dispute the possibility when Ruby Baker enquired), wisteria was not growing in Turkey before George Baker got there. He sold wisteria cuttings for £5 apiece, Arthur Baker said. In today's money, it amounts to £661 pounds per cutting. The price alone indicates how rare and valuable the plant was. And at that price, who could afford it other than the richest man in the Empire, Sultan Abdul Mejid and his family members.

I believe I may have located this wisteria vine that George planted so long ago. In **2011**, it was in the courtyard of and the inspiration behind the Wisteria Restaurant on Büyük Hendek Cd. Above are pictures of it and the 19th century building to which it was anchored. I suspect this was where the Bakers were living, the Pulmans and Heywoods behind them, before they sold it to become the French School and built a new home on Rue Deirnen in about **1870**. The Wisteria Restaurant closed some years ago.

In 2022, my husband and I identified another potential Baker wisteria original. The creeper climbs the height of the modern-day Triada Hotel, across from the Hagia Triada Greek Orthodox Church near Taxim Square (see photos on p. 66). We suspect Arthur Baker put it there, because in the early 1900s the apartment building was used by the Arthur Bakers as their winter residence.

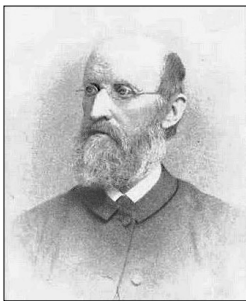
Returning to the **1860s**, to escape the summer heat and humidity, the Bakers, Pulmans, and Heywoods spent their summers on Halki Island (today's Heybeliada), the men ferrying across the Bosphorus to Karaköy and work every



Robert College's Hamlin Hall overlooking the fortress of Rumeli Hisar to the right.



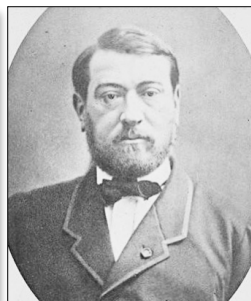
Admiral David G. Farragut



Cyrus Hamlin



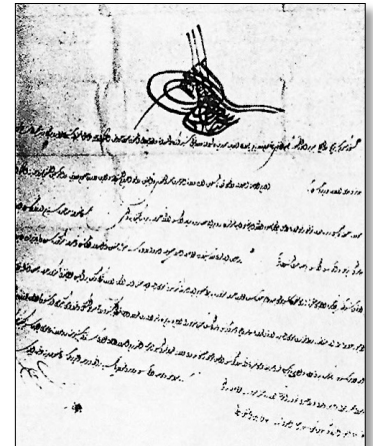
Sultan Abdül Aziz



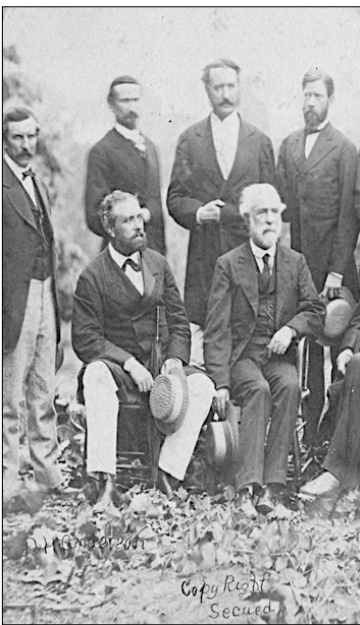
Edouard Blacque Bey



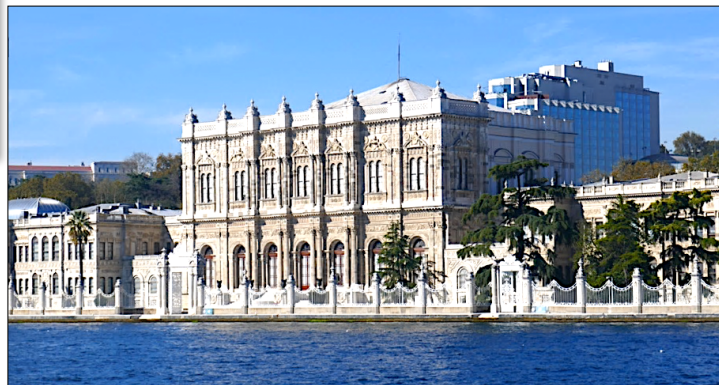
*William H. Seward,
U.S. Secretary of State
under Presidents
Abraham Lincoln &
Andrew Johnson*



The Imperial Iradé Sultan Abdül Aziz issued in September 1868 as charter for Robert College.



Turkish Minister Edouard Blacque Bey seated left, next to Confederate Civil War Commander Robert E. Lee, in August 1869, on a visit to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to promote education.



Dolmabahçe Palace (above) and its Bosphorus entrance (right), in front of which Admiral Farragut moored the USS Franklin.

day. George maintained that climbing Galata Hill one or more times a day kept him fit. On Halki, Louisa would meet her future husband, Charlie Edwards, who was teaching there at the Ottoman Naval Academy.

1861 Sultan Abdül Mejid died and was replaced by his half-brother Abdül Aziz.

1863 Three years after Theodore Baltazzi died in **1860**, Eliza (Sarell) Baltazzi married Charles Alison. He had been a trusted assistant and Oriental secretary to Sir Stratford Canning through the 1840s and 1850s. He was on his way to Persia as the next ambassador. A few weeks after the Alisons' wedding, Maria's sister Amelia Butler left Eliza's employment to marry James Heywood, and the Butlers' association with the Baltazzis came to an end.

On reaching Tehran that summer, Alison found the embassy rundown and too small for his representational and personal purposes. Eliza had nine children she was bringing with her. Alison and the Foreign Office agreed that it was time for new premises, a palatial manor house in keeping with Britain's powerful presence in the region. Alison insisted that Henry Pulman come out to Tehran to design and build it for him. Why Pulman, and not a London architect appointed by the Foreign Office? I suspect it was because, while in Constantinople of late, Alison had witnessed what Pulman could do—namely, design a spectacular Summer Residence for Therapia—and wanted him to do something equally stunning in Tehran. Pulman and his family returned to London in the fall of **1864**, before construction on the Summer Embassy could begin. Leaving Polly and the children in London, he headed out to Tehran in c. **1867**, where he died of typhoid on February 3rd **1869**. No significant progress had apparently been made on the new embassy by then. If he'd done a design, I don't know that it was used. The new embassy was “executed” by architect William Henry Pierson (1839-1881) and completed in **1872**.

George Baker, Cyrus Hamlin, and the Founding of Robert College

1861-1865 THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR In Constantinople during this time, American missionary Cyrus Hamlin, brother of American Vice President Hannibal Hamlin, was making every effort to establish Robert College. It had long been his dream to open ‘a New England-style Christian college’ in the Ottoman capital. He had succeeded in founding a seminary, attended mostly by Armenian and Bulgarian boys, but his attempts to convert it into an institute of higher learning encountered opposition from all sides. He faced fierce challenges from his fellow missionaries at the Mission Station; also from the various Christian denominations represented in the city, like the Italians, Jesuits and Russians; and from the Sultan and the Porte, whose permission he required to do it. Even George Baker—whom Hamlin referred to as “Mr. B” in his memoir *My Life and Times* (1924)—was a sceptic. Cyrus Hamlin:

I was regarded by many as a ‘crank’, pursuing a most hopeless object. An English gentleman said to me one day: —‘You do wrong, Mr. Hamlin, to pursue this object so perseveringly! I happen to know from the highest authority that it has been decided that your college shall never be built upon that spot.’ I said: ‘Yes, sir; I have known that for a long time! but there is a Higher than the highest, and I trust in Him!’ It was undoubtedly true that [Foreign Minister] Aali Pasha had made that promise [that Hamlin would never succeed] to the opposing [Italian, Jesuit, and Russian] diplomats.

Among George's contacts at the Porte, he apparently had it from Sultan Abdül Aziz himself that Hamlin's scheme would fail, and the sentiment was reasonable. Although Hamlin eventually got approval to convert his seminary into a college in **1863**, the larger hurdle was getting a building permit to locate it at Rumeli Hisar, on a precipice he'd already purchased overlooking the hallowed site of Mehmet the Conqueror's fortress, built as part of his campaign to conquer the Byzantines. This was a line the Turks refused to cross; the very idea of it was an anathema on many levels.

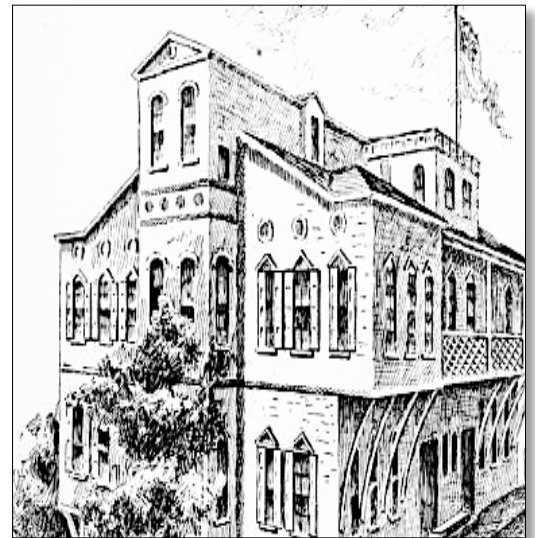
Baker and Hamlin were well acquainted. George was an esteemed member of the Anglo-American Colony and a fellow Protestant. Both men worshiped at the British and Dutch chapels in Pera. But Hamlin felt George was wrong to doubt him. He should have had more faith in Hamlin, and in God, since Hamlin was convinced that God was guiding his mission and every step he took to achieve it; whereas Mr. B. held a more practical view.

Hamlin continued petitioning the Turks for six more years. He made such a pest of himself that now Grand Vizier [Prime Minister] Aali Pasha quipped to the American Minister, “Won't this Mr. Hamlin ever die and let us alone on this college question?” The Grand Vizier and the American Minister both reached the point of refusing to meet with Hamlin because they found him so objectionable. A go-between was recruited to continue the negotiations; this was Hamlin's helper at the seminary and son-in-law, George Washburn. But when Washburn couldn't stand the tensions any longer, he applied for permission to return to the U.S. on leave.

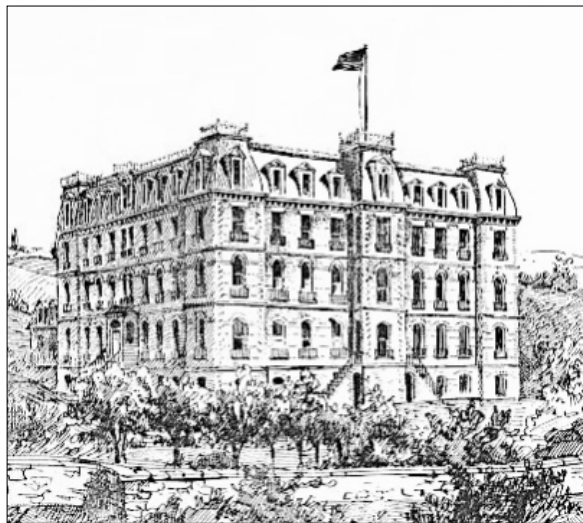
The impasse was broken when a political storm coalesced to work in Hamlin's favor, quite as if God's hand had been in play. Abdül Aziz was paranoid by nature, but also with reason since chunks of the Ottoman Empire were breaking away and there was little he could do to slow the momentum. Then, in 1866-1867, a Greek insurrection erupted



Hamlin Hall under construction (1869-1871).



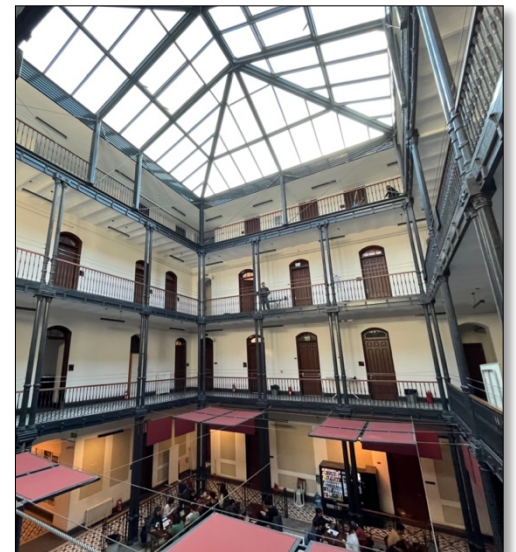
The Bebek Seminary converted to Robert College, the American flag added after the Imperial İradé was issued.



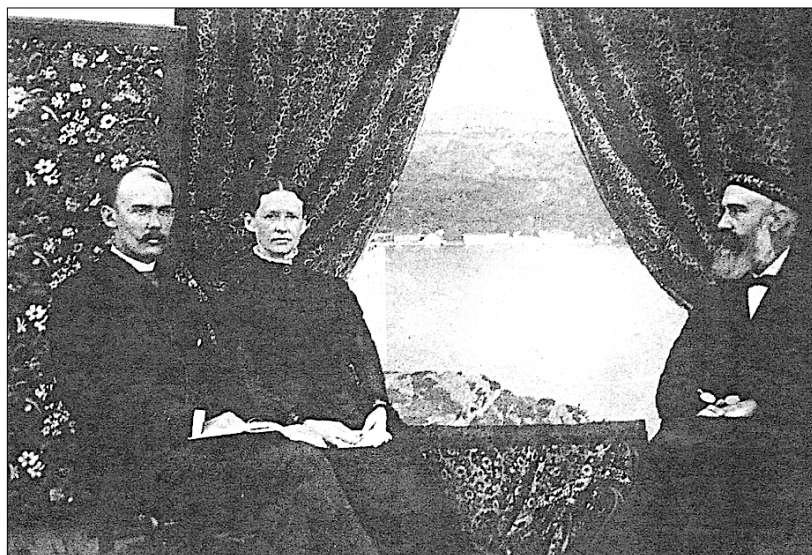
Hamlin Hall (c. 1873) flying the American flag.



Arthur Baker, the first student to occupy Hamlin Hall in 1871, at the age of ten.



Interior of Hamlin Hall (2022). When Arthur Baker occupied it in 1871, the courtyard roof was only half built.



Left: George Washburn with his wife (and Cyrus Hamlin's daughter) Henrietta and son George in the president's suite in Hamlin Hall, the Bosphorus beyond.

on Crete and the Turks were compelled to suppress it. In July of **1867**, a resolution in the U.S. Congress expressed ‘sympathy for the suffering people of Crete’, which was followed by two editorials in a New York newspaper supporting the Congressional denunciation of the Turks, all of which the Turkish Minister, Edouard Blaque Bey, communicated from Washington to the Porte. There followed an unrelated complaint to the Turkish Minister from Secretary of State William H. Seward—and President Andrew Johnson by inference—regarding the Robert College question. On conveying this to the Porte, Blaque Bey connected the two by adding the warning, “it would be well to settle that college question favorably to the Americans or by-and-by it would become a thorny question.”

He may or may not have been inferring that America stood ready to go to the Greek’s defense on Crete, if the college question were not resolved in Hamlin’s favor. Whatever his meaning, the last thing the Ottomans wanted was war with America. Rightly or wrongly, the Sultan’s fears were stoked and primed for what came next. In July **1868**, Admiral David G. Farragut showed up unannounced. At the end of the Civil War, President Johnson had sent him on a tour of the Mediterranean to show the European powers that America had emerged stronger than ever and intended to join them on the world stage. It’s not clear how or why Farragut managed it, but powering up the Bosphorus in his flagship, he moored the gunship at the water’s edge in front of Dolmabahçe Palace, Aziz’s Royal Residence. Worse still, at a banquet Aziz hastily organized in Farragut’s honor, the Admiral asked him why he was holding out on Hamlin’s building permit (when really the answer was obvious, as Mr. B. had noted). Hamlin claims he put Farragut up to it, coached him on what to ask and how to respond, Farragut having had no prior knowledge of the knotty college question. It was either serendipitous that Hamlin and he had met before the banquet, so Hamlin could coach him, or that Seward had sent him expressly to pressure the Sultan. Whichever the case, the elements coalesced to break the Sultan’s resolve and an iradé, or imperial declaration, was issued. It not only gave Hamlin permission to build his school at Rumeli Hisar, but further proclaimed that the land itself was now sovereign U.S. territory. Aziz had gone above and beyond; and given all that had gone before, it was a shock to all, Hamlin perhaps most of all:

On entering [American Minister Morris’] office, I said, ‘What is this hoax, Mr. Morris?’ He replied: ‘I don’t wonder at your question, Mr. Hamlin! But there can be no hoax at all in the matter: for the note, as you shall see for yourself, is in Aali Pasha’s own handwriting; and you know the saying, that His Highness never keeps a verbal promise, and never breaks a written one!’

Hamlin built his schoolhouse on the precipice overlooking the village and castle of Rumeli Hisar. In **1869**, on the informal day it opened, students, parents, faculty, and porters carried the contents of the college from Bebek up the hill to Hamlin Hall. Arthur Baker’s daughter Ruby reported,

Arthur, aged about ten, remembered watching the scholars from the Bebek school winding up the hill to the new building, each carrying some piece of furniture. He always said the effect was decidedly biblical. George Baker, in his best clothes and wearing his top hat, then took the small boy and enrolled him in the new school. Fred, his younger brother, was to join him there a year later.

On this occasion, George Baker riled Hamlin once more with his skepticism. Spotting George and his top hat in the crowd, Hamlin approached and crowed (Hamlin’s italics),

You see, Mr. B—, that I was not entirely destitute of judgement after all! ‘No,’ he replied, ‘I don’t see it! You had no *reason* whatever to expect the success you have had. You had no right to expect it!’

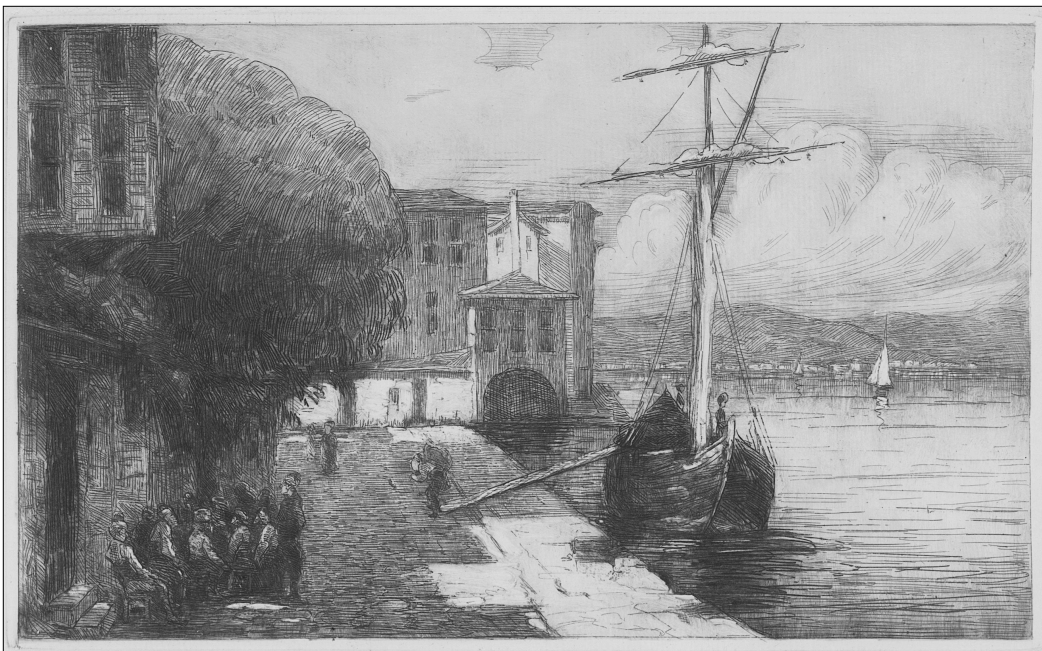
To which Hamlin quoted 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 to Mr. B. It warns that, with God’s guidance, those who appear meek and dimwitted (like Hamlin may have seemed to George on the college building question), always prevail over those who are powerful and think they know what’s what (like George vis-a-vis whether Hamlin would succeed). In Hamlin’s view, reason didn’t come into it. It was purely a matter of faith and God’s will. In George Baker’s defense, I read his reply as an acknowledgment that Hamlin had indeed performed a miracle, as there was no “*reason*” involved to explain his success.

Hamlin seemed to take George’s lack of faith in him personally. When, after more than three decades, he left Turkey in September **1873**, he did not invite George to his farewell party. But George was not alone; a slew of colleagues from the Mission Station and most of the faculty at Robert College were similarly snubbed. Hamlin felt they had treated him poorly, and in many respects he was right. Even his daughter Henrietta and son-in-law George Washburn were not invited, Washburn having taken Hamlin’s place as head of the school. On top of Hamlin’s other grievances with Washburn, Washburn had himself neglected to organize a farewell celebration for the man who’d performed



Looking south along the pier at Rumeli Hisar, a ferryboat which the Bakers often used to commute into town, is just leaving. The north tower of the fortress is visible in the upper right corner; below it is the village mosque.

A ferryboat taking commuters into town, including white-bearded George Baker at the rear, manning the tiller and looking almost native; taken by photo enthusiast, Arthur Baker in c. 1900.



Left, looking north up the pier at Rumeli Hisar (c. 1900). The Bakers and H.G. Dwight recalled the large mulberry tree and its coveted shade.

miracles to found and build the school. It was ironic and egregious. George and other friends pleaded with Hamlin to open up the private party to a community-wide celebration of his achievements, but Hamlin refused. He could be as stubborn with the Anglo-American Colony as he'd been persistent with the Turks.

Arthur Baker was the first student to occupy Hamlin Hall. The day *before* the school transferred from Bebek, George deposited him and his cot and trunk to spend the night alone in Hamlin Hall, before the rest of the students showed up Monday morning. The building was not yet finished and was missing half its roof. The issue was that Arthur was too young to enroll; he was turning ten the next day instead of the requisite eleven. Hamlin was notorious for his quick and fierce temper, and George wanted to avoid a scene on opening day. He presented Hamlin with a fait accompli, the latter surprised to find Arthur ensconced at Hamlin Hall on Monday morning. I don't believe Hamlin would have given George any trouble, in any case, as the school desperately needed the full tuition and boarding fees George was paying for Arthur. Hamlin, a pious man, even doctored the registration records to reflect that Arthur was eleven, not ten. The following year he registered Arthur again as eleven, which was correct, and brother Fred as eleven, too, even though Fred was ten. George's antic nonetheless may have fortified Hamlin's determination to exclude George from his farewell party, despite George's volunteering on the college's local advisory board.

At 17, George's grandson Cecil Edwards went down in the annals as the youngest student to graduate from Robert College in **1898** with a B.A. degree. Fred and Jim studied at Robert College as well, as did several of George's grandchildren and one great-great granddaughter (my sister) in 1966-1967.

* * *

1867 Abdül Aziz made a state visit to London, Paris, and Vienna to shore up support.

c. 1867 George opened a second department store with Hayden at No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera that advertised 'textiles, ironmongery, boots, shoes, luggage, baths and showers, and sewing machines' (V&A-84). Arthur Baker:

Sometime before **1870**, Father opened another shop in the upper part of Pera. It was before **1870** because the great fire of Pera was at that date. I should say the stock was about £5,000-£6,000 [or £761,448 to £913,738 in 2023].

V&A-84: After the dissolution of the [Hayden] partnership, 'Baker's improved sewing machine' was an eye-catching feature of his advertisement, later changed to a lockstitch machine labelled 'Baker's Perfection'. Other contraptions included wringing and mangling machines [for laundry] and a knife grinding machine (with legs broken on the voyage). George was less concerned with sending Turkish goods to England.

1867 Sir Henry Felix Woods was appointed to Constantinople as second in command of the British Ambassador's launch, the *Carado*. One of his assignments was to improve navigation at the Black Sea's entrance to the Bosphorus. His solution was floating lighthouses with strobing beacons that made the entrance easier to find.

1869 The Suez Canal opened on November 17th. It took ten years to build, less than half the time it took to build the British Palace at Constantinople. It shortened the journey between London and the Arabian Sea by a couple of weeks, a boon for British traders seeking their fortunes in India and the Far East.

1869 Charles "Charlie" Reed Edwards (1843-1898) arrived in Constantinople and was hired by the Turks to teach naval architecture at the Naval College on Halki Island (today's Heybeliada). Since this coincided with Henry Felix Woods entering the service of Sultan Abdül Aziz, it seems likely that Woods had something to do with Edwards's appointment. Aziz was keen to upgrade the Imperial Ottoman Navy, and Britain was happy to oblige since it served her geo-political agenda. Woods began by revamping the cadet training program at the Naval College.

Woods would go on to serve the Turks in two capacities: as admiral, running coastal defenses during the Russo-Turkish war (**1877-1878**) and advisor to the Sultan, becoming Abdül Hamid II's Aide-de-Camp in the late **1880s**. He was forced to retire following the Young Turk Revolution in **1908**, and his advisory role ceased when Sultan Abdül Hamid was deposed in **1909**. He stayed on in Constantinople until **1914**, when he left for the duration of the war.

According to Edwards's son Mid, Charlie went to Turkey "in search of travel and adventure":

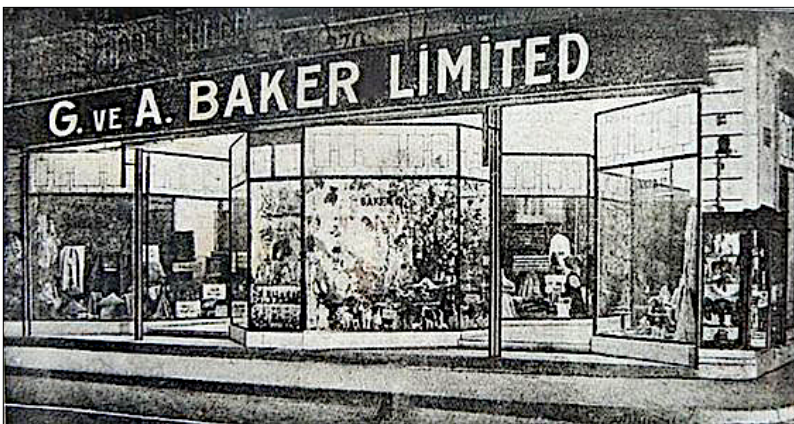
He had served a man called Samuda—head of what was then a very important Shipbuilding firm on the Thames [called 'Samudas', run by two Samuda brothers]—in an election campaign. In return for his services, Father got a cheque which he spent on travel. ...Turkey was a power in the Mediterranean and Father, who was a naval architect, having served his



'George Baker' (third shop from the left) at No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera (c. 1900)



Building on the left is thought to be Nikitiz Han, Grand Rue de Pera, where Elsie and Arthur Leavitt had their first apartment. Arthur Baker's car is apparently parked out front. Two doors down to the right is the Baker shop at No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera, although George Baker's name is no longer there (c. 1912).



Possibly the Baker & Hayden department store at No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera, today's 148 Istiklal Cd., Beyoğlu.



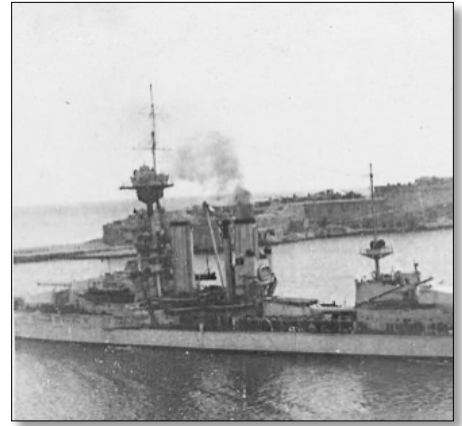
Hayden's shop located at No. 479 Grand Rue de Pera. Hayden held onto it when the Baker & Hayden partnership ended in 1869, but Arthur Baker purchased it from Hayden's sons in 1919. He stayed with the name Hayden (faintly visible on the building) and kept son Arthur John Hayden on as manager.



On the left is No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera, with Arthur Baker's car apparently parked in front.

time at Samuda's, obtained employment with the Turkish Government as Naval Architect.

The Turks had ordered two battleships. They were built by the Thames Iron Works. Only one ever came to Turkey. They were sister ships and the design was prepared by Father. But the Turks could not pay for them both when they were completed. The first was the 'Messoudieh', [Mesudiye, meaning Happiness] sunk by [Lieutenant Norman Douglas] Holbrook in the Great War; the other was named 'Superb' [Hamidieh, Arabic for Benign] and became part of the British Navy. I always understood that these two ships were the most powerful battleships in the world of their day—early 1870s. Besides designing warships for the Turks, Father taught at the Naval School at Halki.



Arthur Baker's photograph of the Messoudieh, which Edwards helped design.

As Mid noted, both ships were built by the Thames Iron Works, but according to reliable sources, both were designed by Sir Edward James Reed (1830-1906), British naval architect, author, politician and railroad magnate, who from 1863 to 1870 held the title of 'Chief Constructor of the Royal Navy'. Where the Samuda brothers came into it is a mystery. It is possible Charlie earned his credentials at Samudas, but then went to work for Reed on the Mesudiye and Hamidieh. He also might have been involved in one of Reed's political campaigns. Edwards's middle name was Reed, so there might be a family connection as well.

1869 Baker and Hayden amicably dissolved their partnership. Baker retained the department store at No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera and at No. 2 and No. 7/9 Kule Kapisi, Galata, while Hayden retained the store at No. 479 Grand Rue de Pera. The Hayden business continued, run by Robert Hayden's two sons following his retirement to England.

1870 The Great Fire of Pera. No one in Pera was unaffected, but since George had a rule never to occupy timber-built structures, the family and business came away unscathed.

c. 1870 George opened another shop at No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera, 'which became the nucleus of the general trading companies variously known as Baker & Edwards, Edwards & Sons, and G.&A. Baker Ltd.' (V&A-84).

1871 Construction began on rail service east out of Constantinople that would eventually reach Bagdad.

1871 G.P. returned to Turkey having concluded his education in England.

1873 Louisa Baker married naval architect Charlie Edwards on March 5th.

1874 George's brother and London agent James Baker died unexpectedly. George was in London and ordered G.P. to join him immediately to take over the London Office. Before G.P. left town, he solicited the following reference letter, possibly from his French tutor. Years later at the bottom G.P. wrote, "1874 [circled] Character scarcely formed at that time, I should say—"

George P. Baker

You are practical & business like, shrewd & sensible. You have a good deal of impulsiveness & do most things without giving yourself time to do things thoroughly. You have some very decided opinions, which you maintain with some persistency, are very easily influenced by other people and utterly devoid of shyness and have plenty of confidence in your own powers. You are persevering in all you do and never relinquish any object you have in view before it is accomplished. You have a good opinion of your merits & are not easily depressed. You can be a good & steadfast friend, are very open & sincere in all you do. [signed] Donble Dunning

G.P. was too young to have a Westminster Bank account, so the bank manager agreed to be his financial power of attorney for a year's probation. Living to the age of 95, he would become the bank's longest-running customer and received preferential treatment to the end of his life. G.P. Baker:

My schooldays were now over, though in the early mornings under the tuition of a French master, I continued in French. During the day I was at the store helping Father, and this continued until the autumn of 1874, when father, again in England, telegraphed that I was to leave and henceforth become his agent in London, Uncle James having died. One of my first duties on reaching London was to be taken to the Bank with Father to be introduced to the Manager, who very quickly asked my age, and on being told that I was only 18, said he would not open an account with a minor and that the account must be in Father's name, and that in the year's time, Father would come again and learn how I had behaved. For the next



Left: A view of the Bosphorus and Rumeli Hisar from Candilli, on the Asian side, by an unknown artist (possibly a family member).

Below: A frequent climb the Bakers made up the hill from the pier at Rumeli Hisar to the George Baker House along the ridge, by Leila (Pulman) Baker in c. 1910. The village mosque is out of view to the right.



The north tower and mosque from the pier at Rumeli Hisar for perspective (2022).



Rumeli Hisar from behind Robert College's Kennedy Lodge, by Ruby Baker Gray.

four years [until carpet trading began in 1878] I remained the agent to the firm engaged in executing the indents and seeing to the shipments, besides receiving consignments of various products such as wool, tobacco, waste silk and opium [!].

1875 The Ottoman Empire reneged on her foreign debts and declared bankruptcy. From the 1840s, Turkey's money reserves had been steadily depleted, a consequence of the Crimean War and Abdül Mejid's unchecked spending that included orders with George Baker. The British and French extended loans to keep the Turkish economy afloat, but imposed excessive interest rates making them impossible to repay. Those invested in the loans lost all their money, including former Ambassador Sir Stratford Canning. He died in **1880** with only a few hundred pounds to his name, prompting Queen Victoria to prevail on Parliament to enact a stipend for Canning's widow and daughters for the duration of their lives. George Baker escaped the debacle, having invested his reserves in England.

1875 Charlie Edwards's naval contract with the Turks expired and George invited him to join him at 'The Store'. Edwards agreed, saying his position at the Naval College 'offered no scope for advancement'. George put him in charge of wholesale operations and exports to England, as he himself wanted to focus on growing the retail side of the business. Bakers was all the while taking orders from the Turkish Government for 'army cloths, boots, tents and artillery', an outgrowth of George's sales of 'boots and blankets' during the Crimean War. Exports to England initially consisted of textiles, embroideries, sheep skins, tobacco and opium, and the list continued to grow.

1875 On finishing university in England, Harry returned to Turkey where George consigned him to the flour mill at Ivan Serai Mills to work for his uncle Heywood. Harry was unhappy, complaining in letters to G.P. in London that he wanted to be involved in the retail operations with his father, a position brother Fred would turn down. Harry felt his father had sidelined him and was put out when he invited Charlie to join the firm, and later younger brother Arthur to be his assistant. Harry took over the mill when Heywood died in **1891**. The mill was sold after Harry's untimely death of cholera in **1908**.

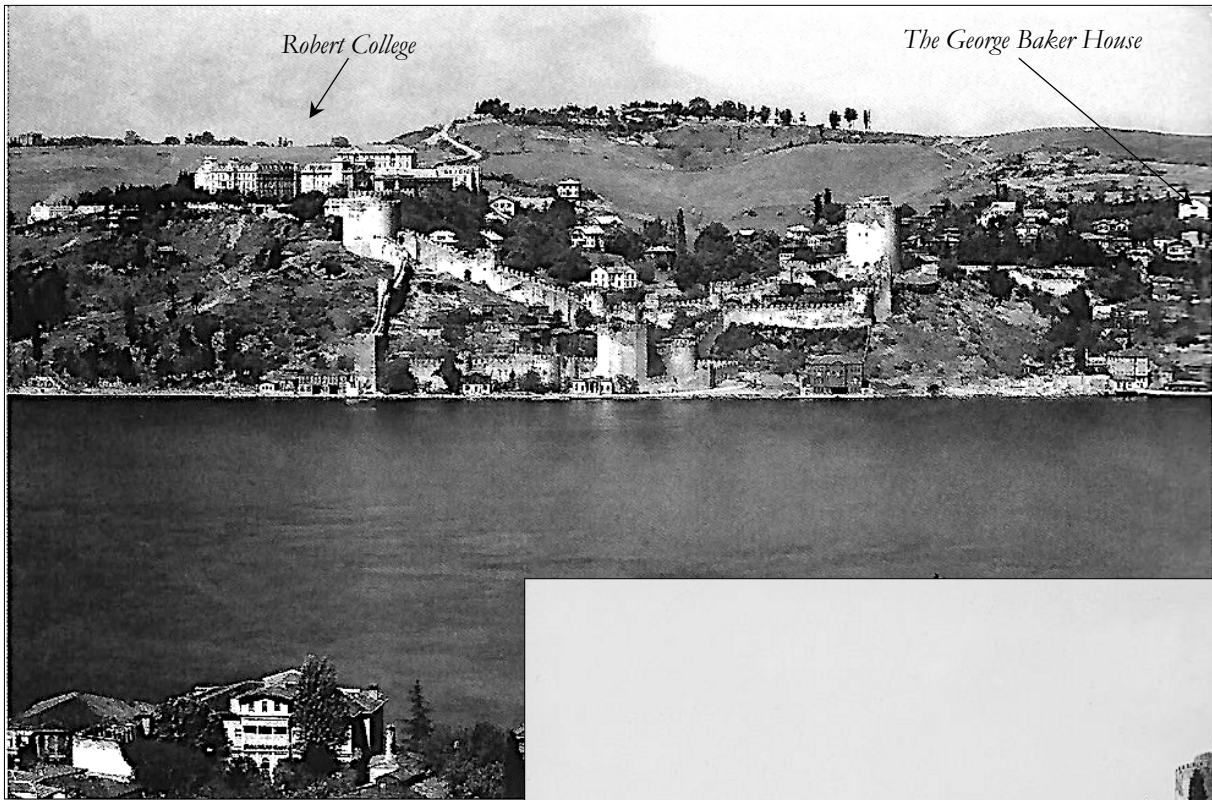
1876 THE YEAR OF THREE SULTANS Sultan Abdül Aziz was deposed by his ministers on the 30th of May and found dead in his chambers five days later. Both murder and suicide were suspected by different parties doing the investigation. On August 31st, Abdül Aziz's nephew and successor Murad V was also deposed and spent the rest of his life under house arrest. He was blamed for an extravagant lifestyle, in contrast to what was happening beyond the palace walls in Constantinople and Asia Minor—drought, famine, fires, and rioting—and his inability to rule. The official notice said he was emotionally unstable, but word among the Bakers was that he was not so much a lunatic as a drunk. He was succeeded by his brother Abdül Hamid II, who, according to Orientalist Philip Mansel, "was regarded by some as the last of the great Sultans and by others as a bloodthirsty tyrant." Sourcing the following to a letter from Edwards to G.P. at the time, the V&A observed that "the change of Sultans led Charles Edwards to write hopefully to G.P. Baker of the prospects of selling brass bedsteads to the new harem[s]." Within days, George too was writing G.P. to send him as many brass bedsteads as he could get his hands on.

A letter from Louisa Edwards to G.P. dated 17 May **1876** illustrates the tensions both outside the family and in, created by the political upheavals and the row between George and son Fred, whom Louisa calls Frank:

My dear George, last Sunday I wrote you a long letter & left it on the nursery table with the intention of adding a few more lines during the week, when I suppose Master Mid [William George Middleton Edwards] has used it for a kite. At any rate, I cannot find it & you will think it unkind of me not writing to you before this to thank you for the beautiful tie you sent [for my birthday]—it is the handsomest one I think I have ever seen.

I was very lucky this year. Charlie gave me a coffee pot to match my tea service, Ma a lace tie, Father an umbrella, & my hat [ordered from England] arrived the day before, so I considered that as a birthday present. Last month being the anniversary of our wedding day, Charlie gave me a very handsome gipsy ring [with] 2 rubies which he had & a turquoise. But when he can afford it, he intends having a diamond put in the place of the latter. We have been married just three years & dear Charlie is as good a husband to me as he was the first week, and I am still as happy. Of course, now I do not see so much of him for he generally leaves home about quarter to half past eight & except at dinner, I do not see him till ½ past seven or seven. He generally comes home to dinner first and goes back as soon as possible, whereas Father comes, so then he can have his sleep as of old. But I should like him [Father] to remain sometimes & not be still such a slave to the business, take life a little easier and go about a little with Mother. They have children now at home.

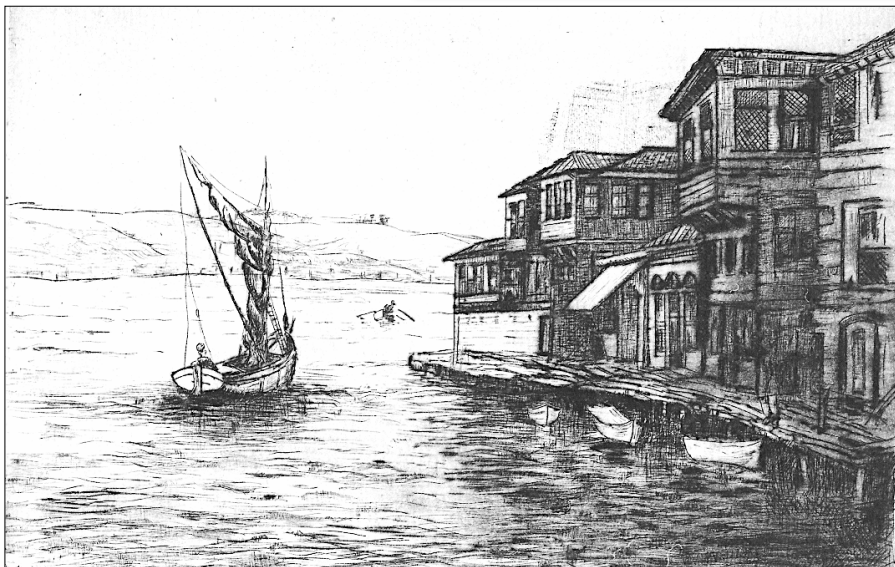
Frank [brother Fred] is down at the lower store since Jean's departure & his [Jean's] young lady [who is] with family have left for England, so last week he [Frank] asked father what his position was to be in the new store [No. 500 Grand Rue de Pera?] &



Rumeli Hisar from the Asiatic side



Right: The quay at Rumeli Hisar, by Abdüllah Frères, the crenelated towers of the castle just visible in the haze behind it. A steamship ferry from town approaches on the left.



Left: The same view by Arthur Baker

when he found out as sales man, he told father he could do that in any shop in the West End of London & that he would leave [Turkey], but expected father to pay his passage home. I suppose he is disappointed he does not take the cash Charlie has [gotten] since they [Charlie and George pooled resources and] went into the new store. Frank has made a mess of his life out here. If he had only had the sense he might have got on & by this time have been able to take Jean's place [as manager] at the top store. Far better to pay a good salary into one's own family than that a Greek should get it, & I am sure he has been long enough here going for eight years or even more [suggesting he was working in the shop since 1868, when he was 9?]. Do not, however, say anything in your letters here unless father has mentioned it to you. But it is my opinion that it will be a long time before father ever pays his passage, although Mother wishes it. She says it will be the best thing. I do not think he [Frank] has been in this house three times since you left [in 1874].

Well, I suppose you must have heard what a state of anxiety we have been living in the last week, expecting every day to have to get ready & come with the children to England. However, I think all danger is over. Mamoud Pasha, who was Grand Vizier, is sent off to his Palace at Bebek and Midhat, a great favourite, is in last Friday. 3,000 Turkish priests [ulema] assembled at the mosque to meet the Sultan, presenting a petition to remove this Mamoud and recall Midhat, making up their minds that if he [the Sultan] did not satisfy their demands (four others besides the above mentioned), they would kill him! So you may imagine the excitement and how many English families have left—all the Hansons with the exception of Mrs. Henry, although her children have all left. Mr. & Mrs. Clifton family. The Hoppers leave tomorrow & three nights last week all [British] vessels in the harbor where [sic] lying under steam, and many families went and remained on board all night such as Mrs. Niven and family. I think some people where [sic] & still are absurd to a degree.

I myself have not the least fear. The English population about Pera & Galata is divided into classes, each class having a captain in case of fire, for that is what they say, that they will set the place on fire. Well supposing that two fires should take place in a night—we are not to wait until a third, but all go to the Consulate [in Galata]. Fancy getting up in the night and taking babies out to the Consulate, when they require food etc. However, I suppose all is done for the best. I only hope we shall not come to that. What seems so to have unnerved people is the murder of the two Consuls at Salonique, Abbot & the second a Frenchman, and by a rabble. I hear some of our iron clads are hanging about the Dardanelles. But we shall be short of news for several days for the Levant Herald is suspended for writing a letter about the Russian ambassador. It was very strong & I am not in the least surprised you will see it in the weekly.

Mr. Laurie [possibly George Laurie, married to Amelia Rennison, a cousin of the Butler sisters] is very unwell and really looks bad. He is doing absolutely nothing & used to live on the interest, whereas now he has no interest to receive so things are worrying him. I should not be surprised if they [the Lauries] do not come home [to England] this summer. The Crimean Church is finished & was to have been opened with grand doings last Wednesday when, in the afternoon, [British Ambassador] Sir Henry Elliot, who was to have been present, sent a message to say that the Minister of Police had advised him not to have it opened, for things were in an unsettled state and the mob might rise up & he could not say what would be the consequence. Of course all [were] very much alarmed, but I think they held service to-day & had no ceremonious opening.

How did Aunt Polly [Mary Jane "Polly" (Butler) Pulman, Maria's sister and Henry Pulman's widow] like the drawing room sofa & chair Charlie & I bought her? Tell her I did expect a line before this mentioning them. I wish Edith [Pulman, Leila's older sister] & Amy [Percival, daughter of Elizabeth Butler and Richard Percival, both Louisa's cousins] would send me a photo. I should so like to see what they are like. Your cabinet is splendid [as seen in a photo]. What a size you have got, so broad & I see a moustache peeping. We showed it to the Dr. [possibly Eliza (Sarell) Baltazari's brother Dr. Richard Sarell] in this street one evening when I came in and he thought it very good. There is a report about that Mr. [A. Millingen?] is thinking of going to America. He has had a vacancy offered him in Scotland, but will not accept, but I do not think he will remain in this place. I suppose you have heard of Mr. J. [Milligan's?] engagement with Miss Hopper. We were all very much astonished. Whether the effects of being engaged or not, he looks very ill. You would not know him. He is now away for a month's holiday & lives on nothing but milk food.

Well I have come to the end of a second sheet & also to the end of news. I am afraid you will weary reading my letter, but I have quite lost the knack of letter writing having so little practice. Give my love to all at home.

Believe me yr loving sister LE.

As to the Empire's external woes that summer, Robert College professor, author, and Ottoman scholar John Freely put it this way: "The problems included revolts and other crises in the Lebanon, Crete, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldavia, Wallachia and Bulgaria, where a revolt by Bulgarian nationalists... was put down by the Ottomans with great severity."

1876 THE BULGARIAN REVOLT From April to June 1876, Turkish irregulars—called *bashibazouks*, infamous for their brutal savagery and lack of discipline—were sent to Bulgaria to put down a Russian-backed insurrection. Descriptions of atrocities filtered back to Constantinople via letters from home to Bulgarian students at Robert College, where Arthur and Fred were in residence. The students shared these letters with Western correspondents, who relayed the grizzly details to the capitals of Europe and America. The news ignited international condemnation. Sourcing the information to letters from Edwards to G.P. on October 30th and November 3rd, the V&A noted,

Even Turkey’s political problems could be of benefit to the trader. The crisis on the eve of the Bulgarian revolt in **1876** nearly brought to the Bakers an order for 40,000 waterproof Inverness capes with hoods for the Turkish army, but the Turkish authorities could not raise the deposit of a quarter of the price in gold.

BAKER & EDWARDS (1876-1890)

Imports, Retail, Exports, Wholesale, General Commission, and Carpets

1876 After a year together, George and Charlie went into partnership forming ‘Baker & Edwards’. Edwards opened an office across the Golden Horn in Stamboul, which was unusual for a European since Stamboul was the Turkish/Muslim sector of the city where Europeans were prohibited after dark. I believe it was intentional because Charlie wanted to get into the carpet trade, and Stamboul with the Grand Bazaar, the carpet hub of the Middle East.

Charlie Edwards was a savvy entrepreneur and a tremendous asset to George and the firm. Without Charlie, it’s hard to imagine the explosion in the company’s growth after he joined George. To George’s imports and retail activities, Edwards added exports, wholesale and commission work, acting as agent in Turkey for British manufacturers and insurance companies. Most effectively, though, Edwards led the Bakers into Oriental carpet manufacturing and exports. It increased its profits many times over and became “the lifeblood of the firm” (V&A-84).

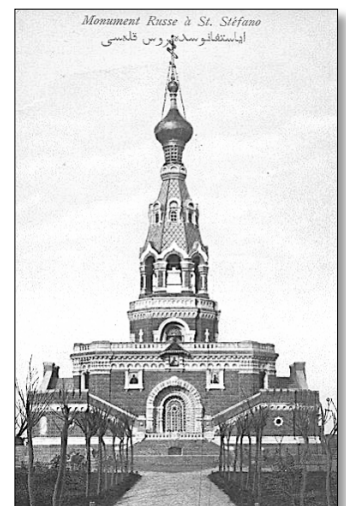
V&A-84: The Edwards family, Charles and his sons Middleton and Cecil, were to become prominent traders in their own right, specializing in the export of Oriental carpets with interests in the later O.C.M. company.

The Baker-Edwards partnership would last until about **1890**, when ‘Baker & Edwards’ divided to form ‘G. & A. Baker’ (which had continued since the beginning) and ‘Edwards & Sons’. But true to George’s methodology, George and Charlie and their respective companies continued to pool resources, a teamwork approach that promoted survival of the business and its subsidiaries.

After the partnership formed, and ‘intent on expanding his retail operation’, George established the department store at 500 Grand Rue de Pera on March 31st. For the first time he ordered modern gas fittings from England to illuminate it. The store is thought to be located next to or across from Tünel, the funicular station at the lower end of the Grand Rue de Pera; if true, it was perfectly situated to capture shoppers coming up Galata Hill from the Bosphorus, Galata Bridge, and Stamboul. This was the store “in which he was eventually associated with his son Arthur Baker, trading as G. Baker and Son and later G. & A. Baker Ltd.” (Cecil Edwards).

-1877-1878 THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR Russian forces triumphed, sweeping down to the outskirts of Constantinople at San Stefano and forcing the Turks to surrender to avoid a Russian occupation of the city. Ottoman territories in Europe were lost. Romania achieved full independence. Serbia and Montenegro gained their independence with a reduction in size. Bulgaria became an independent principality, but was still part of the Empire. In sum, the territories of the once vast and mighty Ottoman Empire were falling away.

According to his son Mid, Charlie Edwards traveled to Edirne (Adrianople) in 1877 ‘on business with the Russian forces’. At the same time, according to G.P., Charlie was ‘adding Manchester goods’ to his portfolio, and Bakers was taking orders from the Turkish Government for army cloths, boots, tents, and weaponry. It would seem that George and Charlie were doing business on both sides of the conflict. This also shows how Charlie was making the most of two sets of connections: those he’d made in Manchester before coming to Turkey, and those he’d made in the Turkish military while at the Naval College. Mid also recalled...



Russian War Memorial at St. Stefano.

hearing of Russian officers coming to dinner when the Russians were at San Stefano in 1878. In the summer of that year, there was a review of Russian troops at San Stefano. I remember nothing of the review, but I distinctly remember the growler [a 4-wheel hansom carriage] in which I sat with Father and Mother.

The Russians conducted their victory parade through San Stefano, a small, predominantly Greek coastal town south of the city. To drive the point home, they erected a towering war memorial in the village center that could be seen from miles around. It was a blight on the Turkish landscape, but Djemal Pasha would dispense with it at the outset of World War I. He was a business liaison of Arthur Baker's and one of the "Three Pashas" to lead Turkey through World War I. He made a propagandistic episode of blowing up the monument in front of the press and a large crowd of protesters. He made sure that it was filmed and reported in the West. Available today on YouTube, the clip was the first of its kind in the Empire and launched Turkey's filmmaking industry.

Afterward Djemal delivered an impassioned speech, which incited a riotous mob to march across Galata Bridge, storm through Pera, and plunder its European shops. Baker's stores was spared, however, thanks to a phone call made to the Chief of Police, Bedri Bey, from whom Arthur had recently purchased a home near Taxim Square. Aside from broken glass, the Baker shops survived intact. Arthur described the chaos in a journal he kept in the three weeks before he fled Turkey in November **1914**.

THE CARPET TRADE (1876-1968)

1876 At the first ordinary meeting of G.P. & J. Ltd. after it became public in **1907**, secretary R.F. Davis explained that "the carpet branch of the business was originally established about 30 years ago" (V&A-84), or in about **1877**. In fact, Charlie Edwards had been working on the idea since he joined the company in **1875** and was promoting it to George and G.P. In a letter addressed to G.P., dated 17 March **1876**, Edwards outlined his proposal:

The carpet trade I am bearing in mind and [that I am] trying to find a man [for] that can serve as a source of the intermediate export [i.e., from a regional buyer to him, for export to England], for I fancy the goods will always come nearly 10% above the Smyrna prices... but this is one branch of what I sincerely hope may become an export trade.

Edwards goes on to say that "it would also be necessary [for G.P.] to get a good [carpet selling] house in England" and buy for them, or otherwise "sell on sample," although the former was preferable. One senses from the letter that Edwards was already sending G.P. carpet samples to sell, in addition to sheep skins and textiles etc.

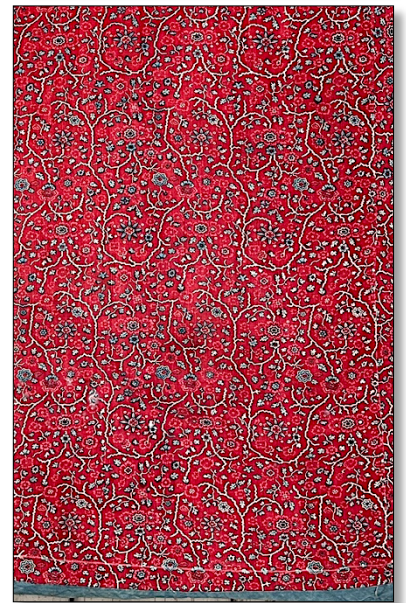
Simultaneously, Charlie was building a warehouse in Stamboul with a ventilated, underground, climate control system especially suited for storing carpets and preventing them from rotting. On the main floor were 'shops', with the offices perhaps upstairs. Charlie Edwards writing to G.P.,

Trade is in a wretched state with us and this new building is a constant drain upon my income. However, I hope to soon get the lower shops completed. We shall, I think, be clear out of the old place by the end of the month. We shall be pleased to get settled and in a respectable business premises. We now want from 5 to 10 thousand pounds more stock.

According to the V&A, who had access to more of the correspondence than I do, G.P. did not immediately jump on the carpet trade idea with enthusiasm, not until after he'd visited Persia with his father in **1878**. Only then were all three men on board and ready to launch carpet manufacturing and sales in a big way.

According to family sources, upon stopping at a country inn for a cup of tea and a Royal wee, Queen Victoria was very taken with a red and blue carpet supplied by the Bakers from Uşak, in western Turkey, and wanted to order some for herself. "Turkish carpets in all their varieties instantly became the rage and poured into England. It was greatly due to George Baker's [and Charlie Edwards's] eye for beauty and flair for business that the Turkish carpet was introduced into the British Isles" (Victor Binns).

At the time, all carpets in the Middle East were made 'to meet local demand', but thanks to George Baker and others of his kind, the industry turned from one of home sales only to one of manufacturing for export. Constantinople—specifically Stamboul—was the world's hub for carpets. 'Buyers from Britain, the U.S., and France visited the Turkish capital, or connected with vendors like the Bakers and Edwardses in ever increasing numbers' (Victor Binns). Always innovating, the Bakers and Edwardses then anticipated European and American/Canadian appetites and began producing carpets in Turkey and India to their own specifications, according to European and American tastes. G.P.



Above: Old G.P. & J. Baker cotton Indian block prints, patterns that informed their own fabric prints.

Left: Persian carpets, wedding gifts to Elsie and Arthur Leavitt, likely from Elsie's uncle Jim Baker and cousin Cecil Edwards. An 1880s Heriz (above left). An 1886 Shiraz (left). Arthur Baker's favorite that he had in his office, a Kazak kilim (left center and below).



noted that Americans preferred brighter, louder colors than Europeans, saying that some of the carpets they got were “very violent in colours and only useful for the Americans.”

In his autobiographical account, G.P. wrote of Edwards sending him samples and his success in selling them:

I think it must have been about this time [that] Charlie Edwards came into the firm to be responsible for the export of Turkey products, including rugs and carpets. He acted for Maples, buying parcels of antique rugs on a 5% basis; and, whilst acting for them, he occasionally included a parcel for me, which I stored in the Cutler Street warehouse and sold through O.T. Miller, a carpet broker. Regnart of Maples, imagining he was the sole importer through Bakers, questioned the action, though he made no protest.

1877-1878 Around the time of G.P.’s 21st birthday in **1877**, George suggested they make a trip to Persia the following summer to explore carpet trading options—both buying readymade carpets for export and having carpets manufactured for them. Charlie had found an Englishman producing carpets in Persia with whom they could meet. Perhaps because of the resistance G.P. was putting up, George did this in a way to make G.P. feel that it was his idea. In his account, G.P. presents himself as instigator of Bakers’ carpet business, but the giveaway in what follows is that J.C. Harper and Co. was a Manchester connection of Edwards’s. Once the carpet trade was operational, Edwards also used his own Manchester shippers to transport the carpets back to England. G.P. Baker:

On reaching my majority [in **1877**], I was to have a three months holiday and travel [in **1878**], and then it was [that] I elected to go to Persia.... In Persia, Father being with me, we were given hospitality at the home of [left blank], agent for a Manchester firm, J.C. HARPER & Co. Carpets and rugs formed part of their business, and here it was that I first got the idea of being a carpet importer. It all seemed so easy. I remember the purchase of one very beautiful specimen which, when it came to London, I allowed Mr. Sloane of New York to buy at the meager profit of 2 %.

George thus gave G.P. three month’s leave for them to accomplish the trip to Persia, after which G.P. was free to do something fun for himself for his job well done, and George would pay for it. G.P. wanted to climb Mount Ararat with a couple of his old school chums, and that’s what he did. I don’t know who filled in for him in London, while he was away, but a good guess would be Edwards.

G.P. described the journey in *Mountaineering Memories of the Past*, which he published in 1942. In it he maintains that his foremost desire was to go to Persia (for himself or for the firm?), and that climbing Ararat only came to him as an afterthought, as he and George traveled past it on their way to Persia. But it makes little sense following an earlier statement that the trip took “a year of thought and preparation.” It would have done, since the climb involved two friends coming out from England and a mountain peak of 17,000 feet, and since Charlie was in any event making the arrangements for G.P. and George in Persia. On their way back from Persia, G.P. rendezvoused with his friends in Tabriz, while George continued home to Constantinople. G.P. Baker:

When I came of age, my father in his wisdom said that I could take a three months’ holiday and go where I liked and he would foot the bill. After a year of thought and preparation, the glamour of the East took me to Persia and on the way I stopped at Erivan, then a town of mud hovels, where in the maidan, or open square, was to be seen a pyramidal heap of native bread, quite 11 ft. high. It was about the end of the war between Russia and Turkey [**1877-1878**] and it was said that this heap of bread was for the Turkish prisoners from Kars. Since that date, Erivan has grown to be a modern city, the capital of the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

Continuing south on the Araxes plain, the whole of the eastern side of the Ararat is seen rising sheer unencumbered by foothills, though a pronounced chasm is visible, due perhaps to a volcanic action many years ago. As I travelled along, it occurred to me that I would like to try and reach the top. Ararat, with its great biblical history, as seen from the Araxes plain, is a mountain to tempt the traveler. From below it all looks so easy. Accordingly, on arriving at Tabriz, in concert with two friends who were willing to join me in the venture, we provided ourselves with native-made alpenstocks, small ice axes and thick felted socks to put over our boots when footing was slippery. One of the most outstanding impressions of Ararat was on our return from Persia to climb the mountain.

As well as getting the Bakers into the carpet trade, the trip to Persia got G.P. interested in antique carpets. By the time he died, his collection was one of the largest and finest in the world. After Ararat, G.P. also made his London telex address ‘Mount Ararat, London’. Ararat also marked the onset of two other passions of his—mountain climbing and horticulture. He climbed every chance he got, recounting his adventures in *Mountaineering Memories of the Past*. Mt. Baker in the Canadian Rockies is named after him. Then, as he wrote, “When I gave up mountaineering, I took to

plant hunting in the hills of southern Europe,” often with brother Arthur, who made drawings of the plants. G.P. took unrecorded species of flowers back to England for presentation to the Royal Horticultural Society, of which he was a member. Several cultivars were named after him, my favorite being tulipa bakeri, which he and Arthur discovered trekking on Crete. It’s a small, delicate tulip that comes up in early spring and grows well in a rocky, sandy soil. The flower has pale-to-dark violet petals with a bright orange-yellow center, an attractive combination and harbinger of warmer weather. On retiring, G.P. turned his attention to creating new cultivars in his garden at Hillside, Seven Oaks. One creation that got broad attention was an iris the color of chocolate. G.P. received recognition and many awards for his achievements in these fields.



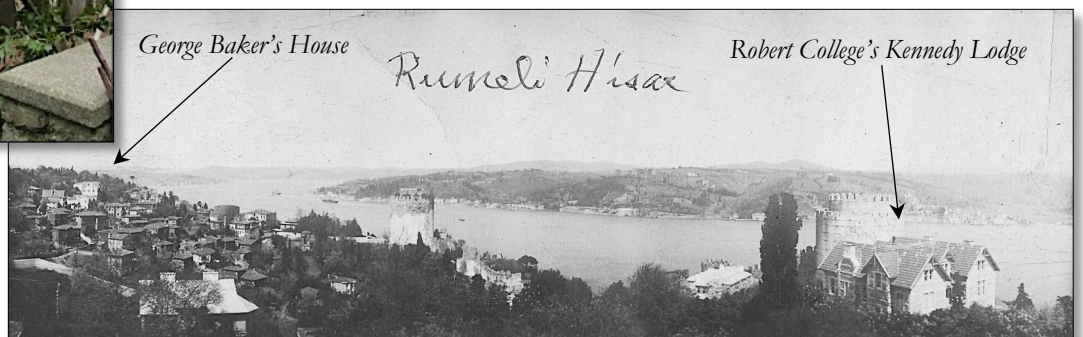
Left: The George Baker House, Rumeli Hisar, designed by Charlie Edwards, shortly after it was built in 1880. The Cedars is to the right and George’s greenhouse to the left. Their gardens were combined.



Arthur and Leila Baker, with Arthur and Elsie Leavitt and baby Peter, seated on the front steps of the George Baker House in 1913.



Above and center: The George Baker House in 2016. Note the wisteria.



George Baker's House

Rumeli Hisar

Robert College's Kennedy Lodge

1879 George's third son Arthur, his education finished—four years at Robert College (1871-1875) and four studying business and finance in England and France (1875-1879)—joined George in Turkey at 'The Store'. He was 18. George made him manager of the department store at No. 500 Grand Rue de Pera, but he did not put him on salary, nor did Arthur ask for one. That would take George nine more years to come round to.

1880 George and Charlie, Baker & Edwards, were doing so well that together that they purchased three lots from Robert College in Rumeli Hisar. A recently-built house was already on one of the lots, and George built on the other two. At the same time, he built a winter residence in Pera, Arthur Baker writing:

In **1880** Father built the house at Hissar, £1,800 [£274,121/\$335,250 in 2023 values]; in 1882 he built the house at Rue Deirnen, £2,000 [£304,579/\$372,500 in 2023 values]. I mention these because it shows that from the time he parted with Hayden, that is from 1869-1882, he must have been making sufficient to invest outside of his business, at least £1,500 a year [£228,434/\$274,977 in 2023 values], but it was a great strain and responsibility.

It may not sound like much to build a villa, but money went a long way in the day. Unskilled laborers could be had for pennies a day and skilled laborers for slightly more, this according to American missionary Cyrus Hamlin, who had erected Hamlin Hall for Robert College across the valley nine years earlier. Indeed, Cyrus Hamlin had everything to do with George and Charlie's acquisition of the property from Robert College. It was up for sale precisely because the Porte refused to issue Hamlin/Robert College another building permit to build on it, after all the trouble Hamlin had caused building Hamlin Hall. Unable to make use of the land for faculty housing, George Washburn, Hamlin's son-in-law and successor as college president, decided to sell.

The site was purported to be the only real estate available in Rumeli Hisar. Already on one of the lots was a house built in the late 1860s. Hamlin and his family moved into it when they were forced to vacate the president's suite in Hamlin Hall for George Washburn, whom co-founder Christopher Robert had put in charge. After Hamlin left Turkey in **1863**, the house was occupied by Albert Long, one of the college's earliest professors. It became known as 'the Long House', seemingly for Long's name and because the house is a long, narrow residence perched lengthwise along the ridge. Then in **1880**, when Long was appointed Vice President and moved onto campus, Washburn sold the property to Charlie and George. Charlie and Louisa moved into the house, Louisa renaming it 'The Cedars' since it was situated in a grove of old cedar trees.

Before Hamlin left Turkey, and ever hopeful that a permit would come through, he dug two foundations (illegally) on the two adjacent lots. Once the land was in George's possession, he had no trouble getting a building permit. Why? Because he had been doing a brisk business with the Porte since the early 1850s. He promptly built on top of Hamlin's foundations, thank you Cyrus Hamlin!

Charlie drew up the blueprints for the George Baker house and is blamed for the steep stairs ascending to the front portico; more like the stair-ladders he'd installed on his ironclads, the family chided, and useful for staggering family members for a group photograph. George installed a conservatory next to the house and spent many an evening puttering in the garden after work and before dinner. G.P. and Arthur were also avid gardeners like their father.

The house George built on the other side of his, he rented back to Robert College, which was still in desperate need of faculty housing. But when son Harry married Mary Jew, daughter of the British post master, it became their house. It may have been consolation for George passing Harry over in favor of Charlie Edwards and then his younger brother Arthur. It seems that Arthur was on his own for housing and moved out to St. Stefano, a distant suburb, from whence he commuted into town everyday by train. (Today St. Stefano is the cite of Atatürk International Airport.) When George Baker died in 1905, Arthur inherited the house in Rumeli Hisar along with G. & A. Baker. And whereas before 1880 the Bakers had gone to Halki Island (Heybeliada) in the summer, at this juncture they started going to Rumeli Hisar instead.

The house had a commanding view of Rumeli Hisar village and castle, and the sparkling Bosphorus, described blue at the time, and the rolling hills of Asia Minor beyond. Robert College was an easy 10-to-15 minute walk across the valley to the ridge on the other side. George's great grandson John Leavitt described it this way:

The village of Rumeli Hisar climbs precipitously up the embankment of the Bosphorus, skirting the north and west sides of the castle. In a hollow between Hisar and the Robert College Campus were scattered a number of New England-style, white-frame faculty houses in a grove of tall cedar trees. From these, Louisa's house took its name 'The Cedars'. Across a

narrow cobblestone lane less than 100 yards away was another large manor house built by Louisa's father George Baker in [1880], with the help of her husband Charlie Edwards. Surrounded by a garden and backed by towering pines, this is where Louisa's brother Arthur Baker ended up with his wife Leila and children Elsie, Dollie, Warden, Ruby and May. Both houses had a commanding view up and down the Bosphorus, especially from the upstairs bedrooms.



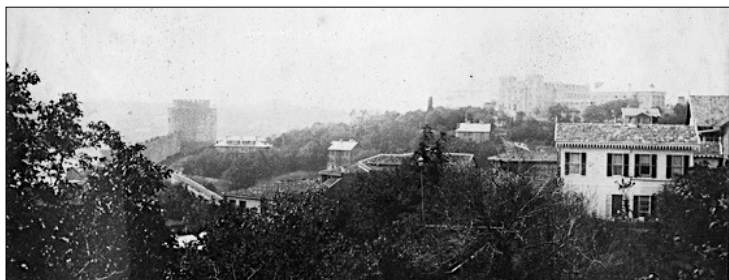
IICS Living Museum

The White House

The White House was originally built for an English merchant family in the early 20th century. It later became property of Robert College and served as faculty housing. The Garwood family lived in the White House from 1952 until 1968. Minnie Garwood attended IICS as a child and is among our oldest living alumni. Her daughter Victoria taught at the Hisar Campus. The house was first used as a school building in the academic year 1969-70.

—By Marius and Nikita

100
Years of Academic Excellence
1911-2011

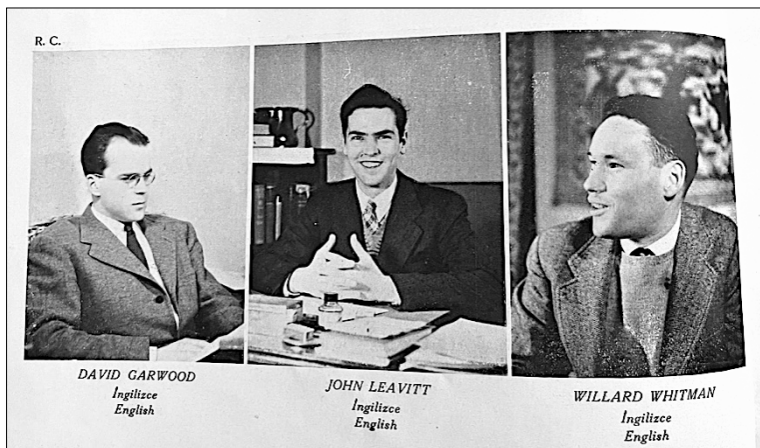


Arthur Leavitt: "This photo was taken from the upstairs balcony of the George Baker house looking south" (c. 1919). The South Tower of Rumeli Hisar is visible to the left, the Bosphorus faintly behind it, and Robert College's Hamlin Hall across the valley. The white house in the foreground is Harry Baker's old house, today the Istanbul International Community School (IICS) (above left).

In reality, this house was built in the early 1880s together with the George Baker house. It was first rented to Robert College for faculty housing, then occupied by George Baker's son Harry Baker and his family. After the turn of the century it was sold back to RC and again used for faculty housing. David Garwood (below) taught English at RC together with Arthur and Elsie Leavitt's son John and "Wil" Whitman in the late 1930s. John Leavitt and Minnie Garwood were students together at the Robert College Community School, precursor of IICS.



From the balcony of Harry Baker's old house looking toward the South Tower of Rumeli Hisar (2022).



From Robert College's 1939 yearbook.

In his book, *Constantinople: Old and New* (1915), H.G. or “Harry” Dwight dedicated a chapter to the village of Rumeli Hisar, where he was living with the Edwards’s at The Cedars in 1907. Here he describes the view from Louisa Edwards’s garden:

I know one such overlook containing a Byzantine capital that makes the cedar of Lebanon above it throw as secular a shade as you please, so cunningly laid out lengthwise on the hillside that the Bosphorus is a mere ornamental water of a lower terrace. This Grand Canal of Constantinople enters bodily into certain thrice enviable *yalis* on the water’s edge. Their windows overhang the sea, or are separated from it merely by a narrow causeway. And each contains its own marble basin for boats, communicating with the open by a water-gate or by a canal or tunnel through the quay.

Two of the three *yalis* he refers to are renowned and were also used by the Baker family. One was Yılanli Yali, south of Rumeli Hisar, where the Edwardses lived after World War I. The other was Zeki Pasha Yali, north of the village, where the Bakers and Leavitts lived in 1914-1915. In late 1913, Arthur Baker apparently decided to have both his summer and winter residences renovated. The Bakers stayed at Zeki Pasha Yali until they evacuated in November 1914. Son-in-law and American diplomat, Arthur Leavitt, carried on living there, along with other personnel from the American Embassy, which was renting a few floors.

Miraculously, the *yalis* and all three of the Baker and Edwards houses in Rumeli Hisar survive to this day. Harry Baker’s house operates as the prestigious Istanbul International Community School (IICS), the antecedent to the Robert College Community School. It was established in the 1920s after World War I for the children of faculty members and local expatriates like my father and his siblings. These days the George Baker House is owned by a Turkish family with ties to the national football league. The Cedars is currently occupied by an Anglo-Turkish professor at Boğaziçi University. Boğaziçi University succeeded Robert College when the U.S. Government formally gifted it to the Turks in the early **1970s**.

After Charlie Edwards died in **1898**, Louisa took in borders for the extra income it provided. In his retirement, George Washburn, Hamlin’s son-in-law and Robert College’s second President, stayed with the Edwardses to draft his memoir, *Fifty Years in Constantinople* (1909). Replacing him at the house in **1909** was American diplomat Arthur Leavitt (my grandfather). Leavitt boarded at The Cedars from 1909 to 1914 and courted Arthur Baker’s daughter Elsie across the cobbled lane (today’s Fenerli Türbe Sk.) at the George Baker House. In their day, the gardens were open and connected, the lane bisecting them.

Harry Dwight, American writer, correspondent, and erstwhile diplomat, drafted his iconic *Constantinople, Old & New* (1915) aka *Constantinople, Settings & Traits* (1926) at The Cedars from **1907-1914**. Between Arthur Baker and Arthur Leavitt in age, he was a good friend to both and Leavitt’s best man at his and Elsie Baker’s wedding.

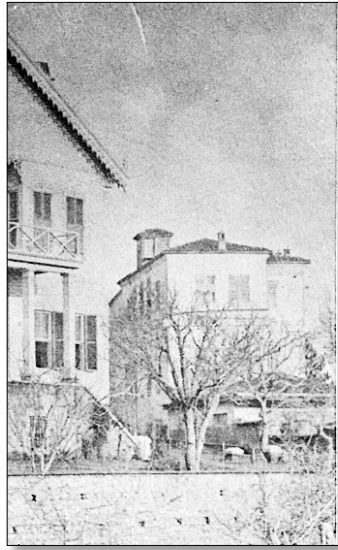
When the extended Baker family reassembled in Istanbul after World War I, Louisa sold The Cedars back to Robert College and moved into Yılanli Yali on the quay in Bebek. It too survives, as does its notoriety for once housing a hair of the Prophet Mohammed’s beard and the body of a bodyguard of Mehmet the Conqueror’s locked in its the attic. Whether these relics are still there, I don’t know, but in the Bakers’ day, three different keys were required to gain entry, these kept by the home owner, the Sheik ul Islam (the Sultan’s chief Islamic advisor), and the leader of a nearby dervish colony. Arthur Baker maintained that Arthur Leavitt and his young daughter Ruth were once given a glimpse inside, which I’m guessing is why he could describe it for us:

The room contains the body of one of the companions of Mahomet the Second [Mehmet the Conqueror]. It is to all appearance a mosque—has a *mihrab* (alter) [the semicircular niche that indicates the direction of Mecca]; several hanging lamps, jars of holy sand from Arafah [Mecca], sealed jars of Zem Zem water [from the holy well at Zam Zam at Mecca], dried or baked soil from Mecca, rugs, and several Koran stands and ornaments usual in shrines. The body is covered with Indian and Persian shawls and the long string of beads which the Dervishes usually [wear]. In this room, and alongside the body, is a Mother of Pearl box on a Koran stand. Inside this box is ONE HAIR from the Prophet’s beard!

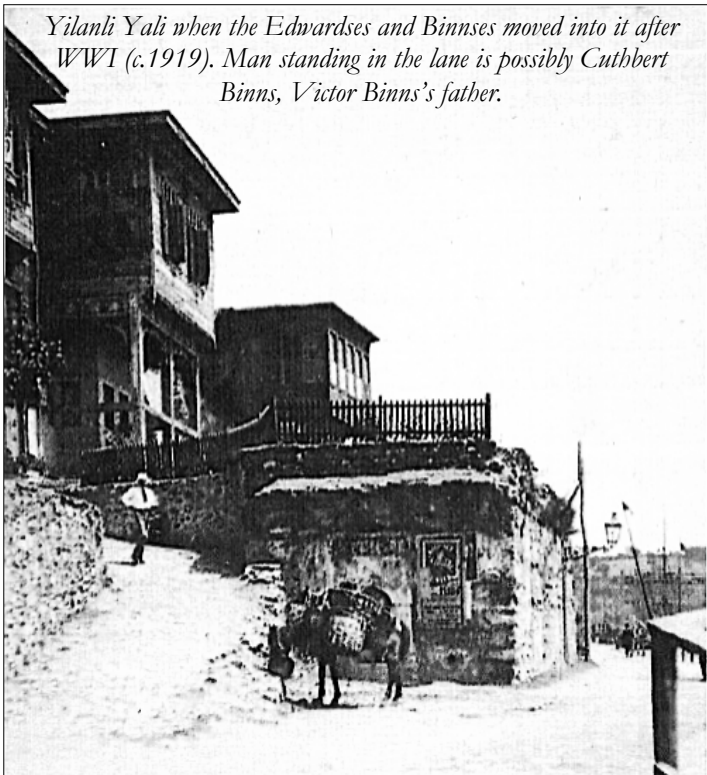
1883 The Orient Express began rail service between Paris and Constantinople.



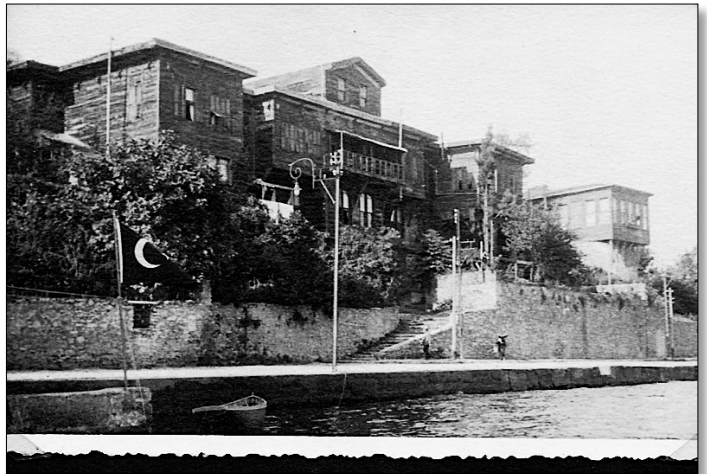
Harry Dwight “in the secular shade of the cedar of Lebanon” behind him in the garden at The Cedars.



Left and right: The Cedars (formerly The Long House) from Google street view looking west up and east down Fenerli Türbe Sk., which translates as 'Phanariot Tomb'. Center, the same residence in the early 1880s.



Yilanli Yali when the Edwardses and Binnses moved into it after WWI (c.1919). Man standing in the lane is possibly Cuthbert Binns, Victor Binns's father.

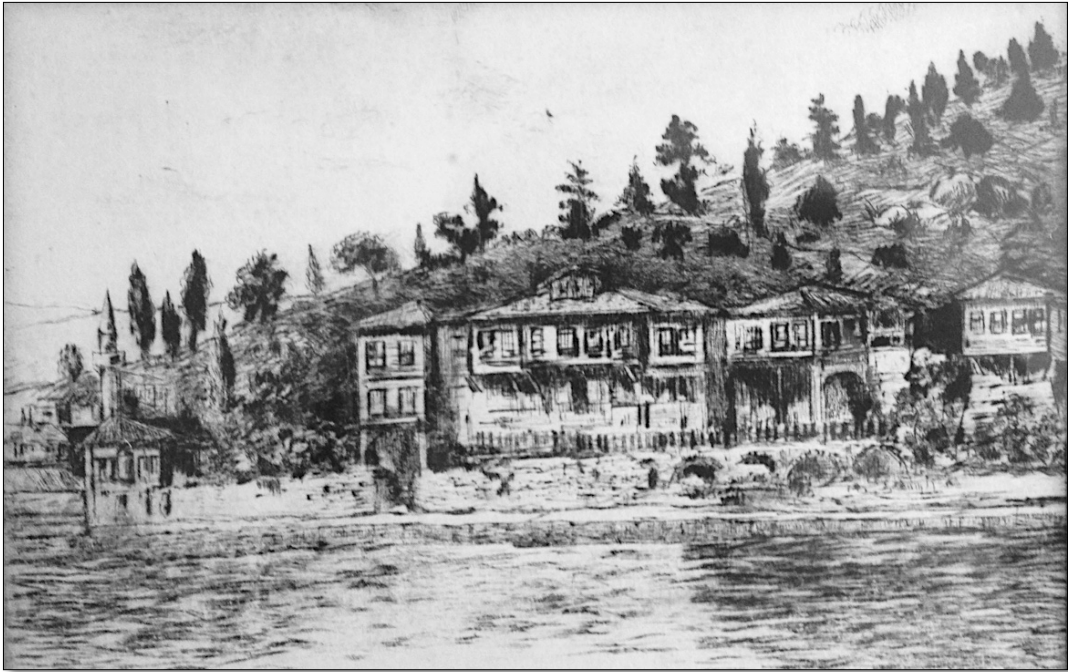


YILANI YALI 1936 - on edge of Bosphorus
 Top floor - Auntie Louie
 Centre - Mildred & Cuthbert Binns
 Lower floor - Turkish family



Left, right: Yilanli Yali after renovations (2018)





Arthur Baker's depiction of Yılanlı Yalı, drawn in 1935 for Queen Marie of Romania, who stayed there on visits following WWI.



Zeki Pasha Yalı (above, right) for sale in 2018.



Left: Arthur Leavitt swimming with colleagues from the American Embassy outside the gate of Zeki Pasha Yalı (1915).

Robert College

The George Baker House

The Cedars



The fortress and village of Rumeli Hisar



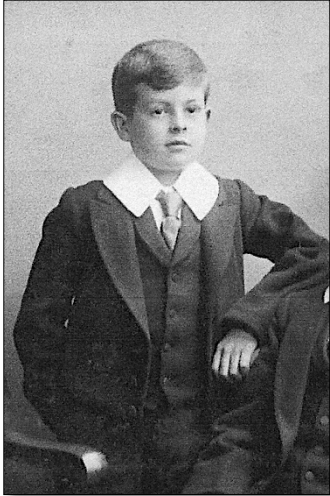
Arthur Baker's house at St. Stefano (c. 1905)

1887 Arthur Baker and Leila Pulman were married at St. Paul's Chapel, Battersea, London. Arthur's brother Fred and Leila's sister Edith were the witnesses. The reception was held at the home of Leila's mother, Polly Pulman, widow of architect Henry Pulman, at 6 Loraine Road, Battersea. Since Polly was Maria Baker's sister, Arthur and Leila were cousins. Although the marriage was legal, there was disquiet in the family over this. By the time Leila's younger sister Edith Pulman married Arthur Baker's younger brother Jim six years later, however, the family had grown used to the idea. It's the reason why so many descendants of George Baker are also descendants of Henry Pulman.

Arthur Baker's Family

Arthur Baker (1861-1939) and Leila Pulman (1861-1959) had five children, all of them born in Turkey:

1. Edith Elsie (1887-1962), who married American diplomat Arthur Leavitt (1884-1981). They had two sons and two daughters.
2. Dorothy "Dollie" Leila (1889-1955), who married Hugh Cotton (1889-1956). They had one daughter.
3. Arthur Warden (1893-1958), who married Jessie Taylor, Nathalie Panutin, Mary Lovegrove, and Cora Chubb. He had one daughter and two sons.
4. Ruby Kathleen (1896-2001), who married Charles "Charlie" Gray. They had one son, who died in WWII.
5. Vivien May (1898-1969), who married Ian Morten (1882-1970). They had one son and two daughters.



Arthur Baker (c. 1887)



Arthur and Leila Baker with Elsie (standing), Dollie (seated), and Warden (on Leila's lap) (November 1893)



Arthur Baker (1893)



Leila (Pulman) Baker



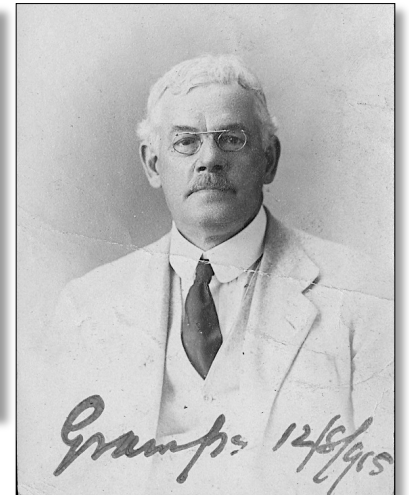
Leila (Pulman) Baker (c. 1887)



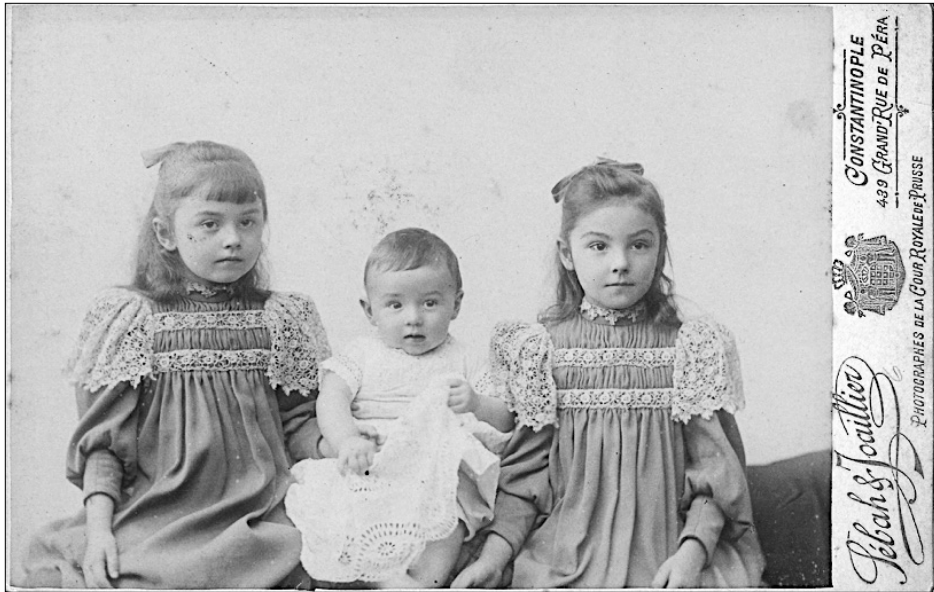
Arthur Baker (1910)



Leila (Pulman) Baker and Arthur Baker (right) (1915)



Arthur Baker (1915)



Arthur & Leila's three elder children (l-r) Dorothy "Dollie" (age 4), Arthur Warden (6 mo.), and Edith Elsie (6) (November 1893).



Arthur and Leila Baker's fourth child Ruby, who later wrote histories of the George and Arthur Baker families.



May and Ruby Baker, the youngest of Arthur and Leila's children.



Elsie and May Baker at San Stefano



May (left) and Dollie (below) as teenagers



Elsie and May swimming at the Baker house at St. Stefano (c. 1905)

FIRST DIVISION (1890)

From Baker & Edwards to G. & A. Baker and Edwards & Sons

1888 It was not until Elsie's birth in November **1887** that George Baker was persuaded to put Arthur on salary as of the New Year. Arthur was 27 and had been working for his father for nine years. After nearly a year of marriage Leila took the matter up with her mother-in-law (and aunt), Maria Baker, who took it up with George. Ruby Baker speculated that G. & A. Baker was formed at this time, but company records indicate it was later, in 1890.

1890 The carpet trade was doing so well that George and Charlie decided to divide Baker & Edwards into G. & A. Baker (referring to George and son Arthur) and Edwards & Sons (referring to Charlie and sons Mid and Cecil). Family sources are uncertain when this happened, whether it happened at the same time as Edwards & Sons was established in **1890**, or done in stages. May Baker speculated G. & A. Baker was formed on Arthur Baker's 21st birthday in **1882**. Ruby surmised it was January **1888**, when George put Arthur on salary. Mid Edwards thought it was even later, after **1895**. Victor Binns, who researched the matter for a company history, thought it was **1890**, at the same time as Edwards & Sons was formed. Cecil Edwards agreed with him (and not his brother Mid). Since Victor's information was based on company archives, I'm inclined to go with **1890**, a conclusion the V&A also reached in its research in 1984. As before, Edwards continued handling carpets, exports, wholesale and agency representations, while George saw to imports and the shops, of which there were now at least four.

1890 As Mid and Cecil were still seeing to their studies, when Charlie formed Edwards & Sons in **1890**, he was expecting them to join him later. That said, Mid recalled that the firm was still called Baker & Edwards when he returned to Constantinople in **1895**, following a year abroad in Australia. This may be so, but only if George was comfortable with Edwards working simultaneously on and for Baker & Edwards and Edwards & Sons.

As a child, Mid had tuberculosis of the bone and lost one of his legs in two operations. He recovered from the ordeal, but suffered from debilitating depression. The British doctor recommended a change of scene, and Mid was put on a working sailboat bound for Australia with other boys his age suffering from one malady or another. The experience was meant to work on their resilience and toughen them up. Mid was away for a year. In Sydney, he worked in a photography shop to support himself. Though he always walked with a limp, it was said the experience made him whole again. It also made him a photographer, just as the technology was emerging in the public arena. Several photographs in H.G. Dwight's *Constantinople: Old and New* are attributed to Mid. When Mid returned to Constantinople in April **1895**, he went to work for his father.

SECOND DIVISION (1892)

G.P. & J. Baker in London was formed, a split from G. & A. Baker and Edwards & Sons in Constantinople

G.P.'s account of the London office's early days before G.P. & J. Baker was formed reveals how his end of the business was organized and grew. G.P. Baker:

From **1880-1883** the London business assumed considerable expansion. We had a warehouse in Ivy Lane with carpets on the ground floor, and soft goods and the shipping department on the upper floors. Each was under the management of a particular person. Hamilton was our designer. Charlie Percival [Elizabeth (Butler) Percival's son and G.P.'s cousin] was in charge of Turkish carpets with Sydney La Fontaine in Smyrna as his agent. Mirzapores [was in charge of the other] imports.

1884 G.P. married Emily Mary "Minnie" Davis. Her father ran the counting house for G.P. & J. Baker. G.P. Baker:

In **1884**, I married. We added printed textiles to the business, mostly in the earlier days, oriental designs inspired from Greek embroideries or Oriental rugs we were handling, and produced by the Swaislands Company at Crayford. Again the business grew with the help of Sydney La Fontaine in Smyrna, [Charlie] Edwards in Stamboul, Percy Pulman [Leila (Pulman) Baker's brother] in CARPETS, [Elizabeth (Butler) Percival's son, Charles "Percy"] Percival the manager of the Soft goods and BAKERS [in Constantinople] Shipping Dept. Fred Davis [G.P.'s father-in-law] in the Counting House joined us, replacing a man called Chapman, who robbed us of some £300.

G.P. & J. Baker Ltd. identifies **1884** as its founding. However, a letter dated 4 April 1892 from George to G.P. and Jim (see below) concludes, "You will now arrange to trade in your own name & notice should [be] given either by circular or otherwise to this effect."



George Baker surrounded by family and Robert College friends outside his greenhouse at Rumeli Hisar (c. 1885). Note the wisteria.

L-r: Mary (Jew) Baker (Harry Baker's wife); George Noel Baker (on her lap); Harry Baker (behind); George Baker; William T. Ormiston, Professor of Natural Philosophy and Math at Robert College; Mrs. Ormiston (?); and Jim Baker, holding a tennis racket.



The George Baker and Charlie Edwards families (c. 1895)

On the ground (l-r): Winifred Baker aged 10 (Harry & Mary Baker's), Dollie Baker aged 4 (Arthur & Leila Baker's), Cecil Edwards aged 12 (Louisa & Charlie Edwards's), Elsie Baker aged 6 (Arthur and Leila Baker's), and Mildred Edwards aged 10 (Louisa and Charlie Edwards's). Seated: Leila (Pulman) Baker with son Warden, Mary (Jew) Baker, George Baker with grandson George Noel, Maria Baker, and Louisa (Baker) Edwards. Standing: Charlie Edwards, Harry Baker, Mabel Edwards, Arthur Baker, and Mid Edwards. Missing are G.P. Baker and Jim Baker.

1887 In the autumn, George sent son James “Jim” to London to assist G.P. (V&A-84). Jim had graduated from Robert College in c. **1884** and spent the interim receiving “tuition in the Store” from George in Turkey. G.P. was reluctant to receive him, but George prevailed and Jim soon proved his worth. Jim was put in charge of the carpet side of the business, which freed G.P. up to pursue printmaking. G.P. Baker:

Jim went to Ouchak [Uşak in c. **1885-1886**], where he resided for a year or more, living in a Khan and contracting smallpox, which was uncommon for an adult. Back in London [in the fall of **1887**], he joined me in partnership, and we formed G.P. & J. Baker [in **1892**], father supplying the capital [in April **1892**]. The warehouse at Ivy Lane was abandoned for a larger one in Warwick Lane.

1892 In a letter to G.P. and Jim dated April 4th, George transferred £5,500 to each of them to set up a company independent of G. & A. Baker and Edwards & Sons. Nonetheless, the understanding was that Jim and G.P.’s new firm would continue to function as George’s London procurement and shipping agent. (By then, it appears that Edwards had developed his own transportation lines to England through his Manchester contacts.) The letter is handwritten. Arthur Baker bore witness with his signature. George finished up telling the boys that their first order of business was to publicize the change under a new name. From this document G.P. & J. Baker was born.

Adhering to the brand, and true to George’s team-and-family-first model, G.P. and Jim pooled the money to form G.P. & J. Baker. They became tandem directors and established themselves as London-based carpet merchants “with associations across the Near East and India.” Their second though less lucrative line of business was textiles, embroideries, and miscellany. Jim managed the carpet trade, G.P. the printmaking, while their cousin Percy Percival, son of Maria Baker’s sister, Elizabeth “Lizzie” (Butler) Percival, saw to exports and shipments to Turkey.

V&A-84: George senior separated the carpet account from other business, giving both James and G.P. £5,500 [each] to carry on this trade. The import of carpets [to the U.K.] continued to be of the greatest importance, although [it was soon] overshadowed by their [G.P.’s] work in the printing of textiles in England for a European market. They [mostly Jim] imported Persian, Turkish, Caucasian and Turkoman carpets, some for re-export to Paris and the United States. ...Their second line were embroideries, though these were far less important.

We learn [from their correspondence between London and Constantinople] about their customers, their competitors, and their agents. We learn not only from whence the carpets came, but which were the most popular in England and their price. We see the problems of the trade and learn, above all, how far they were able to get carpets made in several different places to their [prescribed] colors and patterns.

They frequently imported ‘Turkey Stair’ and were cross when the measurements varied.... Occasionally, G.P. sketched what he wanted. Some Oushaks, 11x5 ft, had two bands at each end ‘all the plain of old gold or terra and the bands across of darker colour, mixed effects, and of the work made at Oushak.’ Another hopeful line was ‘billiard surroundings.’

Although the carpets were hand-made in remote villages, or by nomadic tribesmen, and then carried in bales by camel, the Bakers expected the results to conform precisely to their orders. Exact sizes were given and orders rejected if they were more than an inch or so out. There are frequent references to required colours and to ‘new designs’. In May **1886**, G.P. wrote to his father about an ‘exclusive design of seven colours from Oushak.’ He wanted samples in two qualities and then would ‘treat for a quantity of 100/150 carpets.’ He contemplated similar ‘business in Koulas and Guerdes.’ In December **1886**, G.P. explained to his father, ‘if we can’t get the Daguestan people to make new goods to my colourings, we shall give up these goods.’

There are recurring problems: goods arrived late or not at all, sizes and colours were wrong, carpets arrived moth-eaten or too coarse, or they were good but expensive. G.P. was continually worried about competition. Carpets might be good, but wrong for the intended market. He cautioned his father ‘not to be too eager for the Old Persian designs, now that they are getting into general hands.’ The ones he was receiving ‘are very violent in colours and only useful for the Americans. They rush for them and not the larger designs.’ ...There was a marked seasonal drop in sales immediately after Christmas and in high summer, and when this happened there was a cash flow problem. Both G.P. and Jim frequently wrote to their father for money to settle outstanding bills for goods they were exporting to Turkey. Returns for carpets were always slow.

[Despite their successes] G.P. was often depressed about the uncertainty of trade. He made a careful balance every six months of the carpets imported from La Fontaine [their agent in Smyrna]. At times stock accumulated to a worrying level. In April **1888** G.P. thought that the carpet business was in a critical state, and ‘either we do it ourselves or represent SLF [Sydney La Fontaine] and others’, and he was casting around for new outlets....



The Bakers and Pulmans likely on the occasion of Jim and Edith (Pulman) Baker's wedding in July 1893, at G.P. and Minnie Baker's place at Bexley. Seated (l-r): Frances (Gardner) Pulman married to H. Pery Pulman; Norman Pulman; Cyril Baker; Minnie (Davis) Baker; Robin Baker; Amelia (Baker) Anderson; and Mary (Percival) Chase. Standing: H. Pery Pulman; Edith (Pulman) Baker; Jim Baker, G.P. Baker; Violet Baker (G.P. & Minnie's) with sister Daisy Baker on her lap; Charles Percival; Harry Baker; Arthur Baker; and Fred Baker.



Left: Taken on the same occasion at Bexley in 1893 (l-r) seated: Minnie (Davis) Baker, Edith (Pulman) Baker, Harry Baker with Daisy (G.P. and Minnie's) on his lap, Amelia (Baker) Anderson, and Cyril, Robin, and Violet Baker (G.P. and Minnie's). Standing: Jim Baker, Arthur Baker, and G.P. Baker.

The next letter book is missing, but we know that the outcome of these doubts was the suggestion made by Sydney La Fontaine that G.P. & J. Baker should join an amalgamation of carpet firms. The brothers approved and [Jim] became the first managing director of the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers, or O.C.M. Starting as [Jim] Baker's assistant, Cecil Edwards ultimately took over, first in Persia and then in London.

1892 In Constantinople, Arthur Baker was a founding member of the British Chamber of Commerce and the British Building Society.

1893 Jim Baker and Edith Pulman were married on July 26th. A celebration was held and photographs taken at G.P.'s estate at Ivydene, Bexley.

Leila missed the wedding because she stayed behind in Turkey to give birth to Warden on the 19th of May. When Warden was months old, Constantinople was hit by a devastating earthquake. The Arthur Bakers were living at San Stefano. Before it hit, Warden had crawled under the sofa and fallen asleep. When the ground began to lurch, the family fled to the garden without realizing that Warden was left behind; Leila thought Arthur had him, Arthur thought Leila had him. Gripped with fear, Arthur and Leila blaming themselves for being careless, the family huddled on the lawn waiting for the aftershocks to subside. When it was over, they found Warden undisturbed still under the sofa, having slept through the whole thing.

SWAISLANDS PRINTING COMPANY, CRAYFORD (1893-early 1900s)

1893 G.P. & J. Baker purchased Swaislands Printing Company at Crayford and began printing its own textiles with, as GP wrote, "oriental designs inspired from Greek embroideries or Oriental rugs we were handling." In his account, G.P. described the expansion:

The ramifications of the firm [G.P. & J. Baker] were extending: the carpet department needed more help and more space and although we had the use of the Cutler Street warehouse for the more bulky of our carpet imports, the opportunity was offered to acquire the Tyler premises in Warwick Square with an outlet into Phoenix Court, Newgate Street. We accordingly took them in **1900** on a 77 years lease. The upper floors were already let to Simpson, a bookbinder and Boyles, a printer and publisher, our Counting House being a separate small building in the extreme corner of Warwick Square. In the cellar the old Roman wall formed the boundary between the Birdcage Walk [handwritten in: *of Newgate Prison*] and our premises. In these new premises we were able to make a good display of the carpets; the Textile Dept. in a wing of the main building with Fletcher, a designer, to assist—[Charles] Percival was with us and Percy Pulman also with J.B. in the carpets; Akers the buyer of exports to Constantinople.

The Swaisland Company were printing for us, introduced by Mr. Davis [handwritten: *Minnie's Father*], who was a Director [handwritten in: *auditor*] of the Company and the concern was being managed by Mr. G. W. Homey Honey, the son of the Chairman of the Company, who apparently was not satisfying the Directors nor the shareholders. In **1893**, they accordingly decided to wind up, and at that time it came out that we were one of their most important customers and were in possession of many blocks they had out for us. Catalogues were printed and in due course the sale of machinery, plant, rollers, and blocks was advertised. I suggested to Jim that there was nothing for it but to become printers ourselves, and that any loss we might sustain I personally would bear. I visited the Works, saw Doyle the Manager of the block printing department, engaged his services and also any of the old hands who were not going to migrate. Most of the younger men had already gone north. With the help of Doyle I attended the sale and bought all he advised, such as printing tables with coverings, printing and washing machines and a big lot of printing blocks, the majority being cashmere designs. All went at a knock down price.

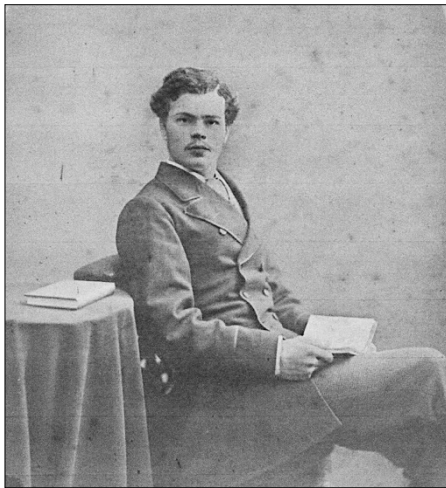
I was negotiating with the owners of the Footscray Works, then empty, to start there, when one of the Swaisland liquidators, learning where I proposed to go, approached me with the offer that I take the Swaislands Block Bleach Works at a rental of £135 with the option to purchase within two years at fourteen years rental—less than £2000 for the freehold.

Crayford House, then owned by Sir Hiram Maxim, was empty and he was willing to let me have the use of it free of rent if our night watchman would also do duty at his Works. To Crayford House the family went, and whilst there Min was looking out for a permanent residence, where at Ivydene, Bexley, towards the end of the year by a hired bus, we all eventually went, and there for thirty-three years we brought up the family.

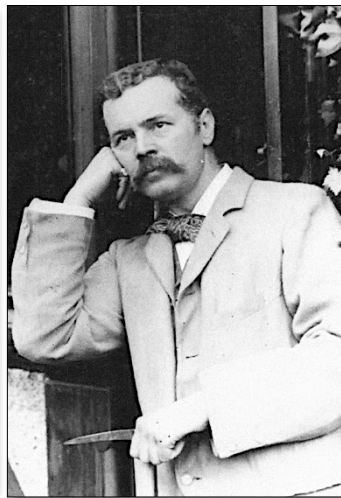
1895 On returning to Constantinople following his year away in Australia, Mid Edwards joined his father at Edwards & Sons on April 12th. He recalled that the division of Baker & Edwards not occurring until after his return, but this is disputed by other sources. There is a photo of the Edwardses and Bakers taken in Turkey 1895 (see p. 56). It is possible the two families were celebrating the split, Mid's return, or both.



The Baker Boys, also taken on the occasion of Jim and Edith Baker's wedding celebration at Bexley (1893). Seated (l-r): Fred, G.P., and Arthur; standing: Harry and Jim.



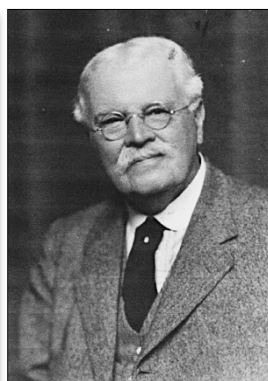
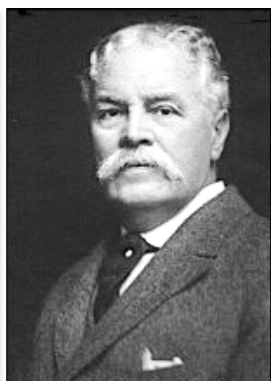
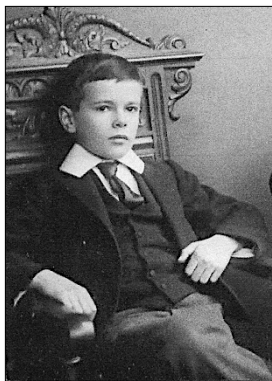
G.P. Baker, a student in England.



G.P. Baker apparently after climbing Mount Ararat (1878).



G.P. Baker two years before he died, taken for an article in the Picture Post (28 May 1949).



L-r: G.P. Baker about to enter boarding school (1866), and in later years.

1896 In G.P. & J. Baker's first years, the printmaking side lost money, but a newly acquired ten-color machine was working well, and thereafter the operation took off. G.P. Baker:

Then in **1896** our new ten colour machine was working, after which, with the help of Crayford, the work of the firm was appreciated wherever we offered our productions, whether England, U.S.A., Canada, Germany, France or Spain. [Designers included big names like] Hamilton and Fletcher. William Morris designs were much in evidence, Voyséy and Butterfield being our main designers on velveteen and silk plush. Doyle left us in **1904** and Clayton was engaged and has been with us ever since and now [in 1945] is a Director. My aim, whether in carpets or textiles, has been to produce the best of designs regardless of the cost.

Before the time came for G.P. & J. Baker to change warehouses to Giltspur Street, Cartier was selling China silks for a New York house and at the same time took orders in Paris for Crayford printed silks. Several cases of silk hemstitched handkerchiefs arrived and were lying in the sub-basement to be checked and distributed, when one night a fire took place on Simpson's floor. Thorogood, our warehouse keeper, whose address was known to the police in case of need, was notified and in due course as soon as he appeared on the scene of the fire he wired to me at Bexley through the police, and hearing a heavy knock at the door I put my head out of the window to learn that I was wanted downstairs by the police, who wanted my reply to the wire. The only reply I could give was I would go to London on my bike. It was in February. Away I went and when somewhere near the Old Kent Road off came one of my pedals and for the remainder of the journey I had to work the bicycle with one leg. On reaching Warwick Square, there I found several fire manuals pumping water onto the fifth floor, but at the same time deluging the sub-basement where the cases of silk were stored. The inner walls made a passage for the water and carpets against the walls were sodden. The following day, Monday, Phoenix, the Insurance Company, which had the largest interest, sent a representative and with him it was agreed that all carpets were to go to Lyons *c/o in the Old Kent Rd.* to be dried, and when he suggested the same people for the silks. I said No, I cannot do better than for the Swaisland Co. who would dry the pongees [a soft thin cloth woven from Chinese or Indian raw silk] for 1d a yard.

The handkerchiefs were not water damaged, but when it came to distributing them it was found that 40 dozen were missing. This indicated robbery and the police were called in. At the interview with the inspector he asked who was in charge of the premises at night. He was told the Salvage Corps and he asked to see their representative, who gave the names of the men on duty. Samples were given to the police, who appeared to have gone round of the shops, where in one place the handkerchiefs were traced [handwritten: *to one of the Salvage men on duty*]. Eventually it was found that the empty boxes were thrown into the well. We claimed the loss from the Salvage Company, who at first refused to pay, but when told the matter would be exposed, paid up.

Our claim on the carpets was £10. Another incident... was our action against Bowrons, the Tanners at Crayford, who acquired the other portion of the Swaislands property above us, but whose water rights were below us, inasmuch as they bought the same water rights as were possessed by their predecessors; that is, from the settling beds which were alongside Crayford House. We found that they were taking water directly from the main river, using it to cleanse their skins and then passing it into a ditch which passed through our works. We were able to measure this flow and, finding it was an abnormal quantity, set traps to support our case. One was to put fluorescein [a synthetic organic compound available in dark orange powder soluble in water and alcohol, used as a fluorescent tracer] in the river above their works, and when with an order from the Court to inspect their Works [there were] found traces of fluorescein in their wells. The action was taken to Court, Gerald Hohler being our Counsel, and the Judge... was said to have visited the Works to make himself acquainted with the geography... where the upper course Works depended on the lower works giving them their water from the settling beds. Bowrons, of course, lost the action, whereby they gave land to create a large settling bed for water storage.

1896 Ruby Baker was born to Arthur and Leila Baker on September 25th at San Stefano. When their Armenian doctor was summoned from Pera to deliver her, he refused to come, fearing he would be arrested leaving his home. A British doctor in the village on holiday delivered her instead.

1898 Charlie Edwards died. Victor Binns wrote that it was sudden, due to complications from food poisoning caused by oysters served at a dinner party for thirteen. Age 25, Mid took charge of Edwards & Sons.

1899 After graduating from Robert College, Cecil joined G.P. & J. Baker in London, apprenticing under his uncle Jim Baker for a year. G.P. Baker:

Cecil [Edwards] joined [G.P. & J. Baker] in **1899** and the next year was in his Father's business [Edwards & Sons] in Stamboul. [In] 1908 [he was] Istanbul manager of the O.C.M. and in **1911**, having married [American Clara Chase], represented the O.C.M. in Hamadan [India], Russia, [and] Persia. [In] **1924** [he was] Managing Director of the O.C.M. (London) Ltd., and in **1930** Director of the O.C.M. Smyrna.



Minnie Baker with four of their seven children (l-r): Violet, Cyril, Douglas (behind), and Robin. Cyril and Douglas were killed in World War I.



G.P. in his retirement at Hillside, Sevenoaks



Emily Mary
"Minnie" Baker



<p>Corpl. R. P. Baker, 18th Batt. Royal Fusiliers.</p>	<p>Lieut. C. P. Baker, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry.</p>	<p>Lieut. D. S. Baker, Royal Engineers.</p>
	<p>WITH THE COLOURS.</p> <p>THE FIVE SONS OF THE HON. SECRETARY OF THE FURNISHING TRADES' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION.</p>	
<p>H. B. Baker, Cadet at Dartmouth R.N. College.</p>		<p>Pte. G. F. Baker, 1st/10th Bn. Rifles.</p>

The G.P. Baker's five sons (l-r): Robin, Cyril, Douglas, Brian and Frank. Cyril was killed in France in May 1917, Douglas in Salonika in July 1916.

1900 Cecil returned to Turkey to take over the carpet side of Edwards & Sons, leaving Mid free to manage the rest of the business—exports (other than carpets), wholesale, and agency and commissions. G.P. Baker:

Cecil Edwards joined the firm in **1899** before the O.C.M. Amalgamation. He was with me when I had occasion to visit the carpet districts in Anatolia, particularly Isparta where [Sydney] La Fontaine [in Smyrna] had induced a Greek doctor to start carpet making and become his agent. We were in Konia and, when it came time to leave, we visited Silleh-Ak-Shehr. To reach Isparta a group of mountains, Sultan Dagh, lay in the way, with Antioch on Pisidicoa on the other side our first stop. The road was a circuitous one round the northern end of the group and instead of walking it, we being on horseback, I suggested we should make for a pass visible in the hills and, if there was a Civil Guard station, [to] go that way. Enquiries were made and my surmise was found to be correct, so away we went where for the night we slept, though over-run with rats. In due course the next morning we were in Antioch passing an ancient aqueduct on the way and many ruins, for in Roman days it was a notable fortress under Claudius. AD 40/54 it was visited by S. Paul, Acts X11.14.

After a meal in a native cook shop of hot meat, which had a putrid taste, our journey was by boat on the Lake of Eğirdir stopping for the night at some habitation on the way. I don't remember how we fared, but I do remember that when the following day we reached the end of the Lake and wanted a vehicle to take us to Esparta, the only one in the place was already engaged by two Armenians. Cecil, however, managed to get the driver to cancel his bargain and promise to take us instead, whereupon the Armenians lodged a complaint at the [gendarme?] whose verdict was that any difference in piasters between the two bargains belonged to the Armenians—a most expeditious settlement for a very just complaint. We were now able to continue our journey by vehicle and in due course reached Isparta, where we were welcomed by a deputation of Greek carpet weavers and a priest with bread and salt. Isparta is a town of mostly Greeks who do not speak Greek. The ruins of Sagalassus were visited with its theatre overthrown by an earthquake—at one time an important place and mentioned by Arrian and captured by Alexander the Great—rock tombs, sarcophagi. I took a series of photos of the many ruins. I don't remember how we got back to Constantinople.

To summarize, G.P. & J. Baker moved to larger premises in Warwick Square, with an outlet on Phoenix Court, Newgate Street, selling carpets and textile prints. Jim Baker—joined by Henry Pulman's son, Percy Pulman—were in charge of carpet sales. G.P.—joined by his cousin Charles Percival (Lizzie (Butler) Percival's son) managed printmaking and sales. Akers was handling the procurement of exports to G. & A. Baker in Constantinople. And in the early 1900s, they began printing Chinese silks for Cartier in Paris and Silk House in New York. They were already selling carpets in European capitals and New York.

1903 George put Harry in charge of establishing a cold storage facility. Among the local fish, meat and poultry vendors, however, the concept initially fell on deaf ears. They rejected it on intractable fears that keeping food cold or frozen only hastened its decay (which is true if, when thawed, it's not cooked and eaten right away). Harry had little success with it. It was absorbed into Edward & Sons when he died in **1908** and was sold in **1920**.

1903 and 1905 Traveling back to England periodically to visit family and attend to the English side of the business, George and Maria concluded their lives in Constantinople, she in **1903** and he in **1905**. His last words uttered to Arthur were, "Don't forget to water the irises!"

George and Maria are buried together at the Crimean War Memorial Cemetery in today's Üsküdar neighborhood of Istanbul, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. His funeral was held at the British Embassy chapel. A larger memorial service took place at the Crimean Memorial Christ Church in Galata. Symbolic of how beloved he had become in the city, on hearing of his passing by word of mouth, a spontaneous crowd gathered at the docks in Scutari (Üsküdar) and escorted his casket as it was carried up the hill to its final resting place. May Baker wrote of her grandfather,

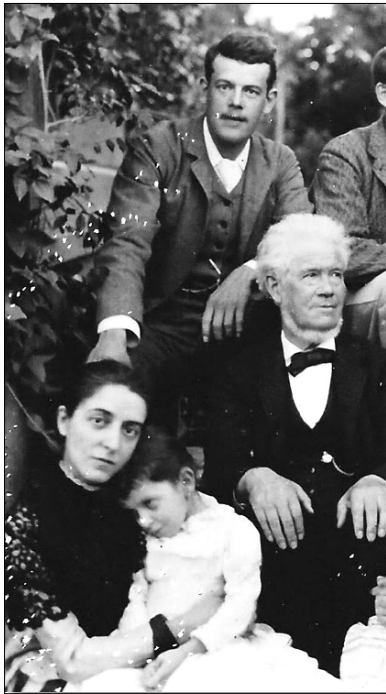
George Baker died at his Hissar House aged 83. He went to work until the day before he died.... It is not customary for Turks to carry a Christian's coffin, but when George Baker's body was being carried from the ferry up to the Cemetery, many Turkish friends vied for their turn to carry the coffin. He was a greatly loved old man.

Reflecting Constantinople's uniquely diverse population, Cecil Edwards added,

His funeral was attended by men of all rank, condition, race and religion, who had come to do honour to the worth and integrity of the Englishman, who had lived so long among them and whose 'word was his bond'.



George and Maria Baker's grave at the Crimean War Memorial Cemetery in today's Üsküdar



Harry Baker in c. 1886 with wife Mary Jew, son George Noel, and father George.



Harry Baker 1866



Harry Baker 1893



Harry Baker 1893



Harry Baker (left) and Louisa Baker (right) in c. 1895



George Baker's two youngest children, Millie and Jim Baker, under the mistoria covered arbor at their residence on Büyüik Hendek Cd. that G.P. recalled climbing as a boy.



Amelia "Millie" Baker



Amelia "Millie" (Baker) Anderson



Fred Baker

Victor Binns concluded,

His impact had crossed all ethnic and cultural divides, and it was noted that never before in the City's history had such a group of mixed faiths gathered in peace for a common purpose.

And we may be fairly certain that, in preparing her father's body for burial, Louisa made a point of returning George's lucky unspent shilling to his pocket for the last time.

1907 Arthur Baker opened a new department store in Pera. Cuthbert Binns (Victor Binns's father) joined Edwards & Sons. In London, G.P. & J. Baker became a 'newly formed public company' and was now G.P. & J. Baker Ltd.

THIRD DIVISION (1908)

G.P. & J. Baker into G.P. & J. Baker and the O.C.M.
Edwards & Sons into Edwards & Sons and the O.C.M.

1908 The carpet departments of G.P. & J. Baker and Edwards & Sons were absorbed into the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers (O.C.M.), a consortium of European carpet traders.

On the recommendation of Sydney La Fountain in Smyrna (Izmir), G.P. and Jim agreed to have the carpet side of G.P. & J. Baker Ltd. absorbed into the O.C.M. Jim Baker was appointed Managing Director. Cecil Edwards became the O.C.M. Manager in Constantinople in **1908** and in Persia in **1911**. A series of letters survive from Jim Baker in Tehran to his wife Edith in England describing the machinations of helping Cecil Edwards set up a base of operations in Tehran in **1911**. Several are featured in *The Baker Chronicles* by Jim Baker's descendant, James de Wesselow.

Heading into World War I, Jim Baker, Percy Pulman, and Cecil Edwards continued the carpet business as members of the O.C.M., while G.P., Percy Pulman, and a few Baker grandchildren stayed on in the printmaking and soft furnishing manufacturing side. The latter would become G.P. & J. Baker Ltd.'s mainstay, as the carpet business began to fizzle after World War I. On Jim Baker's retirement in **1924**, Cecil Edwards became the O.C.M.'s Managing Director in London. He also served as Director in Smyrna (Izmir) in **1930**.

G.P. Baker: In the year [**1907**], Jim was in Smyrna and reported an amalgamation of the more important carpet firms into one Company. Sydney La Fontaine, being our agent, was anxious we should join, and Jim pointed out that unless we did, we should be swamped. Each firm was to contribute £40,000 in goods or cash, and any firm who contributed more than £40,000 would receive the balance in cash. We gave £53,000 and consequently had a return of £13,000. In this way the O.C.M. was founded with Jim as manager, whilst I, although a director of the O.C.M, confined my energies to G.P. & J. Baker. In Giltspur Street, with its new building built by us [we had] the assistance of Percival and Thaw, who knew all the languages and became our continental traveler; Sanderson [was] in charge of G. & A. Baker shipping, and a Frenchman, Cartier, acted for an American firm for the sale of China silks and hemstitched handkerchiefs.

Cecil Edwards: [G.P. and Jim Baker] had other activities such as wholesales of furnishing fabrics which, later on, they manufactured themselves, and this section was not taken over by the Oriental Carpets Manufacturers. This led to a separation—James Baker and [Percy] Pulman continuing the carpet business [with O.C.M.] and George [Percival] Baker remaining in the soft furnishing manufacturing trade of G.P. & J. Baker Ltd.

Cecil Edwards published *A Persian Caravan* in **1928**, a compendium of amusing vignettes about his time in Persia. The book is dedicated to Harry Dwight, who lived with the Edwardses in Constantinople while Cecil was growing up. In **1953**, Cecil published *The Persian Carpet*, an inventory of Persia's myriad manifestations of carpets. Cecil Edwards and Jim Baker were and still are considered titans in their field. G.P. was similarly a giant in printmaking and published several articles and essays on the topic.

1908 THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION With it came the end of Abdül Hamid's oppressive reign and the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era. The Constitution of 1876 was restored and reasserted the guarantee of liberties to all of the Empire's diverse citizenry, the aim being to reduce inter-ethnic tensions and restore an atmosphere of harmony. A multi-party political system was introduced and parties previously operating in secret were openly publicized. These included the more progressive Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) and the Freedom and Accord Party, at one end of the political spectrum, and smaller more conservative groups such as the Poale Zion, Al-Fatat, and the Armenian National Movement, at the other. The Revolution offered hope of further modernizing Turkey's institutions, rejuvenating her economy, and enabling the nation to hold its own against foreign influences, interventions, and aggression. Instead, it ushered in an unprecedented period of internal strife, displacement, and war.

It marked the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire. A nationalist revolution ensued after World War I. Profiting from Turkey's civil unrest, Austria-Hungary tried again to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and succeeded. Bulgaria declared independence. Crete joined Greece.

1908 Harry Baker died of cholera and was buried near his parents and Charlie Edwards at the Crimean Memorial Cemetery in Scutari (Üsküdar).

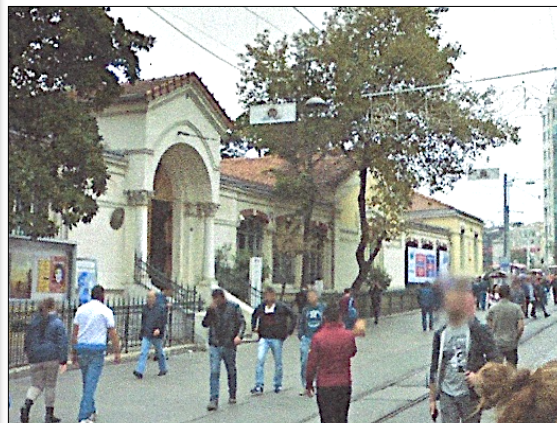


Hagia Triada Greek Orthodox Church from behind (above) and from the roof of the Triada Hotel (left) (2022).

Left, lower left and lower right: The Baker townhouse apartment off Taxim Square, opposite the entrance to the Greek Orthodox Church (right). Today it's the Triada Residence Hotel on Meselik Sk.



Looking towards the front entrance of the Triada Residence Hotel.



The French hospital in 1909, today it is the French Consulate on Istiklal Cd., by Google street view (October 2015).



The Triada Residence Hotel by Google street view (October 2019). Note the wisteria, which may have been planted by Arthur Baker.

1909 THE COUNTER COUP D'ÉTAT

In April, Abdül Hamid sympathizers and religious conservatives attempted a coup d'état, but were thwarted by military units of the Young Turk revolutionaries. On April 24th, two correspondents—American Fred Moore of the Associated Press and New York Sun, and Englishman J.L.C. Booth of the Graphic—were caught in the crossfire outside Arthur and Leila Baker's townhouse off Taxim Square (today's Triada Residence Hotel), as forces backing the Young Turks penetrated the city to reclaim control. Ruby, who was thirteen at the time, described what happened:

The flat in Taxim was situated opposite a large Greek Church [today's Hagia Triada Greek Orthodox Church]. At Easter, there was a night-long service and the church and entrance would be packed with people, all carrying lit candles. At sunrise, a great cry would arise, "Christos Anesty!" "Christ has risen!" None of us would get any sleep that night, so we usually tried to spend that weekend picnicking in the Hissar house. In April 1909, however, the weather deteriorated, so we decided to return to the flat in town.

As soon as we landed at the Galata Bridge, we realized something was wrong. Soldiers were wandering all over the place and shooting indiscriminately. We then heard that the soldiers had mutinied and were running riot in the streets. This situation continued for several days. May and I were kept away from school. Mother went out and got caught between two lots of soldiers. She managed to take shelter in the [British?] high school entrance and then walked down to see Father at his office at Galata square [at 2 Kule Kapisi, George's first shop?].

That morning, Ibrahim, Father's old *bamal* or porter came to him and warned him that there was going to be fighting. His son was in the Salonica Army under Enver Pasha and they were closing in on the city and had sent him this warning. Father rode out to the outskirts of town to see if he could see anything that afternoon, but there was no sign of any troops about. The British Embassy, meanwhile, was entertaining guests that evening and some had difficulty getting back to their ships.

Ruby is referring to the rebellion of the chiefly Albanian First Army Corps, which began on April 13th. The insurgents took the parliament house and telegraph offices and forced Hilmi Pasha, the Grand Vizier, newly appointed as of 13 February, to resign. The Turkish nationalist Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) appealed for help from Macedonian Troops under Mahmud Şevket Pasha, who marched on Constantinople arriving on April 24th, a Saturday, with a liberation army of some 25,000 men. After five hours of fighting they took back the city. The leaders of the mutiny were executed and the C.U.P. re-established control. Ruby continues,

It was decided that Mother, Elsie, May, and I should leave for Athens the following morning. At dawn, wide awake with excitement at the thought of a sea voyage, May and I suddenly heard a volley of shots and down below saw the side street full of soldiers, men and horses collapsing in all directions, one man resting his rifle on the pillar box and shooting up the road. At that moment, Father arrived and told us to take our packed clothes and put them in the back hall and stay there. In the meanwhile, Elsie and Mother were looking out of a side window, but when a bullet struck it, they joined us in the inner hall.

Here we sat until the Greek lady from the flat below came up to tell us that two Englishmen had been shot and brought into the basement hall [today a barber shop]. Mother went down and found the two men. They were Fred Moore, an American journalist with the Associated Press [and New York Sun], and Booth, an Australian, I think, with the Graphic, who had dined with us the night before. Booth had been hit in the head, the bullet running round the crown of his hat. Moore had been hit in the neck [at the shoulder] and was in a very bad way. An Armenian doctor living in the next-door flat appeared, but had no morphine. He returned to his flat to get some, but then was unable to return. He called out to Mother from a back window that he would throw her some morphine and she could administer it, but Mother refused. Always wonderful in any emergency, she felt morphine was outside her scope.

The fighting petered out round about lunchtime. The Taxim barracks up the road had surrendered. We could see a large sheet hanging over the porch. A stretcher was collected from the French hospital opposite [today's French Consulate on Istiklal Cd.] and Moore was taken across. Here they found the bullet had grazed his spine and he was paralyzed from his neck down. When he left hospital, he and his wife spent a couple of months with us at Hissar, where he regained his full strength.

During all this time, the servants had remained in the kitchen at the back. At the end of the day, we sat down to a hot meal. It was eight of us: Mrs. Moore, an American friend Harry Dwight [who was in the street with Booth and Moore when the incident occurred and who had also dined with the Bakers the evening before], and a British Army Officer seconded to the Turkish Army, who had come up from Salonica to see the outcome of the siege.

When we finally got around to inspecting the front of the flat, we found two Mauser bullets embedded in the walls, one over my bed, another over Mother's. Elsie and Father rode out the following day to assess the damage and found that



The barracks north of Taksim Square, built by W.J. Smith, the same architect who built the British Embassy.

Trolley's in the lower right corner indicate the upper end of the Grand Rue de Pera, today's Istiklal Cd.

Liberation troops parading up the Grand Rue de Pera, where it feeds into Taksim Square.

The Baker's side street is behind the building on the left with the round window. The French hospital is obscured by the mosque on the right.



Hagia Triada Greek Orthodox Church from Taksim Square, the French hospital visible below it. To get to the Baker's apartment, bear right around the French hospital down Grand Rue de Pera and take the first side street to the left. Their apartment was on the right across from the entrance to the church.

Lachkishla Barracks-had about 150 shell holes in its surface. We had been in the direct line of fire from the guns to the Barracks! Sultan Abdül Hamid was dethroned the next day and Enver Pasha took power for the time being. This ended another phase of our lives.

1909 Abdül Hamid was deposed on April 26th by a unanimous vote of parliament. He was sent into exile to Salonika, where he was under house arrest. In the following days, Arthur and Leila were invited to tour Hamid's Royal Residence at Yildiz Palace and wrote about it in articles for the press. Hamid's brother Mohammed V, a weak and hapless ruler, became sultan.

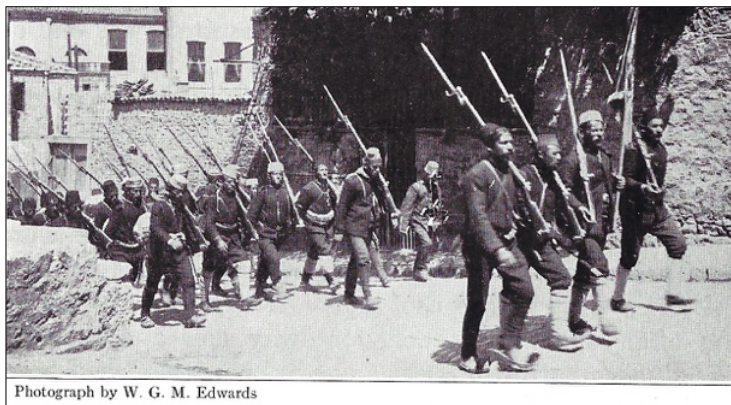


View from the Baker's street looking across the Grand Rue de Pera. Taxim Square and the barracks are up the hill to the right.



Photograph by W. G. M. Edwards

Sultan Mohammed V parading through Stamboul (above) and soldiers taking the city (left), photos by Mid Edwards for Harry Dnight.



Photograph by W. G. M. Edwards

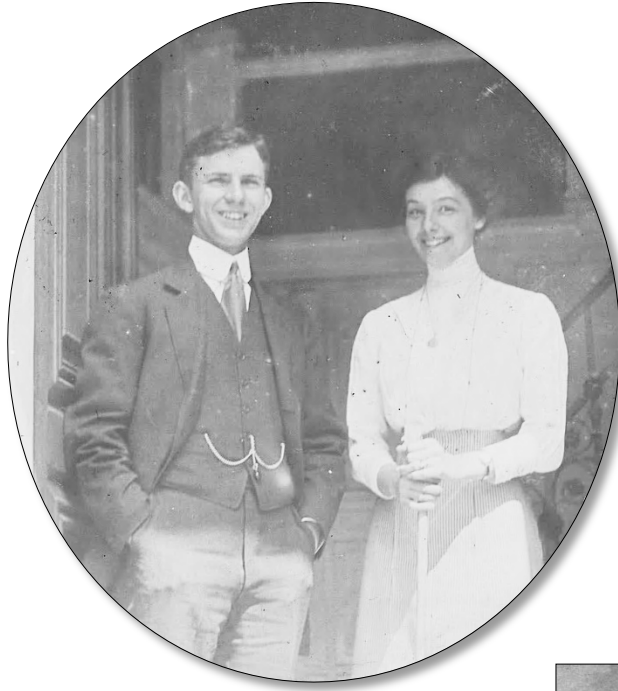


Constantinople Etat de la caserne du Taxim après le combat du 24 avril 1909

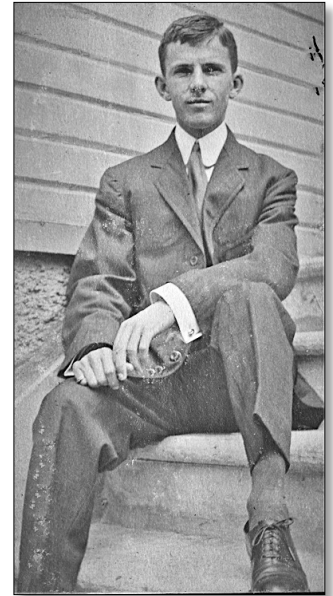
Turks and Europeans viewing the damage to the barracks, among them the French Ambassador with top hat and beard (left) and women (right).



Elsie Baker at San Stephano (c. 1906)



Arthur and Elsie engaged (May 1911)



Arthur (May 1911)



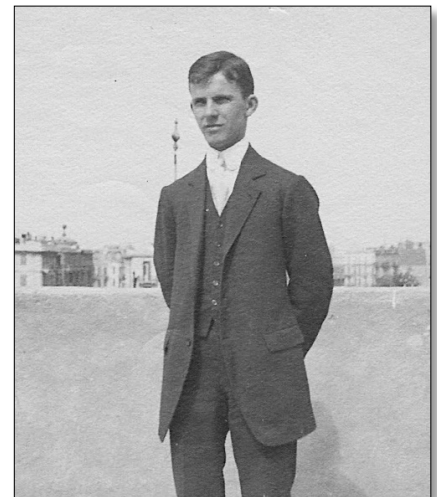
Left: Elsie by Sébah & Joaillier (1911)



Arthur Leavitt on his balcony at the YMCA in Cairo (1911)



Elsie (c. 1909)



Arthur Leavitt on the roof of the American Embassy in Cairo (1911)



Elsie (3rd from left), with friends on the British Embassy yacht, Imogene, used as a pleasure craft and bolt-hole in emergencies (c. 1911)

Arthur Leavitt & Elsie Baker (1909-1913)

1909 In July, Arthur Leavitt arrived at the American Embassy, a recruit of Wilbur Carr and the State Department's recently created Student Interpreter Corps. Its purpose was to move the Embassy away from employing local hires as interpreters and translators because in Washington, though not so much in the field, it was felt that only U.S. citizens could be trusted with America's diplomatic secrets. Arthur was one of four linguists first sent to Turkey. Already on the embassy payroll when he got there were two longstanding dragomans with whom the Student Interpreters could not compete: Arshag Schmavonian and Hagop Andonian. As yet, the trainees couldn't even speak Turkish, whereas the dragomans were native Armenians who spoke at least five languages fluently—English, Turkish, Greek, French, and Armenian. Recognizing their value, three ambassadors between 1909 and 1914 refused to give them up, despite Wilbur Carr's intention to ease them out. When Henry Morgenthau's assignment concluded in 1914, at a time when Armenians were under persecution, he brought Schmavonian and Andonian back to the U.S. with him and paid them to help write his book, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1919). Schmavonian was hired by the State Department as a 'Special Advisor on Near Eastern Affairs'.

On the day that Arthur Leavitt arrived in Constantinople, via the Orient Express from Paris, he observed George Baker's granddaughter Elsie Baker playing tennis at 'Sports Day' at Robert College and was instantly smitten. A stormy three-year courtship ensued. Their surviving love letters form the basis of their love story.

1910-1911 In May of **1910**, Arthur proposed to Elsie. She accepted. But when they presented their decision to her parents, Arthur and Leila Baker refused to bless it. They weren't so sure Leavitt was the right choice for their daughter. In compromise, they insisted the couple cease contact and communications for a year; and if after that time they were still determined to marry, the Bakers would not stand in their way. Immediately thereafter, Elsie and Arthur argued on the grassy knoll behind Robert College. It concluded when Elsie turned on her heel and stormed home, her sister and escort Dollie chasing after her. She was in a rage because Arthur had been unwilling to entertain the idea of eloping.

To avert a scandal the Bakers hustled Elsie onto the next train out of town, headed back to England to recover from her disappointment and get her mind off Leavitt. A few months later, as an apparent favor to Arthur Baker, the American Ambassador sent Leavitt on temporary assignments to Salonika and Cairo, to get *him* out of town, so Elsie could come home for Christmas.

The Bakers hadn't thought that far ahead; having Leavitt boarding across the lane in Auntie Louie's house was awkward. Despite their determination to quash the liaison, by keeping the couple so far apart, this distressing situation kept it very much alive and generated a trove of "secret" love letters, or so the story goes. The way my grandfather told it, since neither he nor Elsie were in Constantinople under the Baker's watchful eye, they were free to write to each other secretly and did.

However, analysis of the love letters reveals that events unfolded quite differently, that Grandpa had sold the family a tall tale. In fact, Elsie and Arthur had remained separated and did not communicate for one year, the whole time wondering where their relationship stood. Because of the row they'd finished up with, there was no telling how the other felt. Were they still committed in love or was the courtship over? Elsie told her father she was done with Leavitt, but she wasn't reading her emotions right and suffered depression and ill health because of the breakup.

In early **1911**, Arthur Baker made a special trip to Cairo to give Leavitt the green light to come home and resolve the matter with Elsie once and for all. He could not endure another minute of her misery. Leavitt then appeared on the Baker's doorstep one year to the day from their first botched engagement to propose to Elsie again. And to his great relief, she accepted.

When Arthur Leavitt left town in September **1910**, Arthur Baker took off for Albania to hike in the highlands by himself for three weeks. He wanted to get a firsthand glimpse of the insurrection percolating there, he wrote, but I imagine he also wanted to get his mind off his family troubles. Separating the couple had been Leila's idea, and he'd gone along to appease her. But having Leavitt sent to Cairo didn't sit well with him. The only solution was to go to

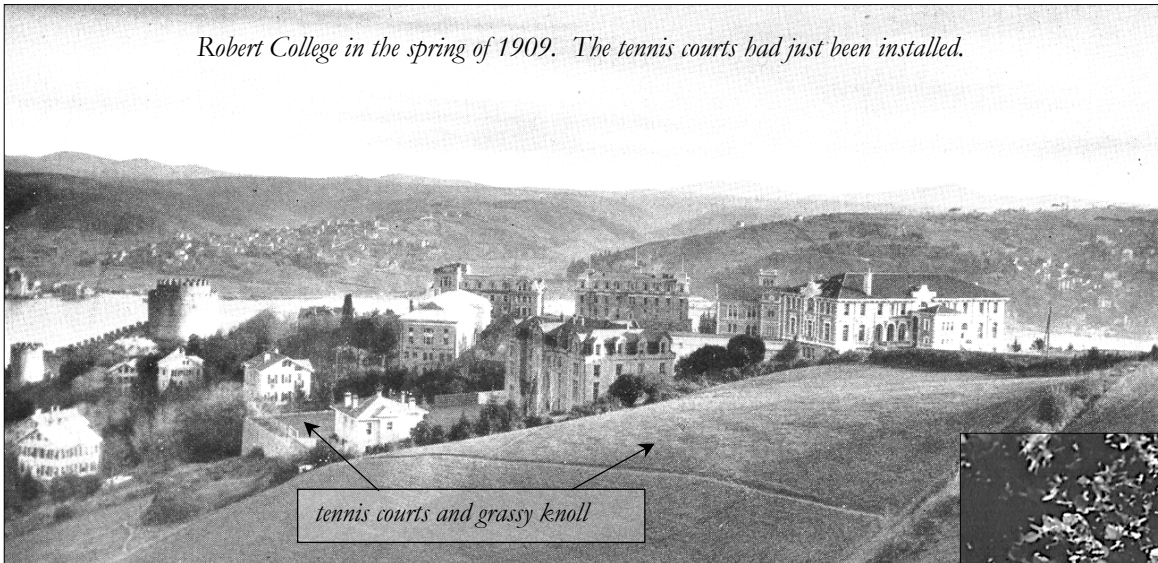
Pera
May.12.[19]10

Dear Mr. Leavitt

I must tell you first that Father has told me I am not to write to you, but I feel I cannot leave [Turkey] without telling you how sorry I am for all that happened. I think we both made a mistake & if I have unconsciously caused you any unhappiness I too am very miserable about it all. I hope when I come back we shall be the best of friends & that you will be able to forgive me.

Yours sincerely
E. Elsie Baker

Robert College in the spring of 1909. The tennis courts had just been installed.

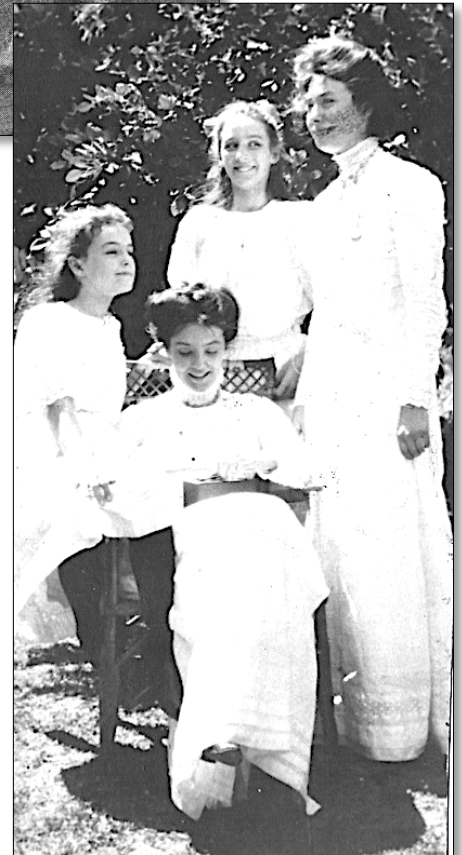


tennis courts and grassy knoll



Left: Elsie and Arthur in Auntie Louie's garden (c. 1912)

Below: Dollie, Elsie and May (1913)



L-r: May, Elsie, Ruby and Dollie in the garden at Rumeli Hisar (1911). The box on Elsie's lap may have been where she kept her love letters from Arthur.



Elsie (front row left), Eileen Vinicombe (to her left), Leila Baker behind Eileen, Dollie (seated right with head turned), other Vinicombe sister Doris (?) standing tallest behind.



Mary Edith Durham (1863-1944)

Cairo, telling Leila that it was a business trip. As he once counseled his granddaughter Sylvia, “Once Granny makes up her mind about something, there is no changing it, so you might as well dry your eyes.”

On his travels in Albania, Baker met Mary Edith Durham, author of *High Albania*. The book and she were controversial because she supported Albanian independence and was viewed by the British press and public as a rebel and eccentric. A British woman had no business living alone in the highlands of this backward country. Arthur Baker was of the same mind until he met her. He was impressed by her intelligence, knowledge and survival skills, and they struck up a friendship. Concerned for his security, she ordered her manservant to accompany him for the rest of his journey, as it was unsafe for him to travel alone. She later visited the family in Rumeli Hisar.

Prelude to War (1910-1914)

1911-1912 THE ITALO-TURKISH WAR Italy declared war on the Turks in a colonial bid to seize territories in modern-day Libya and islands in the Aegean, and prevailed.

1912 Elsie and Arthur Leavitt were married on January 12th at St. Helena’s Chapel at the British Embassy, built by Elsie’s grandfather Henry Pulman after a fire in January 1847 had destroyed it.

Arthur Baker purchased a large house in Pera, below Taxim Square opposite the local mosque from Chief of Police Bedri Bey. Arthur hid Armenian refugees in peril in the empty water storage tank under the house and arranged for them to escape the country.

1912-1913 Together with other Anglo-American and French women and children, the Baker women evacuated to Athens and stayed at the Grand Hotel Angleterre on Constitution Square.

1912 FIRST BALKAN WAR Emboldened by Italy’s easy victory over the Turks, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria formed an alliance and declared war on Turkey. Unprepared, the Ottomans were trounced. The Empire lost its Bulgarian and Albanian territories, including its former Ottoman capital of Edirne (Adrianople). A cholera epidemic ravaged combatants on both sides. The front came to within miles of the Constantinople’s city limits.

Arthur Baker, Arthur Leavitt, and correspondents Harry Dwight and Fred Moore twice hired a taxi to run reconnaissance at the front. On both occasions, the car broke down and they came close to getting caught in the crossfire. Dwight wrote about it in his book. Arthur Leavitt’s report to the State Department makes an interesting comparison.

1912-1913 THE REFUGEE CRISIS Fearing religious persecution, some 400,000 Balkan Muslims fled to Constantinople, pouring into the city in front of the advancing Bulgarian army. Thousands died of cholera, typhus, and starvation along the way. Those who survived were resettled in Asia Minor.

The Bakers were heavily involved in refugee relief efforts. G. & A. Baker was already supplying the Turkish army with camping equipment, sheets, bandages, and uniforms. At the behest of the British Red Cross and the Turkish Red Crescent, Arthur expanded his efforts to set up refugee camps around the city. An American and British hospital were established to deal with the waves of wounded and ill soldiers and civilians. Doctors and supplies arrived from abroad, sponsored by the British and American Red Cross. Arthur was in charge of logistics, distributing British Red Cross aid to the local hospitals and refugee camps. He and Leila were also involved in organizing neighborhood distribution centers, where refugees could get food, water, clothing, and firewood. The Bakers opened one such center in the ground floor of their former apartment building (today’s Triada Residence Hotel). Leila and daughters Elsie and Dollie manned it, along with family friend Harry Dwight, who described the experience in his book. Additionally, Leila was in charge of the laundry and food service at the British hospital—one diet for the Turkish patients, another for the Western doctors, nurses, and volunteers. Elsie Leavitt volunteered at the American hospital. It was all hands on deck and a round-the-clock job. The Turkish Government recognized Arthur and Leila with medals for their work.

1913 THE SECOND BALKAN WAR While the victorious parties of the First Balkan War bickered over the spoils, the Turks reclaimed their former capital of Edirne (Adrianople).

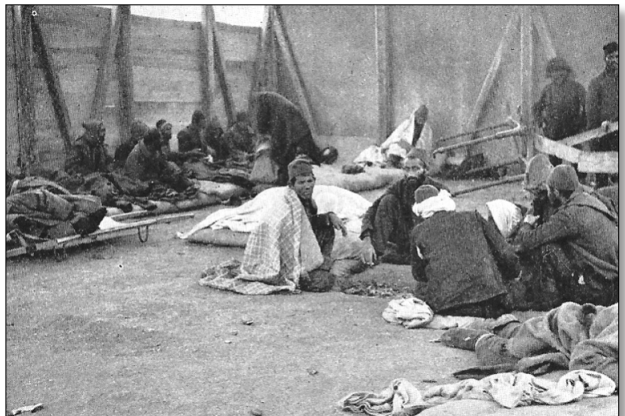
Worn down by the compound pressures of his volunteer work for the Red Cross and running the Baker business, and sensing the imminent danger of a calamitous war, Arthur Baker suffered a nervous breakdown in September, as reflected in the photograph (on p. 76) taken shortly before he left Turkey. On the advice of Dr. Post at Robert



Arthur Baker (in the white hat, smoking?), Fred Moore (in the cap?), and H.G. Dwight (taking the picture?), near the battlefield on 15 November 1912, villagers lending their oxen to rescue the vehicle and passengers before hostilities began.



Wounded, dead, and cholera stricken soldiers sharing ox-carts, by Horace Grant, November 1912



Cholera victims in the yard of a Greek school at San Stefano, by American correspondent Fred Moore, November 1912.



The lower floors of the Triada Residence Hotel (2022), where the Arthur Bakers owned a flat and set up a refugee distribution center where the barber shop is today.



A fugitive family on the road to Constantinople, by Horace Grant, November 1912.

College, he returned to England to recuperate, accompanied by Leila and daughter Dollie. A London specialist recommended a trip around the world to get his mind off his worries. This he did with Dollie, heading east through Turkey, where they deposited Leila and traveled on to Japan. While in Japan, they came across a former suitor of Dollie's. He proposed and when she declined, he committed suicide. Fred Moore, the American correspondent who felt the Bakers had saved his life in 1909, was assigned to Tokyo and made arrangements for the body so Arthur wouldn't have to. Arthur Baker was Moore's son's godfather.

1913-1914 Before leaving Constantinople, Arthur Baker rented two floors of Zeki Pasha Yali in Rumeli Hisar, while renovations were undertaken at the George Baker House further up the hill. The American Embassy was also leasing space in the upper floors for its Summer Residence. Zeki Pasha's relative (daughter?) was living on the ground floor with her British husband, a forebearer of former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Zeki Pasha was otherwise serving as the Ottoman liaison to Berlin. Arthur Leavitt stayed on at Zeki Pasha Yali in 1915 until Elsie turned up from England in the fall and they moved into the 'Thompson flat' in Pera.

World War I (1914-1918)

1914-1918 WORLD WAR I In hopes of recovering some of its lost territories, the Young Turk/C.U.P.-controlled government allied itself with Germany and the Central Powers. Though the Turkish military fought valiantly at Gallipoli and elsewhere, internal dissent, primarily among the Empire's Arab and Egyptian populations, caused the C.U.P. power base to collapse when the Central Powers capitulated. Allied forces then occupied Constantinople.

1914 World War I began for the Bakers on **November 1st**. Turkey announced her allegiance to Germany on this day. Britain had already declared war on Germany, and Britain and France would declare war on Turkey on **November 5th**. Less than 24 hours after the announcement on the 1st, all of the Bakers except Arthur and Mid were on their way back to England by special evacuation trains arranged by American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, with assistance from his junior officer Arthur Leavitt. Though not diplomats, the women and children left on the first "sealed" train with the British Ambassador and his staff. Arthur Baker stayed behind fearing for his shops and business. He left two weeks later on the penultimate evacuation train that run. His personal safety was in jeopardy and he was about to be arrested. The German Ambassador, Baron Hans von Wangenheim, had put him on a hitlist with three other high profile Britishers. Wangenheim ordered the Turks to arrest them as pawns against the Allies.

By contrast, Arthur Baker's Turkish contacts—who included two of the three triumvirate rulers, Djemal Pasha and Enver Pasha, Justice Minister İbrahim Bey Pirizadeh, Chief of Police Bedri Bey, and Army Major Ismail Hakki Bey, among others—were begging him to stay on through the war. They vowed to keep him and his properties safe. They were still buying from him—tents, blankets, sheets, uniforms, artillery etc.—though their ability to pay for them was waning. Djemal Pasha insisted that Baker continue supplying the army on credit, and promised to repay him at the end of the war, but Baker refused and wondered what it would cost him. Samples of Baker's journal follow:

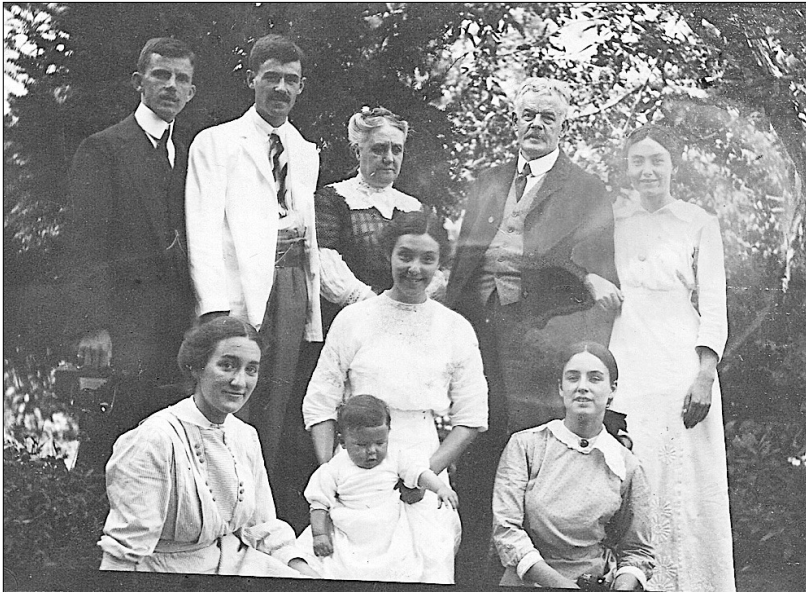
November 5th Morgenthau threatened to leave Turkey last night if [his sponsored evacuation] train did not get away. He is spoken of so well by all and in fact he has done wonders [to get the British and French out]. Again he gave away his packets of sweets [to calm the women and children].

We [G. & A. Baker] have refused credit to all and any, even our oldest customers. I have had daily visits [from the Turks and Germans] for goods. Am wondering if it's wise to play them as I am. Today they got another order worth £300. They are evidently beginning to doubt me, for they are asking the porters questions about our stock.

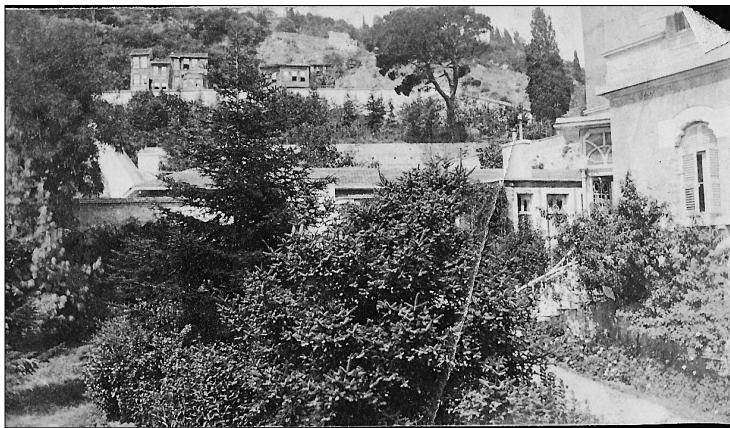
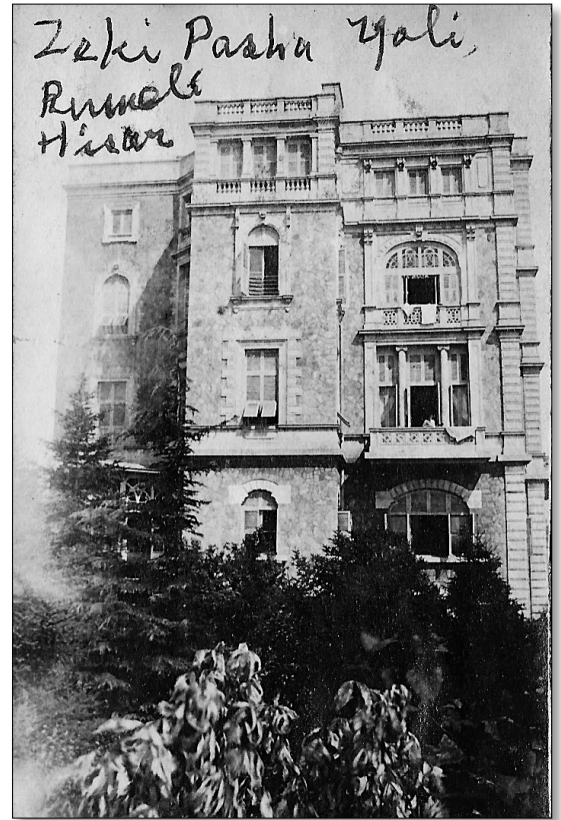
November 7th W. Seager [Walter Seager, head of WALSEACO shipping agency], Drake, D & L, [Cuthbert] Binns [with Edwards & Sons], Swan, the Stocks [Henry Walter Stock, Mabel Edwards's husband, and William Stock], and many others have left. I am now alone at the stores.

Local press is giving us notice that all English, French, and Russian are to register at nearest police station within 15 days. Tax collectors came for *temettu* for the Pera shops, which I paid. Wrote to [Chief of Police] Bedri Bey to say I have a stock of revolvers and cartridges bought in accordance with law and cataloged annually in French and Turkish, since the Constitution [was restored in 1908]. He replies, I am to send him a list.

November 8th Report says four forts at Trebizon [on the Black Sea coast] have been silenced. Russians are at Lodz. Another commission [directive from the Turkish Government] requisitioned all my canteens, campstools, mackintoshes, and blankets. Again [I was] called upon for *temettu* tax at the Stamboul shop [Edwards & Sons?], which I paid.



Taken shortly before Arthur, Leila, and Dollie departed for England to attend to Arthur's ill health. L-r standing: Arthur Leavitt and Warden, Leila, Arthur, and Dollie Baker. In front: Ruby Baker, Elsie (Baker) Leavitt with infant Peter, and May Baker. (September 1913)



Zeki Pasha Yali and garden (1914-1915)



Arthur Leavitt in the garden of Zeki Pasha Yali (1915)



Arthur Leavitt with one-year-old Peter on the steps of Zeki Pasha Yali (1914)

Sent in a list to Bedri of 400 revolvers and over 2,000 cartridges. He replies that I am to “surrender them.” Lawyer sees him with [my] instructions to say no. Bedri must conform with the law, as I have done. He can requisition or buy or store them until after the war. He seems puzzled and will let me know later. [Major] Ismail Hakki Bey sends me word not to leave. If nervous, I am to live with him.

November 13th Papers admit three Turkish transports sunk in the Black Sea. Turks armed and decidedly not inclined to be friendly. Arthur [Leavitt] urges me to get away.

[Navy Minister] Djemal Pasha tells me he has requisitioned enough cloth and serge [a twill fabric] for his navy from Andgel, Bendjabara, Chrisnos, and others [instead of from Baker?]. They took not only serges, but anything in the way of blue or black cloths. [They] even requisitioned my baizes [a course woolen or cheap variant cotton cloth] in greens and scarlets, intending to dye them.

I also had all kinds of material used for ladies dressing gowns or shirts that were taken for hospital purposes, and before I left [on Tuesday, November 17th], I sent in my accounts for about £12,000 [£1,771,532 in 2023 values]. Of this amount, £8,000 [£1,181,022 in 2023] was for goods requisitioned [but not yet paid for]. This sum includes all my revolvers and cartridges, for on Monday [his last day] I called at the War Office and told [Major] Ismail Hakki of my revolvers. He immediately sent for them—done in a quiet way to avoid trouble. It was another act of friendship showing that I was not mistaken in my man.

By mid-November **1914**, the situation in Constantinople was spiraling out of control; so much so, German Ambassador Baron Hans von Wangenheim had made contingency plans to flee. Following on the heels of Turkey’s formal declaration of war against the Entente on **November 11th**, a Fatwa (religious declaration) was pronounced at Fatih Mosque on Saturday, **November 14th**. It called for Jihad, a Holy War, against Britain, France, and Russia. The public response was swift and violent. Spontaneous demonstrations erupted across the city from the eastern suburb of San Stefano, through old town of Stamboul, over Galata Bridge, and up the hill into the heart of Pera. Despite repeated assurances from the Turkish leadership to the contrary, Arthur Baker was in ever increasing danger. By daybreak on **November 15th**, one newspaper had made it clear that “patriot Baker’s days” (and life?) in Turkey were numbered.

1914 Hours before his dawn departure on **November 19th**, Arthur Baker handed off G. & A. Baker to his four top managers—an Armenian and three Greeks. In the late hours of the previous night, he had met with Justice Minister İbrahim Bey Pirizadeh (1859-1934), who had tried to persuade him to stay. When that didn’t work, İbrahim made a few phone calls and smuggled Baker into Stamboul for a late-night, ostensible ‘farewell party’ with more of Arthur’s Turkish friends. They had gathered not to wish him farewell but to convince him to stay. They were confident Germany and Turkey would win the war in a few months’ time. Whether he stayed or left, to a man they vowed to protect him and his shops and residences. It was the first time Baker had been in the old town after curfew, and he remarked on how strange the experience was, given that he’d lived in the city his entire life. He could have been arrested because he was in Stamboul after dark, or simply because he was ‘patriot Baker’, an enemy alien.

In fact, earlier that evening, he’d been approached on the street and asked for his identity papers. Leavitt and Dwight were with him and ran interference. Leavitt said Baker was in his custody and asserted diplomatic privilege. Amazingly it worked. They were coming from dinner at the Correspondents’ Club in Pera, Baker heading to the Justice Minister’s house, Dwight and Leavitt escorting him because they were so concerned for his safety. At dinner they had beseeched him to leave the country on the next morning’s 7:00 am evacuation train, instead of the 6:00 pm train, the last evacuation train to go, despite his exit visa specifying that he travel on the latter, not the former. They and Ambassador Morgenthau were convinced he was in grave danger, and that delaying his departure even for a few hours would be a mistake. And they were right. Sir Edwin Pears, a barrister; Dr. Lewis Mizzi, a barrister and proprietor of the English-language newspaper, *The Levant Herald*; and Alexander Van Millingen, a professor at Robert College, were on Baron Wangenheim’s hitlist with Arthur Baker. Baker got out. Pears spent a night in jail, Morgenthau negotiating hard with Enver and Talaat for his release. Mizzi was detained and transported to a P.O.W. camp in Asia Minor. It took much longer to gain his freedom. Morgenthau succeeded in persuading Enver and Talaat to let Van Millingen go because he was 75 and in ill health. He died in England shortly after getting there.

The day before Baker’s departure, he was intercepted on the street by Abdülla I bin Al-Hussein (1882-1951), son of Hussein bin Ali, the Ottoman-appointed Grand Sharif of Mecca. Abdülla urgently needed to speak to him because he, too, was trying to slip out of town quickly and quietly, before the Turks discovered that he and his father were in



Local women gathered at the well outside the wall of the Baker house near Taksim Square, which Arthur Baker purchased from the Chief of Police, Bedri Bey, in 1912. The woman on the right is holding Arthur and Elsie Leavitt's baby Peter. Opposite the well was the neighborhood mosque (below in 2022).



Left and above, the old mosque the minaret of which used to overlook the Bakers' garden at the Bedri Bey House across the lane. Today the house is gone and the mosque is dwarfed by hotels and apartment buildings (2022).



Next to where the well (above) used to be on the diagonal corner across from the mosque (left, lower right corner) (2022)

clandestine cahoots with British Intelligence, preparing for the Great Arab Revolt against the Turks. He was the mastermind of the plot and had been operating as his father's cutout in Constantinople. But the bedlam and paranoia that pervaded the city were threatening his safety. He had information to get to the British Government and had no way to do it except through Baker. The British Embassy was closed, abandoned, and sealed; and the American Embassy, which was acting on Britain's behalf, was under 24-hour surveillance. Baker delivered the information to the British commander on Malta on his journey out, but never divulged to his family what the nature of it was. With support from Lawrence of Arabia, the Arab Uprising succeeded and Abdüllah eventually became King of Jordan. Arthur Baker's diary continues:

Without farewell to any [English and American] friends, I was at the station at 6.30 a.m. with two trunks of clothing and enough gold to carry me to London. A cheque on the American Tobacco Corporation would perhaps be the capital with which to start life afresh. The future alone would tell.

The train did not leave at 7:00 because of me. My permit was irregular. What right had the Minister of Justice or the police [chief] to give me such a document? It was an army matter. Enver had to be consulted. The telephone was hard at work. At 7:40, we started, but twice on that journey, in answer to calls from Istanbul, we were held up, and my permit called for. Before reaching [the border town of] Demotika, the officer brought me my permit. He regretted the delay, but now all was in order. I could cross the frontier, and with his adieux he added, '*au revoir, mon ami*. We shall soon meet again. The war will not last long. The Germans are at the gates of Paris.'

Whilst in Dedeğaç [Alexandroupoli, on the south coast of Greece] an engine driver brought us an amusing letter from my son-in-law, Arthur Leavitt [still in Constantinople]. It mentioned that a notice was out offering a reward for any information of my whereabouts. The notice was signed by the two gentlemen who had signed my pass [Justice Minister Ibrahim Bey and Chief of Police Bedri Bey]. It was evidently done to throw dust in the eyes of those who objected to my liberty. Very Turkish, I thought. But I was also amused at the figure offered. It was only 100 liras! I must have fallen in value and certainly felt cheap.

Four days later, I was on board the [Messageries] steamer, then in Marseilles, and then in London, where I had to phone to my brothers [G.P., Jim, and Fred] to find out the whereabouts of my family! One of the many surprises my wife had during the war was to see me enter her flat unannounced.

1914 As America had not yet joined the war, Arthur Leavitt stayed behind. He was able to keep an eye on the Baker homes and shops and wrote to Baker in London about them and the business finances. Getting mail and money in or out of the country was impossible except via the American Embassy's diplomatic pouch. Baker was fortunate to have a son-in-law positioned at the Embassy and may have regretted even more his and Leila's initial opposition to his marrying Elsie.

Leavitt managed Baker's affairs over and above his full plate of wartime duties at the Embassy. His largest account was monitoring British POWs, in which capacity he inadvertently got his father-in-law in trouble. Baker was using Leavitt and the diplomatic pouch to convey letters, money, and small amenities like candy and cigarettes to the POWs from family and friends in the U.K. This was mentioned in Leavitt's reporting to Washington, which was mentioned in American liaison with the British in London, which prompted an investigation into Baker's activities to verify that he was not pocketing the donations for himself. Baker was infuriated by the insinuation, but stood reprimanded for not going through proper channels, namely the Red Cross, for whom he had and would again work.

Arthur Leavitt was still living at Zeki Pasha Yali, along with British missionaries who had filtered in from Turkey's interior, missed the evacuation, and were trying to get out. Deciding that his colleagues at the Embassy, Robert College stay-behinds, and the much diminished British community needed cheering up, Leavitt organized a party there in the spring of 1915. He wrote to Elsie in England,

I had my dance on Friday night [30 April 1915]. Everybody seemed to consider it a great success. I had the Weitzels, Weises, Bryants, Miss Burns and Miss Counner to dinner. It went off all right, except for the "barbunia" [a red mullet fish]. I didn't think the food was a roaring success. The hall upstairs was lighted by about 25 small lanterns covered with pink paper by Miss Counner and Miss Burns. I hung them up on wire. Various people played the piano, but a good part of the time we used the Victrola, which the Ambassador lent for the occasion. It was splendid music.

At about 11:30, we all went down to the dining room for refreshments of which there were plenty—tea, lemonade, cakes from the College and salad made by Mrs. [Walter?] Seager from fowls and eggs which I had sent her. At midnight we went up on the roof,



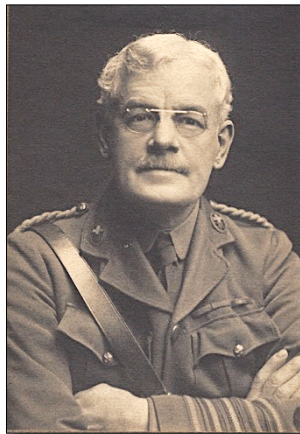
Queen Marie of Romania in front of a rail car filled with Nestles milk, which Arthur Baker had arranged for the starving people (1917).



Arthur Baker as Red Cross Commissioner with his grandson Peter Leavitt.



Arthur Baker standing behind Queen Marie. Right: Baker in uniform; Baker in Romania; Queen Marie reading to a hospital patient; and the gilded table ornament she gave him after the war for his service to Romania. It originally featured a photo of her face instead of the clock.



where we had arranged a surprise. I'd had the carpenter make some supports for one of [Elsie's brother] Warden's broken masts so that it would stand upright. With this as a Maypole with long strands of coloured cloth nailed to it, we had a May dance winding round the pole. But I don't think they cared much for it, as there was a greater attraction on hand. When we reached the roof, we saw a blaze [across the Bosphorus] in Candilli, which proved to be Mumford's house part way up the hill. By 12:30 the whole house was a complete mass of flame throwing a broad reflection across the Bosphorus. The full moon was just above. The house burned to the ground. It had been occupied by a police commissaire and his family.

In her autobiography, *Twenty-Six Years on the Bosphorus* (1933), Lady Dorina Neave wrote of another massive fire in Candilli during the war that effectively extinguished the British colony there:

My links to Turkey were severed by the Great War in more ways than one. A tanker caught fire in the Bosphorus and lighted petroleum drifted among the wooden piles on which many houses were built. These were quickly set ablaze, and the flames spread from house to house. Twenty-two in all were destroyed at Candilli, among them "Clifton Yali", our dearly-loved home. In this way was removed the last trace of our twenty-six years' sojourn in that beautiful, romantic and misruled country, where we had spent so many happy days and of which I still retain so many happy memories. (p. 249)

Ambassador Morgenthau was made famous for his skillful execution of the evacuation of the British and French from Turkey in 1914 and for his ardent support of the Armenians, who were again under persecution as they had been in the Hamidian pogroms of 1894-1896. As mentioned, he took his two Armenian dragomans with him when he left.

1915 On 7 May, following meetings in Canada and New York relating to carpet sales, Jim Baker survived the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

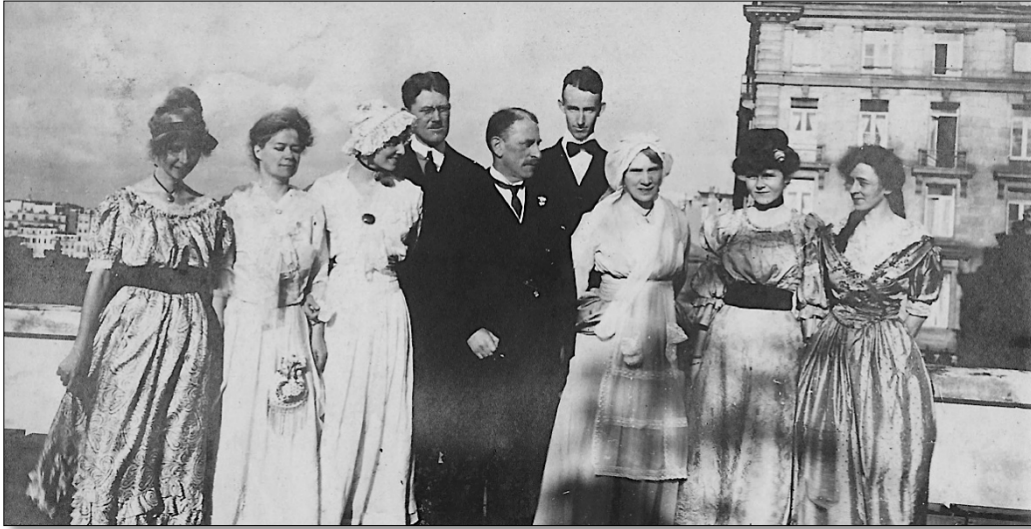
In London, Elsie Leavitt got an American passport and returned to Turkey in September. She couldn't stand another separation from Arthur, now for the third time—first for the year of separation and silence after their botched engagement, and second for six months following their successful engagement while he was still in Cairo. She left son Peter with Leila and Ruby in England. He was approaching his third birthday in January. She crossed the English Channel to France and sailed from Marseilles to Athens. It was a dangerous journey for a young woman to make on her own. She was held up in France several days waiting for a troop transport with a private cabin to accommodate her. Arthur was sick with worry when, every day, he went down to the docks in Piraeus and she failed to show up. By the time the Leavitts returned to England in the summer of 1917, Elsie'd had daughter Ruth and Peter was five.

1916 THE ARAB REVOLT World War I demanded heavy Ottoman engagement in the Middle East theater. Early victories at Gallipoli and the Siege of Kut were promising, but the Arab Revolt, aided by British operative Lawrence of Arabia, in collusion with Arthur Baker's friend Abdüllah I bin Al-Husseini, turned the tide against the Turks.

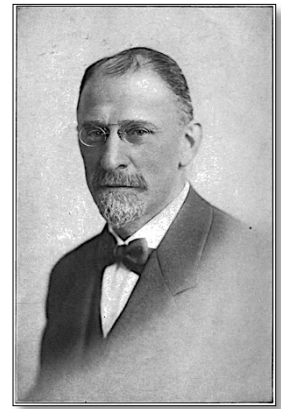
1917 America joined the Allies in the war on April 6th. The American Embassy was delayed in evacuating because Ambassador Elkus was stricken with typhoid and too sick to travel. Arthur and Elsie Leavitt and baby Ruth got out with Elkus and his staff in a diplomatically "sealed" train through Austria and neutral Switzerland to France, and then by ferry to England. In Vienna their passports were seized and not returned. Arthur Leavitt: "I should mention the delightful feeling of freedom we had getting away from the Central Powers after the three years we had gone through in Turkey since the summer of 1914."

On finding out he'd been assigned as Consul to Almeria, Spain, a backwater in his view, Arthur Leavitt resigned and was simultaneously fired from the State Department. Chief Wilbur Carr did not appreciate Leavitt asserting his independence over 'the needs of the service'. Leavitt joined American Army Intelligence in Paris as an interpreter/translator. Their third child John was born in Paris during a Zeppelin air raid. When the sirens wailed, the midwife ordered Elsie under the bed. Between contractions, she responded that she had no intention of doing so because the baby was emerging, but if the midwife wished to do so, she was welcome to. And she did.

For the remainder of the war, the Bakers and Leavitts were scattered across Europe. Arthur Baker went to Romania as British Red Cross Commissioner, a follow-on to his volunteer work for the Red Cross during the refugee crisis in Constantinople in 1912-1913 and at Gallipoli in 1915. In Romania, as the Germans and Russian revolutionaries were closing in on him from opposite sides, he distributed food and Nestle's milk to the starving population. He was locally celebrated as well for afterward repurposing the railroad car. Entering at one end, the peasants emerged out the other side scrubbed, deloused, and donning a fresh set of donated clothes and shoes, whereupon they joined the food line.



Ambassador Morgenthau with Elsie and other stay-behind Americans on the roof of the American Embassy, Constantinople, in 1916. (L-r) Miss Connor, Eleanor Burns, Dr. Huff, Ambassador Morgenthau, Arthur Washburn, Mrs. Huff, unidentified woman, and Mary Lyon.



Henry Morgenthau, American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire 1913-1916.



Above and right: England 1915-1916, Leila and Arthur Baker with grandson Peter Leavitt. Below, at the seaside (l-r) Mildred (Edwards) Binns (Victor's Binns's mother), Arthur Baker, Louisa (Baker) Edwards, Peter Leavitt, Mabel (Edwards) Stock, Ruby Baker, and Peter's nanny.



Right: Elsie's passport picture with Ruth for her second evacuation to England from Turkey (1917).

Arthur Baker worked closely with Queen Marie, a grandchild of Queen Victoria's and champion of Romania's plight during the war. They formed a friendship and corresponded after the war. In gratitude for his work, she gave him a heavily filigreed gold table ornament that featured a photograph of her face on the front. When Leila took exception, Arthur had the photo replaced with a clockface. Queen Maria visited the Bakers in Istanbul a few times after the war, but stayed at Yilanli Yali despite Louisa not being there.

Early in the war, Dollie processed death certificates for the Records Office and later volunteered with the British Red Cross in Switzerland. In France, Warden caught a bullet through the neck which narrowly missed his jugular vein. On recovering, he went to the British Embassy in Rome to do intelligence work. In Paris, when Ruby was not helping Elsie with the children, she was behind the counter at the Y.M.C.A. canteen. In England, Leila and May kept the home fires burning and volunteered in the war effort.

1918 In April, the Germans began their last major offensive and got to within 30 miles of Paris.

In June, Arthur sent Elsie, the children, and Peter's nanny to Nantes, where Elsie volunteered with the British Red Cross. In September-October, Arthur joined the Army Air Corps and was commissioned 1st Lieutenant. Stationed at the 11th Regional Headquarters in Nantes, he continued as liaison for General Bolling with the French.

World War I armistice was declared on November 11th. The C.U.P. leadership in Turkey fled and civil war erupted in Turkey.

1919 Arthur Leavitt participated in the Paris Peace Conference. Called upon to translate between Arabic and English, having studied Arabic for only a year in Cairo, he was chagrined to find he was in the presence of Lawrence of Arabia. A few sentences in Lawrence interrupted him to say, "Let me make this easier for you, Mr. Leavitt, I'll take it from here."

The Bakers and Leavitts converged on Constantinople. Warden got there first, Arthur Baker right behind him. The women and children followed in the summer. The Leavitts came last from America, where they'd visited with Arthur Leavitt's family. Leavitt applied to be reinstated at the State Department, but Wilbur Carr would have none of it. He had personally hired Arthur for his Student Interpreter program and was miffed by several transgressions, such as his marriage to Elsie Baker; Arthur had gotten special permission to do so, but Student Interpreters were not supposed to marry in their first five years of probation. Another was turning down his assignment to Almeria and resigning. To Carr, Leavitt's desire to make a contribution in the war made no difference.



Elsie and May in the late 1950s

In a series of essays written after his retirement, Arthur Baker described returning to Constantinople, the city of his birth, and living under the Allied Occupation. His Turkish friends had kept their promise, though none of them survived the war. None of his properties—neither homes, nor shops and offices—had been touched. It was remarkable, really, as compared to other British and French properties, which had been seized, used, and returned in poor condition or destroyed, as in the case of the Candilli homes. Arthur found everything just as he'd left it, including his four managers. They had succeeded in

keeping a few of the shops running in his absence. Three had kept scrupulous accounts, but the fourth had inflated prices, skimmed off the top, and had to be fired.



Elsie Baker in the 1950s



Dollie Baker in WWI



Warden Baker c. 1929



Ruby Baker at 100

Aftermath (1919-1926)

1919-1923 **TURKISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE** A nationalist uprising led by Mustafa Kemal drove the Greeks and other ethnic minorities out of Anatolia. He established an interim government in Ankara and was appointed the first head of state with the honorific title of ‘Atatürk’, Father of the Turks.

1919 G. & A. Baker and Edwards & Sons went public to form G. & A. Baker Ltd. and Edwards & Sons (Near East) Ltd. P. & A. Swanzy Ltd. and African Eastern Trading Corporation Ltd. became shareholders. Hayden’s retail business was purchased from the ‘Hayden Brothers’ and one of Robert Hayden’s sons, Arthur John Hayden, was kept on as manager.

1920 Hoping for a vigorous rebound, Arthur Baker opened G. & A. Baker Ltd. branches across the region in Bulgaria (Sofia and Varna), Romania (Galatz, Bucharest, and Novorossiysk), and Russia (Sevastopol, Batum, and Tiflis).

Another new venture, The Grand Garage, opened near Taxim Square. Victor Binns placed it near Shishli ‘where the Divan Hotel used to be in the 1960s’. The Garage sold Chevrolets, Erskines, Essexes, Fords, Fiats, and Studebakers. It supplied Dunlop tires and spares and included a petrol station and repair shop. Long before the garage was built, automobile enthusiast Arthur Baker had imported the first cars into Turkey—two Studebakers, one for the British Ambassador and the other for himself. Baker’s grandson John Leavitt recalled being transported in it every day to school at the Robert College Community School, today’s Istanbul International Community School (IICS), by Arthur Baker’s Greek chauffeur.



A billboard of a tractor indicating The Grand Garage dealership just off Taxim Square heading towards Harbiye

After the war, Wilbur Carr and the State Department lost the third of his four original Student Interpreters to Turkey. Louis “Lewis” Heck had stayed behind in **1915** to close down the American Embassy and set up the U.S. Interests Section in the neutral Swedish Embassy. When he, too, was forced to leave because of illness and concerns for his safety, a young American missionary, Luther Fowle, was enlisted to maintain the U.S. Interests Section for the duration of the war. It’s an interesting twist because Fowle had greeted and befriended Arthur on his arrival to Turkey in July 1909, and introduced him to Elsie Baker, as she came off the tennis courts at Robert College.

As if managing U.S. interests weren’t dangerous enough, Fowle was also distributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to American missionaries, who had stayed behind to help Armenian and Syrian refugees on behalf of Near East Relief:

Still another war time task fell to Mr. Fowle’s lot: ‘due to the illness and departure of [Lewis Heck]..., Washington asked, through the Swedish Foreign Office, that the Mission treasurer [Luther Fowle] assume this task until the arrival of another American attaché. No such officer arrived...’ and this responsibility continued until after the war ended. ‘The diplomatic status thus acquired by the Mission treasurer [Luther Fowle] may have had much to do with the unbroken functioning of Mission and relief activities during 1917 and 1918.’ (“Memorial records for Luther R. Fowle,” American Research Institute in Turkey.)

In his memoir, *A Century Among the Turks*, Fowle wrote,

...even when the United States entered the war in 1917, and Germany forced the Ottomans to sever diplomatic relations with America, the Mission schools and hospitals still carried on, their personnel primarily engaged in relief work. This unusual situation could not be expected to continue for long, however, and the ambassador [Abram Elkus] urged the aging Dr. Peet to withdraw while he still could, leaving his apprentice [Luther Fowle] in charge as mission treasurer. Through 1917 and 1918, cut off from all contact with America and operating in enemy territory, the work of the Mission [and the Embassy] went on. (“Memorial records for Luther R. Fowle,” American Research Institute in Turkey).

Leavitt’s Student Interpreter classmate Lewis Heck was sent back to Constantinople at the end of the war to reopen the Embassy again and prepare it for Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol, the appointed U.S. High Commissioner. In a dispatch to Washington in August **1919**, Bristol wrote, “I have taken the responsibility [from Heck] as Senior U.S.

Representative... I am taking care of the relations [with the Turks] so far as the armistice terms and all military and naval affairs are concerned.” (Güngör, Hakan (2017), Number 59, p. 537.) Fed up with the State Department’s treatment of him, Heck resigned and went to work for Arthur Baker and the Ford Motor Company importing Fords to Turkey.

1922 The Ottoman sultanate was abolished on November 1st. Sultan Mehmed VI was forced into exile on November 17th.

1923 The Treaty of Lausanne was signed on July 24th. It acknowledged international recognition of the new Ankara-based government and Atatürk as Turkey’s new leader. In accordance with the treaty, the new Turkish Parliament established the Republic of Turkey on October 29th to replace the defunct Ottoman Empire. Of the former Empire’s once vast territories, only eastern Thrace west of Istanbul was retained.

1924 Jim Baker retired from G.P. & J. Baker/O.C.M. and was replaced by A. Cecil Edwards.

The Ottoman Caliphate was abolished on March 3rd, its authority transferred to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

In the fifty years from the last quarter of the 19th century through the first quarter of the 20th century, some seven to nine million Turkish-Muslim refugees from the lost Ottoman territories of the Caucasus, Crimea, Balkans, and the Mediterranean islands migrated to Anatolia and Eastern Thrace. In similar proportions, Christians in the Empire—mostly Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians—died in pogroms or were expelled in the reverse direction. The displacement resulted in an equal number of deaths as expulsions.

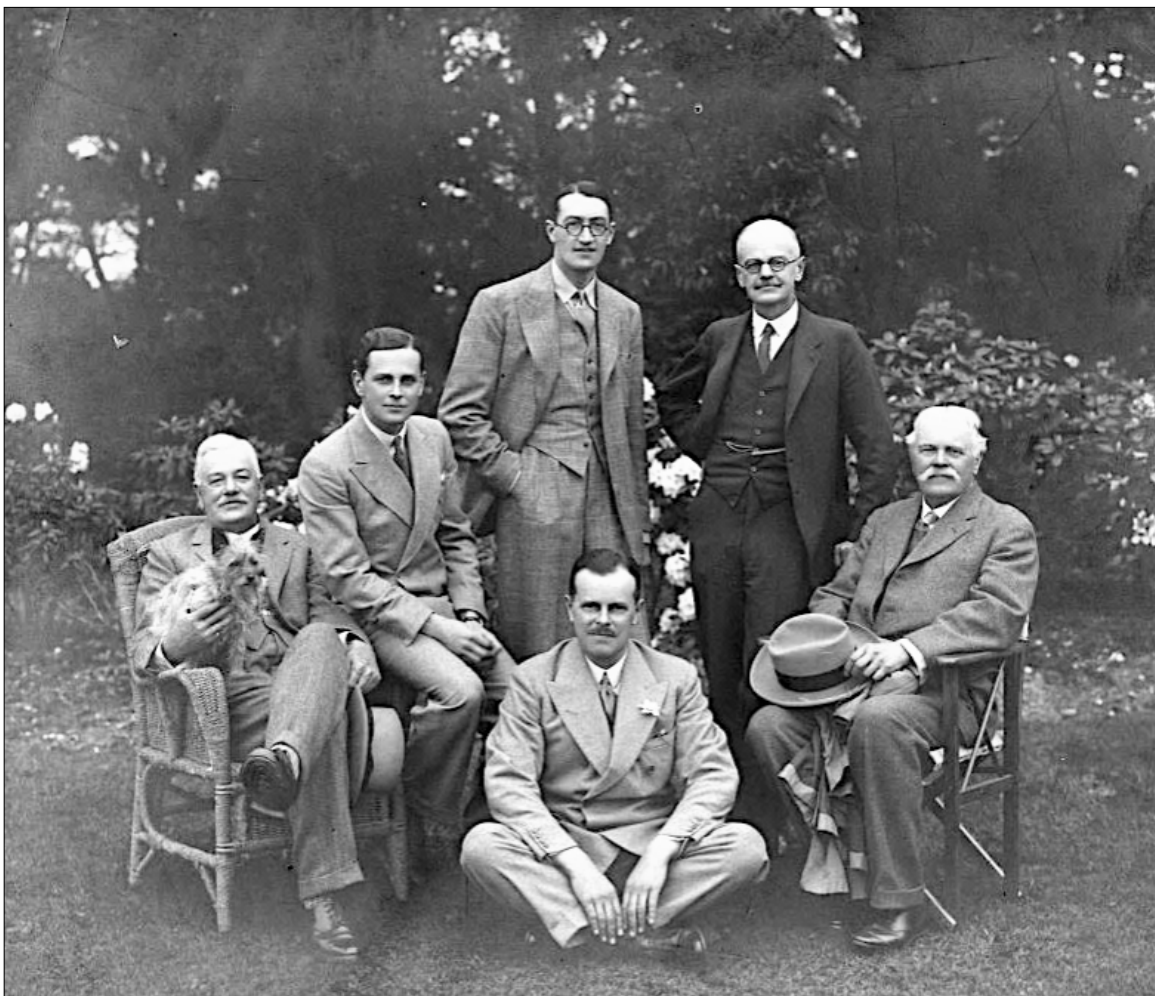
1926 G. & A. Baker Ltd. absorbed Edwards & Sons (N.E.) Ltd. Arthur and Leila Baker retired to England in December. Son Warden Baker and Mid Edwards took charge, Warden overseeing imports and the stores, Mid exports and the representational business. Warden returned to England in about **1928** or **1929** having accomplished little. Ruby chalked it up to his lack of experience, saying he’d worked for his father only a couple of years before the war. I suspect it was also a matter of character, he more suited to diplomacy and spying than entrepreneurship. The **1929** crash may have had something to do with it, too, it’s not clear.

A financial dispute ensued between Arthur Baker and his nephew Mid Edwards. It was emblematic of the changing face of doing business in Turkey. The details are vague, but it seems that Arthur expected to be compensated when his personal and business assets were sold or liquidated. According to the new Turkish Republic’s new economic policies, however, hard currency was forbidden from leaving the country, and Mid was apparently unable or unwilling to find a way to get the money out; money that Baker was counting on for his retirement. Since Mid was still doing business with the Turks in Turkey, I suspect he didn’t want to get in trouble with the Turkish authorities. By the time Arthur Baker died in **1939**, therefore, he had little to show for his and his father’s legacy, other than a modest home at 10 Kings Avenue, Bromley, which was flattened by a bomb in World War II. Had he still been alive, it would have killed him. The proceeds from the sale went toward supporting Leila, who lived for another two decades.

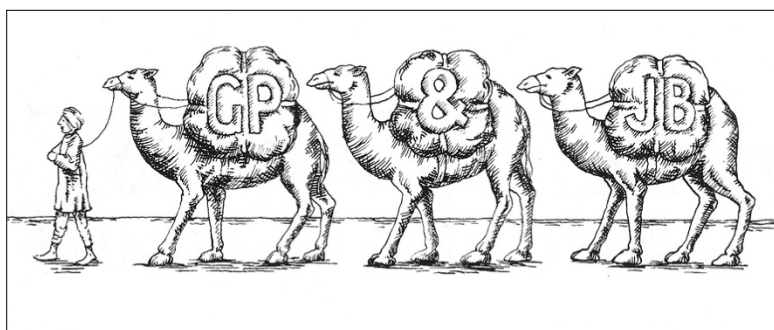
Mid finished out his life in Turkey, dying in **1950**. He is buried near his parents at the Crimean War Memorial Cemetery in Scutari (Üsküdar). Ruby Baker:

After Father threw his hand in and retired [in **1926**], Mid [Edwards] therefore was the only Grandchild of the original Bakers [still in the Istanbul side of the business]. Warden left [in c. **1928-1929**], Arthur Leavitt... also left [in December **1926**]. Father had asked Mid to see to some of his own property after he left, and sell it and send him the money. Dollie finally took over the whole of this ~~correspondence~~ transaction; she showed it to me and asked me what I thought of it. I thought I would find some hanky-panky, but after reading the whole thing, I came to the conclusion the man [Mid] was a fool; he was trying to be so clever that he kept on tripping himself up. However, the end of the story is that Father left Turkey in 1926, and the whole thing was not settled till after the Second World War in about 1948 [when Arthur Baker had been dead for nine years].... Dollie tried to get lawyers in Constantinople to take it over, but they would not touch it.

But now, as far as I know, Victor Binns is the only Baker descendent of the Bakers left [in the business in Turkey, true]. He was Mid’s nephew, and I expect Mid brought him in. But it leaves a nasty taste in my mouth. However, I have got to the age when these things don’t really matter, and, as I have shown in my account, the great thing that stood out all along was the integrity of all the original members of that family.



At G.P. Baker's estate at Hillside, Sevenoaks, likely on the occasion of G.P.'s retirement in 1933. Jim Baker had retired in 1924, Arthur Baker in 1926. (L-r) Jim Baker, Brian Baker (G.P.'s son), Ronald Baker (Jim's son), A. Cecil Edwards (Louisa's son), who took Jim's place as Managing Director at O.C.M., G.P. Baker, and Robin Baker (G.P.'s son seated center).



Ruby Baker and Victor Binns wrote their respective Baker accounts in the late 1960s. They were doing their research at the same time. Because of this dispute, they did not communicate with each other or compare notes. It's a pity. Most of the family is familiar with Ruby's two accounts of the Arthur Baker and George Baker families, but fewer have read Victor Binns's two accounts—the original done in 1968 and a revision in 1984. He had much to add to the story, which Ruby seemed to be ignorant of or ignored. We are also indebted to him for an extensive family tree, which took him more than a decade to compile. Its contents are on Geni.com.

Before leaving Turkey, Arthur Baker transferred title of the George Baker House to his daughter Elsie Leavitt. The Leavitts sold it to Robert College and sailed to America in late December to start life anew from scratch. Professor Cecil Tubini and his family lived in it for many years and a plaque still identifies it as the Cecil Tubini House. When women were admitted to Robert College in the 1960s, the house became the women's dorm.

The Bakers and Leavitts were part of a wave of Levantines and Westerners who migrated out of Turkey after the war. Many, like the Bakers, had been living there for generations. After the war, circumstances were so changed that it made it untenable for them to stay. Foreigners received no special treatment or privileges anymore. The Capitulations, which Mehmet the Conqueror had instituted following the Conquest and which had given European merchants great advantage over the native Turk, were the first to be abolished at the outset of the war. By 1926, companies like G. & A. Baker Ltd. were overregulated, heavily taxed, and incentivized to disappear. Arthur Baker had considered Turkey 'home' his entire life, yet he and the family had never had the slightest inclination to assimilate. The Baker sojourn in the Levant had been a long and good run, but it was over.

Harry Dwight once noted that 'all foreign inhabitants of Constantinople were merely guests of its ruler'. The Bakers had been well respected guests indeed. The Turks had had no interest in arresting Arthur Baker at the outset of World War I. It was in their practical nature to hold onto him, perhaps, but also in keeping with their deep sense of fairness and honor. There was a reason Enver Pasha and Bedri Bey allowed Arthur to slip out of Turkey on November 19th. There was a reason Justice Minister Ibrahim Bey and others pledged to protect his properties through the war, and did, though they perished. The respect and loyalty Arthur and his father George had shown the Turks from **1848** to **1914** engendered the same in return.

After the war, when Warden was frustrated in his struggle to keep the business going, Arthur wrote him the following, as if the realization had only just occurred to him as well:

Did it ever strike you that much of the favour shown us by the Turk is really due to the dealings your Granddad & I had with them. They protected us at all times & though since 1900 we have seen old Turk, new Turk, Enverites & others in power, we always had fair treatment from them.

Dissolution (1926-1964)

1929 THE WALL STREET CRASH Still holding shares in G. & A. Baker Ltd., the African Eastern Trade Corporation and Niger Company merged to form the United Africa & Company Ltd.

1926-1939 Victor Binns: In these years [after Arthur Baker left], every department except the garage lost money. Bakers, like so many other companies, was badly hit by the **1929** crash and the African & Eastern [United Africa & Company Ltd. as of 1929] was hardly in a position to help. The continued depreciation of the Turkish currency and the tremendous slump in product prices put Bakers in terrible financial straits. Strict austerity measures were introduced. The last branch, in Sofia, was shut down, the garage sold, the ready-made clothing store closed, and all other activities greatly restricted. Smaller offices were found and, of the directors, only Cuthbert Binns [Victor's father] and Middleton Edwards [Victor's uncle] remained to run the business.

1931 G. & A. Baker Ltd.'s Sofia branch and The Grand Garage closed.

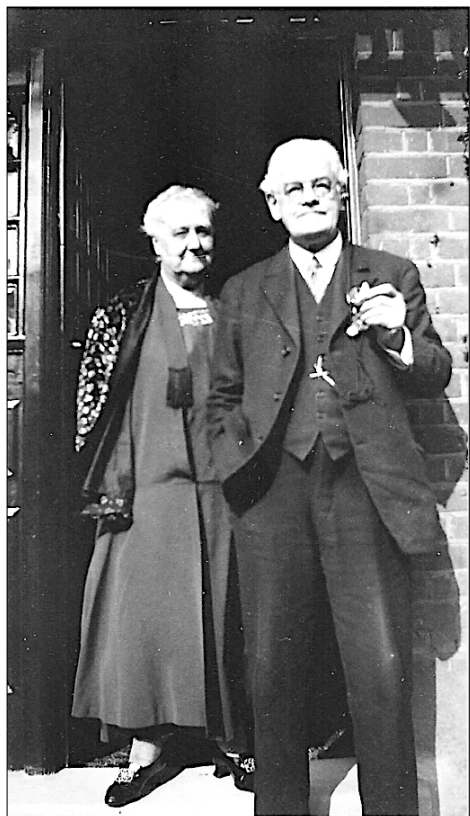
1932 G. & A. Baker Ltd. absorbed I. Modiano and Freres et Fils.

1933 G.P. retired from G.P. & J. Baker Ltd. The Picture Post wrote of him in "G.P. Baker of the Irises" on 28 May **1949**, shortly before he died:

The man who has climbed to the ceilings of the world, who has dared and endured in over seventy years of searching for rare plants in the Canadian Rockies, Crete, Corsica, Persia, Greece, Morocco, Switzerland, Norway, and the mighty Himalayas, sits now, rug-wrapped and frail at 93. The famous irises of this king of collectors won many of the Royal Horticultural Society's Awards of Merit. In 1931, his 'Iris Realm' was awarded a higher honor still, the seldom-given First Class Certificate. But last year, came the greatest honour of all, the Society's coveted Corry Cup for the best hybrid of the year—not an iris, but a very beautiful saxifrage.

In his memoir, *Mountaineering Memories of the Past*, G.P. finished up,

What a flood of memories 'that time is past' recalls! The many companions of those far-off days with whom it was my privilege to climb and make life-long friends—Yeld, Stafford Anderson, Slingsby, Solly, Broome, Woolley, Hiatt Baker, and



Leila (Pulman) and Arthur Baker at Bromley (1930s)



Arthur and Leila Baker with son Warden at Bromley (c. 1929)



Leila (Pulman) Baker



The Baker's house and garden at Bromley



Leila and Arthur Baker with Winifred (Seagar) Edwards, Mid's wife.



Arthur Baker (c. 1919)

my brother Arthur—one and all have crossed the Great Divide and left me to live in retrospect, and in the memory of those happy days. No more for me the battle against the forces of nature; no more for me ‘living dangerously’ a short space between time and eternity; no more the joy that comes with the reaching of a lofty goal or a peaceful sheltering roof; no more the glad peace that comes with eventide when, with or without a shelter roof, one stretches weary limbs to rest and tired eyes close in sleep; no more the distant scene through a rift in the clouds of a Skye smiling valley rich with verdure.

All these experiences and many others I have enjoyed in more than fifty years of mountain climbing. And now although their further physical attainment is denied me, yet still can I recapture in spirit with undiminished enjoyment the thrills and raptures evoked by their memories; and so in taking FAREWELL of the mountains I am able with the Psalmist to say, ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the Hills from whence cometh my help.’

1935 Baker & Seager Ltd. was formed.

1939 The Ankara branch of G. & A. Baker Ltd. opened.

Arthur Baker died on the 22nd of May at his home in Bromley, Kent. Some years before, Ruby and May had moved Leila to an assisted living facility, which they called ‘The Hotel’. Granddaughter Sylvia (Baker) Harrison, Warden Baker’s daughter living with them at the time, recalled:

One Monday evening I returned to Bromley from a weekend away and was surprised to find that Granny had moved into a hotel in Matlock in Derbyshire. Grandpa was on his own at the house with Aunt May coming in to cook and tidy for him. The poor old lady had been very happy at Bromley when they first moved to England from Turkey. She loved her convenient little house. She ran it very well with the help of two ladies. One cooked and the other cleaned and everything was fine. Then the younger of the two decided to get married and they both left. Granny had a succession of people after that, one of whom called her ‘a miserable old faggot’. All this really upset her, together with the fact that Grandpa’s deafness had made him difficult to communicate with and had left them both socially isolated. They no longer went to the Conservative Club or played bridge with their neighbors. In any case, most of the people they had been friendly with had either moved away or died.



Leila (Pulman) Baker as ‘Queen Victoria’ at assisted living.

Leila Baker was happier at the hotel with no domestic worries and people to talk to. She enjoyed the dancing and tapping her feet to the music. She wore a small white crochet head cover, leading friends to call her Queen Victoria. Arthur Baker was happy enough at Bromley with his books, paints, and garden. As it was, he did not live to see the onset of World War II in August 1939, dying on May 22nd of that year. When war broke out, Leila was moved to Bath to live with daughters Dollie and Ruby. She occupied the cellar so she didn’t have to move up and down stairs in the air raids. She was heavy and stairs were difficult. To everyone’s surprise, she lived 20 years beyond Arthur, dying in 1959, two years before her 100th birthday.

1939-1945 WORLD WAR II

1942 Four subsidiaries of G. & A. Baker Ltd. closed, two becoming departments of Baker’s.

1947 The main department store at No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) closed. The shoe department was transferred to the ‘Haydens’ store at No. 479 Grand Rue de Pera.

1951 Unilever N.V. took over the oil mill at Bakirköy.

1952 ‘Haydens’ and the shoe shop were sold.

1962 The Ankara branch closed. The final shutdowns began.

1964 G. & A. Baker Ltd. ceased operating as a general merchandise trading company, but continued marketing for certain Unilever products, where Victor Binns ended up.

G.P. & J. Baker Ltd. was purchased by Parker Knoll.



Left: The Arthur Baker family in 1937 on the occasion of Arthur and Leila's 50th wedding anniversary. It was the last time the family was together. Seated (l-r): Arthur, Dollie, and Leila. Standing: Ruby, May, Warden, and Elsie.



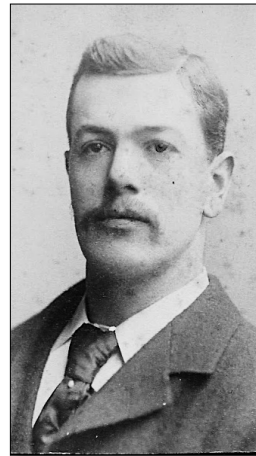
Right: On the same occasion in 1937, this photo includes May (Baker) Morten's children (l-r) Jack, Margaret and Jean Morten, and Warden Baker's eldest Sylvia Baker (center). Sylvia celebrated her 106th birthday in 2023.



Left: Leila Baker at her writing desk.



Right: Leila napping at Bromley with dog.



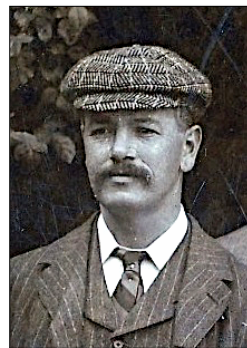
Edith (Pulman) and Jim Baker (c. 1893)



Portrait of Jim Baker by unknown artist "VC"



L-r: Jim Baker with wife Edith and sisters Louisa (Baker) Edwards and Millie (Baker) Anderson, possibly taken at Jim and Edith's house in Rye, Sussex (c. 1912).



Jim Baker (1893)



Left (l-r): Jim and Arthur Baker with Dollie Baker and Elsie Leavitt (1912). Elsie is pregnant with Peter and wearing the popular 'hobble skirt'.



Right: Jim with grandnephew Peter Leavitt (1915)



George & Maria Baker's surviving children taken at Hillside, Sevenoaks (1933).

Seated (l-r): Fred Baker, Lonisa (Baker) Edwards, and Arthur Baker (bearing aid hanging from his jacket). Standing: G.P. Baker, Millie (Baker) Anderson, and Jim Baker.



Family gathering at G.P. Baker's estate at Hillside, Seven Oaks, likely on the occasion of G.P.'s retirement in 1933.

Front (l-r): Joyce Baker (Jim's), Robin Baker (G.P.'s), Martin Baker (Robin's), Mardi (Younger) Baker, A. Cecil Edwards with Marie Louise Baker in his lap, Nancy (Cutcliffe) Davison with John Baker (Robin's), Violet (Baker) Cutcliffe (G.P.s).

Middle row: Edith (Pulman) Baker, Muriel (Bamber) Baker (Robin's wife), G.P. Baker, Millie (Baker) Anderson, Minnie (Davis) Baker, Lonisa (Baker) Edwards, Amy Percival (Lizzie (Butler) Percival's daughter and Charlie's sister).

Back row: Charlie Percival (Lizzie (Butler) Percival's son and Amy's brother), Arthur Baker, Leila (Pulman) Baker, Jim Baker, Winnie (Rickard) Baker, Fred Baker, and Clara (Case) Edwards (Cecil Edwards's wife).



The four surviving Baker Boys (right) at Bakers Folly, Lemwinnick Cove, near Newquay, Cornwall (above), in 1938. L-r: Arthur, Fred, G.P. and Jim.



Postscript

1966 George Baker's great-grandson, John Leavitt, began a diplomatic assignment at the American Embassy in Ankara in July, just as his father had done in Constantinople a half century earlier. Shortly after the Leavitts landed in Ankara, Dad piled the family into a sky blue Chevy station wagon and drove us to Istanbul. I was the same age as George Baker when he ran away from home. Staring out the window at the sun-dried, undulating, wheat fields of Anatolia, I decided that our family was so interesting and exciting that I, too, would become a diplomat like my father and grandfather (and did).



John Leavitt in the RAF in WWII

Dad wanted to introduce us to Turkey, our new home away from home. He was eager to show us Istanbul, where he'd grown up, gone to grade school, and later taught English at Robert College, where his parents had met and fallen in love. His ulterior motive was to imbue us with the Baker legend. Like the Pied Piper, he led us through the narrow cobbled streets in Stamboul, Pera and Rumeli Hisar, regaling us with anecdotes that Baker descendants had been keeping alive for four (now five) generations. Marching us across Galata Bridge at sunset on our last night, the light reflecting mystically off the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, Dad spotted a relic "G. & A. Baker Ltd." delivery truck parked on Karaköy quay. It created such a commotion (and a few tears on Dad's part) that even though we each had a camera on us, no one had the presence of mind to take a picture of it, or better yet, of us lined up in front of it. But the memory of that moment is as sharp to me today as any photograph we might have taken.

* * *

Baker Businesses in Constantinople/Istanbul (1854-1964)*

Businesses (20+)**

Prospect Place	No. 2 Kule Kapisi (c. 1854-?)
George Baker	No. 7/9 Merdevan, Kule Kapisi (Kulesi Sk.) (18??-?)
Baker & Hayden	No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera (1860-1869)
George Baker, G. & A. Baker	No. 207 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) (1867-1964)

Bakers, G. & A. Baker	No. 370 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) (c. 1870-1947)
Haydens	No. 479 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) (1919-1952)
G. & A. Baker	No. 500 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) (1876-1926)
G. & A. Baker	No. 241 Grand Rue de Pera (Istiklal Cd.) (1910-1925)
G. & A. Baker	Üsküdar (1921-1922)
Baker & Edwards	(1875-1890)
Edwards & Sons	Topalian Han, Sultan Hamam (1920-1922); Turkia Han, Rue Kutubhane, Stamboul (1922-1926); 36 Asir Effendi Cd., Stamboul (1926-1962)
G. & A. Baker Ltd.	Charlie Edwards (1890-1898), Mid Edwards (1898-1926) (1875-1962)
G. & A. Baker Ltd.	Wholesale cotton piece goods, prints, and sheeting. No. 500 Yuksek Kaldirim (1919-1926)
The Grand Garage	Readymade clothing and haberdashery. Rue Shishli, Harbiye (approximate location of the Divan Hotel in 1968?) (1920-1931)
Ivan Sarai Flour Mill	Automobiles: Chevrolet, Erskine, Essex, Ford, and Studebaker.
Cold Storage	Dunlop tires, spares, accessories, petrol, and repair shop. (1860-1908)
Djoobali Warehouse	Haraldji, Kara Mehmet Mahallesi, Kaik Yapidgi Sokak No. 50/60 (1903-1920) Cold storage of meat, poultry, and fish. Golden Horn (1920-1931)

*These lists of Baker Businesses in Constantinople/Istanbul, Agency Representations, Branches Opened in 1920, and Sample Commodities Traded were compiled by Victor Binns in his untitled 1968 account of the George Baker family.

**Other Baker shops are recorded as located at today's No. 148 Istiklal Cad., Beyoğlu; No. 5, Galip Dede Cad., Tünel; and No. 23 Mateo Han, Tarakcilar Cd., Galata. How they correlate to the shops listed above is as yet undetermined.

Agency Representations

Aircraft engines, accessories	Chemicals	Insurance	Perfumery	Tanning goods
Automobiles, tires	Cottons, yarns	Lab equipment	Pharmaceuticals	
Building materials	Household appliances	Machinery, equipment	Science instruments	

Branches Opened in 1920 (except Ankara)

Turkey:	Ankara (1939-1962), Dardanelles, Samsoun, Trebsond
Bulgaria:	Bucharest, Novorissisk, Sofia (1920-1931), Varna
Russia:	Batoum, Savastopol, Tiflis

Sample Commodities Traded

From Turkey

Apricots	Furs and skins (fox, goat, hare, kid, lamb, marten, sheep, goat, cow, mohair)	Poppy seeds
Barley	Grapes (Sultana)	Raisins
Beeswax	Gum styrax, gum tragacanth	Rice
Berries	Haricot beans	Rose oil, Otto of roses
Bran	Hazel nuts, hazel nut oil	Sesame seeds, sesame seed oil
Broom bristles	Lentils	Skins (fox, hare, kid, lamb, marten, sheep)
Canary seed	Linseed oil, oilcake	Sunflower seeds, sunflower seed oil
Carpets	Mohair	Textiles
Cereals	Oil	Timber
Cherries	Olives, olive oil	Tobacco
Chickpeas	Opium	Valona
Cotton	Pistachio nuts	Walnuts
Figs	Plants and plantings	Wheat, spelt
Firewood		Wool

To Turkey

Artillery	Blankets	Camping equipment (tents, chairs, backpacks)
	Boots, shoes	

Carbon black	Dates	Pharmaceuticals
Cement	Flour	Prints
Chemicals	Floor cloth	Provisions (bulk)
Clocks	Furniture	Rubber
Clothing, men's and women's readymade	Guns	Saddles, riding equipment
Coal, coke	Haberdashery	Sheeting
Cocoa beans, cocoa butter	Hardware	Sodium sulphate
Coffee	Hessian, jute	Sugar
Copper	Hides, skins	Tea
Copra	Lead ingots	Textiles, wool cloth
Cottons, yarns	Linen, linen duck	Tin, tin ingot
Creosote	Naphthalene	Zinc Oxid
	Paper, paper products	

Main Baker Family Sources

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- Victor Binns: "The Evolution of G.A. Baker Ltd." (1968) and "The Francis Baker Family 1788-1983" (1984).
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- Ruby (Baker) Gray: "Letters to My Nephews and Nieces" (1969), which formed the basis for her two publications, *The George Baker Family, 1822-1905* (1971) and *The Arthur Baker Family, 1861-1959* (1971).
- Arthur H. Leavitt: Several autobiographical chronologies (late 1960s-early 1970s), and his and Elsie Baker's "Love Letters" (1911, 1914-1915, 1927).
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- May (Baker) Morten: Notebook, each page recording family events by year from 1854 to 1960.
- Amy Percival: Letter written to G.P. Baker (1944-45)
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- Victoria & Albert Museum, *From EAST to WEST, TEXTILES from G.P. & J. BAKER* (1984).
- Washburn, George, *Fifty Years in Constantinople* (1909); American missionary, educator, second president of Robert College, Cyrus Hamlin's brother-in-law, and Baker family acquaintance.
- Waugh, Sir Telford, *Turkey Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow* (1930); longtime British diplomat in Turkey, associate of Arthur Baker and Arthur Leavitt's.

Photographs

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