

**THE BAXTER FAMILY DESCENDANTS OF
GEORGE AND THOMAS BAXTER, OF
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK,
AS WELL AS SOME WEST VIRGINIA
AND SOUTH CAROLINA LINES**

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The Baxter Family Descendants of George and Thomas Baxter, of Westchester County, New York, as Well as Some West Virginia and South Carolina Lines by Miss Frances Baxter

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(NORFOLK)

See page 135

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By

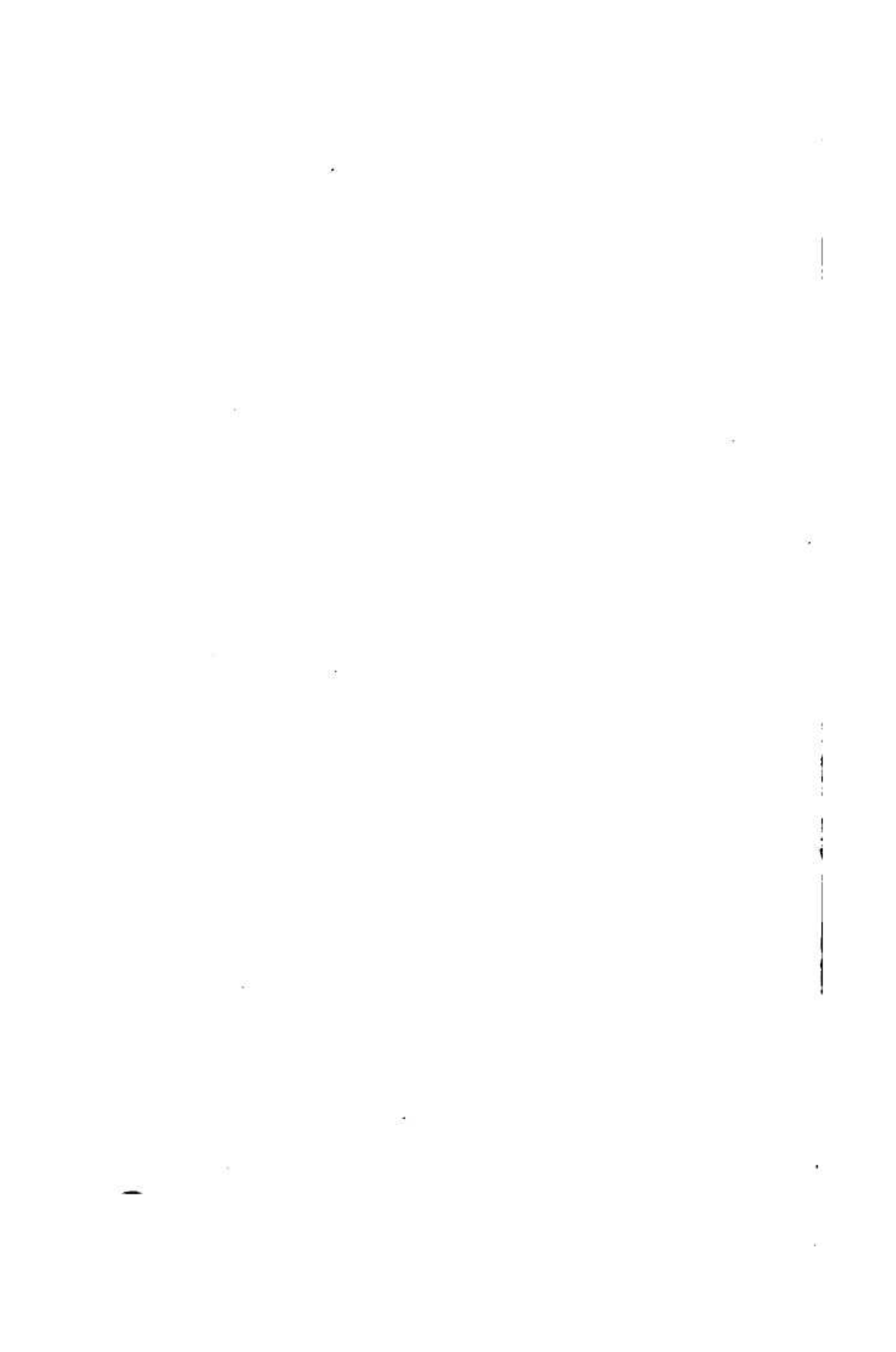
MISS FRANCES BAXTER

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FOREWORD

In preparing this book for the press, I only regret that more of the members of the Baxter family are not represented in its pages. The family are now scattered far and wide over the United States; none of the name now live in North Salem although a number of the blood do. In Westchester village are a few Baxters, the descendants of Augustine Baxter. The Baxters of Central New York are many of them the descendants of Roger Baxter. Many others are settled along the Hudson River. Most of them are descended from Thomas and Rebecca Baxter. Many other Baxters whom I looked up proved to be of the Scotch-Irish family, of whom I have tried to give a brief account in these pages. But the Baxters were neither Scot nor Celt, but Anglo-Saxon, and are such wherever found. They are not found in the pages of Burke or Debrett, nor even among the great landed gentry. They were the small landed gentry or merchants and they all have many characteristics in common. Love of books and a strong attachment to their own blood. The name of Yeoman is the one most often applied to themselves. The eight daughters of Thomas and Rebecca Baxter intermarried among many of the old Westchester families. I have carried out their lines far enough to indicate their direction. A good deal of their records come from Bolton's "Westchester." In the disputes of George and Thomas Baxter with Gov. Stuyvesant, I have no remarks to make. I give the plain facts. All three, no doubt, thought they were right. They acted as any strong-willed and high-tempered men would have done, and in assisting the English against the Dutch I think their motive was not so much revenge as to regain possession of their property. To all tender-hearted persons, who shudder at the name of Pirate as applied to their ancestor, I can only say, according to the best authorities, there is no pretension made even by the worst enemies

of Thomas Baxter, that he ever killed anybody. So we may consider him as a sort of comic opera pirate. But, say some, did these people surrender their property without striking a blow for its defence? Even so; they chose the safe side, saved their skins and carried their grievances to court, where they certainly got the best of the argument.

What became of Thomas Baxter? Did he remain in England or did he return, and finally settle on Cape Cod? If so, did he have two sons of the name of Thomas?

The descendants of John Baxter, of North Salem, had the old tradition of the three brothers, one of whom settled at Greenwich, Conn., one somewhere on the Hudson and the third at Cow Bay on Long Island. They took no note of the three younger sons of John and Mary (Honeywell) Baxter.

The Baxter Memorial speaks of a Gregory Baxter who settled at Roxbury, Mass., 1630. His daughter Abigail married Joseph Adams and they were the grandparents of John Adams, second President of the United States. It has long been a tradition in our family that our first ancestor on American soil, married Mary Adams, but whether of the Braintree family remains to be seen.

I believe the two Thomas Baxters married wives from Hartford. As to the divorce of Bridget Baxter, I can only say we cannot judge our ancestors. They did what they thought for the best.

The date of Thomas Baxter's birth was probably 1628, and his marriage took place about 1651, as the first mention of his wife was in that year. His son was probably born about 1653-4, after he left New Amsterdam.

After the divorce, Bridget Baxter lived in or near Hartford; then she married John Palmer and came to Westchester where her husband was a Justice of the Peace. His name appears first in the Indian deed of Westchester, May 27, 1692, as one of the trustees of Westchester, along with that of Thomas Baxter, his stepson.

The divorce of Bridget Baxter was recorded at White Plains in 1686. It took place in 1662.

In the wills I have received of Baxters living in England, 1600-1664, there are many Baxters of the names of George and Thomas, more than any other name.

In the account of John Baxter I have followed the stories told of him by my father, who was brought up in the same family, and also the data gathered in the libraries of New York City.

The traditions are to a certain extent verified. I have studied the history with great care and may say that I have left no stone unturned to get the truth of our Baxter history. There were several Baxter families in Massachusetts in early times, whether related to Thomas and George is not certain.

The records of some of the family at North Salem was taken from Pettit Baxter's family Bible, printed in London in 1776. My father copied the records in 1873, when he was at North Salem. In 1911 the Bible was in the possession of Richard Baxter's granddaughter, Mrs. J. A. Braden, but the old records had disappeared.

Among the numbers of those who left England during the period of unrest following the suspension of the sittings of Parliament (1629-1640), there is the record of but few. Of those who came over in Winthrop's fleet in 1630 and of the Lists of the "Arbella," we know nothing positively. During those eventful years scarcely a day passed but some vessel set sail for the shores of the New World from some English port, for the most part as secretly as possible, simply because the emigrants did not wish to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance. The lists of the year 1635 alone are complete. Of course, this makes it much more difficult to trace our ancestors.

The Baxter tradition is this:—The ancestor of the Baxter family in America, Captain John Baxter, came from England at the time of the English occupation in 1664, in command of a company of Irish volunteers, and for his services received a grant of land on Throgg's Neck, in Westchester County. This tradition is generally current in the so-called Westchester line. The Baxter who comes nearest to filling this description is Captain George Baxter, who certainly came with the English fleet in 1664, but who as certainly