

HILL, Agnes (Baxter). March 18, 1870–March 9, 1917.

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY (BA 1891, MA 1892), CORNELL UNIVERSITY (PhD 1895).

Agnes Sime Baxter was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, the daughter of Janet (Methven) and Robert Baxter. Her parents were born in Scotland, her mother in 1845 and her father in 1844. She had two younger siblings, a sister, Elizabeth, and a brother, Norman, twins born in 1883. Her father was for many years manager of the gas works in Halifax.

Baxter graduated from Dalhousie University in Halifax in 1891, the first woman at Dalhousie to take first class honors in mathematics and mathematical physics; she also received the Sir William Young Gold Medal for her academic accomplishments. She remained at Dalhousie as a graduate student and received her master's degree in 1892. In 1937 her elder daughter wrote, "I always understood that mother was the first woman in Canada to take an M.A. in Math. I suppose – and I know that until a few years ago there was only one other woman who had won the Sir William Young Medal. Mother was too modest to ever tell us much of this" (Owens Papers).

Agnes Baxter entered Cornell University for graduate study in 1892. Her final year, 1894–95, she held an Erastus Brooks fellowship before receiving her PhD in 1895 with major subject pure mathematics, first minor mathematical physics, and second minor physics. The year after receiving her doctorate, she remained at Cornell editing the works of her advisor, James E. Oliver, who had died in March 1895.

On August 20, 1896, Agnes Baxter married Albert Ross Hill (1869–1943) in Halifax. A. Ross Hill, also from Nova Scotia, received a BA from Dalhousie in 1892, studied a year in Europe, and received a PhD from Cornell in 1895 with a dissertation in philosophy. At the time of their marriage A. Ross Hill was professor of psychology and education at the State Normal School in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The following year he joined the philosophy faculty at the University of Nebraska. While they were in Lincoln, Nebraska, they had two daughters, Jessie Methven Hill, born December 13, 1897, and Ester Davison Hill, born March 19, 1903. In 1903 A. Ross Hill joined the educational psychology faculty at the University of Missouri as professor and dean of the school of education. He spent 1907–08 as professor, director of the school of education, and dean of the college of arts and sciences at Cornell before returning the following year to Missouri as president of the University of Missouri.

Agnes Hill died in 1917, shortly before her forty-seventh birthday, in Columbia, Missouri, of pneumonia following influenza and operations during a lengthy illness. Funeral services were held in the Columbia Presbyterian Church; she was buried in the Columbia cemetery. After her death, A. Ross Hill presented Dalhousie with a gift of books "to perpetuate the memory of one of its loyal graduates, who gave her life to assist in [his own] educational work instead of making an independent record for herself" (Wilkins and Dilcher 1988). On March 15, 1988, the Agnes Baxter Reading Room, the library for the Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computing Science at Dalhousie, was officially opened and dedicated.

Organizational affiliations: AAUW, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Pi Lambda Theta.

Dissertation:

1895 [Baxter, A. S.] On Abelian integrals: A resume of Neumann's "Abelsche Integrale," with comments and applications. PhD dissertation, Cornell University, directed by James Edward Oliver.

References to: [BioWMath](#), DcCanB 14, [MacTutor](#), NotMat, NotSci 2, NotTwCS 1S.

"Hill-Baxter: A. Ross Hill and Agnes Sime Baxter of Halifax Married." *Oshkosh (WI) Daily Northwestern*, 26 Aug 1896.

"Mrs. A. Ross Hill Dies Today." Unidentified Columbia (MO) newspaper, 9 Mar 1917.

"Mrs. A. Ross Hill Dead." *Missouri Alumnus* 5 (15 Mar 1917): 187-88.

"[Baxter, Agnes Sime: In Memoriam.](#)" *Dalhousie Gazette*, 15 Jun 1917.

Wilkins, Gina and Karl Dilcher. "Dalhousie University Honours Alumna with Room Dedication." (Press Release) 11 Mar 1988.

Other sources: Owens questionnaire 1937 (completed by daughter?); Owens Papers; Williams Papers; correspondence with Karl Dilcher, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Dalhousie University; Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library; DcAmB 32 (Hill, A. Ross); Canadian Census 1881, 1901 (Nova Scotia); US Census 1900 NE, 1910 MO; Missouri death certificate.

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