



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 1978

Hopkinson family
Papers

1736-1941 (bulk 1800-1841)
43 volumes, 8.5 lin. feet

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Restrictions: None

Related Collections at HSP: Francis Hopkinson papers (Am .8101/ Collection 746)

Joseph Hopkinson manuscript (Am .085/ Collection 293)

Mrs. Francis T. Redwood collection (Am .12905/ Collection 540)

James Gibson papers (Collection 236)

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Abstract

The Hopkinson family was a prominent political family of Philadelphia and Bordentown, New Jersey. Thomas Hopkinson (1709-1751) was a merchant, a lawyer, and a diplomat. Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791), Thomas's son, was a jurist, author, musician, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Joseph Hopkinson (1770-1842), Francis's son, was a Pennsylvania congressman from 1815 to 1819, a federal judge from 1828 to 1842, and author of the anthem *Hail, Columbia*. Joseph's son, Oliver Hopkinson (1812-1905), served during the Civil War with the 1st Regiment, Delaware Volunteers and with the 51st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania Militia.

Covering four generations, the Hopkinson family papers consist principally of incoming correspondence; but there are also outgoing letters, documents, manuscript notes, and printed material. All papers have been bound in volumes, and photostatic copies of most volumes are available to researchers.

Background note

Thomas Hopkinson, born in England in 1709, immigrated to the American colonies in the early 1730s. There he served as a lawyer and judge of the vice-admiralty for the province of Pennsylvania. He grew to be well known for his scientific experiments, particularly with electricity, and through this work became well acquainted with Benjamin Franklin, who became a lifelong friend. Hopkinson, a leading citizen of Philadelphia, was the first president of the American Philosophical Society and served as a trustee of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania).

In 1736, Thomas Hopkinson married Mary Johnson (1718-1804), the daughter of Baldwin Johnson and his wife, Jane (Eyre) Johnson. The couple was married at Christ Church. They had eight children, six of whom lived to adulthood: Francis, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, Jane, and Ann. Thomas's early death in 1751 left his wife to care for the children, the oldest of whom, Francis, had just turned fourteen.

Thomas Hopkinson had been an influential member of Philadelphia society, and his wife had eminent connections. In 1766, Francis traveled to England, and while there, visited

his mother's uncle, the Bishop of Worcester, at Hartlebury Castle. Not long after returning home to America, Francis courted and married Ann Borden, the daughter of Joseph Borden and Elizabeth Rogers of Bordentown, New Jersey.

Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) was a member of the first graduating class of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) in 1757. He then studied law under Benjamin Chew and went on to become a well respected lawyer and jurist. He worked as the secretary for the Pennsylvania Indian Commission and was a customs collector for the ports of Salem, New Jersey, and Newcastle, Delaware. Relocating after his 1768 marriage to Ann Borden of Bordentown, New Jersey, Hopkinson was appointed to the Provincial Council of that colony by Governor William Franklin.

When war with Great Britain was imminent, Hopkinson resigned his royal appointments and represented New Jersey at the Continental Congress. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and during the course of the war served as chairman of the Navy Board and treasurer of the Continental Loan Office. Returning to his home state in 1779, he was appointed judge of the Admiralty Court for Pennsylvania, and was a member of the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention. In 1790 President Washington appointed him United States judge for the district of Pennsylvania.

Well-known as a lawyer and a patriot, Hopkinson was also a satirist and humorist. His writings include *The Prophecy*, concerning the British oppression of the American colonies, and *Plan of Improvement in the Art of Paper War*. He also dabbled in poetry and composed music. His composition *My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free*, written in 1757, is commonly regarded as the first secular musical composition by an American composer. During the British occupation of Philadelphia during the Revolution, he penned a humorous song entitled *Battle of the Kegs*. Hopkinson's career as a songwriter, satirist, and jurist was cut short when he died suddenly in 1791, at the age of fifty-three.

Francis Hopkinson and Ann Borden, who was the daughter of Joseph Borden and Elizabeth Rogers, had five children who lived to adulthood: Joseph, Elizabeth, Mary, Anne, and Francis. Joseph (b. 1770), the eldest son, became a lawyer of national repute. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1786, he was admitted to the Philadelphia bar in 1791. In 1795 he defended those charged with treason during the Whiskey Rebellion, and in 1798 was a representative in the government's negotiations with the Oneidas. In 1799 he represented Dr. Benjamin Rush in his libel suit against publisher William Cobbett, winning a sum of \$5,000 in damages for the doctor. In 1804 and 1805 he defended Justice Samuel Chase during his impeachment trial, argued before the United States Senate, which further burnished his growing reputation.

Hopkinson, a staunch Federalist, briefly interrupted his legal career to serve two terms as a United States congressman, elected to the House in 1814 and 1816. He did not run for reelection in 1818, but retained a strong foothold in Washington by arguing several landmark cases before the Supreme Court in 1819. As counsel for the state of Maryland in the case *McCulloch v. Maryland*, Hopkinson uncharacteristically, and unsuccessfully, argued for states' rights. With Daniel Webster, he argued the case *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, and Hopkinson also argued the case of *Sturges v. Crowninshield*. In 1828

President John Quincy Adams appointed Hopkinson federal judge for the eastern district of Pennsylvania. As a judge, Hopkinson delivered the opinion for the case *Wheaton v. Peters*, which serves as the basis for American copyright law.

In addition to his eminence as a lawyer, Joseph Hopkinson was also a poet and musician, and the author of the lyrics to the famous anthem *Hail, Columbia!* An avid supporter of the arts, Hopkinson served for many years as the president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and was also vice president of the American Philosophical Society for a period. The prominence of his family, affirmed by his 1794 marriage to Emily Mifflin, the daughter of Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin and Sarah Morris, combined with Hopkinson's considerable intellectual talents, placed him in the most active political and social circle of the era. Friends, colleagues, and acquaintances included John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Joel Poinsett, John Marshall, Bushrod Washington, Richard Stockton, Joseph Dennie, John Story Jenks, and his godmother, Elizabeth Powel.

In addition to the Hopkinsons' Philadelphia house on Spruce Street between Third and Fourth Streets, they maintained the family home in Bordentown, New Jersey, where there was a small farm. It was in Bordentown where Hopkinson met perhaps his most famous friend, Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's older brother and the former King of Spain and Naples. Bonaparte, banished from much of Europe, moved to the United States in 1816 and purchased an enormous estate in Bordentown. He and Hopkinson, neighbors for more than twenty years, shared a love of fine art and an interest in literature and politics. Upon Bonaparte's return to Europe in the 1830s, Hopkinson became responsible for all of his affairs in the United States. Through their friendship, the Hopkinson family was introduced to European dignitaries, artists, and writers.

Fourteen children were born to Joseph and Emily (Mifflin) Hopkinson, although only nine lived to adulthood: Thomas, Francis, Elizabeth Borden, John Penington, Alexander Hamilton, James, Oliver, Edward Coale, and Joseph. Three sons, Alexander (known as Hamilton), John, and Edward, died as young men. Among this brood were doctors, lawyers, musicians, and naval officers.

Elizabeth Borden Hopkinson (b. 1800) enjoyed a special place as the only daughter in her large family. A favorite visitor at the Adams residence in Washington, she had a wide circle of admirers and friends. In 1824 she married John Julius Keating (b. 1802), the son of Colonel John Keating, who had been an officer in the French army. John Julius Keating had a brief career in the Pennsylvania State Legislature before his death in 1827 at the age of twenty-five. In 1832 Elizabeth married William Shepard Biddle, who was nearly twenty years her senior. His death in 1835 left Elizabeth twice widowed at the age of thirty-five. She did not marry again, and neither of her marriages produced any children. She died in 1891, outliving not only her parents, but two husbands and all but one of her thirteen siblings.

Oliver Hopkinson, the only one of Elizabeth's siblings to survive her, was born in 1812. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1832, and, like the generations before him, studied law, eventually serving as the assistant to William Meredith, the U.S.

district attorney. In 1845 he married Eliza Swaim, and the couple had eleven children, nine of whom lived until adulthood: William Francis, Joseph, Edward, Elizabeth Borden, Emily Olivia, Oliver Jr., Julius, James, and Gabriella.

Oliver Hopkinson was involved with a number of local paramilitary units, including the National Grays and the Cadwalader Grays. He served as lieutenant colonel of the First Delaware Volunteers during the first two years of the Civil War and was wounded at the Battle of Antietam. After resigning his commission in 1863, he was offered command of the 51st Pennsylvania, which he accepted, and he maintained that position until the end of the war. He died in 1905, at which time he was the oldest living graduate of the University of Pennsylvania.

Scope & content

This collection documents the history of the Hopkinson family of Philadelphia and Bordentown, New Jersey through four generations.* The collection consists of twenty-one bound volumes of original manuscripts from the family, as well as twenty-one photostatic copies of seventeen original volumes, and a photostatic copy of a table of contents that contains inventories for Volumes 2 through 18. All volumes retain their original numbers and the table of contents has been listed as Volume 21. (Please see volume listing on Page 9 for details.)

The original manuscripts were arranged, mounted, and bound by the Hopkinson family. The photostatic copies reflect this same arrangement, and researchers are asked to use these copies of the volumes whenever possible. There are no copies available for Volumes 1 (Manuscripts), Volume 19 (Oliver Hopkinson Civil War letters), or Volume 20 (Newspaper scrapbook).

Volumes 1 and 20 are the only two that do not contain correspondence. Volume 1 contains diplomas, certificates, commissions, appointments, and other official documents garnered by various family members. Volume 20 houses a small collection of newspapers that appear to have been saved and mounted because they contain articles either on the Hopkinsons or on notable national events. The earliest newspaper in the volume is an issue of the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* from 9 July 1788, while the latest is the front page from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* from 4 March 1941. Most of the papers date from the 1800s and include issues of the *United States Gazette*, *Daily Federal Republican*, and the *Western Monitor*. There is also a series of articles from 1930 from the *New York Times Magazine* on Napoleon II, Napoleon Bonaparte's son, who was nicknamed "L'Aiglon." An inventory of the newspapers in Volumes 20 is available in Appendix B on page 12.

Volumes 2 to 19 contain mostly personal and business correspondence, as well as scattered bills, receipts, invoices, and other financial records. While several different family members are represented throughout the collection, most of the material

* A genealogical report on the descendants of Thomas Hopkinson is available in Appendix A starting on page 10 of this guide.

originated from Thomas Hopkinson (1709-1759), Francis Hopkinson (1731-1791), Joseph Hopkinson (1770-1842), and Oliver Hopkinson (1812-1905).

While Thomas and Francis, both politicians, corresponded with many notable figures of the colonial era, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Morris, and Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Hopkinson's letters are especially prevalent throughout the collection and shed light on his work as a lawyer and a judge. For insights into Joseph's personal affairs, Volume 16, parts 1 and 2 contain letters that he wrote to his wife, Emily, between 1798 and 1845. Additionally, Volume 8, parts 1 and 2 contain letters to Joseph from his friend, the French expatriate Joseph Bonaparte (1768-1844), who had arrived in Bordentown, New Jersey, in 1816. Although he spent approximately twenty years of his life living in the United States, all of Bonaparte's letters save two are written in French. (Most letters are accompanied by typed translations.) Bonaparte often went by the name Count de Survilliers, and in his letters often referred to himself in the third person. Bonaparte wrote frequently to Hopkinson throughout the 1820s and 1830s, and also wrote occasionally to other members of the Hopkinson family, regularly extending invitations to them to dine at his estate, Point Breeze.

Another significant group of family letters are the "Civil War letters" from Oliver Hopkinson when he served first with the 1st Regiment, Delaware Volunteers, and then with the 51st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania Militia.

In addition to letters devoted to family and business affairs, a few of the volumes contain letters that were collected for their autographs, such as Volume 5 (Authors), Volume 6 (Miscellaneous foreign), and Volume 9 (Philadelphians). Volume 12 specifically contains letters written to various Hopkinsons from women, many of whom frequented the country's highest social circles, such as Fanny Butler, Louisa Catherine Adams, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Elizabeth Powel.

Separation report

None.

Related materials

At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

Francis Hopkinson papers (Am .8101/Collection 746)
Joseph Hopkinson manuscript (Am .085/Collection 293)
Mrs. Francis T. Redwood collection (Am .12905/Collection 540)
James Gibson papers (Collection 236)

At the Library Company of Philadelphia:

Hopkinson Family "Receipts Culinary" book

Subjects

Bank of the United States (1816-1836)
Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts
Rock Hill Academy (Ellicott City, Md.)
United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, 51st (1861-1865)
United States. Congress. (14th, 1st session: 1815-1816). House
United States. Congress. (14th, 2nd session: 1816-1817). House
United States. Congress. (15th, 1st session: 1817-1818). House
United States. Congress. (15th, 2nd session: 1818-1819). House

Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848 – Correspondence
Adams, Louisa Catherine, 1775-1852 – Correspondence
Baldwin, Henry, 1780-1844
Betts, Samuel Rossiter, 1786-1868
Biddle, Elizabeth, 1800-1891
Binney, Horace, 1780-1875
Bonaparte family
Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850 – Correspondence
Clay, Henry, 1777-1852 – Correspondence
Coale, Samuel S. (Samuel Stringer), 1754-1798
Dashkov, Andrei Iakovlevich, 1777-1830
Dayton, Jonathan, 1760-1824
Duche, Jacob, 1738-1798
DuPonceau, Peter S., 1760-1844 – Correspondence
Du Pont, Eleuthérie Irénée, 1771-1834
Everett, Edward, 1794-1865 – Correspondence
Fergusson, Elizabeth Graeme, 1737-1801 – Correspondence
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 – Correspondence
Gaston, William, 1778-1844
Gilpin, Henry D. (Henry Dillworth), 1801-1860
Grouchy, Emmanuel, marquis de, 1766-1847

Hamilton, Alexander, 1757-1804 – Correspondence
Hopkinson, A. Hamilton (Alexander Hamilton), 1804-1827
Hopkinson, Ann Borden, 1747-1827
Hopkinson, Emily Mifflin
Hopkinson, Francis, 1737-1791
Hopkinson, Francis, 1781-1870
Hopkinson, Francis, 1796-1870
Hopkinson, John P. (John Penington), 1801-1836
Hopkinson, Joseph, 1770-1842
Hopkinson, Mary Johnson, 1718-1804
Hopkinson, Oliver, 1812-1905
Hopkinson, Thomas, 1709-1751
Hopkinson, Thomas, 1747-1784
Hopkinson, Thomas Mifflin, 1794-1871
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826 – Correspondence
Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, 1768-1844 – Correspondence
Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, 1768-1844 – Family
Kemble, Fanny, 1809-1893 – Correspondence
Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Du Motier, Marquis de, 1757-1834
Lallemand, Charles François Antoine, baron, 1774-1839
Laurens, Henry, 1724-1792
McLane, Louis, 1786-1857
Maillard, Louis.
Marshall, John, 1755-1835
Morgan, John, 1735-1789
Morgan, Mary, 1742-1785
Mosbourg, Jean-Antoine-Michel Agar, comte de, 1771-1844
Murat, Achille, 1801-1847 – Correspondence
Murat, Lucien, 1803-1878
Napoleon I, Emperor of the French, 1769-1821 – Friends and associates
Peters, Richard, 1780-1848
Poinsett, Joel Roberts, 1779-1851-- Correspondence
Poletika, Petr Ivanovich, 1778-1849.
Powel, Elizabeth Willing, 1743-1830
Rush, Richard, 1780-1859
Sergeant, John, 1779-1852
Swaim, Wm. (William)
Sparks, Jared, 1789-1866 – Correspondence
Stockton, Richard, 1764-1828
Story, Joseph, 1779-1845
Walsh, Robert, 1784-1859
Washington, Bushrod, 1762-1829 – Correspondence
Washington, George, 1732-1799 – Correspondence
Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852 – Correspondence

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Acquisition information

Gift of Edward Hopkinson Jr., 1946-1948.

Alternative format

Henry Baldwin's letters, Volume 4, pages 42-90, are available on microfilm: XR 989

Volume 6, pages 32-35, 39-40, 44-48; Volume 8, parts 1 and 2 (Joseph Bonaparte correspondence); and Volume 16, pages 48-49, are also on microfilm: XR 990.

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], Hopkinson Family Papers (Collection 1978), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Volume listing

Folder title	Date	Volume	Copy? Y/N
Manuscripts	1757-1882	1	No
Letters, 1736-1800	ca. 1939	2a 2b	Yes
Correspondence: J. Kent Kane, Richard Peters, Joseph Story, B. Washington, 1816-1840	ca. 1939	3	Yes
Correspondence: Henry Baldwin, Horace Binney, William Gaston, Joseph Hopkinson, R. L. Stockton, 1806-1841	ca. 1939	4	Yes
Authors, 1802-1842	ca. 1939	5	Yes
Miscellaneous foreign, 1812-1878	ca. 1939	6	Yes
Correspondence: Adams, Clary, Everett, Lafayette, Marshall, Webster, 1822-1841	ca. 1939	7	Yes
Joseph Bonaparte, 1818-1841	ca. 1939	8a 8b	Yes Yes
Philadelphians, 1815-1841	ca. 1939	9	Yes
Miscellaneous, 1807-1838	ca. 1939	10	Yes
Political letters, 1800-1840	ca. 1939	11	Yes
Letters from ladies, 1793-1878	ca. 1939	12	Yes
Correspondence, 1760-1805	ca. 1939	13	Yes
Correspondence to Joseph Hopkinson, 1817-1841	ca. 1939	14	Yes
Correspondence from Joseph Hopkinson, 1797-1841, 1919	ca. 1939	15	Yes
Correspondence to Emily Hopkinson, 1798-1845, n.d.	ca. 1939	16a 16b	Yes Yes
Miscellaneous, 1786-1919, n.d.	ca. 1939	17a 17b	Yes Yes
Miscellaneous, 1813-1910, n.d.	ca. 1939	18	Yes
Oliver Hopkinson Civil War letters, autographs	1861-1863, n.d.	19	No
Newspaper scrapbook	1788, 1816-1840, 1930, 1941	20	No
Table of contents for Volumes 2-18	ca. 1939	21	Yes
Volumes 2-18: original manuscripts	1736-1919	22-40	No

Appendix A: descendants of Thomas Hopkinson

Generation No. 1

1. THOMAS¹ HOPKINSON He married MARY NICHOLLS.

Child of THOMAS HOPKINSON and MARY NICHOLLS is:

2. i. THOMAS² HOPKINSON, b. 1709; d. 1751.

Generation No. 2

2. THOMAS² HOPKINSON (*THOMAS*¹) was born 1709, and died 1751. He married MARY JOHNSON. She was born 1718, and died 1804.

Children of THOMAS HOPKINSON and MARY JOHNSON are:

3. i. FRANCIS³ HOPKINSON, b. 1737; d. 1791.
ii. THOMAS HOPKINSON, b. 1747; d. 1784.
iii. ELIZABETH HOPKINSON, b. 1738; m. JACOB DUCHE; b. 1738; d. 1798.
iv. MARY HOPKINSON, b. 1742; d. 1785; m. JOHN MORGAN; b. 1735; d. 1789.
v. ANN HOPKINSON, b. 1745; m. SAMUEL STRINGER COALE; b. 1754; d. 1798.
vi. MARGARET HOPKINSON, b. 1749; d. 1751.
vii. JANE HOPKINSON, b. 1744; d. 1811.

Generation No. 3

3. FRANCIS³ HOPKINSON (*THOMAS*², *THOMAS*¹) was born 1737, and died 1791. He married ANN BORDEN, daughter of JOSEPH BORDEN and ELIZABETH ROGERS. She was born 1747, and died 1827.

Children of FRANCIS HOPKINSON and ANN BORDEN are:

4. i. JOSEPH⁴ HOPKINSON, b. 1770; d. 1842.
ii. ELIZABETH HOPKINSON, b. 1772; d. 1839; m. JONATHAN WILLIAM CONDY.
iii. MARY HOPKINSON, b. 1773; d. 1806; m. ISAAC SMITH.
iv. JAMES HOPKINSON, b. 1769; d. 1775.
5. v. ANNE HOPKINSON, b. 1777; d. 1868.
vi. FRANCIS HOPKINSON, b. 1781; m. MARY HEWITT.

Generation No. 4

4. JOSEPH⁴ HOPKINSON (*FRANCIS*³, *THOMAS*², *THOMAS*¹) was born 1770, and died 1842. He married EMILY MIFFLIN 1794, daughter of THOMAS MIFFLIN and SARAH MORRIS. She died 1850.

Children of JOSEPH HOPKINSON and EMILY MIFFLIN are:

- i. THOMAS MIFFLIN⁵ HOPKINSON, b. 1794; d. 1871; m. MARY PEARSON.
- ii. FRANCIS HOPKINSON, b. 1796; d. 1870; m. ANN BIDDLE.
- iii. ELIZABETH BORDEN HOPKINSON, b. 1800; d. 1891.
- iv. JOHN PENINGTON HOPKINSON, b. 1801; d. 1836.
- v. ALEXANDER HAMILTON HOPKINSON, b. 1804; d. 1827.
- vi. JAMES HOPKINSON, b. 1810; d. 1875; m. CAROLINE SEABROOK.
- vii. OLIVER HOPKINSON, b. 1812; d. 1905; m. ELISA SWAIM.
- viii. EDWARD COALE HOPKINSON, b. 1814; d. 1831.
- ix. JOSEPH HOPKINSON, b. 1816; d. 1865; m. (1) JOANNA MCCREA; m. (2) SARAH WISTAR.

5. ANNE⁴ HOPKINSON (*FRANCIS*³, *THOMAS*², *THOMAS*¹) was born 1777, and died 1868. She married EBENEZER STOUT.

Child of ANNE HOPKINSON and EBENEZER STOUT is:

- i. JAMES H.⁵ STOUT.

Appendix B: list of newspapers in Volume 43 (in order as they appear)

Newspaper	Date
<i>The Rose Bud: devoted to literature and domestic intelligence</i>	7 November 1840
<i>The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser</i>	9 July 1788
<i>United States' Gazette</i>	18 January 1816
<i>Daily Federal Republican</i>	9 February 1816
<i>Relfs Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser</i>	16 February 1816
<i>Daily Federal Republican</i>	7 March 1816
<i>Daily Federal Republican</i>	11 March 1816
<i>The Western Monitor</i>	12 April 1816
<i>The United States Gazette</i>	10 October 1827
<i>New York Times Magazine</i> , "L'Aiglon in His Austrian Cage"	26 January 1930
<i>New York Times Magazine</i> , "Maurois Explains the Deluge of Lives"	3 February 1930
<i>New York Times Magazine</i> , "The Last Lonely Flights of L'Aiglon"	9 February 1930
<i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i> (front page only)	4 March 1941
<i>National Gazette and Literary Register</i>	23 November 1826