

The Hopkins - Stearns Papers

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Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901

By
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Revised by
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Introduction

Most of the material in the Hopkins - Stearns Papers is personal correspondence. The bulk of this correspondence concerns the Dr. Frank Hopkins family of Keeseville and the Reuben Stearns family of Parishville and Potsdam. The connection between the two families is the marriage of two of Frank Hopkins' sons (Frank and Charles) to two of Reuben Stearns' daughters (Florence and Cora). Since there is little direct correspondence between the two families, however, the Hopkins letters have been separated from the Stearns letters. Miscellaneous materials have been interfiled.

Dr. Frank Hopkins was born in Vermont and moved to Essex County, New York after receiving his education at the Medical College of Woodstock. He had a private practice, and was the Assistant Assessor, a medical examiner, and an agent for Traveller's Insurance and Equitable Insurance. In 1873 he became the physician at Clinton Prison. In 1876 he returned to Keeseville, New York and became a druggist. He was also elected School Commissioner of Essex County, and served in that position for three years. He died in 1879.

Dr. Hopkins was married to Mariette Maynard and they had three [sic] children (Frank, Charles, George, and Nellie). Most of the Hopkins material is personal in nature. These letters give an intimate view of family relations and a look at how a late-19th century family lived in northeastern New York.

Of particular interest is a series of letters received by Dr. Hopkins from people he knew and worked with at Clinton Prison, which include both prisoners and employees. These letters tell of conditions at Clinton Prison and attitudes about it during the 1870s. Other items of particular interest are several diaries written by Nellie Hopkins and Frank Hopkins, children of Dr. Hopkins. These are interesting because they give a first-hand description of daily life and emotional and philosophical attitudes of the two children.

Reuben Stearns married Margaret Tichener from Parishville in St. Lawrence County in 1854. Prior to this, he had gone west, first to Indiana and then to California where he was a miner. There are good descriptions of his travels west in his letters to Margaret Tichener. He returned to Parishville, was married, and became a farmer.

While Reuben Stearns was living in the West, he wrote many letters to Margaret Tichener expressing his affection for her and his feelings about the places he stayed. Although the content of these letters is mostly personal, they still offer an insight into how some people lived and felt in the mid-19th century.

Other letters in the collection are to Margaret Tichener from close friends. There is also extensive correspondence among the children of Dr. Frank Hopkins, their friends, and with the Stearns' daughters.

Miscellaneous items in the collection include photos, bills, brochures, invitations, valentines, greeting cards, and newspaper clippings. This collection was donated by Mrs. William R. Young and was deposited in the Special Collections by the Clinton County Historical Association.

BACKGROUND SOURCES IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Census of Parishville, N. Y., St. Lawrence County, of 1860.
Funeral discourse on Dr. Frank Hopkins, in the Hopkins - Stearns Papers.

CONTENTS

This collection is stored in two Hollinger boxes, one half-Hollinger box, and one flat box. It is subdivided into numbered folders, except for the diaries. Box 1 contains correspondence. Box 2 contains correspondence and bills. Box 3 contains invitations, photos, deeds, and other miscellaneous items. Box 4 consists of the diaries and three short journals.

BOX 1: STEARNS CORRESPONDENCE

1/1: 1845-1849 (14 items)

1/2:1850 (11 items)

1/3: 1851-1852 (10 items)

1/4:1853-1855 (11 items)

1/5: 1856-1859 (9 items)

1/6: 1860-1866 (8 items)

1/7: Undated (6 items)

HOPKINS CORRESPONDENCE

1/8: 1848-1859 (18 items)

1/9: 1869-1872 (19 items)

1/10: Jan. 1873-Mar. 1873 (13 items)

1/11: Apr. 1873-May 1873 (12 items)

1/12: Jun. 1873-Sept. 1874 (14 items)

1/13: Oct. 1873-Nov. 1873 (15 items)

1/14: Dec. 1873-Jan. 1874 (12 items)

1/15: Feb. 1874- Mar. 1874 (10 items)

1/16: Apr. 1874- Jun. 1874 (13 items)

1/17: Jul. 1874-Sep. 1874 (16 items)

1/18: Oct. 1874-Dec. 1874 (11 items)

1/19: Jan. 1875-Feb. 1875 (13 items)

1/20: Mar. 1875- Apr. 1875 (18 items)

1/21: May 1875- Jun. 1875 (15 items)

1/22: Jul. 1875- Aug. 1875 (13 items)

1/23: Sep. 1875- Oct. 1875 (13 items)

1/24: Nov. 1875-Dec. 1875 (13 items)

1/25: 1876-1877 (16 items)

Box 1 Items Total: 323

BOX 2 HOPKINS CORRESPONDENCE

2/26: 1893-1899 (15 items)

2/27: 1900-1901 (14 items)

2/28: 1903-1905 (16 items)

2/29: Undated (17 items)

2/30: Correspondence with Dr. Hopkins and prison inmates and personnel 1876 (14 items)

2/31: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/32: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/33: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/34: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/35: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/36: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/37: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/38: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/39: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/40: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/41: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/42: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (20 items)

2/43: Bills to Dr. Hopkins: medical and music bills (9 items)

Box 2 Items Total: 325

BOX 3 MISCELLANEOUS

3/44: Invitations, valentine, greeting cards (9 items)

3/45: Land papers (19 items)

3/46: Materials dealing with deaths of Dr. Hopkins and Frank Hopkins Jr. (13 items)

3/47: Poems: unknown authors (2 items)

3/48: Pamphlets, programs, and medical brochures (23 items)

3/49: Photos, news clippings, report cards, birth certificate (Frank Holcolmbe), WWI pledges for war savings, stamps, etc. (25 items)

Box Three Items Total: 91

BOX 4 JOURNALS AND DIARIES

Folder 50

3 short journals (3 items)

10 diaries - 6 Nellie Hopkins (1887, 10 ITEMS 1888, 1889, 1902, 1906, 1910);

1 Dr. Hopkins (1876); 2 Frank Hopkins Jr. (1875, 1908-1909);

1 unknown (1897)

1 Book of Masonic Order initiation rites 1 ITEM

Box 4 Items Total: 14

Number of items

Box 1: 323

Box 2: 325

Box 3: 91

Box 4: 14

Items Total: 753