



THE HERITAGE MUSEUM

HARRISONBURG-ROCKINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The John L. Hopkins Collection

HRHS-130
is available for

Research and Study
purposes only

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society
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Archival and Manuscript Collections Finding Aid

ACCESSION No.: HRHS -130

COLLECTION TITLE: John L. Hopkins Collection

DATES: 1863-1864

SIZE: 1.5” 2 folders

DONOR: John L. Hopkins III

PROCESSED: complete January, 2014.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

The following information was taken from an HRHS exhibit on display from May 2013 to November 2013, (Hopkins Letters Panel I):

“During the restoration of the Hopkins ancestral home, “Cave Hill,” in 2003, the owners discovered a cache of letters and Confederate money hidden in a wall. The letters were penned by family members in 1863 and 1864 in the midst of the Civil War. Although damaged by weather, critters, and time, the stories of families separated, soldiers in battle, scarcity, fear, and bravery, along with a bit of romance are revealed in these writings posted between Middleburg, Virginia, and Cave Hill, as well as military camps. The Hopkins men and their friends wrote from the battlefields while the women describe home and family, notably the effect of Mosby’s Raiders and the Yankees on daily civilian life in Middleburg as the War was wearing on.

During the War years, Mary Virginia (“Ginnie”) Lipscomb, the recipient of the letters, was living at Cave Hill, the home of her uncle Gerard Tyson Hopkins, as tutor for his children. Ginnie’s mother, Elizabeth Hopkins Lipscomb, Gerard Tyson’s sister, and her daughter, Ann Elizabeth (“Annie”), wrote from Middleburg. Cousin George Kisling, a surveyor, traveled in the Valley with the Confederate forces. Other Hopkins men joined the Confederate army: Gerard Tyson Hopkins and his half-brothers, Johns Edwards Hopkins, Luther Wesley Hopkins, Howard Robert Hopkins, and Richard Elliott Hopkins, their cousin Whitfield Kisling, and Elizabeth’s young son, Robert Lipscomb.

The homestead at Cave Hill Farm, located in Rockingham County near McGaheysville, was completed in 1847 and owned by John Henry Kisling during the War. Cave Hill, nestled between the Massanutten Peak and the Blue Ridge Mountains, has been the ancestral home of the Hopkins family since 1873 as a result of Hopkins men marrying Kisling women for two generations: Mary Catherine Kisling to Phillip Hammond Hopkins Jr. in 1816 and Frances Virginia Kisling to Gerard Tyson Hopkins in 1847. Cave Hill survived the burning during the Civil War, although its barns did not. Presumably, Ginnie Lipscomb hid the letters.

This exhibit features digital reproductions of twenty-two letters with transcriptions in detail

through the diligent efforts of Nancy Hill Hess.”

The letters in this collection were written between family members and friends of Elizabeth Maria Hopkins Lipscomb (the people who wrote the letters are in bold print). The first letter was written from Elizabeth Lipscomb, most likely from the “Colonial Inn” in Middleburg, VA to her daughter, Jinnie, at “Cave Hill” in McGaheysville, VA.

Elizabeth was the oldest child of Phillip Hammond Hopkins, Jr. She was the first of his fifteen children; six from his first wife, Mary Catherine Kisling Hopkins; two from his second wife, Mary Hughes Hopkins; and seven from his third wife, Johannah Hunton Carter Hopkins.

Elizabeth Hopkins married Robert M. Lipscomb, a Methodist preacher. They lived in Baltimore prior to the war. She and Robert had five children; **Mary Virginia “Jinnie”**; **Ann Elizabeth “Annie”**; Robert D.; Cassandra; and Edwin.

Being southern sympathizers, when the “war between the states” broke out, the Lipscomb’s temporarily moved to Middleburg, Virginia. There they stayed with Elizabeth’s younger sister and husband, Catherine Barbara Hopkins and Edwin Broun where Catherine and Edwin ran a general store and the “Colonial Inn” (aka “Windsor Inn” circa 1824).

Elizabeth’s oldest daughter, **“Jinnie” (Mary Virginia) Lipscomb**, went on to “Cave Hill” in McGaheysville, Virginia, to live with her Uncle Gerard and Aunt Fannie (Frances Kisling) Hopkins and their family. **Jinnie** taught the children. Jinnie’s sister, **“Annie” (Ann Elizabeth) Lipscomb**, stayed in Middleburg and taught the Broun children.

Others who wrote letters were:

Johns Edward Hopkins – half-brother of Gerard Tyson Hopkins and Elizabeth Hopkins Lipscomb. He served in the 10th Virginia; the Twenty-Third Virginia Cavalry; and eventually rode with Mosby’s Raiders. He was captured on December 21, 1864 and spent Christmas in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC. Later he was sent to Fort Warren in Boston Harbor for the rest of the war.

George J. Kisling - older brother of Frances “Fannie” Kisling Hopkins and Gerard Tyson’s brother-in-law. George was an engineer with an office in Staunton, Virginia. He surveyed for the Confederacy.

Dangerfield Fauntleroy “D.F.” Neill – a neighbor of the Broun family in Middleburg who fought for the South. He is mentioned in Luther “Lute” Hopkins book, From Bull Run to Appomattox, where he is referred to as “Faunt”.

Emphriam C. Watson – probably a family friend. Johns Edward Hopkins mentions the Watson family in his letter of August 1864. This letter may have been given to him by Emphriam, a patient at the Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond, Virginia, to deliver to his father, James Watson. Not sure it ever was.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

This collection contains 23 letters written during the Civil War period and currency found at “Cave Hill”, a c.1830 home located in McGaheysville, VA. This is the home of the Hopkins family and all letters have a direct connection. Letters were found hidden in a

wall cavity, possibly for close to 150 years and provide a record of life in the Middleburg, Loudoun County, and the Shenandoah Valley area of the Civil War.
See Transcription of Hopkins Civil War Letters by Nancy Hess, 2011.

COLLECTION INVENTORY:

5 pieces of confederate currency.

23 letters:

1. February 25; March 5,9,12; April 4,10,1863, Elizabeth Hopkins Lipscomb to Jinnie Lipscomb
2. March 7, April 9-10 1863, Annie Lipscomb to Jinnie.
3. Fall 1863, Annie to Jinnie.
4. Sept no date, Middleburg, Annie to Jinnie.
5. October 21, 1863, Jinnie to George Kisling.
6. November 25, 1863, John Hopkins to Virginia, Jinnie, Li.
7. December 9, 1863, EML to Jinnie.
8. February 10, 1864, Cave Hill, Jinnie to George Kisling.
9. March 13, 1864, Jinnie to George Kisling.
10. March 22, 1864, George Kisling to Jennie.
11. May 3, 1864, George Kisling to Jennie.
12. May 8, 1864, from Annie Lipscomb.
13. May 17, 1864, Camp Roods Hill, John to Jinnie.
14. May 27, 1864, Camp near NM, John to Jinnie.
15. May 31, 1864, Crockett to Lipscomb.
16. June 26, 1864, Cottage, Annie to Jinnie.
17. June 21, 1864, D. F. Neill to Jinnie.
18. July 27, 1864, John to Jinnie, arrested.
19. August, 2, Smithfield Jefferson Co., John to Aunt Fannie and/or Jinnie
20. August 20, 1864, Annie to Jinnie.
21. August 21, 1864 Kisling to Jinnie.
22. September 4, 1864, Watson to father.
23. No date (?Dec 1864?), from Elizabeth Lipscomb to daughter Jinnie.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged into two folders:

Folder 1: Civil War Letters

Folder 2: Confederate Currency