CHARLES S. HOPKINSON COLLECTION

Creator: Joan Hopkinson Shurcliff and William S. Shurcliff; various
Dates: 1869-2006
Quantity: 4 linear feet (8 manuscript containers, 1 microfilm)
Acquisition: Accession #: 2010.33 ; Donated by: Charles H. Shurcliff and Arthur A. Shurcliff
Identification: A68 ; Archive Collection #68
Citation: [Document Title]. The Charles S. Hopkinson Collection, [Box #, Folder #, Item #], Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.

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Language: English

Biographical Note

Charles S. Hopkinson was born in 1869 in Cambridge, Mass and died in 1962 in Beverly, Mass. Portrait painter and landscape watercolorist, Hopkinson grew up in Cambridge and attended the Hopkinson Classical School in Boston (owned by his father, the headmaster). His childhood interest in drawing was channeled into daily landscape compositions, subject to family critique. Upon his entrance to Harvard in 1888, Hopkinson began to draw for the Lampoon. In 1891 he moved to New York to study at the Art Students League, working with John Twachtman and H.
Siddons Mowbray. He married Angelica Rathbone, a fellow student, in 1893 and the two went to Paris.

Hopkinson studied at the Academie Julian with Edmond Aman-Jean, traveled to Brittany, and exhibited in the 1895 salon. In the late 1890’s he worked in Cambridge and showed his paintings in New York (at the SAA) and in Boston.

Returning to Europe in 1901, Hopkinson visited Spain (to study Velazquez and El Greco), Brittany, and Holland (to see his “heroes”, portraits by Hals and Rembrandt). He then began a lucrative career as a portrait painter in Cambridge; his first commission was to paint the baby e.e. cummings (1896, Massachusetts Historical Society). Adopting the color theories of his former neighbor Denman Ross, who had become a prominent collector and a teacher at Harvard, Hopkinson later used the results of Carl Cutler’s experiments with a spinning disk to study the spectrum. He painted over 900 portraits in an appealing, direct style with a palette gradually lightening through his career. Many were commissioned by local educational institutions, especially Harvard, where he acted as house portraitist.

His first marriage having ended in divorce Hopkinson married Elinor Curtis in 1903 and settled in a new home overlooking the ocean on the Curtis estate in Manchester. He exhibited frequently and regularly in the national annuals and at several Boston and New York galleries. His watercolors were described as “modern” in the press and he exhibited three oils in the 1913 Armory show. Instead of allying himself with the local established painters, Hopkinson showed his work with the “Boston Five”, a group of young watercolorists whose bright palettes and decorative compositions were sharply criticized; yet he continued to paint in oil for an elite clientele: among his sitters were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Calvin Coolidge, and John Masefield. In 1919 the National Art Commission selected him to paint some of the participants of the Peace conference at Versailles. Later in life he concentrated on watercolors, traveling frequently to paint. He remained active until about 1960.

Studios: 5 Park St., Boston; 1900-1962 Fenway Studios

Biography courtesy of the Bostonians 1986.

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**Acquisition Note**

Gift of Charles H. Shurcliff and Arthur A. Shurcliff, sons of Joan Hopkinson Shurcliff and William A. Shurcliff.
Scope and Content of the Collection

Brief Description: Material relating to Hopkinson paintings, primarily collected and organized by Joan Hopkinson Shurcliff (youngest daughter of Charles S. Hopkinson) and her husband, William S. Shurcliff in their long-time endeavor to identify and publish two catalogs: one titled “Charles Hopkinson Portraits” and the other titled “Landscape Paintings by Charles Hopkinson.”

This collection provides a unique insight into the laborious efforts, unique skills, determination and dedication of Joan Hopkinson Shurcliff and her husband, William A. Shurcliff to gather information, identify and publish separate catalogs of the portrait and landscape paintings by Charles Hopkinson. The enormity of this task is highlighted by the surprisingly productive life of the artist. He painted approximately 900 portraits, portrait sketches and more than 850 landscapes.

Included in Hopkinson’s portraits are two US presidents, four US Supreme Court Justices, nineteen college and University presidents, forty-five University deans and professors and scores of leading lawyers, bankers and philanthropists.

In addition to examples of their excellent detective work in tracking down privately-owned paintings and obtaining photographs of most, they detail the mechanics of catalog preparation including the classification of paintings by serial number, the organization of related material and establishing dates of paintings where possible.

Included in the collection is an index organized under the subject titles: 1. Administration 2.Groups 3.Reports. In processing the files every effort has been made to adhere to the index and subject titles. Since many of the Hopkinson portraits were members of his own family, the names, nicknames, date of birth of each of the five daughters are set forth for clarification in reviewing the correspondence since names and nicknames are repeatedly referenced.

1.Harriot Hopkinson (Happy) 1/17/1904 Mrs. Alfred Rive
2.Mary Hopkinson (Maly) 9/23/1905 Mrs. John H. Gibbon
3.Isabella Hopkinson (Ibby) 5/8/1907 Mrs. James Halsted
4.Elinor Hopkinson (Elly) 2/21/1910 Mrs. James H. Barr
5.Joan Hopkinson (Joany) 4/2/1913 Mrs. Wm. Shurcliff

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Series Description

Series I: Administration:
Material (letters, reports, receipts, lists) pertinent to the administration of the files.

Series II: Groups:
Correspondence and other writings (letters, reports, lists of paintings, ownership, research notes) by groups including families and individuals; non-profit and profit-making institutions.

Series III: Catalogs
List of the exhibitions, newspapers, clippings, individual portrait and landscape photographs and folders.

Container List

Box 1
Series 1 Administration
Folder 1: A-1 Index to files and content
Folder 2: A-10 Lists and statistics

Series II Groups
Group A: Shurcliff family work product
Folder 5: G -10 Hopkinson sketch books
Folder 6: G -20 a Family correspondence 1985 -1994

Box 2
Folder 1: G- 20b Family correspondence 1995 -2006
Folder 2: G -20c Lists of exhibitions and portraits
Folder 3: G- 40a 8 Heirs newsletter #'s 1-20
Folder 4: G- 40b 8 Heirs newsletter #'s 21 -40
Folder 5: G-40c 8 Heirs newsletter #'s 41 -55

Box 3
Group B: Non-Profit Institutions
Folder 1: G-50 Archives, museums, US Govt.
Folder 2: G-52a galleries, Universities
Folder 3 G-52b Galleries, Universities
Group C: Profit Making Institutions
Folder 4: G-55a Misc. galleries, Museums 1929-1999
Folder 5: G-55b Vose Galleries Correspondence 1985-1991
Box 4
Folder 2: G-55d Vose Galleries show photographs 1991
Folder 4: G-55f Vose Galleries show May/June 2001
Folder 5: G-55g Vose Galleries show account 2001

Box 5
Group D: Families and Individuals
Folder 1: G-61 Harriot Hopkinson Rive Family
Folder 2: G-62 Mary Hopkinson Gibbon Family
Folder 3: G-63a Isabella Hopkinson Halsted Family
Folder 4: G-63b Isabella Hopkinson Halsted Family
Folder 5: G-63c Isabella Hopkinson Halsted Family

Box 6
Folder 1: G-65 Joan Hopkinson Shurcliff
Folder 2: G-71a Family Correspondence
Folder 3: G-71b Family Correspondence

Series III Reports
Folder 4: R-10a Charles Hopkinson writings
Folder 5: R-10b Charles Hopkinson writings
Folder 6: R-11 Photos of Charles Hopkinson
Folder 7: R-12a Misc. writings re Charles Hopkinson

Box 7
Folder 1: R-12b Misc. writings re Charles Hopkinson
Folder 2: R-13 Gifts, bequests to daughters
Folder 3: R-15 Mrs. Charles Hopkinson writings
Folder 4: R-100a Exhibition catalogs
Folder 5: R-100b Exhibition catalogs
Folder 6: R-102 Exhibition lists and misc.
Folder 7: R-200 Articles, magazines and journals

Box 8
Folder 1: R-210a Newspaper clippings 1869-1920
Folder 2: R-210b Newspaper clippings 1921-1949
Folder 3: R-210c Newspaper clippings 1950-1996
Folder 4: R-250a Hopkinson family portraits
Folder 5: R-250b Hopkinson family portraits
Folder 6: R-300 Individual portraits: A-Ayd
Box 9
Folder 1: Individual portraits: Bak-Bee
Folder 2: Individual portraits: Bel-Byr
Folder 3: Individual portraits: Cab-Col
Folder 4: Individual portraits: Cop-Cum
Folder 5: Individual portraits: Cur-Cut

Box 10
Folder 1: Individual portraits: Dan-Eli
Folder 2: Individual portraits: Eme-Gav
Folder 3: Individual portraits: Gib-Gul
Folder 4: Individual portraits: Hal-Hay
Folder 5: Individual portraits: Hen-Hop

Box 11
Folder 1: Individual portraits: Hop-C-I
Folder 2: Individual portraits: Hop-H-I
Folder 3: Individual portraits: Hop-J-M
Folder 4: Individual portraits: Hou-Lam

Box 12
Folder 1: Individual portraits: Lov-Mur
Folder 2: Individual portraits: Nei-Par
Folder 3: Individual portraits: Par-Pez
Folder 4: R-300 Individual portraits: Ple-Ric
Folder 5: R-300 Individual portraits: Rive
Folder 6: R-300 Individual portraits: Roc-Rug

Box 13
Folder 1: R-300 Individual portraits: Sac-Shr
Folder 2: R-300 Individual portraits: Shurcliff
Folder 3: R-300 Individual portraits: Smi-Swa
Folder 4: R-300 Individual portraits: Tal-War
Folder 5: R-300 Individual portraits: Was-Z
Folder 6: R 360a Drawings, sketches and doodles

Box 14
Folder 1: R 360b Drawings, sketches and doodles
Folder 2: R 37d Lost or stolen paintings
Folder 3: R 375 Display photos, portraits
Folder 4: R 380 Display photos, landscapes
Folder 5: R 385 Photos, scenes and people
Folder 6: R 386 Photos, self portraits
Folder 7: R 387 Photos, misc.
Folder 8: R 390 Possession, ownership
Folder 9: R 395 Restoration, repair
Folder 10: R 398 Replicas, enlargements

Box 15
Folder 1: R 400 Appraisals, art experts
Folder 2: R 415 Exhibitions, future
Folder 3: R 420a Sales 1900 - 1990
Folder 4: R 420b Sales 1990 - 2000
Folder 5: R 430 Gifts
Folder 6: R 440 Drafts, catalogs
Folder 7: R 500 Tracking, paintings