

**A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FUNDS
THAT CAME FROM THE ESTATE OF
EDWARD HOPKINS FROM THE
REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF CAMBRIDGE, FOR THE YEAR 1885**

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A Brief Account of the Funds that Came from the Estate of Edward Hopkins from the Report of the school committee of Cambridge, for the year 1885 by John L. Hildreth

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City of Cambridge. - *School committee*
(1885)

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Prepared by John L. Holdwell



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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FUNDS RECEIVED FROM THE ESTATE OF EDWARD HOPKINS.

SINCE at this time the history of the Hopkins fund, and some knowledge of the worthy man who made this noble gift have an especial interest, it has been deemed fitting to put into this report a short sketch of his life and of the several funds that came from his estate.

In Barnard's History of the Hopkins Grammar School at Hartford, the following outline of the life and career of Mr. Hopkins is given:—

Edward Hopkins, whose beneficent life-work will be perpetuated beyond our times by the schools which his bequests have helped to found or maintain, was born near Shrewsbury, England, in 1600. He was educated in the Royal Free Grammar School of that town, and followed mercantile and commercial pursuits in London, by which he accumulated a considerable fortune. He became early in life a convert to the religious doctrines and observances of the Puritans, and in 1637 embarked his fortunes with a company of personal friends of the same faith, among whom were his father-in-law, Theophilus Eaton, and Rev. John Davenport, to find, if not a "refuge and receptacle for all sorts of consciences," at least an opportunity to worship God in their own way, and administer their civil affairs "more according to the rule of righteousness," than was then the fashion in the old world. After a brief sojourn in Boston, where he received many overtures to settle, he joined the settlement at Hartford, where his character and confidence in business immediately called him to share in the administration of public affairs. In the same year of his arrival his name is found among the "committee" at the general court at Hartford, and we can easily suppose that he took part in that assembly of 1638, by which the "inhabitants and residents of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield did associate and conjoin themselves to be one Public State or Commonwealth," to "maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the

Gospel of the Lord Jesus which we now profess," and in "civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such laws, rules, orders and decrees as shall be made, ordered and decreed," not by the king and council—not even by Royal Parliament, but by the General Court, elected by the whole body of freemen in which the "Supreme Power of the Commonwealth" was declared to reside. That constitution was the nearest approach to a republican and organized democracy,—a democracy in which the people, and the whole people of the several towns acted through representatives in a legislature, elected twice a year by all the inhabitants thereof—which the world had yet seen.

Mr. Hopkins was elected the first secretary of the colony of Connecticut, and deputy governor under the constitution of 1638, and succeeded Mr. Haynes as governor in 1640, and again in 1646, 1648, 1650, 1652 and 1654. In the alternate years he usually filled the office of deputy governor, and was frequently chosen assistant, and also one of the commissioners of the United Colonies. In this last capacity he signed, in behalf of Connecticut, the articles of Confederation in 1643, by which the colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven united for future help and strength under the name of the United Colonies of New England, and was president of that body, when a settlement was made with the Dutch in 1650. In 1640 he was one of the committee appointed to negotiate the purchase from Mr. Fenwick of the post and appurtenances at Saybrook. And, indeed, there was hardly a committee raised on "the foreign relations" of the colony with Massachusetts, the Dutch, or the Indians, in which he did not occupy a prominent place with Geo. Haynes, Capt. Mason, Mr. Whiting, and Wyllis. Like the other public men of the colony, in the intervals of public duties he was diligently engaged in business on his own account.

Governor Hopkins went to England in 1658, on the occasion of his brother's death, with the intention of returning to his family and friends in New England; but he was, soon after his arrival, made warden of the fleet, (an office filled by his brother at the time of his decease) commissioner of the admiralty, and member of parliament. Detained by these new duties, he sent for his family, and died in London in March or April, 1657.

By his will, dated London, March 7, 1657, after disposing of much of his property in New England in legacies, and particularly to the family of Rev. Mr. Hooker, his pastor, he makes the following bequests:—

"And the residue of my estate there (in New England) I do hereby give and bequeath to my father, Theophilus Eaton, Esq., Mr. John Davenport, Mr. John Cullick and Mr. William Goodwin, in full assurance of their trust and faithfulness in disposing of it according to the true intent and purpose of me, the said Edward Hopkins, which is to give some

encouragement in those foreign plantations for the breeding of hopeful youths both at the grammar school and college, for the public service of the country in future times."

"My farther mind and will is, that within six months after the decease of my wife, five hundred pounds be made over into New England, according to the advice of my loving friends, Major Robert Thomson and Mr. Francis Willoughby, and conveyed into the hands of the trustees before mentioned in further prosecution of the aforesaid public ends, which, in the simplicity of my heart, are for the upholding and promoting the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in those distant parts of the earth."

For reasons which do not always appear on the face of the transaction, but which may be gathered from a knowledge of the relations of the trustees to certain controversies which then divided the town of Hartford and kept the two colonies in a ferment, the General Court of Connecticut, by sequestering the estate and by directing the payment of all the rents or debts, not to the trustees, but to the selectmen of the several towns where the property was situated, who were also held accountable to the General Court, delayed for six years its final settlement.

After the departure of Mr. Hopkins to England, differences of opinion as to discipline, baptism and church membership had grown up in the church at Hartford between the pastor, Rev. Samuel Stone, and Mr. William Goodwin (one of the trustees of Mr. Hopkins' will) the ruling elder, which in their progress not only rent his church, but involved all the neighboring churches, indeed almost every church in the colony. At the date of sequestering the estate, Mr. Goodwin and his friends had decided to withdraw from the church and from the jurisdiction of Connecticut, which they finally did, removing to Hadley in the spring of 1659. Mr. Cullick, who sympathized with Mr. Goodwin, removed to Boston in 1659. Mr. Davenport was known to sympathize with the "disaffected party," as Mr. Goodwin and his friends were called. In this state of things, it seems to have been the intention of the trustees in 1660 to divide the estate between New Haven and Hadley; but in the year following, an offer was made by them, through Mr. Goodwin, of an allowance of £350 to the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut upon these conditions:—

1. "That it be improved according to the mind of the donor, expressed in his will,
2. "That the court do also engage to remove all obstructions out of our way, that we may not be disturbed or hindered in the management of the estates according to our trust."

This offer was not accepted, and the order of sequestration was continued. In October, 1663, Governor Winthrop, Mr. Allyn, Mr. Wyllys, and Capt. Talcott, were appointed by the

General Court "to consider what is meet to be attended to in reference to Mr. Hopkins' estate, by him bequeathed to be improved for the promoting of learning, and to make report of their thoughts to the court." On the first of February, 1664, in reply evidently to a communication received from this committee, Mr. Goodwin insists on the removal, by the court, of all obstacles to the legal settlement of the estate, "the which if you shall decline to do betwixt this and the end of March next ensuring the date hereof, this tendery (of £350) is to be judged a nullity, and we shall forthwith endeavor the freeing of the estate elsewhere." This determination of the trustees to apply "elsewhere," (meaning thereby the English Court of Chancery, or direct application to the king for power of administration on the estate), and other considerations, were sufficient to induce the General Court at its next session, in May, 1664, to remove the restraint.

On the 13th of June following (1664) the surviving trustees, Rev. John Davenport, of New Haven, and Mr. William Goodwin of Hadley, signed an instrument under seal, by which, after allotting £400 to the town of Hartford for the support of a Grammar School, according to the will of the donor, they ordered that the rest of the estate should be, all of it equally divided between the towns of New Haven and Hadley, "to be in each of these towns respectively managed and improved toward the erecting and maintaining of a Grammar School in each of them, the management thereof to be in the hands of our assigns, only provided that one hundred pounds out of that half of the estate that Hadley hath should be given and paid to Harvard College." According to this agreement then made, the estate of Edward Hopkins in New England (after paying a few legacies to his friends) was divided, Hartford receiving £400, New Haven £312, Hadley £308, and Harvard College £100.

What became of the £500 which, upon the decease of Mr. Hopkins, was to come from Old England and to be devoted to the same purpose, namely "to give some encouragement in these foreign plantations for the breeding up of hopeful youths both at the grammar school and college for the public service of the country in future times," may be briefly told as follows. His widow died in 1699, having lived, as often happens to annuitants

to an exorbitant old age. She had survived all the trustees by more than thirty years. Daly, Mr. Hopkins' executor and residuary legatee, had also died. The executors of Daly's estate and his heirs at law claimed that, after all the just allowances made, there was not sufficient assets to pay the £500. It would seem also that New Haven, in spite of the pains taken by John Davenport to spread upon the town records the fact that there was still £500 to come, had lost sight of this money that was to be available upon the death of the widow of Edward Hopkins. Nothing was done to oblige the executors of the executor, Daly, to pay over the money or to account for its proper expenditure, until 1708, when a suit in chancery was begun in London by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," asking that the £500 should be given to them to be used in New England, according to the purposes expressed in the will. In 1709 Harvard College also began a similar suit through its agent in London, Mr. Henry Newman, remitting him £40 to be used for that purpose. "On the 9th of July of that year the case came to a hearing and reference was made to a master in chancery to take account of the assets of the said Hopkins estate, liable to the said £500; and in case the said £500 should be recovered, it was ordered and decreed that the same should be paid and applied to the school and college in New England, for the breeding up of scholars there in the school and college, according to the will of the said Edward Hopkins. And in order thereto, the master was to examine witnesses or write to New England to be informed whether there was such a school or college there; and if not, then what school or college was there and on what purposes founded, and to state to this court how he finds the same."

On February 10th, 1710-11, the master reported that there were sufficient assets to pay the legacy, and that "there was about sixty or seventy years ago, and now is, a school and college at Cambridge in New England and called Harvard College; and that about ten years ago there was, and is, a small building made contiguous to the same, and called Stoughton College." On the 7th of March following, his lordship, the Head Keeper Harcourt, decreed that the £500 with interest from June 10th, 1700, to this date, being six months from the death of Anne Hopkins, should be laid out in a purchase of lands in New England, in the

name of the corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel, but the trust be recorded in the deeds to be for the benefit of the college and grammar school at Cambridge in New England. A final decree, however, was made March 20th, 1712-13, in which it was ordered that the money should be invested in lands in the name of 21 trustees, of whom Joseph Dudley was the first mentioned. In accordance with this decree, the £500, with interest added from January, 1700, was sent to Samuel Sewall, one of the trustees, who, by the decree, was appointed treasurer. He records, July 15th, 1715, the receipt of a letter from Sir William Ashurt, bringing the remittance of Mr. Hopkins' legacy. He charges himself with £1104, 8s. 2d., which was the legacy sent over, and with £147, 5s. more for difference between 15d. and 17d. weight, making £1251, 13. 2d. in all.

This disposition of the remaining £500 gave rise in later years, as is well known to many, to a sharp and almost personal controversy. We have neither a desire nor a willingness to enter into the merits of that question here: still it is a part of the history of those funds that came to the college and the grammar school at Cambridge, and if there are those who desire to know more about it they are referred to a review of Quincy's History of Harvard University by one of the professors of Yale College in the Biblical Repository for 1842 and also to an Historical Address by Leonard W. Bacon on the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Hopkins Grammar School at New Haven, delivered July 24, 1860.

These trustees purchased from the Natick Indians in 1715 9,266 acres of land and the General Court added, by gift, 8,000 acres more. These lands the trustees leased; but so much trouble came from the non-payment of rents and disputes about the terms of the leases that, in 1832, in accordance with a resolve by the General Court, they were paid \$8,000 from the state treasury. The tenants of Hopkinton and Upton, in consideration of the release of all claims upon them by the trustees, also paid them \$2,000 more. This tract of land was incorporated in 1775 as the town of Hopkinton. The trustees received an act of incorporation in 1827. From the proceeds of the rentals from these lands the trustees of the Hopkins Funds made their first payment to Harvard College for divinity students and for "deturs"