



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Manuscript Collections

**FRANK HOPKINS:
An Inventory of His Papers**

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

- Creator:** Hopkins, Frank, 1877-1959.
- Title:** Frank Hopkins papers.
- Date:** [ca. 1910]-1987.
- Abstract:** Biographical information; newspaper clippings; research notes; essays, lectures, and scripts; programs; brochures, leaflets, and fliers; posters; photographs and picture postcards; and correspondence reflecting the interests and related activities of a Fairfax (Minn.) attorney, especially those relating to Fort Ridgely and the Dakota Conflict of 1862, the history and culture of American Indians, politics, music, and religion.
- Quantity:** 0.5 cu. ft. (1 box).
- Location:** P2644

BIOGRAPHY OF FRANK HOPKINS

Frank Hopkins was born November 7, 1877 in rural Cairo Township, Renville County, to Charles H. and Susan Christman Hopkins, where he lived on the family farm until he was 17 years old. After graduating from the Fairfax public schools he taught school for a time but later continued his education at the Minnesota Normal and Business College (Minneapolis), graduating in 1899, and at the University of Minnesota, where he obtained a law degree in 1903.

Following his graduation from the University, Hopkins returned to Fairfax, where he practiced law for over 40 years, and was actively engaged in the political, civic, cultural, and religious affairs of the city and surrounding area. A Republican, he served two terms (1911, 1913) in the Minnesota House of Representatives and was an unsuccessful candidate for Congress in 1930. He directed the Citizens Band of Fairfax for approximately 35 years, having begun his association with the organization as a piccolo player at the age of 13. He was active in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Fairfax in a variety of capacities, including those of Sunday school teacher, choir director, and trustee.

Hopkins' interest in the history of Fort Ridgely and the Dakota Conflict of 1862 was undoubtedly instilled in him by his father, a Civil War veteran who was a leading

spokesperson for the creation of a state park at the fort, a focal point of the Dakota Conflict; who served as park commissioner for many years; and who was a founder of the Fort Ridgely State Park and Historical Association, whose purpose was to promote the park's development and preserve its historical heritage. Hopkins' long association with the fort began during his childhood, when he played fife in the fife and drum corps. As an adult, he played a significant role in getting the state park established by the State Legislature during the 1911 session; staged historical pageants and presented lectures there on the history of the fort and the Dakota Conflict, about which he was considered an expert; and served as president of the Fort Ridgely State Park and Historical Association.

Hopkins' interest in historical pageants was stimulated when he was asked to create an elaborate pageant depicting pioneer life in the Minnesota River Valley and the Dakota Conflict that was presented at Fort Ridgely State Park in 1939. His appreciation of and respect for Native American culture was aroused while serving as attorney for the heirs of Little Crow, the Dakota chief. During the 1940s and 1950s he continued to research and write about historical topics and American Indian culture; staged pageants; lectured; and, adopting the persona of "Chief Minnesota," performed monodramas he had scripted on the history and culture of American Indians for schoolchildren and others.

Hopkins married Estella Johanna Schramm in 1905. They had three children – two daughters, Ora and Lois, and a son, Wayne. Hopkins died July 22, 1959 in Aitkin, Minnesota, where he lived following Estella Hopkins' death in 1945. He was buried in Fort Ridgely Cemetery in the state park.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION

These papers are arranged topically.

RELATED MATERIALS

There are additional Frank Hopkins papers in the Fort Ridgely State Park and Historical Association Records in the Minnesota Historical Society manuscript collections, as well as additional photographs in the Society sound and visual collections.

CATALOG HEADINGS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

- Bands (Music) – Minnesota – Fairfax.
- Choirs (Music) – Minnesota.
- Dakota Indians – Minnesota – History.
- Dakota Indians – Social life and customs.
- Dakota Indians – Wars, 1862-1865.
- Indians of North America – Folklore.
- Indians of North America – Legends.

Indians of North America – Social life and customs.
Monodramas.
Pageants – Minnesota.
Song festivals – Minnesota.

Places:

Fairfax (Minn.).
Fort Ridgely (Minn.).
Fort Ridgely State Park (Minn.).
Minnesota River Valley (S.D. and Minn.) – History.

Persons:

Hopkins, Charles H., 1844-1928.
Hopkins family.
Little Crow, d. 1863.

Organizations:

Fort Ridgely State Park and Historical Association.
Methodist Episcopal Church – Minnesota – Fairfax.

Types of Documentation:

Photographs.
Picture postcards.

Occupations:

Attorneys – Minnesota.
Band directors – Minnesota.
Choral conductors – Minnesota.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited item and/or series here]. Frank Hopkins Papers. Minnesota
Historical Society.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number: 15,868

Processing Information:

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Catalog ID number: 6221888

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

Location	Box	
P2644	1	<p>Hopkins family, [ca. 1912-1913] – 1959. Biographical information, including an essay by Hopkins’ daughter Lois entitled “The Story of My Grandparents in Minnesota,” and photographs.</p> <p>Politics, [ca. 1910-1911], 1930. Includes a campaign poster used in Hopkins’ 1910 or 1912 campaign for the Minnesota state legislature.</p> <p>Music, 1915, 1925, 1927, 1939. Includes clippings, a program, and photographs relating to the Citizens Band of Fairfax.</p> <p>Methodist Episcopal Church, Fairfax, Minnesota, 1914-1919, 1939, [1965]. Includes a photograph of the 1914 church fire.</p> <p>Fort Ridgely and the 1862 Dakota Conflict, undated, 1912-1914, 1933-1987. 2 folders. Materials relating to the State Park and Historical Association; the state park and historic site, including choral festivals, historical pageants, and other events held there; and the Dakota Conflict, including fort battles.</p> <p>Historical pageants, undated. Christopher Columbus/Northwest Passage pageant research notes and script, 1941.</p> <p>American Indian presentations: Promotional materials, [ca. 194- – 195-]. Research notes and writings, 1941-1958. 2 folders. Writings include a partial script, lectures, and essays.</p> <p>American Indians: miscellaneous materials, 1914, 1940-1952, 1971. Clippings, correspondence, and picture postcards.</p> <p>Red Wing, Minnesota, undated. Dismantled “general” clippings scrapbook, undated, 1918, 1935-1941. Includes articles on politics and government, world events, American Indians, religion, and medical advances.</p> <p>Miscellaneous photographs and picture postcards, undated.</p>