

Famous Father—Worthy Son



J. Hopkinson



MARSHA HOPKINSON UNVEILING TABLET



J. Hopkinson

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

RECENTLY there was unveiled on the wall of a modest brick house in Philadelphia a bronze tablet which tells the passer-by that "Half Columbia" was composed here by Joseph Hopkinson on April 22, 1798. The unveiling was done by a little girl, Martha Hopkinson, who thus honored the memory of her great-grandfather, a man whose name is known to comparatively few Americans. Yet Francis Hopkinson and Joseph Hopkinson offer an example of "famous father-worthy son" scarcely paralleled in American history.

It is eminently fitting that their names should be recalled as Independence day approaches for they contributed materially to the foundation of our Republic and the establishment of the national tradition.

Francis Hopkinson was born in Philadelphia in 1737, the son of an Englishman who served several years as a judge of the admiralty and a member of the provincial council. Hopkinson was the first scholar entered at the University of Pennsylvania (then the college of Philadelphia) and was graduated with its first class. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1761. After serving as secretary to a conference between the provincial authorities and the chiefs of several Indian nations, and as librarian and secretary of the Philadelphia library, he went to England in 1766 and became an intimate friend of Lord North, Benjamin West and John Penn.

Upon his return to this country he resumed his law practice, kept store for awhile and became a member of two societies which united in 1769 to become the famous American Philosophical society. In 1772 he was appointed inspector of the customs at New Castle but was removed because of his radical ideas. He next moved to Bordentown, N. J., and was a member of the provincial council of that colony from 1774 to 1776. In the latter year he was elected to the Continental congress from New Jersey and became one of America's immortals when he signed the Declaration of Independence.

Historians now seem to agree generally that the Betsy Ross legend of the origin of the flag can be accepted only with reservations. She may have made the first flag, so far as the actual cutting and sewing of it was concerned, but she was not the "designer." The evidence as to who actually was is at best incomplete, but such evidence as exists points strongly to Francis Hopkinson. It is known that he was greatly interested in the heraldic art, especially as it applied to seals, flags and coins. It is known that in June, 1777, he was chairman of the navy board, acting under the marine committee of the Continental congress, and that the famous "flag resolution" of June 14, 1777, establishing the design of the national flag, was presented to congress among the business of the marine committee.

But the strongest evidence is contained in the words of Hopkinson himself which are on record. On May 25, 1780, he wrote to the board of admiralty saying, "It is with great pleasure that I understand my last Device of a Seal for the Board of Admiralty has met with your Honours, Approbation." This seal, which was adopted May 4, 1780, had 13 red and white stripes. In a later letter he asked for compensation for his services, itemizing a list of designs that he presumably had prepared. Among these was "the flag of the United States of America" and "a great seal for the United States of America, with a reverse."

But even though it may not be possible to establish his right to that distinction, he showed his versatility in other ways which entitle him to remembrance. As early as 1774 Hopkinson had won a name for himself by publishing an allegory in which he recounted the wrongs of the colonies and this is said to have done much to fan the spirit of revolution in all who read it. Throughout the Revolution he continued to use his gifts as a writer in a series of satires directed at the British, which were published in the newspapers of the day and attracted widespread attention,

some of them even being attributed to Benjamin Franklin.

The most famous of all of Hopkinson's writings was "The Battle of the Kegs," based on an incident which took place during the British occupation of Philadelphia. A certain David Bushnell had invented a turtle-shaped, one-man submarine which he proposed to use in attaching bombs and time fuses to the bottoms of British vessels in the Delaware river. Tests of this submarine, however, were not very successful, so the ingenious Bushnell next conceived the idea of loading a number of kegs with powder and putting them in the river to float down and they exploded against the ships when they touched them. Most of them blew up when they struck ice cakes in the river but one did actually destroy a British boat. This was enough, however, to throw the British into a panic and they began bombarding every floating object in the river, both the guns on the ships and soldiers on the wharves keeping up an incessant fire for hours.

When Hopkinson heard of this incident he was so amused that he wrote a poem called "The Battle of the Kegs." It immediately became the most popular soldier song of the war and Washington's soldiers sang it to a variation of the tune of "Yankee Doodle" during the remainder of the conflict. It reads as follows:

THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS
Gallants, attend, and hear a friend
Trill forth harmonious ditty—
Strange things I'll tell that late befell
In Philadelphia City.
'Twas early day, as poets say,
Just when the sun was rising,
A soldier stood on log of wood
And saw a sight surprising.

As in amazement he stood to gaze—
The truth can't be denied, sirs—
He spied a score of kegs or more
Come floating down the tide, sirs.
A sailor, too, in jerkin blue,
The strange appearance viewing,
First damned his eyes in great surprise,
Then said, "Some mischief's brewing."

"The kegs now hold the rebel bold
Packed up like pickled herring;
And they've come down to attack the town
In this new way of ferrying."
The soldier flew, the sailor, too,
And, scared, almost to death, sirs,
Wore out their shoes to spread the news,
And ran 'till out of breath, sirs.

Now up and down, throughout the town,
Most frantic scenes were acted;
And some ran here and some ran there,
Like men almost distracted.
Some "fire" cried, which some denied,
But said the earth had quaked;
And girls and boys, with hideous noise,
Ran through the town half-naked.

Sir William, he, snug as a flea,
Lay all this time a-snoring,
Nor dreamed of harm, as he lay warm
In bed with Mrs. Loring.
Now, in a fright, he starts upright,
Awaked by such a clatter;
He rubs both eyes and boldly cries,
"For God's sake, what's the matter?"

At his bedside he then espied
Sir Erskine at command, sirs;
Upon one foot he had a boot,
And 't other in his hand, sirs.
"Arise! Arise!" Sir Erskine cries;
"The rebels—more's the pity—
Without a boat are all afloat,
And ranged before the city."

"The motley crew in vessels new
With Satan for their guide, sirs,
Packed up in bags, or wooden kegs,
Come driving down the tide, sirs.
Therefore, prepare for bloody war!
Those kegs must all be routed,
Or surely we despised shall be,
And British courage doubted."

The royal band now ready stand,
All ranged in dead array, sirs,
With stomachs stout to see it out,
And make a bloody day, sirs.
The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms make a rattle;
Since wars began I'm sure no man
E'er saw so strange a battle.
The rebels vied, the rebel dales,
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.
The fish below swam to and fro,
Attacked from every quarter—

"Why, sure," thought they, "the devil's to pay
Among folks above the water."
The kegs, 'tis said, tho' strongly made
Of rebel staves and hoops, sirs,
Could not oppose the powerful foe,
The conquering British troops, sirs,
From morn to night these men of might
Displayed amazing courage,
And when the sun was fairly down
Returned to sup their porridge.

A hundred men with each a pen,
Or more—upon my word, sirs,
It is most true—would be too few
Their valor to record, sirs,
Such feats did they perform that day
Upon those wicked kegs, sirs,
That years to come, if they get home,
They'll make their boasts and brags, sirs.

In 1788 Hopkinson published a group of seven songs which he dedicated to "His Excellency, George Washington." Whether or not this had anything to do with his appointment as United States district judge in Pennsylvania is a matter for conjecture. At any rate in 1790 Washington named him for that position. He did not live long to enjoy the new honor, however, for he died of a stroke of apoplexy on May 9, 1791.

His son, Joseph Hopkinson, born in Philadelphia November 12, 1770, followed closely in his father's footsteps. Graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1786, he also studied law and began practice in Easton, Pa., in 1791. But he soon returned to Philadelphia and rapidly rose to a position of prominence at the bar. He was elected to congress in 1814 and at the close of his term moved to Bordentown where he remained until 1822. He then resumed the practice of law and in 1828 President John Quincy Adams appointed him judge of the United States court for the eastern district of Pennsylvania, the same office held by his grandfather, Thomas Hopkinson, under the British crown. Hopkinson died in Philadelphia January 15, 1842.

In addition to his distinction as a jurist, Hopkinson was for many years president of the Philadelphia academy of fine arts, which he helped found, and vice president of the American Philosophical society which his father had helped establish. He was a writer of wide renown on legal, educational and ethical subjects but he is best remembered for the patriotic song which he wrote in 1798.

Conflicting stories are told as to the reason for Hopkinson writing "Hail Columbia." According to one version he wrote it in honor of President John Adams because of Adams' protest against the shameful attempt of the French government to exact bribes from American ministers sent to France to make a treaty which would smooth out the difficulties between that country and the United States. Another version is that it was written in order "to get up an American spirit which should be independent of and above the interests, passions and policy of both belligerents" in the threatened war between France and Great Britain.

Whatever the motive back of it, it seems pretty definitely established that Philadelphia theaters went to Hopkinson and tried with his help to put words to a piece of music called "The President's March," which was an arrangement of an old German folk song. Fox had been unable to find words that would adequately express the national feeling, but Hopkinson and his wife wrote such a song and Mrs. Hopkinson played it on the clavier. Fox sang the song in the theater, advertising it as the "new federal song" and it gained instant popularity. It was not known as "Hail Columbia," however, until it was first sung in a New York theater some time later, but for the next 10 years, until Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner" swept the country, it was regarded as the only national song of the new republic.

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CAP AND BELLS



OH—HIS BEARIN'S!

In a Montrose school recently a little girl informed her teacher that an airman was flying over Montrose late the night before.

"What was he doing?" asked his teacher.

"Please, Miss, he was looking for his children," was the unexpected answer.

"Looking for his children!" said the teacher, "what do you mean?"

"Daddy said he'd lost his balrns."—Scots Observer.

SIGN OF INDIFFERENCE



"I don't believe my husband loves me any more."

"Why on earth should you say that?"

"Well, he says he don't mind if I dress chic like the other girls do."

Self-Deception

Perhaps you cynically sigh,
"In vain to get the truth I try!"
Yet most of what is told to you
Is what you like to listen to.

Watched His Man

An orator, warming to his task, took off his coat, which rather disconcerted one of the stewards of the meeting, who thought that a reporter would make a sensation out of the incident.

Towards the close, he said to the speaker:

"I don't suppose you knew when you removed your coat that a newspaper man was present?"

"Yes, I did," was the reply, "but I kept my eye on the coat all the time!"

Yes, a Few Small Ones

"How has your potato crop turned out, old chap?" asked one ardent amateur gardener of his neighbor.

"Splendid, old man," replied the other; "some are as big as marbles, some as big as peas, and, of course, quite a lot of little ones."—Capper's.

SCANTY AS YET



She—Mary's buying that dress on installments.

He—Advise her not to wear it again until she has all the installments.

Study its Manufacture
Though manufacturers disclose
Great works we marvel to recall,
The mischief-maker always shows
The most production of them all.

Not the Only One

The Installment Collector—Your wife promised me faithfully that she'd make a payment today.

Mr. Peewee—What are you kicking about? She once solemnly promised that she'd obey me.

His Status

"I wonder if that Captain Spitzboode amounts to anything beneath the surface?"

"I should say so—why, he's the captain of a submarine."

Choose Your Seats

The court-martial was about to open. The defendant leaned over and whispered to an officer: "How long will his affair last?"

The officer whispered back: "About two hours for me and about two years for you."

Giddap

Teacher—Tommy, what do the letters M. D. after a man's name signify?
Tommy (at random)—Mule driver, I suppose.

France Rightly Claims Bonaparte as Her Son

Napoleon Bonaparte was French because he was born of Italian parents on French soil and reared there. Corsica, after its many vicissitudes, became French. The story of the island, told briefly, is that it was settled by the Iberians who came from Spain; the Ligurians who came from Gaul or Italy; the Romans who colonized Mariana near the mouth of the Golo, and the Sylla who settled Aleria near the mouth of the Tavignano. Rome Latinized the barbarians. Later, the Vandals, the Byzantines, the Goths, the Saracens, and last of all, the Italians came in the order specified. Of the Italians, the Pisans came first in 1077; the Genoese followed three centuries later in 1347. Owing to this diversity of peoples, Corsica was in a constant state of turmoil, one race constantly fighting with another. Tired of these disturbances, the queen of the Ligurians sold the island to Louis XV in 1768, since which time, with the exception of during two futile risings, and an invasion by the English (1793-1796), it has remained a French possession.—Literary Digest.

Robust health depends upon proper food assimilation. Keep the digestive processes active with Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills. The tonic laxative. 25c a box. 372 Pearl St., N. Y. Adv.

Plenty There

Although a successful motion picture expert for many years, it was only recently that Arthur Ripley made his first motor trip into the San Bernardino mountains. Not knowing about the steep grades and long climb in second gear, Arthur merely figured by mileage with the result that when he reached the Rim of the World road his gas began to get low. Spying a native, he shouted:

"Hey, feller, where can I get some gas around here?"

"Straight ahead," pointed the man, "the real estate office ain't more than two miles away."—Los Angeles Times.

A FAMILY DOCTOR'S LAXATIVE IS BEST



Your health is too important! You cannot afford to experiment with your delicate bowels when coated tongue, bad breath, headache, gas, nausea, feverishness, lack of appetite, no energy, etc., warn of constipation. This applies not only to grown people, but particularly to children. That's why a family doctor's laxative is always the safe choice.

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Bees Resented Intrusion

When a truck ran away and hit one of the grand old cherry trees at Cherryville, Pa., the eight men aboard received more than a bump apiece. The collision, which demolished the tree, aroused a monster swarm of bees that made their home in the hollow trunk. Some of the men made surprising records as sprinters, but all were stung. Two Cherryville girls, talking a stroll, shrieked that men were about to attack them, only to find out what was really doing when the bees came along.

Rarity enhances pleasure.

"Flies are Highly Dangerous"

Says The United States Public Health Service

WHEN children come down sick with typhoid or summer complaint, which kills more than 1/5 of the children who die under five, what is the cause? Often the disease has been brought into the home by flies.

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FEEL LIKE A MILLION, TAKE

NR TO-NIGHT
TOMORROW ALRIGHT

Over for the Week
Schoolmaster—This makes the fifth time I have punished you this week. What have you to say?
Youth—I'm glad it's Friday, sir.—Pele Mele, Paris.



Mother of Four Babies

"Although I am only 22 years old, I have four babies to care for. Before my first baby was born my mother urged me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound because I was so terribly weak. I had to lie down four or five times a day. After three bottles I could feel a great improvement. I still take the Vegetable Compound whenever I need it for it gives me strength to be a good mother to my family."—Mrs. Vern L. Dennings, 510 Johnson Street, Saginaw, Michigan.

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