



Fairfield Museum and History Center Library
370 Beach Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Manuscript Finding Aid

Title: Hobart Family Papers

Collection #: Ms 11

Dates: 1742-1912

Size of Collection: .75 linear ft (1 box)

Accession Number:

Donor:

Restrictions: None

Processed by: Michael Cuneo; additional processing by Barbara Austen

Date: July 1981; December 1996

Biographical/ historical note:

Reverend Noah Hobart (1705/6-1773) was born in Hingham, Mass. He graduated from Harvard College in 1724 and settled in Fairfield as pastor of the First Church of Christ in 1733. His entry into the ministry was part of the family tradition--his grandfather, Peter, was the first pastor of the Church of Christ in Hingham, and his father was a deacon. Noah married first Ellen Sloss (1710-1753) and second, his "childhood sweetheart" Mrs. Priscilla Lothrop of Plymouth, Mass. His daughter, Ellen (1741-1780), married Nathaniel Lothrop, her step-brother and Priscilla Lothrop's son, in 1768.

Noah Hobart's nephew, Justin Hobart, also settled in Fairfield. When his father died, his uncle Noah adopted him. Justin (1731-1809) was the son of Lydia Jacobs and Nehemiah Hobart and made his living as a joiner. He married Hannah Penfield in 1762 and had eight children. Justin Hobart, Jr. (1772-1830) and his sister, Mary Hobart (1765-1845), children of Justin and Hannah, operated a general store in Fairfield. Justin also worked as a carpenter in New York City from about 1797-1805. During his free time in the city he

procured supplies for Mary in the Fairfield store, which was located at 1230 Unquowa Road (see the photograph file for an image). He returned to Fairfield sometime in the early 1800s to help run the store. He also served as town clerk of Fairfield from 1813-1814. Justin married Desire Burr (1782-1872) in 1804. Among their children were Edmund and Hannah. Edmund held the offices of probate judge, town treasurer, and postmaster in Fairfield.

Hannah Hobart (1777-1827) was the seventh child born to Justin Hobart, Sr. She and her brother evidently entered into business, as Justin, Jr., owed her \$1401 at the time of her death.

In 1880, Susan Miles Hobart (1847-1905), the daughter of Edmund, married William G. Porter, M.D. (d. 1906), of Philadelphia. Porter's father, William Gibbs Porter (1799-1877), a Florida merchant, was appointed the King of Belgium's vice-consul in Apalachicola, Florida, in 1840.

Photographs of the Hobart homes, and of Hannah Hobart, are in the photo files Fairfield--Buildings, 249 Beach Road and 289 Beach Road.

Scope and content note:

This collection spans at least four generations of Hobarts, with papers dating from 1742-1912. The most heavily documented generation is the third, which included Justin Hobart, Jr., and his sisters, Mary and Hannah. The records from the store which Justin and Mary ran, along with correspondence regarding the procurement of merchandise for the store, give ample detail of its operation.

The materials are organized by generation, in chronological order. The first series includes the papers of Noah Hobart, 1742-1765. These consist of drafts of an address to the congregation at Fairfield, 1742, warning against the preaching of John Davenport, grandson of the first minister of New Haven colony. The younger Davenport was an itinerant preacher spreading the word of the "Great Awakening." Another important document in Noah Hobart's papers is a letter from Judge Ebenezer Silliman concerning the imposition of the Stamp Act, 1765. These documents are accompanied by a deed, 1765, and transcripts of the address, the Silliman letter, and a chronicle of Hobart's romance with Priscilla Thomas (later Lothrop).

Series B consists of the correspondence of Ellen Hobart Lothrop with her husband, Nathaniel Lothrop, and her Watson cousins, 1765-1805, along with transcripts and an index. Ellen's letters include descriptions of the wedding of Gershom Burr and Priscilla Lothrop in 1765, and comments about British tyranny and the American colonies' preparations to defend themselves from British aggression, 1775. In a folder following the letters and transcripts are a note, n.d.; a wrapper from a set of letters, 1771; a family chart; and a reproduction of one of her letters, printed by the Connecticut Historical Society.

Justin Hobart, Sr., is represented in Series C by his grandfather Peter Jacob's will, 1748, and a writ against the estate, 1762; deeds, 1766-1798, and his estate records, 1805-ca. 1809.

Series D contains the papers of Justin Hobart, Jr., 1797-1828. They include letters to his sister, Mary, 1797-1800; writs and other legal documents, 1806-1828; an apprenticeship agreement, 1804; a franchise for a shelling machine, 1806; records relating to the estate of Abraham Benson, 1820-1821; deeds, 1804-1829; and financial records, 1798-1819. His wife, Desire Burr Hobart, is represented in Series E by bills and receipts, 1832-1851.

Mary Hobart's papers are organized in Series F. They consist of correspondence, 1810-1817; a guardianship record, 1831; records of her estate, 1831-1846, including her will and an inventory of real property; and waste books, a partnership agreement and account and other financial records from the Hobart general store, 1803-1817.

Hannah Hobart's records, in Series G, consists of legal records, including personal property inventories, 1825-1829, n.d.; and deeds, 1829. Edmund is represented in Series H by legal papers, including land and inheritance records, and his will, 1843-1897; tax receipts, 1885-1899, and a promissory note, 1847. Documents related to other Hobart family members include correspondence to Polly, 1809, and Hannah Hobart, 1880, 1912; genealogical material, a poem, and an article on the Justin Hobart House, 1886; and three issues of "The Advertiser" inscribed by James Hobart, 1809. These are arranged in Series I.

Series J contains the papers of William G. Porter, 1840-1884, and includes correspondence concerning and his appointments as vice consul for the King of Belgium, 1840-1841; a stock certificate, 1864; and genealogies of the Gibbs-Rodman-Porter families, n.d.

HOBART FAMILY
Papers, 1742-1912

- Series A. Noah Hobart Papers, 1742-1765
- Folder 1. 3 drafts of address to the Congregational Church in Fairfield, 1742; correspondence, 1765, n.d.; deed, 1765
 - Folder 2. transcripts of address and 1765 letter; typescript of news article
- Series B. Ellen Hobart Lothrop Papers, 1765-1805
- Folder 1. Correspondence, 1765-1773
 - Folder 2. Correspondence, 1773-1775, 1805
 - Folder 3. Typescript of correspondence, with index
 - Folder 4. Note, n.d.; wrapper, 1771; typed family chart; Conn. Historical Society reproduction of 1779 letter
- Series C. Justin Hobart Papers, 1748-ca. 1809
- Folder 1. Peter Jacob's will, 1748; writ against estate, 1762
 - Folder 2. Deeds, 1766, 1782-1798; bill, 1782; estate records, 1805-ca. 1809
- Series D. Justin Hobart, Jr., Papers, 1797-1828
- Folder 1. Correspondence, 1797-1798
 - Folder 2. Correspondence, 1799-1800
 - Folder 3. Writs, 1806-1828; franchise, 1806; summons, 1819, 1828
 - Folder 4. Legal records re: Abraham Benson estate, 1820-1821
 - Folder 5. Deeds, 1804-1829
 - Folder 6. Bills, receipts and promissory notes, 1798-1819
- Series E. Desire Burr Hobart Papers, 1832-1851
- Folder 1. Bills and receipts, 1832-1851
- Series F. Mary Hobart Papers, 1803-1846
- Folder 1. Correspondence, 1810-1817
 - Folder 2. Estate records, 1831-1846; guardianship paper, 1831
 - Folder 3. Waste book from Hobart's store, 1803-1816
 - Folder 4. Store inventory, partnership, and other accounts removed from waste book
 - Folder 5. Waste books from Hobart's store, 1809-1817

HOBART FAMILY
Papers, 1742-1912

- Series G. Hannah Hobart Papers, 1825-1829
Folder 1. Legal records and personal property inventories, 1825-1829, n.d.; deeds, 1829
- Series H. Edmund Hobart Papers, 1843-1899
Folder 1. Land records, inheritance and estate records, will, 1843-1897
Folder 2. Tax receipts, 1885-1899; promissory note, 1847
- Series I. Assorted Hobart Family Papers, 1809-1912
Folder 1. Correspondence to Polly Hobart, 1809, and Hannah Hobart, 1880, 1912; letter from R.H., n.d.; historical note, n.d.
Folder 2. Genealogical material, n.d.; poem, n.d.; article on Justin Hobart house, 1886
Folder 3. 3 issues of "The Advertiser," inscribed James Hobart, 1809
- Series J. William Gibbs Porter Papers, 1840-1884
Folder 1. Correspondence and vice consul appointments, 1840-1841
Folder 2. Stock certificate, 1864; invitation, 1879; certificate, 1884
Folder 3. Gibbs-Rodman-Porter genealogies, n.d.

HOBART FAMILY
Papers, 1742-1912

Subject headings:

Account books--Conn.--Fairfield
Belgium--Diplomatic and consular service
Clergy--New England
Consuls--Florida
Deeds--Conn.--Fairfield
Fairfield (Conn.)--History--Revolution, 1776-1783
Great Awakening
Marriage customs and rites--Conn.--Fairfield
Retail trade--Conn.--Fairfield
Stores, retail--Conn.--Fairfield
Women in business

Hobart, Hannah, 1777-1827
Hobart, Justin, 1731-1809
Hobart, Justin, 1772-1830
Hobart, Mary, 1765-1845
Hobart, Noah, 1705/6-1773
Hobart's Store (Fairfield, Conn.)
Lothrop, Ellen Hobart, 1741-1780
Porter, William Gibbs, 1799-1877