

Guide to the Thomas Hodgskin Papers

MS 575



compiled by Rosalind Haworth

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P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 575

CREATOR: Hodgskin, Thomas, 1787-1869

TITLE: Thomas Hodgskin papers

DATES: 1802-1903

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, writings, lectures, and other papers of Thomas Hodgskin. Of particular interest is a group of letters between Hodgskin and Francis Place which give a detailed account of Hodgskin's experiences and reflections while travelling through Europe. Also included are some papers of a personal and family nature.

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Requesting Instructions

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research. The entire collection is available on microfilm. Patrons must use HM 16 instead of the originals.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Thomas Hodgskin Papers (MS 575). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

Entire collection is available on microfilm (954 frames on 1 reel, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM16.

Biographical / Historical

Thomas Hodgskin (1787-1869), teacher, journalist, and political activist, was born at Chatham, Kent, the third of six children of John and Elizabeth Hodgskin. Like many of his contemporaries Hodgskin joined the Royal Navy in 1800 at the age of twelve. He served with distinction until 1812, when he was courtmartialled and dismissed for an injudicious letter he had sent to a superior. His naval experience, however, provided the material for his first book, *Essays on Naval Discipline* (1813), an expose of the inhuman conditions and practices which prevailed in the Royal Navy. For the next three years Hodgskin led a frugal existence during which he studied and wrote articles on naval topics for the radical weekly, *Drakard's Paper*. The turning point in his career came when he met Francis Place, who in turn introduced him to James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. Apparently at the urging of Place, Hodgskin embarked in 1815 on a tour of Europe with the purpose of writing a social and economic commentary patterned after Arthur Young's famous *Travels*. The enthusiasm of Place, Mill, and Bentham for his accounts resulted in a project to study Hanover, then ruled by the British King. Armed with questions prepared by the Bentham circle, Hodgskin began his study in December, 1817. While in Hanover he met and married Elizabeth Hagewisch. Returning to the United Kingdom in 1818, Hodgskin made his home for the next three years in Edinburgh, where he published his journals under the title, *Travels in the North of Germany* (1820).

Hodgskin returned to London in 1823 and through the influence of Place and Mill became Parliamentary reporter for the *London Morning Chronicle*, a position he held for many years. At the same time he and another journalist named Robinson founded a weekly magazine devoted to popular science for artisans and workingmen, *The Mechanic's Magazine*. The venture was so successful that he and Robinson, enlisting the support of Place, Dr. Birkbeck, a well-known educator and philanthropist, and Henry Brougham (later Lord Chancellor) started the London Workingmen's Institute, which continues today as Birkbeck College, University of London.

Hodgskin's most notable achievement was his work in behalf of the British labor movement. Keenly affected by the repression and economic exploitation of the working classes, Hodgskin attempted to develop a coherent social philosophy in order to give direction to their demands. As a result of his sojourn in Europe, he had come to believe in the anarchist position that all government was an unmitigated evil, and that labor was the sole source of value. The contention that labor was being exploited and that the function of government was to maintain this system of exploitation earned the praise of Karl Marx and the wrath of his former friends, Place and Mill. Nevertheless, through his continued friendship with Dr. Birkbeck, Hodgskin was able to propagate his views at the Institute. He wrote a number of books in which he developed these ideas, such as, *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital* (1825), *Popular Political Economy* (1827), and *The Natural and Artificial Rights of Property Contrasted* (1832), which was the most

comprehensive statement of his doctrines. In later years his political activism diminished, and he spent the remainder of his life as a journalist working for a number of newspapers and journals, notably as editor of *Hansard*, and as a member of the staff of *The Economist*, during which time Herbert Spencer was his assistant.

For additional biographical information see the paper by C. H. Driver in folder II:5.

The Thomas Hodgskin Papers contain letters and papers relating to Hodgskin's life, written by himself, members of his family, and fellow radicals and associates. It is arranged in three series: CORRESPONDENCE, WRITINGS, and SPECIAL FILES. CORRESPONDENCE includes letters by Hodgskin to his parents, who were storekeepers at a naval dockyard, and to his daughter, Mary. The most important part of the collection is the group of letters to Francis Place, which give a detailed account of his experiences and reflections while travelling in France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, and Holland.

Letters to Hodgskin include those from Place, John Bright, and Richard Cobden pertaining to his political doctrines. In addition, there are a number of letters from Members of Parliament, including Lord Bentinck, Lord Brougham, Lord Campbell, Benjamin Disraeli, John Downing, Lord John Manners, and Lord Mahon, related to the accounts of speeches reported in *Hansard*.

"Correspondence of Others" contains letters between Hodgskin's daughter, Frances Hodgskin, to various people, notably Herbert Spencer, about her father.

The WRITINGS series is not large, but does contain two lectures by Hodgskin, "Peace, Order and Law" and "Free Trade in Connection with the Corn Laws." In addition, there are letters to the press and fragmentary manuscript notes about his travels and thoughts. There are also a number of newspaper accounts of Hodgskin's lectures on "The Causes and Prevention of Crime" as well as a manuscript article on the life of Hodgskin written by C. H. Driver.

SPECIAL FILES contain documents relating to Hodgskin's naval service, mainly appointments and commissions.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, writings, lectures, and other papers of Thomas Hodgskin. Of particular interest is a group of letters between Hodgskin and Francis Place which give a detailed account of Hodgskin's experiences and reflections while travelling through Europe. Also included are some papers of a personal and family nature.

Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Correspondence. II. Writings. III. Special Files.

Collection Contents

Series I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1802, 1812, 1815-1818, 1821, 1841-1865, 1891, 1903

1/2 of 1 box

CORRESPONDENCE is divided into three groups: Correspondence from Thomas Hodgskin; Correspondence to Thomas Hodgskin; and Correspondence of Others.

Correspondence from Thomas Hodgskin

b. 1, f. 1reel 1U	Hodgskin, Elizabeth (mother)	1816
b. 1, f. 2reel 1U	Hodgskin, John (father)	1812
b. 1, f. 3reel 1U	Hodgskin, Mary (daughter)	1861
b. 1, f. 4reel 1U	Place, Francis (5 ALS)	1815
b. 1, f. 5reel 1U	Place, Francis (14 ALS, 2 letters stuck together)	1816
b. 1, f. 6reel 1U	Place, Francis (6ALS)	1817
b. 1, f. 7reel 1U	Place, Francis (6 ALS, further 8 ALS forming continuous letter 27 Feb - 23 Apr, 2 ALS) Jan-Apr	1818
b. 1, f. 8reel 1U	Place, Francis (5 ALS) May-Jun	1818
b. 1, f. 9reel 1U	Place, Francis (10 ALS) Jul-Oct	1818, undated

Correspondence to Thomas Hodgskin

b. 1, f. 10reel 1U	Bentinck, Lord George	1847
b. 1, f. 11reel 1U	Bright, John	1861
b. 1, f. 12reel 1U	Brougham, Lord Henry	1859, undated
b. 1, f. 13reel 1U	Campbell, John (First Baron Campbell)	1843
b. 1, f. 14reel 1U	Campbell, Thomas	1815
b. 1, f. 15reel 1U	Cobden, Richard	1848, undated
b. 1, f. 16reel 1U	Codington, Edward	1845
b. 1, f. 17reel 1U	Combe, George	1850, undated
b. 1, f. 18reel 1U	Disraeli, Benjamin	1842
b. 1, f. 19reel 1U	Downing, John (?)	1841
b. 1, f. 20reel 1U	Fortescue (?)	1843
b. 1, f. 21reel 1U	Hume, Joseph	1848
b. 1, f. 22reel 1U	Manners, John James Robert (later 7th Duke of Rutland)	1843

Correspondence to Thomas Hodgskin (continued)

b. 1, f. 23reel 1U	Maule, Fox Ramsey (11th Earl of Dalhousie)	undated
b. 1, f. 24reel 1U	Place, Francis	1821
b. 1, f. 25reel 1U	Richardson, Lady Mary	1865
b. 1, f. 26reel 1U	Smith, W. Sidney	1802
b. 1, f. 27reel 1U	Stanhope, Philip Henry, Lord Mahon (5th Earl of Stanhope)	undated
b. 1, f. 28reel 1U	Sullivan, Charles	1842
b. 1, f. 29reel 1U	Thompson, T. Perronet	1848
b. 1, f. 30reel 1U	Unidentified	undated
Correspondence of Others		
b. 1, f. 31reel 1U	from Hodgskin, Frances	1891
b. 1, f. 32reel 1U	from Spencer, Herbert	1903

Series II: WRITINGS, 1842-1843, 1857-1860*1/4 of 1 box*

WRITINGS are divided into two sections, "Writings of Thomas Hodgskin" and "Writings of Others." The first section is arranged chronologically; "Writings of Others" is arranged alphabetically by the name of the writer.

Writings of Thomas Hodgskin		
b. 1, f. 1reel 1U	"Peace, Law and Order," a lecture English	1842
b. 1, f. 2reel 1U	"Free Trade in Connection with the Corn Laws," a lecture English	1843
b. 1, f. 3reel 1U	Letters to the press:	
b. 1, f. 3reel 1U	Trade without Capital, to the <i>Morning Chronicle</i>	1858, 23 January
b. 1, f. 3reel 1U	The "Times" and Lord Brougham, to the <i>Daily News</i> ?	1859, 14 January
b. 1, f. 4reel 1U	Travels and Thoughts, manuscript fragments	undated
Writings of Others		
b. 1, f. 5reel 1U	Driver, C. H., memorandum on the life of Thomas Hodgskin, 16 pages	undated
b. 1, f. 6reel 1U	Hodgskin, Mary, extract from a letter describing T.H.	undated
b. 1, f. 7reel 1U	Unidentified, newspaper reports of lecture "Don't Create Them" on criminals, and the causes and prevention of crime.	1857
b. 1, f. 8reel 1U	Unidentified printed material	undated

Series III: SPECIAL FILES, 1806-1864*1/4 of 1 box*

SPECIAL FILES are arranged chronologically and consists primarily of documents pertaining to Hodgskin's naval career.

Naval Service		
b. 1, f. 1reel 1U	Form of Commission to rank of Lieutenant	1806, 25 September
b. 1, f. 2reel 1U	Form of appointments as Lieutenant on HMS Nemesis and HMS Menelaus	1809, 1811
b. 1, f. 3reel 1U	Certificate of service on HMS Menelaus, Oct 1811 to Apr 1812, by Captain Peter Parker	1812
b. 1, f. 4reel 1U	Form of appointment to rank of Commander	1858, 19 October
b. 1, f. 5reel 1U	Form of notification of retirement, with rank of Captain	1864
b. 1, f. 6reel 1U	Miscellaneous printed material not directly related to T.H.	undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Adult education
Journalists
Labor
Labor movement
Philosophy
Radicalism
Working class

Corporate Body

London Workingmen's Institute

Geographic Names

Europe -- Description and travel
Great Britain -- Politics and government

Names

Bentinck, George, Lord, 1802-1848
Bright, John, 1811-1889
Brougham and Vaux, Henry Brougham, Baron,
1778-1868
Broughton, John Cam Hobhouse, Baron,
1786-1869
Campbell, John Campbell, Baron, 1779-1861
Campbell, Thomas, 1777-1844
Cobden, Richard, 1804-1865
Combe, George, 1788-1858
Dalhousie, Fox Maule-Ramsay, Earl of,
1801-1874
Disraeli, Benjamin, 1804-1881
Hodgskin, Elizabeth
Hodgskin, John
Hodgskin, Mary
Hodgskin, Thomas, 1787-1869
Hume, Joseph, 1777-1855
Place, Francis, 1771-1854
Richardson, Mary, Lady
Rutland, John James Robert Manners, Duke of,
1818-1906
Spencer, Herbert, 1820-1903
Stanhope, Philip Henry Stanhope, Earl,
1805-1875
Thompson, T. Perronet (Thomas Perronet),
1783-1869