

MG-150

HENRY C. CORBIT COLLECTION, 1835-43

50 items

Outgoing family correspondence of Henry C. Corbit, Philadelphia city legislator, member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and traveler who was personally acquainted with a number of well-known abolitionists and advocates of woman suffrage. The collection consists of letters from Corbit to his wife Sarah written during travels through western Pennsylvania and New York State, June 5-19, 1835; letters to his mother, Elizabeth Corbit, and one letter to his brother Joseph during a trip through England and several European countries (including an extended stay in Paris), August 1, 1839 - July ---, 1840; letters to his wife Sarah plus one letter to his daughter Emma describing a trip to England and France, April 29 - June 26, 1843; and a manuscript poem entitled "A voice from Heaven," identified as "Copied by Helen Corbit," n.d. (In the correspondence the months are identified, in traditional Quaker style, by their numbers rather than their names.)

Subjects discussed in the Corbit letters include the modes of transportation employed (packet boat, steamer, etc.), other travelers, scenery along the way, towns and cities visited, life in Paris during Corbit's stay there, and impressions of the English and French. Certain comments by Corbit indicate some of his general sentiments, including his belief that "virtue and morality and all that is good is pacing onward" and that "the world is now better than it ever was before." In 1843 he compared England unfavorably with the United States and remarked upon England's "unholy war upon the Chinese for pelf and upon the poor nations of India for Territory." Notable in the correspondence are references (some rather casually made) to personal encounters with individuals who were or would become well-known, including Lucretia Mott, whom Corbit met at a Friends Yearly Meeting in New York State in 1835 and again in London in 1840. Two other persons referred to, both newly married, were with Corbit on the steamer Britannia on the way to Europe in 1843; these were Horace Mann, "a tall old fashioned white headed man of about sixty! [sic]" and Julia Ward Howe, "a round full unintellectual faced dame of about thirty...said to possess abundance of solid charms."

Transferred from the Pennsylvania State Museum, October 26, 1964.

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A. Travel Correspondence, 1835-43. 49 items.

(Months are identified by number rather than by name in the dates of the letters listed below, according to the traditional Quaker practice. 6 mo. 5 would be June 5, while 8 mo. 1 would be August 1, etc.)

- 1835, 6 mo. 5 H.C. Corbit, Packet Boat Swatara on the Penna. Canal near Middletown, to S.B. Corbit (wife), Phila.  
 6 mo. 6 H.C. Corbit, Packet Boat Swatara near Lewistown, to S.B. Corbit, Phila.  
 6 mo. 9 H.C. Corbit, Pittsburg, to S.B. Corbit, Phila.  
 6 mo.10 H.C. Corbit, " " [S.B. Corbit] "  
 6 mo.13 " " Lake Erie " S.B. Corbit "  
 6 mo.14 " " Falls of Niagara, to S.B. Corbit, Phila.  
 6 mo.15 " " Lake Ontario " " " "  
 6 mo.16 " " Victor, near Genesee Yearly Meeting, to S.B. Corbit, Phila.  
 6 mo.19 H.C. Corbit, North River, to [S.B. Corbit]  
 6 mo.19 " " [New York], to S.B. Corbit, Phila.
- 1839, 8 mo. 1 H.C. Corbit, Steamer British Queen off the Hook, New York, to Elizabeth Corbit (mother), Phila.  
 8 mo.17 H.C. Corbit, London, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
 8 mo.27 " " Steamer E'toile on the Seine between Rouen and Paris, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
 9 mo.25 Henry [Corbit], to E. Corbit, Phila. (from Paris)  
 10 mo.16 H.C. Corbit, Paris, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
 10 mo.30 " " " " " " "  
 11 mo.12 Henry [Corbit] " " [Elizabeth Corbit] "  
 11 mo.20 " " Lyons " Elizabeth Corbit "  
 12 mo.30 H.C. Corbit, Paris " " " "
- 1840, 1 mo.15 Henry [Corbit], Paris, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
 1 mo.29 " " " " " " "  
 2 mo.15 " " " " " " "  
 2 mo.28 " " " " " " "  
 3 mo.13 H.C. Corbit " " " " "  
 4 mo. 1 " " " " " " "  
 4 mo.17 " " " " E. Corbit, Phila.  
 4 mo.25 " " " " Joseph Corbit (brother), Phila.  
 5 mo. 4 Henry [Corbit], Brussels, to E. Corbit, Phila.  
 5 mo. 7 H.C. Corbit, Aix-la-Chapelle (Prussia), to E. Corbit, Phila.  
 5 mo.10 " " Coblenz (Prussia) to E. Corbit, Phila.  
 5 mo.13 " " Heidelberg (Germany), to E. Corbit, Phila.  
 5 mo.18 " " Basle (Switzerland) " " " "

- 5 mo.25 H.C. Corbit, Berne (Switzerland) to [E. Corbit], Phila.  
5 mo.28 " " Geneva, to [E. Corbit], Phila.  
5 mo.29 " " Mont Blanc (Savoy), to E. Corbit, Phila.  
6 mo. 3 " " Lyons, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
6 mo.23 Henry [Corbit], New Castle upon Tyne, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
6 mo.26 H.C. Corbit, London, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.  
7 mo.-- " " Steamer British Queen, to Elizabeth Corbit, Phila.
- 1843, 4 mo.29 Henry C. Corbit, New York, to Sarah B. Corbit (wife), Phila.  
5 mo. 1 " " " Boston, to Emma Corbit (daughter),  
Westchester Boarding School, Westchester, N.Y.  
5 mo. 3 Henry C. Corbit, Halifax, to Sarah B. Corbit, Phila.  
5 mo.12-14 " " " Steam Ship Britannia (5 mo. 12) & Liverpool  
(5 mo. 14), to Sarah B. Corbit, Phila. (1 item)  
5 mo.22 [H.C. Corbit], St. Etienne, to Sarah B. Corbit, Phila.  
5 mo.30 H.C. Corbit, Paris, to Sarah B. Corbit, Phila.  
6 mo. 6 " " " " " " " "  
6 mo.11 H.C.C., " " " " " "  
6 mo.15 " London " " " " "  
6 mo.26 H.C. Corbit, Steamer Great Western, to Sarah B. Corbit, Phila.

B. Manuscript Poem: "A voice from Heaven" (copied by Helen Corbit for "S.B.C."), n.d. 1 item.