

Isabella Francis Hopkins

February 3, 1848, New York, NY – February 3, 1935, Cincinnati, OH
Mary E. Emery Memorial Carillon, Mariemont, Ohio, USA (1929)

Isabella Francis Hopkins was a Cincinnati philanthropist who constructed the Mary M. Emery Memorial Carillon in honor of her beloved sister. Born in New York City in 1848, she moved with her family to Cincinnati in 1861 after the outset of the Civil War threatened her father's mercantile business.

In 1883, alongside Nellie Phillips (usually identified as "Mrs. Robert Dayton") and through Christ Episcopal Church, Isabella [founded](#) the Protestant Episcopal Hospital for children. She also [served](#) as the secretary of the Board of Lady Managers, which collaborated with the all-male Board of Trustees. Patients, receiving free care, were accepted regardless of race, gender, or religious creed. The Hospital grew into the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, which, still in operation, consistently ranks as one of the best children's hospitals in the country.



Isabella F. Hopkins ([Find a Grave Memorial](#))

Isabella was incredibly close to her sister [Mary Muhlenberg Emery](#) (née Hopkins, 1844-1927), Cincinnati's "Lady Bountiful." Mary's life was marked by grief: in 1884 her son Albert died, followed by her son Sheldon in 1890 and husband Thomas J. Emery in 1906. Both sisters single and childless, Mary and Isabella found companionship with each other, living together in Mary's residence of Edgecliffe, which she left to Isabella after she died.

Tragedy seems to have motivated Mary's philanthropic impulses, culminating in her foundation of the planned garden community of [Mariemont](#) in 1923. Although high construction costs made this ideal difficult, Mariemont was envisioned as a mixed income community that would provide quality housing for factory workers. Like many villages of the period, Mariemont was an exclusively white community. In 1925 Mary founded the Thomas J. Emery Memorial fund in honor of her late husband in order to "bring about the social, physical, civic, and educational betterment on humanitarian lines of residents of the United States, but preferably of those of the State of Ohio." Isabella was one of the incorporators of the memorial, and served as one of its original trustees.

An avid patron of the arts, Isabella was one of the founders of the MacDowell Society, a shareholder of the Cincinnati Art Museum, and donated to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Museum Association. But her most lasting artistic legacy might be her donation of a carillon to the village of Mariemont. Following Mary's death in 1927, Isabella founded the Mary M. Emery Memorial Carillon in honor of her sister, purchasing 23 bells from the Gillett & Johnston bellfoundry. Located in Mariemont's Dogwood Park, the carillon was dedicated in a ceremony on November 16, 1929, with Percival Price also playing a guest recital. On the lowest bourdon bell, Isabella had a dedication inscribed:

Dedicated to the Youth of Mariemont
in Memory of its Founder, my beloved
Sister, Mary Muhlenberg Emery, A.D. 1929
Isabella F. Hopkins.

In 1966, the carillon was expanded with the addition of 26 new bells cast by Petit & Fritsen.



The 2017 Congress of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America at Mariemont (GCNA)

When Isabella passed away in 1935, a column in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* lamented the “passing of the grand givers.” She was [buried](#) in Spring Grove Cemetery near her beloved sister Mary. In her [will \(pp. 246–52\)](#), Isabella left money for the maintenance and upkeep of the carillon, as well as specific instructions on how it was to be played:

“My desire is that the youth of the Village of Mariemont may have patriotism inculcated by music played on the bells on all national holidays, and also on the anniversary of the flight of Charles A. Lindbergh from New York to Paris in May, 1927. I should like to have hymns played every Sunday of the year, and a curfew every night at 9 o’clock.”

Today, the carillon is played regularly by Richard D. Gegner and Richard M. Watson, following Isabella’s wishes.

—Claire Janezic

Appendix 1: Music in Honor of Isabella F. Hopkins

In her will, Isabella Frances Hopkins left detailed instructions on when to play recitals, and the types of music she wanted played. In addition, she specified that each concert should begin with the Doxology and end with the hymn “Abide With Me.” Her interests included public welfare, child welfare, parks, aviation, and religion. Taking this into account, as well as her desire for patriotic music, the following pieces are among those that may honor her legacy and wishes regarding the carillon:

- "Children’s Song" by Jean Miller (GCNA)
- Selections from *Do You Know the Muffin Man*, arr. Lee Cobb (ACME). Includes Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Do You Know the Muffin Man, Row Row Row Your Boat, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, London Bridge is Falling Down, This Old Man, The Itsy Bitsy Spider, and Rock-a-bye Baby.
- *Children’s Suite*: Toy soldiers, Echos, Creole lullaby, Little bells by Brigitta Kindler Steidl.

- Selections from *Three German Children's Songs at Christmas*, arr. Richard von Grabow (ACME)
- Selections from *Six Hymns for Two Octave Carillon*, arr. Theophil Rusterholz (GCNA). These hymns could have been played on the original 23-bell instrument built in 1929. Includes Canonbury, Eucharist Hymn, Llanfair, Llangloffan, Lux Benigna, and Veni Emmanuel.
- Selections from *Five Hymn Arrangements*, arr. Theophil Rusterholz (GCNA). Includes Beecher, Olivet, Sicilian Mariners, Ton-y-Botel, and Webb.
- Selections from *Three Hymn Settings*, arr. Peter Paul Olejar (GCNA). Includes Heavenly Armour, Drop, Drop Slow Tears, and Idumea.
- Selections from *The Spanish Liturgical Year*, various composers, arr. Carol Anne Taylor (GCNA)
- "Prelude and Fugue on Old 104th" by Ronald Barnes (GCNA)
- Selections from *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky, arr. Scott Hummel (ACME). Includes the following movements: Promenade, The Gnome, The Old Castle, The Ox-Cart, Two Jews: One Rich, One Poor, The Great Gates of Kiev. Isabella F. Hopkins and her sister Mary M. Emery both donated paintings to the Cincinnati Art Museum.
- Selections from *Hymns of Faith II*, arr. John Courter (ACME). Includes Abide With Me, Lift Every Voice and Sing, Old Hundredth, and Precious Lord. Abide With Me is especially relevant, as Hopkins wanted every concert to end with this hymn.
- "The Star Spangled Banner" by John J. Smith, arr. Milford Myhre, in *The Music of 'March': A Civil Rights Carillon Collection* (ACME), reprinted from the GCNA
- "The Stars and Stripes Forever" by John Phillip Sousa, arr. Milford Myhre (GCNA)
- "The Rhythm of Mother Earth" by Joke Brandsma (Donemus)
- "To a Wild Rose" by Edward McDowell, arr. Milford Myhre (GCNA). Hopkins was a founder of the MacDowell Society.
- "Sky Bells," by Mary Jeanne Van Appledorn in *Millennium beiaard compositie bundel* (NKV)
- "Letters from the Sky" by Joey Brink (ACME)
- "Had We The Wings" by Sonja Beets (Digital Music Print Belgium)
- "Heights" by Emily Cooley (Yale University Guild of Carillonners)
- "Mountain Flight for Peace" by Frances Newell (ACME)
- "Fly a Kite" by the Sherman Brothers, arr. Richard Giszczak (GCNA)

Further Research Resources

["MARIEMONT HISTORY 1991.08.012,"](#) Mariemont Preservation Foundation.

Suggested Reading

1. "Carillon's Chimes to Commemorate Lindbergh's Flight." *The Canton Repository, Canton, O.*, Feb. 7, 1935, 3.
2. "ISABELLA HOPKINS, ART PATRON, DEAD: PHILANTHROPIST OPENED COTTAGE FOR SICK CHILDREN 50 YEARS AGO IN CINCINNATI: Special to the New York Times." *New York Times*, Feb. 5, 1935, 19.
3. "Miss Isabella F. Hopkins, Philanthropist, Is Dead: Cincinnati Woman Was Known Here for Her Interest in St. Paul's Church and for Aid Given to Local Families." *The Chillicothe Scioto Gazette*, Feb. 4, 1935, front page.
4. "Isabella F. Hopkins Expires On Eighty-Seventh Birthday; Founded Children's Hospital." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Feb. 4, 1935, 1–2.
5. "Friends, Kin, And Servants Given Annuities Under Will Of Miss Isabella F. Hopkins." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Feb. 7, 1935, 24.
6. "DIRECT GIFTS: Take Six Millions Of \$25,000,000 Estate of Mrs. Mary M. Emery. Remainder Is Placed in Memorial Fund To Continue Projects of Welfare Forever. Sister and Business Representative To Receive \$500,000 Each—Seventy Persons To Benefit By Annuities." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Oct. 18, 1927, Final Edition, front page.
7. Slater, James B.. "Isabella F. Hopkins," in "A Register of Honorary Members: 1936–1996," special issue, *GCNA Bulletin* 52 (2003): 20, 34.
8. Frank, Thomas B.. *Cincinnati: The City of Personality*. Cincinnati: 1930, 40–41.
9. Bevis, Rex. "[The Thomas J. Emery Memorial: A Lasting Gift from Mary Emery.](#)" *Mariemont Town Crier* 39, no. 5 (Mar. 2015): 1, 4–5.

Further Reading

1. Hopkins, Isabella F.. "The Third Annual Report of the Board of Lady Managers, of the Hospital of the Protestant Episcopal Church, In the Diocese of Southern Ohio," in [*Third Annual Report of the Hospital of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Southern Ohio*](#). Cincinnati: 1886.
2. "[Children's Hospital Founders](#)." Walnut Hills Historical Society, accessed June 6, 2022.
3. "[The Children's Hospital](#)." *The Cincinnati Lancet-Clinic*, Nov. 26, 1887, 659.
4. "[About MacDowell](#)." The MacDowell Society, accessed June 6, 2022.
5. Brockman, Rosana. "[Emery Hall And Furnishings Have Rich, Romantic Past](#)." *The Edgecliff*, Mar. 21, 1949, 1.
6. Taft, Robert A.. [*The Papers of Robert A. Taft: 1889–1939*](#). Vol. 1, ed. Clarence E. Wunderlin. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997, 461–2. Letter with pledge card requesting Republican Party support.
7. "Zoo Society Adds Fifty Names." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 7, 1932, 22.
8. "[Isabella F. Hopkins](#)." Remember My Journey, accessed June 6, 2022.

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