

# Mrs. Shippen Sheet Music Collection

Special Collections in Performing Arts  
University of Maryland Libraries

**Processed by:** Evangeline Athanasiou

**Date Processed:** June 2017

**Size:** 1.5 Linear Feet, 5 Items

**Inclusive Dates:** ca. 1803-1827

**Bulk Dates:** 1811-1825

**Collection No.:** 2002-103-SERWER

**SCPA shelf location:** ZZ10-2-4

## Abstract

Due to the limited information concerning the origins of this particular collection of items, it is our responsibility to inform readers of the uncertain identity of the original owner of these bound folios, "Mrs. Shippen." According to accessible vital records, there were eight women on the east coast of the newly independent United States who would have gone by the name, "Mrs. Shippen," at the time of these publications (early to middle 19th century). All eight eligible Mrs. Shippens were married to descendants of the British-born Edward Shippen (1639-1712), who immigrated to America in 1668, eventually establishing a home with his family in Philadelphia. Shippen was a successful merchant and eventually a powerful political figure as the first elected mayor of Philadelphia in 1702. This collection consists of one of these Mrs. Shippens' sheet music: early 19th-century publications from England and Ireland, consisting of mostly piano compositions, along with several arrangements for voice, harp, and flute.

## Important Information for Users of the Collection

**Restrictions:** There are no restricted files in this collection.

**Preferred Citation:** Mrs. Shippen Sheet Music Collection, Special Collections in Performing Arts, University of Maryland Libraries.

**Publication Rights:** Copyright was not transferred with this gift. However, the scores are, theoretically, now within public domain. Scholars must be advised, though, that for select titles copyright renewal or other rights transfer might have occurred since publication. The onus is on the researcher to determine permissible rights for any purpose beyond research.

**Status:** This collection is PROCESSED

## Historical Note

The early 19th century, in both America and Europe, saw the sheet music industry's sudden boom in productivity and popularity. Various factors affected this increase in sheet music demand, which stemmed from the growth of parlor music, or music performed in the private homes of the middle and upper class. The economical prosperity following the Revolutionary War strengthened the middle class, enabling more families to enjoy luxuries that had once been available only to the wealthiest households. One of the more popular additions to the middle-class home was the pianoforte, which provided entertainment and musical education (a skill connoting a well-rounded citizen) for both children and adults. Women, in this case Mrs. Shippen, were particularly encouraged to take up a musical instrument for the purpose of entertaining guests, family members, as well as to display their husband's wealth and social standing.

Although the exact identity of "Mrs. Shippen" is not certain, it is likely that the original owner of these bound folios was part of the prominent Shippen family around Philadelphia in the early 19th century. The Shippens were part of a wealthy family that enjoyed these new luxuries; with the family's powerful connections in Philadelphia, the Shippens' children would have likely had a music teacher as part of their education. Early 19th-century sheet music is generally

composed for musical amateurs, and marketed toward these middle/upper-class families by associating it with famous composers and performers. The songs will often display ornately illustrated titles that may include anything from the arranger associated with the publication, to the original composer (W. A. Mozart, G. F. Handel, etc.), the opera that the melody is from, and they may even identify the celebrated singer that first premiered the piece. Names of famous composers and musicians would have drawn those who desired the experience of seeing a live performance (a relatively expensive affair) and created an opportunity for the amateur musician to participate in the contemporary music scene.

Seven of the eight eligible Mrs. Shippens are descendants of Edward Shippen's grandson, Edward Shippen III (1703-1781). The eighth Mrs. Shippen descends from Edward III's brother, William Shippen Sr. (1712-1801). Although there are eight possibilities for the identity of this "Mrs. Shippen," every one of them lived either in Philadelphia or a surrounding suburb for most of their lives. The English publications in this collection could indicate a trans-Atlantic voyage that any one of the Mrs. Shippen families may have taken with their families to Europe (as was common for wealthier families of the time).

### Scope and Contents of Collection

The Mrs. Shippen Sheet Music Collection covers the period from ca. 1803-1827; the bulk of the materials date from 1810-1825. The collection consists of five bound folios of English and Irish sheet music; some pieces are organized as part of a larger series of publications, and some are in random groupings of single publications. The bulk of the publications are the products of London: Chappell & Co., London: Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter & Co., and Dublin: I. Willis.

### Custodial History and Acquisition Information

This collection was donated in June 2002 by Nancy Serwer in the course of placing the papers of her late husband, Professor Howard Serwer, at Special Collections in Performing Arts. The collection was originally purchased by Dr. Serwer for reasons not communicated to the curator. While there is limited evidence that Dr. Serwer intended to investigate the materials, his principal area of research was the music and life of German-born English composer George Frideric Handel (1685-1759). We are unaware of any familial connection between the Serwers and the Shippens.

### Arrangement of Collection

This collection is organized into one series:

- Series 1: Sheet Music

### Series Description

#### **Series 1. Sheet Music, 1803-1827 (1.5 feet, 5 items and 1 folder)**

This series contains five bound folios of collected sheet music, organized by their original placement within the box in which they were transferred to the University of Maryland. The bound folios all have hardcover bindings, which are extremely delicate and on several bound folios are completely detached from the interior materials. Also included is Dr. Serwer's notes

on these items.

## Box Inventory

### Series 1 – Sheet Music, 1803-1827

- Item #1                      Bound Folio 1, ca. 1811-1818  
Labeled “Mrs. Shippen.,” hardcover bound folio of collected sheet music, with red trim and red label. Handwritten contents on first page in black ink indicating two main groups that are separated by their composers, J. B. Cramer and J. T. Latour. All compositions are for piano, except for three arrangements from piano and flute. Contents: 24 individual songs.
- Item #2                      Bound Folio 2, ca. 1807-1825  
Labeled “Mrs. Shippen.,” hardcover bound folio of collected sheet music, with green trim and green label. The item consists of vocal music, both solo and ensemble arrangements, with piano or harp accompaniments. The second half of the contents is a series of French Romances published by Chappell & Co.. Contents: 41 individual songs.
- Item #3                      Bound Folio 3, ca. 1815-1818  
Labeled “Mrs. Shippen.,” hardcover bound folio of collected sheet music, with red trim and red label. The spine is partially attached and the number “4” is visible, along with the text “Piano Forte Music.” The item consists of Chappell & Co.’s *Piano Forte Journal* series of arrangements and variations of popular tunes, one of which is duett for four-hands. The second half of the contents is a collection of *Select Melodies with Variations for the Flute and Pianoforte* by Goulding, D’Almaine, Potter & Co. There is a handwritten table of contents after the title page of the title page. Contents: 30 individual songs.
- Item #4                      Bound Folio 4, ca. 1811-1815  
Labeled “Mrs. Shippen.,” hardcover bound folio of collected sheet music, with red trim and red label. The item consists entirely of Chappell & Co. solo piano publications, first with a series of *National Melodies* and second with with a series of *Favorite Air* arrangements by Gelinek. Contents: 43 individual songs.
- Item #5                      Bound Folio 5, ca. 1811-1827  
Labeled “Mrs. Shippen.,” hardcover bound folio of collected sheet music, with red trim and red label. There is a handwritten (black ink) table of contents that is followed by (in pencil) a price for each individual

publication, with a sum total toward the bottom of the page. The item consists of solo piano music, with one selection that allows for a pedal-harp. This collection has various handwritten signatures on the title pages of individual pieces. Contents: 15 individual songs.

Item #6                      Howard Serwer's notes, undated

## Related Material

Howard Serwer Papers, Special Collections in Performing Arts, University of Maryland Libraries.

Kassler, Michael. *Music Entries at Stationers' Hall, 1710-1818: From Lists Prepared for William Hawes, D. W. Krummel, and Alan Tyson and from Other Sources*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2004.

## Subjects

Shippen Family  
Sheet Music  
Parlor Music

## Names

Mrs. Shippen  
Dr. Edward Shippen  
Edward Shippen IV  
J. B. Cramer  
Francis Latour  
London, England  
Dublin, Ireland