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## Jack Hopkins' Civil War

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### Abstract

In the 1862 Pennsylvania College album there is a photograph of a young man who that year was entering his fifteenth year of service as a student. In one student's book, the portrait of Hopkins jokingly refers to him as "vice president." This appellation speaks volumes about the genuine affection for Hopkins, it symbolizes the gulf between the American custodian, for while it was clearly made in jest as genuine affection for Hopkins, it symbolizes the gulf between the white student and the black janitor. It goes without saying that the student is humorous because they understood that in their time, a black man as the vice president.

John Hopkins was born in Maryland in 1806. The 1860 census tells us very little else is known about Hopkins's first forty-one years. Did he leave Maryland as a slave? Did he leave Maryland openly, or escape via the Underground Railroad? That is known for certain is that Hopkins was in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, large gaps like these are fairly typical when it comes to African Americans in Pennsylvania's antebellum period. [excerpt]

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