

A. K. Fisher Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff
Revised by Kathleen O'Neill



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Collection Summary

Title: A. K. Fisher Papers

Span Dates: 1827-1957

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1867-1948)

ID No.: MSS20628

Creator: Fisher, A. K. (Albert Kenrick), 1856-1948

Extent: 17,000 items; 55 containers plus 2 oversize; 24 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Botanist, naturalist, and zoologist. Correspondence, letterbooks, diaries, articles and speeches, family papers, field notes and records, memoranda, reports, drawings, bibliographic cards on birds, plants, and animals, maps, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and photographs relating chiefly to Fisher's activities as an ornithologist and vertebrate zoologist.

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.

People

Chapman, Frank M. (Frank Michler), 1864-1945--Correspondence.

Fisher family.

Fisher, A. K. (Albert Kenrick), 1856-1948.

Fisher, Anne B. (Anne Benson), 1898- Anne B. Fisher papers.

Fisher, Walter K. (Walter Kenrick), 1878-1953. Walter K. Fisher papers.

Fuertes, Louis Agassiz, 1874-1927--Correspondence.

Lilly, Ben, 1856-1936--Correspondence.

Mearns, Edgar Alexander, 1856-1916--Correspondence.

Merriam, C. Hart (Clinton Hart), 1855-1942--Correspondence.

Pinchot, Gifford, 1865-1946--Correspondence.

Ridgway, Robert, 1850-1929--Correspondence.

Stone, Witmer, 1866-1939--Correspondence.

Wetmore, Alexander, 1886-1978--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Ornithologists' Union.

Harriman Alaska Expedition (1899)

Pinchot South Sea Expedition (1929)

United States. Bureau of Biological Survey.

Washington Biologists' Field Club.

Subjects

Biology--Washington (D.C.)--Societies, etc.

Biology--West (U.S.)

Conservation of natural resources.

Forests and forestry.

Game laws.

Ornithology--Societies, etc.

Ornithology.

Scientific expeditions--Alaska.

Scientific expeditions--Oceania.

Scientific expeditions--West (U.S.)

Wildlife conservation.

Zoology.

Places

Alaska--Discovery and exploration.

Death Valley (Calif. and Nev.)--Discovery and exploration.

Oceania--Discovery and exploration.

West (U.S.)--Discovery and exploration.

Occupations

Botanists.

Naturalists.

Zoologists.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of A. K. Fisher, botanist, naturalist, and zoologist, were given to the Library of Congress in 1955 and 1960 by his daughter-in-law, Anne B. Fisher.

Processing History

The papers of A. K. Fisher were arranged and described in 1962. The finding aid was expanded and revised in 2010.

Additional Guides

A note concerning the A. K. Fisher Papers appeared in the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 15, no. 13 (March 26, 1956): 151. The material was described in the *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* 13, no. 3 (May, 1956): 161; and 18, no. 3 (May, 1961): 140.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of A. K. Fisher in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of A. K. Fisher are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, A. K. Fisher, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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1856, Mar. 21	Born, Sing Sing (now Ossining), N.Y.
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1876	Married Alwilda Merritt
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1879	M.D., Columbia College, College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, N.Y. (now part of Columbia University)
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1883	Founded with others the American Ornithologist' Union, Washington, D.C.
1885-1905	Assistant to C. Hart Merriam, performed economic investigations, Department of Agriculture, Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy, Washington, D.C. (later renamed Division of Biological Survey)
1891	Member, Death Valley Expedition
1892-1898	Biological surveys in various western states
1893	Published <i>The Death Valley Expedition</i> . Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office
1893	Published <i>The Hawks and Owls of the United States in Their Relation to Agriculture</i> . Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office
1899	Member, Harriman Expedition to Alaska
1905-1931	Assistant chief, Bureau of Biological Survey, Division of Economic Investigations, Washington, D.C.
1929	Member, Pinchot South Sea Expedition
1932	Published <i>Report on Birds Recorded by the Pinchot Expedition of 1929 to the Caribbean and Pacific</i> . Washington, D.C.: n.p.
1948, June 12	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Albert Kenrick Fisher (1856-1948) span the years 1827-1957, with the bulk of the material dating from 1867 to 1948. The collection consists of diaries, correspondence, family papers, letterbooks, notes, memoranda, reports, drawings, photographs, bibliographic cards on miscellaneous plants and animals, articles and speeches, maps, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks. The papers are organized into ten series: [Family and Personal Papers](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Biographical Data and Notes](#), [Field Notes](#), [Subject File](#), [Articles and Speeches](#), [Photographs](#), [Miscellany](#), [Scrapbooks](#), and [Oversize](#).

The papers relate to Fisher's activities as an ornithologist and vertebrate zoologist; the Death Valley Expedition of 1891; biological surveys in California, Nevada, Arizona Territory (including New Mexico), Utah, and portions of other Western states, 1892-1898; as a member of the Harriman Expedition to Alaska in 1899 and member of the Pinchot South Sea Expedition in 1929; as one of the founders and assistant chief of the United States Biological Survey in the Department of Agriculture; as one of the founders and presidents of the American Ornithologist's Union; as a founder of the Washington Biologist's Field Club on Plummer's Island in the Potomac River; and his activities concerning his fight for game laws and conservation.

Much of the collection consists of correspondence, the major part of which is from scientists and conservationists. The remainder is composed mainly of family and personal papers, material concerning Fisher's field trips and expeditions, his work in ornithology, and personal photographs.

The collection includes the family papers of his son and daughter-in-law, Walter K. Fisher (1878-1953) and Anne B. Fisher (1898-). Walter K. Fisher, professor emeritus of zoology at

Stanford University, was a prominent naturalist, author, and artist. Anne B. Fisher authored several works of fiction and nonfiction including *Wide Road Ahead* (1939), *Cathedral in the Sun* (1940), *Salinas*, *Upside-down River* (1945), *No More a Stranger* (1946), *Oh Glittering Promise* (1949), and *Stories California Indians Told* (1957). Also of interest is correspondence from Ben Lilly, a big-game hunter of New Mexico and Arizona, Edgar Alexander Mearns, and C. Hart Merriam; Fisher's field notes and records; and photographs.

Other prominent correspondents are Frank M. Chapman, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Gifford Pinchot, Robert Ridgway, Witmer Stone, and Alexander Wetmore. Fisher's correspondence with Pinchot, beginning about 1905 and continuing until 1941, is replete with comments on forestry and wildlife conservation.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in ten series:

- [Family and Personal Papers, 1827-1957](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1867-1955](#)
- [Biographical Data and Notes, 1856-1953](#)
- [Field Notes, 1879-1887](#)
- [Subject File, circa 1870-1932](#)
- [Articles and Speeches, 1885-1941](#)
- [Photographs, circa 1856-circa 1953](#)
- [Miscellany, 1879-1948](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1876-1884](#)
- [Oversize, 1879-1899](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-6	<u>Family and Personal Papers, 1827-1957</u> Principally diaries and correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of person, then by type of material, and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 7-39	<u>General Correspondence, 1867-1955</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by years and therein alphabetically. Letterbooks are filed at the end of the series.
BOX 40	<u>Biographical Data and Notes, 1856-1953</u> Miscellaneous biographical material and notes for an unwritten, unpublished autobiography. Arranged in rough chronological order.
BOX 41	<u>Field Notes, 1879-1887</u> Eight small volumes of wildlife notes. Unarranged.
BOX 42-46	<u>Subject File, circa 1870-1932</u> Bibliographic cards, notes, memoranda, and other material on birds, hawks, owls, cats, and mammals. Arranged by subject.
BOX 47	<u>Articles and Speeches, 1885-1941</u> Manuscripts, typescripts, and printed copies of articles and speeches. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 48-52	<u>Photographs, circa 1856-circa 1953</u> Single photographs and photograph albums. Arranged by family or general subject categories with albums filed at the end of the series.
BOX 53-54	<u>Miscellany, 1879-1948</u> Miscellaneous subject files, drawings, financial papers, maps, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arranged by subject or type of material.
BOX 55	<u>Scrapbooks, 1876-1884</u> Newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX OV 1-OV 2	<u>Oversize, 1879-1899</u> Oversize diploma and Harriman Alaska Expedition album. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-6	Family and Personal Papers, 1827-1957 Principally diaries and correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of person, then by type of material, and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 1	Fisher, A. K.
BOX 1	Family correspondence, 1898-1949
BOX 1	Death, will and estate, 1948-1949
BOX 1	Miscellany, undated
BOX 1	Fisher, Anne B. (daughter-in-law)
BOX 1	Diary, 1923
BOX 1	Family correspondence, 1909-1954
BOX 1	General correspondence, 1921-1955
BOX 2	Newspapers clippings, 1937-1957
BOX 2	Printed matter, 1937-1957
BOX 2	Fisher, Fannie (1850-1941) (sister), family correspondence, 1891, 1894, 1928
BOX 2	Fisher, John Kenrick (1807-1874) (uncle)
BOX 2	Family and general correspondence, 1827-1877, undated
BOX 2	Memorabilia, 1827
BOX 2	Fisher, Susan Townsend (1817-1906) (mother), family correspondence, 1884-1906
BOX 3	Fisher, Walter Kenrick (1878-1935) (son)
BOX 3	Diaries, 1876-1879, 1942-1953
BOX 3	Family correspondence
BOX 3	1890-1897
BOX 4	1989-1908
BOX 5	1909-1929
BOX 6	1930-1939, undated
BOX 6	General correspondence, 1916-1953
BOX 6	Articles, 1916-1929
BOX 6	Biographical material, 1953
BOX 6	Printed matter, 1907-1954
BOX 6	Miscellany, 1919-1953
BOX 6	Merritt, Gilbert (1824-1892) (maternal grandfather of A. K. Fisher, "Hermit of the Pines")
BOX 6	General correspondence, 1888-1890, undated
BOX 6	Genealogical material, undated
BOX 6	Miscellany
BOX 7-39	General Correspondence, 1867-1955 Letters sent and received.

General Correspondence, 1867-1955

Container *Contents*

Arranged chronologically by years and therein alphabetically. Letterbooks are filed at the end of the series.

BOX 7	1867-1881
BOX 8	1882-1884
BOX 9	1885-1888
BOX 10	1889-1892
BOX 11	1893-1894
BOX 12	1895-1896
BOX 13	1897-1899
BOX 14	1900-1901
BOX 15	1902-1903
BOX 16	1904-1905
BOX 17	1906-1907
BOX 18	1908-1910
BOX 19	1911-1912
BOX 20	1913-1914
BOX 21	1915-1916
BOX 22	1917-1918
BOX 23	1919-1920
BOX 24	1921
BOX 25	1922
BOX 26	1923
BOX 27	1924
BOX 28	1925
BOX 29	1926
BOX 30	1927
BOX 31	1928
BOX 32	1929
BOX 33	1930
BOX 34	1931-1932
BOX 35	1933-1934
BOX 36	1935-1937
BOX 37	1938-1940
BOX 38	1941-1955
BOX 39	Undated
BOX 39	Letterbooks, 1886-1908
BOX 40	Biographical Data and Notes, 1856-1953 Miscellaneous biographical material and notes for an unwritten, unpublished autobiography. Arranged in rough chronological order.
BOX 40	1856-1897
BOX 40	1929

Biographical Data and Notes, 1856-1953

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 40	1943-1953
BOX 41	Field Notes, 1879-1887 Eight small volumes of wildlife notes. Unarranged.
BOX 41	1879-1887
BOX 42-46	Subject File, circa 1870-1932 Bibliographic cards, notes, memoranda, and other material on birds, hawks, owls, cats, and mammals. Arranged by subject.
BOX 42	Bird notes
BOX 42	Bibliographic cards
BOX 42	circa 1870-1932
BOX 43	circa 1870-1932
BOX 44	General, circa 1870-1932
BOX 45	Hawks and owls, circa 1870-1932
BOX 46	Cats, circa 1870-1932
BOX 46	Mammals, circa 1870-1900
BOX 47	Articles and Speeches, 1885-1941 Manuscripts, typescripts, and printed copies of articles and speeches. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 47	1885-1941
BOX 48-52	Photographs, circa 1856-circa 1953 Single photographs and photograph albums. Arranged by family or general subject categories with albums filed at the end of the series.
BOX 48	Family
BOX 48	Birthplace, undated
BOX 48	Fisher, A. K. and Walker K., 1921, 1926
BOX 48	Fisher, Walter K., 1897-1944
BOX 48	Lake George, 1901
BOX 48	Miscellany
BOX 48	Fisher, A. K.
BOX 48	Fisher, Anne B.
BOX 48	Fisher, Walter K.
BOX 48	General miscellany
BOX 48	Mariner's Museum
BOX 49	General
BOX 49	Index
BOX 49	Pinchot South Sea Expedition, 1929
BOX 49	Lilly, Ben

Photographs, circa 1856-circa 1953

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 49	Mexico
BOX 49	Miscellany
BOX 50	Albums
BOX 50	Miscellany
BOX 51	Miscellany
BOX 51	Harriman Alaska Expedition, 1899 <i><u>See Oversize</u></i>
BOX 52	Pinchot South Sea Expedition, 1929
BOX 53-54	Miscellany, 1879-1948 Miscellaneous subject files, drawings, financial papers, maps, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arranged by subject or type of material.
BOX 53	American Ornithologists Union, 1902-1929
BOX 53	Diploma, 1879 <i><u>See Oversize</u></i>
BOX 53	Belding Lyman, circa 1890
BOX 53	Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, 1894-1945
BOX 53	Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., 1900-1948
BOX 53	Drawings, 1891, 1906, undated
BOX 53	Financial papers, 1929
BOX 53	Miscellany
BOX 53	Maps and blue prints, 1911, 1931, undated
BOX 54	Newspapers clippings, 1900-1948, undated
BOX 54	Pinchot South Sea Expedition, 1929
BOX 54	Printed matter, 1900-1948
BOX 55	Scrapbooks, 1876-1884 Newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 55	1876-1884
BOX OV 1-OV 2	Oversize, 1879-1899 Oversize diploma and Harriman Alaska Expedition album. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Photographs, 1899
BOX OV 1	Albums
BOX OV 1	Harriman Alaska Expedition, 1899 (Container 51)
BOX OV 2	Miscellany, 1879
BOX OV 2	Diploma, 1879 (Container 53)