John Fiske Papers: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Huntington Staff, circa 1955; encoded with supplementary revision by Diann Benti in August 2017.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
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Overview of the Collection

Title: John Fiske Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1850-1901
Collection Number: mssFK 1-1661, mssHM 7227-7231, mssHM 18866--18895, mssHM 24739-24877
Creator: Fiske, John, 1842-1901.
Extent: 1,661 pieces in 15 boxes + 25 volumes and 4 cases
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
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Abstract: This collection contains the papers and correspondence of American philosopher and historian John Fiske (1842-1902). Included are manuscripts and proof sheets of his books, articles, lectures and other works on history, theology, and education, his literary works, musical compositions, and some documents. The professional and personal correspondence includes letters from Fiske to his wife, family, and colleagues; there are also letters to Fiske's step-father E. W. Stoughton (1818-1882).

Language: English.

Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. John Fiske Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
Purchased from Godspeed in the 1920s and from Mrs Otis D. Fisk, 1955.

Removed or Separated Material
Some letters to Fiske were cataloged separately as part of the Huntington's Literary File, including:

- Charles Darwin letters to Fiske, 1871-1880 (HM 8260-2869)
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell. Letter to John Fiske. 1897 October 3 (HM 8270)
- J.B. Millet Co. (HM 7057-7060)
- Lowell, James Russell. Letter to John Fiske. 1888 January 3 (HM 5382)
- Herbert Spencer (HM 13718-13760) includes: Fiske, John. Herbert Spencer's request to religion : [an address at a farewell banquet to Spencer] (HM 13759) and Fiske, John. "Precisely the doctrine held and taught by Mr. Spencer," 1884 August 24. (HM 13760)

Proof sheets transferred to the Rare Book Department, August 1955

- Colonization of the New World ... (Philadelphia and New York: Lea Brothers & Company, [1902]). (Call number: 193952 v. 1-2)
- Independence of the New World ... (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, [c1902]). (Call number: 193953 v. 1-2)
- Modern development of the new world ... (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, [1902]). (Call number: 193954 v. 1-2)

Biographical Note
John Fiske (1842-1901) was an American philosopher and historian. He was born Edmund Fiske Greene in Connecticut in 1842. He later assumed his maternal great-grandfather's surname Fiske. He graduated from Harvard College in 1863 and Harvard Law School in 1865. He began his career as author by publishing his first article in 1861 in the National Quarterly Review. After that he was a frequent contributor to American and British periodicals. He was a lecturer at Harvard University, Washington University and other schools. He also taught history. Fiske also became a supporter of Charles
Darwin and the doctrine of evolution. Fiske published several books including The Discovery of America (1892). He died in Massachusetts in 1901. He was married to Abby Morgan and they had six children: Maud, Ralph, Ethel, Harold, Clarence, and Herbert.

Fiske's mother Mary Greene married Edwin W. Stoughton in 1852 after the death of John's father Edmund Brewster Green. Edwin W. Stoughton was a lawyer in New York and U.S. minister to Russia from 1878 to 1879.

**Scope and Content**

This collection contains papers and correspondence of John Fiske. Included are manuscripts and proof sheets of his books, articles, lectures and other works on history, theology, and education, his literary works, musical compositions, and some documents. The professional and personal correspondence includes letters from Fiske to his wife Abby Morgan Fiske, mother Mary Fiske Bound Green Stoughton, Henry Holt, Henry A. Richmond, James Grant Wilson, and others. There are also letters to Fiske's step-father E. W. Stoughton.

Recipients of 6 or more letters from John Fiske:

- Brooks, James Willson (14 items)
- Brooks, Martha Willson (12 items)
- Fiske, Abby Morgan (Brooks) (436 items)
- Gilbert, Shepherd D. (42 items)
- Ginn & Co. (35 items)
- Green, James (7 items)
- Holt, Henry (39 items)
- Lewis, Polly (Fisk) Bound (16 items)
- Richmond, Henry A. (41 items)
- Roberts, George Litch (26 items)
- Spencer, Hebrert (6 items)
- Stoughton, Edwin Wallace (8 items)
- Stoughton, Mary Fisk (Bound) Green (599 items)
- Wilcox, Lizzie (15 items)
- Wilson, James Grant (88 items)

HM 18874-18880, HM 18882-18883, HM 18885-18892, and HM 24781-24877 have the bookplate of William Bixby; HM 18881 has a sticker on the inside cover: "W. T. Newton, No. 571"; HM 18884 has the bookplate of William F. Gable

**Arrangement**

Organized in the following manner: 1) Bound volumes, and 2) Boxed and cased Materials. The correspondence is arranged chronologically. The collection includes several items with call numbers beginning with HM.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

**Subjects**

- Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882 -- Correspondence.
- Fiske, John, 1842-1901 -- Archives.
- Historians -- United States -- Archives.
- Lecturers -- United States -- Archives.
- Philosophers -- United States -- Archives.
- United States -- History.
- United States -- Intellectual life -- 19th century -- Sources.

**Forms/Genres**

- Lectures -- United States -- 19th century.
- Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 19th century.
- Manuscripts -- United States -- 19th century.
- Proofs (derivative objects) -- United States.
- Personal papers -- United States -- 19th century.
- Professional papers -- United States -- 19th century.
### Additional Contributors
- Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882.
- Fiske, Abby Morgan, recipient.
- Holt, Henry, 1840-1926, recipient.
- Huxley, Thomas Henry, 1825-1895.
- Richmond, Henry Augustus, 1840-1913, recipient.
- Spencer, Herbert, 1820-1903.
- Stoughton, Mary Fiske Bound Green, recipient.
- Wilson, James Grant, 1832-1914, recipient.

### Bound volumes

#### Manuscripts

- **American Political Ideas viewed from the standpoint of universal history [3 lectures].** 1885 HM 18874
- **American Revolution: Part One (pages 1-550) [Volume I in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1891 HM 18875 vol. 1
- **American Revolution: Part Two (pages 551-end) [Volume II in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"].** 1891 HM 18875 vol. 2
- **Autobiographical Notes. (1884)** HM 18876
- **B. Franklin: [a biographical sketch].** Approximately 1887 HM 18882
- **The Beginnings of New England [Volume V in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1889 HM 18877
- **The Boston Tea Party: [a lecture].** Approximately 1894 HM 18878
- **Civil Government in the United States [Volume XI in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1890 HM 18879
- **The Dutch and Quaker Colonies: Part One (pages 1-258) [1 of 2 volumes: Volume XIV in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1899 HM 18880 vol. 1
- **The Dutch and Quaker Colonies: Part Two (pages 259-end) [2 of 2 volumes: Volume XV in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1899 HM 18880 vol. 2
- **Essays on a Liberal Education. Edited by Rev. F. W. Farrar ... London, 1867 [reviewed by John Fiske for the North American Review]. (1868)** HM 18884
- **Europe before the Arrival of Man: [an article].** 1882 HM 18881
- **History of the United States [Volume XII in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1893 HM 18883
- **John Tyndall: [a biographical sketch].** 1894 HM 18885
- **The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War [Volume IV in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1900 HM 18886
- **New France and New England [1 volume: Volume XIII in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1901 HM 18889
- **Old Virginia and her Neighbors [Volumes XVI-XVII in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]] 1897 HM 18890
- **Preface to Appleton's Encyclopaedia of American Biography.** HM 18873
Scenes and Characters in American History: Part One [1 of 2 volumes: Volume VI in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]. HM 18891
Contents: Charles Francis Adams; John Adams; John Quincy Adams; Samuel Adams; Henry Lee of Massachusetts, an article by Lee's son; Disasters of 1780; Benedict Arnold; Verrazano & Hudson; Penn's Holy Experiment; Thomas Jefferson; and Alexander Hamilton.

Scenes and Characters in American History: Part Two (2 of 2 volumes: Volume VII in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"). HM 18891
Contents: James Madison; Andrew Jackson; "Tippecanoe, and Tyler Too"; Daniel Webster; Charles Lee; and "Old & New Ways of treating History."

Schubert: [a biographical sketch] [1 volume; cover title: "A Sketch on Franz Schubert"]. [1891?-1905] HM 18887
Bound with:
- Fiske, John. An Evening with Schubert, St. Louis, 1893 March 6 [program of a recital]
- Paine, John Knowles. [Memoir on Fiske's love of music]
- Fiske, Abby Morgan (Brooks). Note on Fiske's sketch on Schubert, 1905

Thomas Hutchinson, last Royal Governor of Massachusetts: [a biographical sketch/lecture]. Approximately 1888 HM 18888
The War for Independence [1 volume: Volume III in bound set "Original MSS. Histories and Essays by John Fiske"]. 1889 HM 18892

Correspondence

Letters from John Fiske to Shepard Devereux Gilbert [38 letters and 4 postcards]. 1863-1898 HM 24739-24780
Letters of John Fiske as joint editor of Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography. 1886-1888 HM 24781-24877
97 letters. 88 letters are addressed to James Grant Wilson, editor, 4 to Rossiter Johnson, and 3 to J. W. Weidemeyer. The collection also contains one letter each from Octavius B. Frothingham and Alice A. Gray to Fiske.

Boxed materials

Boxed correspondence

Box 1 1850-1859
Box 2 1860-1862
Box 3 1863-1864
Box 4 1865-1868
Box 5 1869-1872
Box 6 1873-1875
Box 7 1876-1878
Box 8 1879
Box 9 1880-1882+
Box 10 1883-1886
Box 11 1887-1891
Box 12 1892-1893
Box 13 1896-1901

Note
Includes HM 7231 (Letter from Fiske to J. B. Millet Co., 1898 November 7).
<table>
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<th>Case</th>
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<td>Fiske, John. Letters to Henry A. Richmond, 1881-1889. HM 24917-24957</td>
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<td>Letters from John Fiske to Edwin Ginn and Ginn &amp; Co. [35 letters and one duplicate] 1886-1888 HM 25385-25420</td>
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<td>Fiske-Thomas Henry Huxley correspondence. HM 13243-13257</td>
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<td>[Fiske's itinerary for his lecture course in the Spring of 1892]. [1892 January] FK 1278</td>
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<td>&quot;The Genesis of Language&quot; [a critical comment on the essay, by the author]. 1885 August 2 FK 1279</td>
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<td>To the Middleton Musical Association [receipted bill]. 1858 October 12 FK 1280</td>
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<td>Priced lists of histories ... [1858] FK 1281</td>
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<td>Three lists of books ... [1859] FK 1282</td>
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<td>Grand Beethoven night ... [program of music]. 1880 December 18 FK 1283</td>
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<td>The Idea of God : Notes for the first draft, written in the Little Kitchen at Petersham. [1885 after July 12] FK 1284</td>
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<td>[Itemized statement and summary of debts]. 1885 December 22 FK 1285</td>
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<td>[Summer seasons at Petersham from 1868 to 1885]. 1885 FK 1286</td>
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<td>Whereabouts of J. F., April 9 to May 7 : [a list of addresses for] Letters and Telegrams. [1900] FK 1287</td>
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<td>The Genesis of Language. [1869] FK 1288</td>
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<td>Mass in B Minor : a memorandum ... in pencil. Approximately 1873 FK 1289</td>
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<td>[Examination paper for admission to the Massachusetts Bar]. 1864 HM 7227</td>
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<td>Are we Celts or Teutons [sections VII and VIII only]. 1869 HM 7228</td>
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<td>[Specifications for Carpenter's Work ...] [for E. W. Stoughton's house on Berkeley Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, unbound]. 1877 HM 7229</td>
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<td>New England : [article drawn from Fiske's The Beginning of New England]. Approximately 1889 HM 7230</td>
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<td>To John Fiske, L.L.D. an Acrostic, but not by a Cross Stick ... 1897 February 12 HM 18866</td>
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<td>A Candid Theologian. To the Editor of the Christian Union : [a letter]. 1873 HM 18867</td>
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<td>John Fiske's miscellaneous receipts &amp; expenses. Jan. 1886. 1886 HM 18868</td>
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<td>[Plat showing six lots on Berkeley Place, Cambridge, Massachusetts, giving the names of owners and footage for each]. Approximately 1892 HM 18869</td>
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<td>The Peasant Girl and the Fairy : [a story for children]. Approximately 1884 HM 18870</td>
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<td>Spain and France in the New World : [a lecture delivered in Boston, October 21, 1892 (incomplete)]. Approximately 1892 HM 18871</td>
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<td>Cosmic Philosophy ... 1901 April 27 HM 18872</td>
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<td>Mass in B Minor : [the score and vocal parts]. 1871 December-1873 June HM 18893 a-b</td>
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<td>Il Metauro: a sonata for the organ or pianoforte. [Approximately 1857] HM 18894</td>
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<td>Shront: an Opera. 1857 HM 18895</td>
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**Box 15**

**Ephemera**

This box contains miscellaneous ephemera including fragments of Fiske writings, envelopes, visiting cards and other cards, copies of manuscripts and correspondence (for which the originals are held by the Huntington Library), newspaper clippings, including those related to the marriage of President Grover Cleveland, etc., 1887, Cleveland and the tariff, 1888, and the protective tariff, and newspaper clippings removed from HM 555, HM 560, HM 8260-8270, HM 13181, HM 13241-13256, and HM 13718-13758.