Guide to the Robert B. Fisk Papers

WA MSS S-2683

by Lisa Conathan

2011

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-2683

CREATOR: Fisk, Robert B.

TITLE: Robert B. Fisk papers

DATES: 1882–1929

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.34 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Robert B. Fisk Papers consist of family correspondence and business papers created and accumulated by Robert B. Fisk during the course of his career as an attorney and land developer in Potter County, South Dakota. Correspondence broadly documents nineteenth- and early twentieth-century South Dakota life, including the rapidly growing settler population, business and real estate transactions, politics and the transition to statehood, the conditions of workers and prisoners, and the effect of the Panics of 1893 and 1907 on the local population. Business records include correspondence from mortgage and wholesale companies for whom Fisk worked as a collections agent. Additionally, letters from family members document life in contemporary Kentucky.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fiskr

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fiskr.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Robert B. Fisk papers
WA MSS S-2683

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The Robert B. Fisk Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation
Robert B. Fisk Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information
Former call number: Uncat.MSS.1173.
Collection are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.
This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization, at the time of acquisition. Further description was added in 2011.

Robert B. Fisk
Robert Brown Fisk was born in Covington, Kentucky in 1852. He was an attorney and land developer in Gettysburg, Potter County, South Dakota from 1884 until his death after 1929.

Scope and Contents
The Robert B. Fisk Papers consist of family correspondence and business papers created and accumulated by Robert B. Fisk during the course of his career as an attorney and land developer in Potter County, South Dakota. Correspondence broadly documents nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century South Dakota life, including the rapidly growing settler population, business and real estate transactions, politics and the transition to statehood, the conditions of workers and prisoners, and the effect of economic recessions on the local population. Additionally, letters from family members document life in contemporary Kentucky.

Arrangement
Organized into two series: I. Business Papers, 1882-1929. II. Family Papers, 1885-1929.
Collection Contents

Series I. Business Papers

2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

Business Papers consist of correspondence (chiefly incoming, though also including retained copies of some outgoing letters) and financial records (chiefly bills and statements). Correspondence includes letters from colleagues, clients, and prospective settlers, relating to legal matters and cases, to economic conditions in the Dakota Territory and South Dakota, and to real estate prospects and transactions. Of particular interest is correspondence from mortgage and wholesale companies (for whom Fisk worked as a collections agent) and from individuals seeking relief from debt, documenting the economic conditions in the Dakota Territory and South Dakota in the context of rapid settlement, widespread mortgages, and the Panics of 1893 and 1907.

Correspondence is arranged chronologically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1</td>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>1883, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 2-13</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1882–1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 14-19</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1895–1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 20-25</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1901–1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 26-30</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1908–1911 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 31-38</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1911 September–1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 39-50</td>
<td>Business correspondence</td>
<td>1917–1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 51</td>
<td>Unidentified notes and sketches</td>
<td>1929, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series II. Family Papers

0.84 linear feet (2 boxes)

Family correspondence addresses not only family matters such as health and welfare, personal financial situations, and births and deaths of family members, but also legal and economic topics related to the conditions in and prospects of the Dakota Territory and South Dakota. Estate papers document the holdings and distribution of the property of Fisk’s parents, John F. and Elizabeth S.Fisk.

Organized into two subseries: Correspondence and Estate Papers.

Correspondence
Organized by sender and then arranged roughly chronologically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 52-53</td>
<td>Julia C. Fisk (wife)</td>
<td>1885–1898, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 54</td>
<td>John F. Fisk (father)</td>
<td>1887–1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 55</td>
<td>William Greene (brother?)</td>
<td>1887–1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 56-57</td>
<td>Olin Meredith Fisk (son)</td>
<td>1893–1917, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 58-59</td>
<td>John F. Fisk (brother)</td>
<td>1884–1911, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 60-63</td>
<td>Charles H. Fisk (brother)</td>
<td>1901–1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 64</td>
<td>Selene, (sister)</td>
<td>1898–1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 65</td>
<td>Hennie (sister)</td>
<td>1896–1908, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 66</td>
<td>J.W. Hale (brother-in-law)</td>
<td>1896–1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 67</td>
<td>Otis Harrison Fisk (nephew)</td>
<td>1889–1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 68</td>
<td>Ella (sister)</td>
<td>1895–1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 69</td>
<td>Belle Fisk Andrews (sister)</td>
<td>1894–1916, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 70</td>
<td>Elizabeth S. Fisk (mother)</td>
<td>1891–1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 71</td>
<td>Nellie Michener (neice)</td>
<td>1897–1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 72</td>
<td>Mary (sister)</td>
<td>1890–1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 73</td>
<td>Tom (nephew)</td>
<td>1901–1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 74</td>
<td>Gineva (cousin)</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 75</td>
<td>Sadie (neice)</td>
<td>1894–1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 76-78</td>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>1884–1917, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estate Papers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 79-82</td>
<td>Parents’ estate documents</td>
<td>1904–1906, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 83-84</td>
<td>Estate correspondence</td>
<td>1905–1929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

Subjects
Frontier and pioneer life -- South Dakota
Lawyers -- South Dakota
Real property -- South Dakota

Geographic Names
Dakota Territory -- Economic conditions
Dakota Territory -- Politics and government
Dakota Territory -- Social life and customs
Kentucky -- Social life and customs
Potter County (S.D.) -- Economic conditions
Potter County (S.D.) -- Politics and government
South Dakota -- Economic conditions
South Dakota -- Politics and government
South Dakota -- Social life and customs

Occupations
Lawyers -- South Dakota

Names
Fisk, Robert B.

Families
Fisk family