

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Fiske, Jane Briggs Smith, Papers, 1806-1923

**LOCATION(S):**

Octavo vols. "F"  
Mss. boxes "F"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

thirty-four octavo volumes; one manuscript box

**CONTENTS LIST:**

yes

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**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

See, Frederick Clifton Pierce, *Fiske and Fisk Family ...* (Chicago, 1896); *Vital Records of Hanson Massachusetts to the Year 1850* (Boston, 1911); and Susan Augustus Smith, *A Memorial of Rev. Thomas Smith ...*(Plymouth, 1895).

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

The diaries are the gift of Jean M. Harrington, 10 August 1988; the papers are the gift of Jean M. Harrington, 7 September 1988; the letters of Jane Briggs Fiske Smith are the gift of Mrs. Brian P. Barr, 21 November 1988; the letters of F. Fuller Fiske are the gift of Jean M. Harrington, 8 October 1997; the letters of William F. Fiske and other miscellaneous papers are the gift of Jean M. Harrington, 28 January 1998

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

Jane Briggs Smith (1834-1925), daughter of Capt. Joshua and Saba (Drew) Smith, was born in Hanson, Mass. During, and for a period after, the Civil War she taught former slaves at freedmen's schools in Hilton Head, Port Royal, and Sumter, South Carolina, and in Washington, D.C. While in the South she met Friend Fuller ("Fuller") Fiske (1828-1906), of Webster, N.H., who was working as a volunteer civilian nurse during the Civil War. They married on 8 October 1872, settled in Webster, N.H., and had two children, one born 29 June 1873, who died soon afterwards, and William Fuller Fiske.

The Fiskes engaged in extensive farming in Webster, with the help of Fuller's brother, William Taylor Fiske (1830- ), for the latter-half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. After Fuller's death, Jane remained in Webster for a few years, but the lose of her eyesight required her to return to Hanson to live with her niece, Caroline Moore Smith Thomas (1858-1926). Jane died in Hanson on 5 January 1925 and is buried in the Fern Hill Cemetery.

William Fuller Fiske (1876- ) studied at the New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (later University of New Hampshire), during the 1890's, and became an entomologist. He was the assistant entomologist for the New Hampshire Experimental Station, 1897-1901; assistant entomologist for the state of Georgia, 1901-1903; assistant in forest investigations, 1903-1906; in charge of the Gypsy Moth Laboratory (Melrose Highlands, Mass.), 1906 May-1913 January; and United States Department of Agriculture, special investigator of sleeping sickness in Africa for joint commission of Royal Society and British Colonial Office, 1913- . He was also a member of many societies and clubs. According to family lore, he supposedly disappeared while on his investigation in Africa.

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The bulk of this collection is comprised of thirty-four diaries of Jane Briggs (Smith) Fiske for the years

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1871 through 1910 (1872, 1878, 1882, 1884, 1892, 1908 lacking). The remainder of the collection contains forty-five letters from Jane to Fuller for the period 1865 to 1871; seventeen letters from Fuller to various family members for the period 1856 to 1864; forty-nine letters from William to Jane; and miscellaneous correspondence and papers.

The diary for 1871, the year before her marriage, is written while Jane was in Washington, D.C. The daily entries contain a report of the weather, followed by a record of her activities, including time spent at the Capitol listening to the Senate or Supreme Court; visits made and received; letters written and received; going to the Barracks school; going to Sunday School and church; playing whist; sewing; going to concerts or the theater; visiting the Congressional greenhouse; going to class; giving lessons; reading; and knitting. Jane returns to Hanson, Mass. for a visit in April, and, on 22 May, makes the notation, "... In the evening went ... to hear Fred Douglass."

The remaining diaries, written after her marriage, again begin with a report of the weather (though in later years, just a chronicle of morning and afternoon temperatures). The entries for the diaries (extensive at first, but brief, and barely legible, towards the later years) contain information regarding the daily activities of a farm wife, including chores (e.g., cooking, baking, mending, darning, sewing, churning, washing, drying, ironing, cleaning, scrubbing); visits made and received; letters written and received; and mentions of births, birthdays, marriages, illnesses, and deaths. There are also references to helping her husband make out bills and helping him with his school reports; selling meat, butter, and eggs; and killing turkeys, chickens, pigs, and cows.

The forty-five letters from Jane to Fuller for the period 25 June 1865 to 23 January 1871, written during her tenure in the South, contain comments regarding her students, abolition, the enfranchisement of the freedmen, and academic and pedagogical discussions. Her letters express her philosophies on several subjects and chronicle her ever changing moods ("... my temperament is decidedly mercurial. ..."--22 January 1868).

The majority of the seventeen letters from Fuller for the period 1 July 1856 to 22 July 1864 were written during his service in the Civil War and are addressed to his sister, Susan Caroline Fiske (1834-1865). There are two letters addressed to his brother William written prior to his service.

The forty-nine letters from William to his mother for the period 1902 to 1907 contain comments regarding his work and travels.

The remaining materials are a collection of miscellaneous items such as correspondence; a sketch; a postcard from Butte, Montana; receipts; bills; a list of "volunteer civilian nurses" from the Office of Chief Med. Officer, Fredericksburgh, Va., dated 24 May 1864; a quit-claim deed; railroad passes for the year 1902; a hotel bill; and a Western Union telegram.

Papers pertaining to estate of Jane Briggs Smith Fiske, and to William Fuller Fiske, can be found in the **Thomas-Smith Family, Papers, 1833-1987**.

See Contents List.

*AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY***MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**JANE BRIGGS SMITH FISKE, PAPERS, 1806-1923  
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