

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the Herbert F. West Collection of A. Hugh Fisher

GEN MSS 795



by Sandra Markham

2011

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 795

CREATOR: West, Herbert Faulkner, 1898-1974 , collector

TITLE: Herbert F. West collection of A. Hugh Fisher

DATES: 1860-1945

BULK DATES: 1901-1945

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.54 linear feet (9 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Herbert F. West Collection of A. Hugh Fisher consists of correspondence, writings, clippings, tearsheets, and fine art sent to Herbert West by the artist Alfred Hugh Fisher between 1938 and 1945. It includes over 300 letters from Fisher to West, 1938-1945; autobiographical memoirs by Fisher; volumes of travel journals (in the form of letters to his colleague Halford Mackinder) covering Fisher's work with the Visual Instruction Committee of the British Colonial Office and recording his visits to Australia, Borneo, Canada, China, Fiji, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tasmania, and Tonga, 1907-1910; various articles, clippings, notes, manuscripts, and ephemera; and a selection of drawings, paintings, and prints by Fisher whose subjects include the home of writer Margaret Leigh, and portraits of his contemporaries Lascelles Abercrombie, Walter de la Mare, T. Sturge Moore, George W. Russell, and W. B. Yeats, among others. Also present is an etching by Hungarian printmaker Gyula (Julius) Komjati, whom Fisher visited in 1932. Although West and Fisher never met in person, their long-distance friendship gave the artist someone to whom he could entrust his work and legacy, a particularly important concern when British citizens were anticipating Germany's impending attack. In addition to describing daily life in wartime Britain, Fisher's letters to West provide further personal history and context for the material West was receiving.

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

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 <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.westhf>.

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

Gift of Herbert F. West, 1954-1957; letter to Miss Pye, gift of Bertram Rota, 1958; "Lycidas" woodcuts, gift of Robert Barry, 1953.

Custodial History

West described his relationship with Fisher, and the circumstances surrounding the collection and its transfer to Yale, in an essay published in *Yale University Library Gazette* 29, no. 1 (July 1954): 2-8.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Herbert F. West Collection of A. Hugh Fisher 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

Herbert F. West Collection of A. Hugh Fisher. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

The collection was formerly filed under the call number MS Vault Fisher AH, and was housed in buckram-covered acidic containers created for Herbert West; they were discarded in 2011.

Associated Materials

West's collection of books inscribed by Fisher were cataloged separately. Fisher's letters to William Rose Benet, also a gift to the library from Herbert West, are filed in the Benet Family Papers. Albums of photographs taken by Fisher during his time with the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee are in the Royal Commonwealth Society Collections at the University of Cambridge Library, Cambridge, England.

Alfred Hugh Fisher (1867-1945)

Alfred Hugh Fisher, a painter, printmaker, photographer, illustrator, poet, essayist, and critic known professionally as A. Hugh Fisher and to his friends as Hugh, was born in the Brixton district of London on February 8, 1867, the son of Alfred George Fisher and Isabella Read Smith Fisher. After some schooling he

obtained a position as a junior clerk at George Street & Company, an advertising agency, in 1884. As a youth Fisher had declared his intent to become an artist; he exhibited his first watercolor at the Royal Academy in 1887, and in the 1880s began his career as an illustrator for a variety of popular periodicals. He received formal art education through a scholarship awarded him by the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art) from 1894 to 1897, after which he studied for six months with Benjamin Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens at the Académie Julian in Paris. Beginning in 1901, Fisher traveled and worked in Europe and England, painting and drawing as well as turning out illustrations for publishers, particularly the *Illustrated London News*. In 1907 he was appointed to the position of artist for the British Colonial Office's Visual Instruction Committee (COVIC) under the direction of Halford Mackinder. The agency's intention was to create a series of lectures that would acquaint British children with their empire's varied geography, and Fisher was assigned to visit as many colonial possessions as he could within three years, to paint and photograph scenes to be turned into lantern slides to illustrate Mackinder's talks. His travels took him through Ceylon, India, and Burma (1907), Aden, Somaliland, Cyprus, Canada, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore (1908), Borneo, Gibraltar, Malta, and Australia (1909), and Tasmania, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji (1910). In addition, a steamship accident in 1909 allowed him to spend a few days in Japan. Aside from the thousands of images he made for the committee, Fisher's journey resulted in his own volumes *Through India and Burmah with Pen and Brush* (1911) and *India* (1913). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s he regularly spent time in France, Italy, Belgium, and Germany. His friendship with the Hungarian etcher Gyula (Julius) Komjati (1894-1958), who was working in England in 1927, led Fisher to spend three months in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1932.

Fisher began producing etchings in the 1890s, and was elected to membership in the Royal Society of Painters and Etchers in 1898. He was also the author of *The Cathedral Church of Hereford* (1898), a few volumes of poetry, a novel titled *Quix* (1931), and many essays, obituaries, and book reviews, the latter also published under his pseudonym Caleb Reade. In 1909 Fisher married his second wife, Liliás Cecile Wyman (1875-1930), whom he had met at the offices of the *Illustrated London News*. He died on July 2, 1945, after having suffered a stroke, and was buried in North Curry, Somerset, England.

Herbert Faulkner West (1989-1974)

Herbert F. West, teacher, author, publisher, and Anglophile, taught comparative literature at Dartmouth College from 1925 to 1964, and was professor emeritus until his death. He received degrees from Dartmouth College and Harvard University, and founded Westholm Publications, which issued several titles between 1955 and 1972.

Scope and Contents

The Herbert F. West Collection of A. Hugh Fisher consists of correspondence, writings, clippings, tearsheets, and fine art sent to Herbert West by the artist Alfred Hugh Fisher between 1938 and 1945. It includes over 300 letters from Fisher to West, 1938-1945; autobiographical memoirs by Fisher; volumes of travel journals (in the form of letters to his colleague Halford Mackinder) covering Fisher's work with the Visual Instruction Committee of the British Colonial Office and recording his visits to Australia, Borneo, Canada, China, Fiji, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tasmania, and Tonga, 1907-1910; various articles, clippings, notes, manuscripts, and ephemera; and a selection of drawings, paintings, and prints by Fisher whose subjects include the home of writer Margaret Leigh, and portraits of his contemporaries Lascelles Abercrombie, Walter de la Mare, T. Sturge Moore, George W. Russell, and W. B. Yeats, among others. Also present is an etching by Hungarian printmaker Gyula (Julius) Komjati, whom Fisher visited in 1932.

Although West and Fisher never met in person, their long-distance friendship gave the artist someone to whom he could entrust his work and legacy, a particularly important concern when British citizens were anticipating Germany's impending attack. In addition to describing daily life in wartime Britain, Fisher's letters to West provide further personal history and context for the material West was receiving.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1913-1954. II. Writings, Ephemera, and Photographs, 1860-1945. III. Fine Art, 1881-1941.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1913-1954

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

The series contains letters to and from A. Hugh Fisher, with some letters between Herbert West and others. Letters to Fisher appear in the first subseries and include thirty from friends who had read his 1913 book of poems. The second subseries holds the bulk of the material, more than three hundred letters written by Fisher to West between August 1938 and June 19, 1945, two weeks before he died. Also present is correspondence with two of Fisher's friends and his American print dealer, regarding the placement of West's collection of Fisher's papers.

Of special interest in the letters from Fisher to West is one dated March 19, 1939, enclosing the eulogy he had delivered at the memorial service held for his wife Liliias in 1931; in the letter Fisher disclosed the story of his first marriage.

Series I is organized into two subseries: A. Hugh Fisher and Herbert F. West

A. Hugh Fisher		
b. 1, f. 1	Letters from friends "about my first book of poems"	1913
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence with Board of Education, Trenton, New Jersey	1925-1926
b. 1, f. 3	Letter and cards from György (George) Buday	1939
b. 1, f. 4	Letter to Miss Pye Possibly Sibyl Pye (1879-1958); accompanied by three autograph manuscript sonnets: "On the Sea at Night," "A Lodging for the Night," and "Shelley," plus a typescript book review Removed from A. Hugh Fisher, <i>Poems</i> (1913); gift of Bertram Rota.	1924 Feb 25
Herbert F. West		
b. 1, f. 5-15	Letters from A. Hugh Fisher	1938-1940 Aug
b. 2, f. 16-29	Letters from A. Hugh Fisher	1940 Sep-1945, undated
b. 2, f. 30	Letters from Dorothy Andrews	1941, 1945
b. 2, f. 31	Correspondence with Mary Bernhard-Smith	1945-1954
b. 2, f. 32	Correspondence with Elizabeth Manning Whitmore	1946-1950

Series II: Writings, Ephemera, and Photographs, 1860-1945

1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

Fisher had hopes that West would write his biography, and supplied him with many types of source material including his own memoirs, a mix of manuscripts, typescripts, and carbon copies. Some appear to have been written in the 1930s, but also present are the original commercial duplicate books in which Fisher recorded his COVIC observations, in the form of "diary letters" to Halford Mackinder; the volumes retain the carbon pages and, in some cases, the torn-out top sheets. Fisher's memoir of Hammersmith concentrates on his neighbors, the art critic and historian Frederic George Stephens and his family, as well as May Morris, Emery Walker, and others living nearby. Many of Fisher's letters to West (in Series I) also recount episodes of his life, so should also be consulted for biographical information. Other writings include essays, short stories, and book reviews, some of which Fisher wrote under his pseudonym of Caleb Reade.

Ephemera contains catalogues and tickets from Fisher's exhibitions in Liverpool (1905) and London (1913), various promotional materials, clippings about his COVIC service (1907), and music by Jennie La Forge Cutler to Fisher's poem "Song of the Wind" (1914). A folder of photographs holds four snapshots and two formal portraits of Fisher; a large-format mounted photograph, taken while Fisher sat for his portrait to be carved in marble by means of a three-dimensional pantograph, is in Box 7.

Series II is organized into three subseries: Writings, Ephemera, and Photographs

Writings

Autobiographical and travel writings

Arranged in chronological order by content

b. 3, f. 33	Timeline of life events, 1867-1945 See letter to West of April 4, 1939	1939, 1945
b. 3, f. 34	Timeline of life events, 1914-1933	undated
b. 3, f. 35	Memoir of his mother, Isabella Read Smith Fisher Includes portrait photograph (1916) and letter from Erasmus Alvey Darwin (1804-1881) to Isabella Smith (1860)	1860-circa 1939
b. 3, f. 36	Memoir of the years from 1866-1900 Includes biographical information about his father, Alfred George Fisher	circa 1939
b. 3, f. 37	Memoir of the years in Hammersmith, 1901-1907	1940
b. 3, f. 38	Memoir of the years in Hammersmith, 1902-1904	undated
b. 3, f. 39	Memoir of London, 1903-1904	undated
b. 3, f. 40	Journal: Ceylon	1907
b. 3, f. 41-42	Journal: Canada, China, Japan, Singapore, Borneo, and Canada, 1908-1909 Typed transcription from journal books not present in the collection	undated
b. 3, f. 43	Journal: Hong Kong and Japan	1908-1909
b. 3, f. 44	Transcript of honeymoon diary kept by Liliias Fisher, June 1909	1940

Writings > Autobiographical and travel writings (continued)

b. 3, f. 45	Journal: Gibraltar and Malta	1909
b. 3, f. 46	Journal: Malta and Australia	1909-1910
b. 4, f. 47	Journal: Tasmania and New Zealand	1910
b. 4, f. 48	Journal: New Zealand and Tonga	1910
b. 4, f. 49	Journal: Tonga and Fiji	1910
b. 4, f. 50	Journal: Fiji and Australia	1910
b. 4, f. 51	Journal: Australia	1910
b. 5, f. 52-53	Notes on travels in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, 1932	undated
b. 5, f. 54	Miscellaneous memoirs Includes "About George Moore"	1903-1925
Other writings		
	Book reviews by A. Hugh Fisher and Caleb Reade Stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 70	1906-1926
b. 5, f. 55	Notes regarding T. Sturge Moore	1903-1938
b. 5, f. 56	Obituaries for Frederic Stevens and T. Sturge Moore	1907, 1941
b. 5, f. 57	Poems (manuscripts, tear sheets, and clippings from periodicals)	1896-1929
b. 5, f. 58	Travel writings, published (tear sheets and clippings from periodicals) Also stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 71	1901-1914
b. 5, f. 59-60	Miscellaneous essays, letters to editors, short stories, and talks Includes autograph manuscripts, typescripts, and clippings	1896-1933, undated
Ephemera		
b. 5, f. 61	Ephemera Also stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 72	1899-1942
Photographs		
b. 5, f. 62	Photographs Also stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 73	1886-1932, undated

Series III: Fine Art, 1881-1941*0.21 linear feet (1 box)*

Drawn and etched portraits include Fisher's literary friends Walter de la Mare, George W. Russell ("A.E."), and W. B. Yeats, among others, as well as the author/artist T. Sturge Moore. There are two self-portraits, two portraits of Fisher's second wife Liliás, and two of the printmaker Gyula (Julius) Komjati; many of the prints were inscribed by the artist to Herbert West. The Paintings subseries primarily contains watercolors, with one work in oil, and includes two views of the home of author Margaret Leigh. Box 9 holds two mats specially designed for the watercolors "Rocks at Low Tide" and "Wagon Shed, France" (stored in Box 8; see August 13, 1939, letter from Fisher to West). Prints also holds a series of woodcuts Fisher made to accompany Milton's "Lycidas," which were meant to be published by the Black Cat Press in Chicago; the volume was never issued. The subseries ends with one etching by Gyula Komjati. Reproductions contains photographs and photostats of Fisher's work, as well as some of his illustrations in clippings and tearsheets from publications.

Series III is organized into four subseries: Drawings, Paintings, Prints, and Reproductions.

Drawings		
b. 6, f. 63	England Contains "Cornwall" (1881) and "All Souls" (1940)	1881, 1940
b. 6, f. 64	"The Gods at Golf," illustrated poem	undated
	Portraits Stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 74 Contains Lascelles Abercrombie (1919), Felix Andrews (1938), Gordon Bottomley (1921), Walter de la Mare (undated), A. Hugh Fisher (2 self-portraits, 1938 and 1941), Liliás Fisher (1927), Oscar Levy (1941), T. Sturge Moore (1922), George W. Russell (1934), and W. B. Yeats (1932)	1919-1941
	Sketches from classical sculptures (2) Stored in: Oversize, Box 7, folder 75	undated
Paintings		
b. 6, f. 65	Coastal scene, watercolor	1939
	Calf, oil on canvas mounted on board Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 76	undated
b. 6, f. 66	Margaret Leigh's home on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall, watercolor (2 scenes)	[1936]
	"Rocks and Low Tide," watercolor on paper Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 77	1939
	Scenes on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall (3), watercolor on paper mounted on board Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 78	undated
	"Wagon Shed, France," watercolor on board Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 79	1939
Prints		

Prints (continued)

	Birds and animals Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 80 Contains "Jimmy the puma," "The Shearers," "Spectacled Owls" (1928), "Study of a Long-eared Owl," and "Study of a Rook"	1928, undated
	Czechoslovakia and Hungary Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 81 Contains "Budapest Early Morning," "Budapest the Two-fold City," "Coronation Church, Budapest," "Czecho-Slovak peasant" (1933), "Daphnis and Chloe (Czecho-Slovakia)" (2 copies), "Firtrees, Brodyan, Czechoslovakia," "Hungarian Plain," "The Little Carpathians," and "The Mayor's Guard" (1933)	1933, undated
	England Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 82 Contains "Looking towards Holmbury from Leith" (1886), "Princes Riseborough in Snow" (1927), and "The Square, Winchester" (undated)	1886-1927, undated
b. 6, f. 67	"Lycidas" woodcuts made to accompany Milton poem Also contains second set, trial proofs, inscribed to Roger Ingpen; gift of Robert Barry	circa 1923
	Portraits Stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 83 Contains portraits of Lilius Fisher (titled "The French Hat," 1906), Gyula (Julius) Komjati (2 images, 1933), William F. Revell (2 copies, one titled "Portrait of a Philosopher," 1901), Béla Szylágyi (titled "Hungarian Calvinist Pastor," 1936), and W. B. Yeats	1901-1936, undated
b. 6, f. 68	"Neer do well," etching by Gyula (Julius) Komjati	undated
	Reproductions	
b. 6, f. 69	Reproductions Also stored in: Oversize, Box 8, folder 84 Includes contemporary photographs and photostats of Fisher's works, as well as printed reproductions and tear sheets; also includes reproduction of a portrait drawing of Fisher by A. Filmore Valentine	1893-1941

OVERSIZE

b. 7, f. 70	Writings: book reviews by A. Hugh Fisher and Caleb Reade (in Series II)	1906-1926
b. 7, f. 71	Writings: travel writings, published (tear sheets and clippings from periodicals) (in Series II)	1910-1913
b. 7, f. 72	Ephemera: music by Jennie La Forge Cutler (in Series II)	1914
b. 7, f. 73	Photograph of Fisher (in Series II)	undated
b. 7, f. 74	Drawings: Portraits (in Series III)	1919-1941
b. 7, f. 75	Drawings: Sketches from classical sculptures (2) (in Series III)	undated
b. 8, f. 76	Paintings: Calf (in Series III)	undated
b. 8, f. 77	Paintings: "Rocks and Low Tide" (in Series III)	1939
b. 8, f. 78	Paintings: Scenes on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall (3) (in Series III)	undated
b. 8, f. 79	Paintings: "Wagon Shed, France" (in Series III)	1939
b. 8, f. 80	Prints: Birds and animals (in Series III)	1928, undated
b. 8, f. 81	Prints: Czechoslovakia and Hungary (in Series III)	1933, undated
b. 8, f. 82	Prints: England (in Series III)	1886-1927, undated
b. 8, f. 83	Prints: Portraits (in Series III)	1901-1936, undated
b. 8, f. 84	Reproductions (in Series III)	1893-1941
b. 9	Special mats (2) created for watercolors (in Series III)	1939

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

Artists, English -- 20th Century
Authors, English -- 20th Century
World War, 1939-1945 -- England

Geographic Names

Australia -- Description and travel
Budapest (Hungary) -- Pictorial works
Czechoslovakia -- Description and travel
Fiji -- Description and travel
Gibraltar -- Description and travel
Hammersmith and Fulham (London, England) --
Description and travel
Hong Kong (China) -- Description and travel
Japan -- Description and travel
Malta -- Description and travel
New Zealand -- Description and travel
Singapore -- Description and travel
Sri Lanka -- Description and travel
Tasmania -- Description and travel
Tonga -- Description and travel

Genres / Formats

Drawings (visual works)
Etchings (prints)
Oil paintings (visual works)
Photographs
Travel journals
Watercolors (paintings)
Woodcuts (prints)

Names

Abercrombie, Lascelles, 1881-1938 -- Portraits
AE, 1867-1935 -- Portraits
Bottomley, Gordon, 1874-1948 -- Portraits
Buday, György, 1907-1990
Cutler, Jennie La Forge
Darwin, Erasmus Alvey, 1804-1881
De la Mare, Walter, 1873-1956 -- Portraits
Fisher, A. Hugh (Alfred Hugh), 1867-1945
Fisher, Alfred George, d. 1902
Fisher, Isabella Read Smith, 1844-1928
Fisher, Liliás Cecile Wyman, 1875-1930

Komjati, Gyula, 1894-1958
Leigh, Margaret, 1894-1973
Levy, Oscar, 1867-1946 -- Portraits
Mackinder, Halford John, 1861-1947
Milton, John, 1608-1674 (Lycidas, Illustrations)
Moore, T. Sturge (Thomas Sturge), 1870-1944
Russell, George William, 1867-1935 -- Portraits
Stephens, Frederic George, 1828-1907
West, Herbert Faulkner, 1898-1974
Whitmore, Elizabeth Manning
Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865-1939 --
Portraits

Corporate Body

Great Britain. Colonial Office. Visual Instruction
Committee

Contributors

West, Herbert Faulkner, 1898-1974 , collector
Komjati, Gyula, 1894-1958