

**Sturgis Library Archives
Town and Local History Collection**

**Josiah Fish Letters
MS. 144**

Extent: 1 box

Scope and Content Note: This is a collection of letters from the 1850s and 1860s, from Josiah Fish of West Barnstable to members of his family – his father Capt. Josiah Fish, his mother Ruth, his sister Ruth, and his brother George. One letter is from Asa Jenkins to Capt. Josiah Fish (Josiah C. Fish’s father), written from Camp Amory on Trent in North Carolina. It is not clear what relationship Asa Jenkins had with the Fish family, though he is mentioned in the first letter in the collection. Josiah C. Fish’s sister married a James Jenkins, whose relationship to Asa is also presently unknown.

A number of the letters from Josiah C. Fish were written during the Civil War. Some are missing the first page or two.

Josiah first writes from his home in West Barnstable to his sister Ruth, chiding her for not writing back soon enough, and sharing news of the family and village life. He then appears to go to sea (San Francisco, Callao, Peru) as part of the guano trade. He then travels to Boston and then to a camp near Alexandria Virginia. In one undated letter he writes to his mother that he has “become religious” after observing all the strife in the world. It appears that this letter was written in the 1860s after Fish had joined the military.

Historical and Biographical Information: Josiah Fish was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1841 and died in Rappahannock Station, Virginia on November 7, 1863 where he was serving in the Civil War. His family resided in West Barnstable, Massachusetts.

Asa Jenkins was born in 1838 and spent most of his life at sea, though he resided in Barnstable. He served 9 months in 1862 in Company D, 45th Massachusetts Regiment.

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication purposes.

Acquisition: Donated by Alice Ungethuen of Dedham, MA, July, 2015.

Processed by: Lucy Loomis, May, 2017

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Contents: (Includes original letters and photocopies)

- Fldr 1** Background information:
- Family record for Josiah C. Fish (1841-1863)
 - Family record for Josiah Fish (father) (1803-1866)
 - Cemetery listings for the Jenkins family
 - Biographical Sketch of Asa Jenkins
 - Asa Jenkins listing in *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the Civil War*
 - Deed of gift and collection information
- Fldr 2** Envelopes from letters addressed to:
- Mr. George S. Fish (3)
 - Capt. Josiah Fish (2)
 - Mrs. James Jenkins (1)
- (Originals are in subfolder)
- Fldr 3**
- a. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Sister” (Ruth Fish Jenkins, wife of James Jenkins), West Barnstable, June 8, 1855
 - b. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Sister,” West Barnstable, the 29th of ?, 1856
 - c. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Sister,” West Barnstable, April 6, 1856
 - d. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Sister,” West Barnstable, February 1st, 1857
 - e. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Sister,” San Francisco, May 24, 1858
- (Originals are in subfolder)
- Fldr 4**
- a. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Parents,” San Francisco, June 5, 1859, in which he tells of their upcoming trip to the Sandwich Islands, Galapagos, and the Christmas Islands.
 - b. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Parents,” Calleo (Callao, Peru), October 11, 1859, in which he discusses the guano trade.
 - c. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Parents,” Boston, October 14, 1860. Letter barely legible.
 - d. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Mother,” undated, in which he discusses having “become religious.”
- (Originals are in subfolder)
- Fldr 5**
- a. Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Brother,” Camp near Alexandria, Virginia, August 5th,
 - b. _____
Josiah C. Fish to “Dear Brother,” Camp near Alexandria, Virginia, September 5th, _____.
 - c. Asa Jenkins to “Capt. Josiah Fish,” (Josiah C Fish’s father), from Camp Amory on the Trent, New Bern, North Carolina, January 1, 1863
- (Originals are in subfolder)
- Fldr 6**
- 6 incomplete letters written by Josiah C. Fish during the Civil War, missing first and/or last pages. Written to his brother, and his “old friend and shipmate.” The first letter has an example of “cross-writing.”
- (Originals are in subfolder)