

**SPENCE, MARY E. (MARY ELIZABETH), 1865-1962.**  
**Mary E. Spence papers, 1853-1950**

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6887  
rose.library@emory.edu

---

---

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Spence, Mary E. (Mary Elizabeth), 1865-1962.  
**Title:** Mary E. Spence papers, 1853-1950  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 811  
**Extent:** 1 linear foot (2 boxes) and 1 oversized papers box and 1 oversized papers folder (OP)  
**Abstract:** Papers of educator Mary E. Spence and her father, Adam Knight Spence  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

---

---

**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Related Materials in Other Repositories**

[Spence family papers](#), Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee and [Adam Knight Spence and John Wesley Work collection](#), Archives Division, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Source**

Purchase, 1997.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Mary E. Spence papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Processed by Susan Potts McDonald and Vicky Hesford, December 1998.

---

---

*Emory Libraries provides copies of its finding aids for use only in research and private study. Copies supplied may not be copied for others or otherwise distributed without prior consent of the holding repository.*

## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Mary Elizabeth Spence, (1865-1962), the only child of A.K. Spence and his wife, Catherine Thompson Mackie, was born in Michigan on July 4, 1865. Like the children of other white faculty members, Mary Spence was educated at Fisk. She obtained her B.A. in 1887 and her M.A. in 1893, before going on to Oberlin for her Ph.D. She returned to Fisk where she became a professor of classical languages and literature. Mary Spence died in Nashville, Tennessee in 1962.

A.K. (Adam Knight) Spence (1831-1900) was born in Rhynie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1831. His father was a physician who, after of few years of practice in his native Scotland, decided to immigrate to America. The family settled near Ann Arbor, Michigan where the young Adam Spence helped run his family's farm after the death of his father. Several years after his father's death he finished high school at the preparatory department of Oberlin College. He went on to obtain his B.A. from Michigan University in 1858 and stayed on at Michigan to teach languages for 12 years. In 1870, Rev. Erastus Milo Cravath, a friend from his days at Oberlin, asked him to come to Fisk to add a College Department to the Normal School. He became the second principal of Fisk and through his efforts graduated the first College class of four members in 1875. Spence remained on the faculty at Fisk until his death on April 24, 1900. He was a participant in the culture of the University, helping to raise funds for the Jubilee Singers, writing and teaching poetry, as well as teaching Greek and Latin.

### Scope and Content Note

The Mary E. Spence papers are composed mainly of personal and family correspondence. The collection covers a time span of approximately eighty years from 1853-1950. As such it affords insight into the career of two generations of Fisk professors, Mary E. Spence and her father, A.K. Spence.

The papers of Mary Spence consist mainly of personal and family correspondence, and include an autograph book (1882-1883) dating from Mary's time as a student at Fisk, as well as her address book. The family correspondence mainly includes a series of letters (1888-1889) to Mary from her parents while she was at Oberlin and letters from her Chase family relatives. The personal correspondence is made up of letters from friends and colleagues. There is also a small collection of letters dealing with Fisk matters. Other materials include personal writings such as creative essays and receipts.

The Spence family papers consist of correspondence between A. K. Spence, family members, friends and colleagues. There is an extensive series of letters between Adam Spence and his sister Julia Spence (Chase) and her husband Frederick A. Chase and correspondence from his brothers Thomas Spence and Edwin A. Spence. Also included are letters to John Wesley Work, Jr., the composer and professor at Fisk, and a general collection of Fisk University correspondence. The collection contains a variety of printed materials relating to black educational institutions (particularly Fisk) and churches.

### Arrangement Note

Organized into (1) Mary E. Spence papers, (2) Spence family papers, and (3) Printed material.

---



---

## Container List

### Mary E. Spence papers

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Address book
1	2	Autograph book, Fisk University, 1882-1883
1	3	Chattel Mortgage, George S. Moore to Mary Spence, 1916
1	4	Correspondence, Family, 1877-1924
1	5	Correspondence, Fisk University, 1887-1928
1	6	Correspondence, Personal, 1877-1935
1	7	Correspondence, Personal, fragments and no date
1	8	Correspondence, Personal, Christmas cards, 1888-1934
1	9	Correspondence, Personal, Valentine cards, no date
OP2	-	Diplomas
1	10	Receipts, 1915-1924
1	11	Warranty Deed, Charles D. Felts to Mary E. Spence, 1917
1	12	Writings, no date

### Spence family papers

2	1	Account book, Adam Knight Spence, 1887-1888
2	2	Calling cards, Mr. & Mrs. Adam Knight Spence
2	3	Correspondence, Fisk University 1892-1928
2	4	Correspondence, Personal, 1853-1892
2	5	Correspondence, Personal, 1894-1950
2	6	Correspondence, Personal, Invitations
2	7	Correspondence, Personal, fragments and no date
2	8	Correspondence, Work, John Wesley, 1906-1921
2	9	Insurance policy, Ella Charter Bailey
2	10	Photograph, Spence, Mary
OP1	1	Photograph, Spence, Mrs. A.K. (?)
2	11	Photograph, Work family, Glass plate negative, no date
2	12	Photograph, Work family, Glass plate negative, no date
2	13	Photograph, Work family, Glass plate negative, no date
2	14	Warranty Deed, Miss Susan Z. Standish and Mrs. Elizabeth B. Porter to Catherine T. Spence, January 31, 1891

### Printed material

2	15	Bailey, Sue, "Christmas, 1931," Poem
2	16	Baptist Sunday School Union, Hiseville, [?], May 8, 1921

- 2 17 Bradford, Amory H., "The Creed of a Philanthropist," American Missionary Association, no date
- 2 18 Central Tennessee College, 12th Annual Commencement of the Law Dept., Program, Mary 15, 1894
- 2 19 Fisk University, Anniversary week, General Programme, May 1887 [2] [Mary Spence gave speech during commencement]
- 2 20 Fisk University, Brochure, 1909
- 2 21 Fisk University, Catalogue of, 1908-1909
- 2 22 Fisk University, Christmas card, no date
- 2 23 Fisk University, *The Fisk Herald*, Vol. XIII, No 10, June 1895
- 2 24 Fisk University, *Fisk University News*, Vol. XII, No. 8, May 1922
- 2 25 Fisk University, Mozart Society of Fisk University, Ninth Annual Concert, Program, March 15, 1889
- 2 26 Fisk University, Union Church, List of members, 1868-1888
- 2 27 Fosdick, Harry Emerson, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" a sermon preached at the First Presbyterian Church, New York, May 21, 1922
- 2 28 General
- 2 29 Grand Opera House, Nashville, Tennessee, Program, February 26, 18??
- 2 30 Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton, Virginia, Memorandum, January 1894 [4]
- 2 31 Hymnal
- 2 32 Musergia Club, Louisville, Kentucky, Music festival program, May 9-11, 1907
- 2 33 Nightingale Club, Topeka, Kansas, Programme, December 15, 1905
- 2 34 Religious, general [images 0811-001, 002.tif]
- 2 35 Tennessee State Conference of Congregational Churches, Programs, 1921 and 1924
- 2 36 Walnut Hills Congregational Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, Calendar for the Week of November 24-30, 1907
- 2 37 Zion District Association, Kentucky, Programs, 1930, 1932, 1937
- 
-