

## The other children of Henry Fyske and Margaret Gibson

Henry Fyske and Margaret Gibson had had a lot of bad luck with their children. Of ten known births, **Henry, Francis, Mary** and both **Elizabeths** died very young.

Apart from our own descendant, **John**, there is not much that can be said about the others. For, **Mary**, and the second **Henry** there is nothing definite to say any later than their father's will, which considering the high status of the Fiske family in Cratfield, is a little odd.

**William** married a lady called Mary around 1632, and had six children: Elizabeth, Francis, Margaret, Tobias, William and Ann. The Churchwardens Accounts of Cratfield explain that he was "overseer in 1648-50. Churchwarden in 1639, 1646 and 1652, at which point he was identified as a gentleman. Paid to make the rate in 1644 and 1646, he also made the rate for the 5 garrisons'. He was assessed for the poor rate between 1643 and his death in 1652."

One of his sons, William Fiske junior, baptised in 1635, was also a churchwarden from what would have been a relatively young age, from as early as 1654 when he was just 19, and by the age of 21 he was already a 'chief inhabitants' pulling all the village strings. But he was obviously a bright lad and from an influential family. His will was written in 1673 and suggests that he probably had no children, and there is no record that he ever married. He left his es-

tate to his nephew John Borrett, on condition that his servant, Elizabeth Stobard receive £10 a year. That may have been his older sister Elizabeth that he was talking about there.

The reappearance of more Borretts is interesting. That was another family that moved in similar circles to the Fiskes. It was a John Borrett and his wife Mary, who died in 1691 and 1699, that now lived at the old Fiske family home of Stadhaugh Manor, as John Fiske the American philosopher noted when he paid a visit to Laxfield graveyard in 1880.

The only one of John's siblings on whom there is much to go in is **Margaret**. But although her father Henry Fyske's will of 1627 states that her husband's name was John Barrett, there is conflicting evidence that Margaret actually married a yeoman called Robert Burton in Cratfield in 1622.

Burton's will of 1625 is a massive rambling affair, in which much of his estate, in Framlingham, near Cratfield, was to go to what must have been their daughter Anne, who had married somebody by the name of Gilbert, but was now a widow.

There were financial conditions, and if Anne failed to satisfy these, then the estate went to their son Henry Burton, when he turned 21.

Margaret was still alive though, and among the things was bequeathed there were £160, and

order to "educate and bring up son Henry, in good and virtuous education and learning till he be 16, or till such time as he shall be fit to be bound apprentice ... to some good and sufficient trade as he shall like and shall be thought most fitting." She was left £7 a year for his upbringing.

Robert Burton then goes to explain various issues about what certain people could or could not do with various plots of land and timber, before adding that Margaret was to receive "all goods and chattels, moveables, household stuff, plate, corn, cattle, hay, swine, poultry, implements and utensils whatever."

There were other children and land, so it seems Margaret had married very well indeed.

Robert Burton also had two areas of land in Debenham, a village about 17 miles off to the west, some of which was going to Margaret herself, while some of it was going to their son James, while the lands called Owlds, that had recently been purchased off one William Moilte, were left to the youngest son called John, who was probably still very young at the time.

Robert's father-in-law, Henry Fiske, is mentioned as supervisor of the will.

It seems plausible that Robert Burton died soon after his will was made, and that Margaret remarried, hence the reference to John Barrett as her husband in her own father Henry's will a few years later.

## John Fiske (1633-1710) and Mary Baker (unknown-1667)

So the next generation was another John Fiske, the second of his namesake father's three children, born in 1633 in Cratfield, and who was 42 when his father died.

There is very little detail on this John so far, but [www.fiskes.co.uk](http://www.fiskes.co.uk) states that he was a butcher by trade.

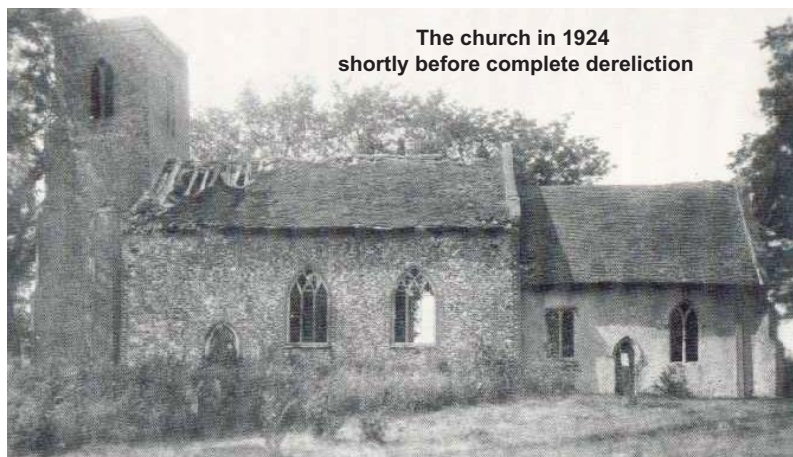
He married Mary Baker of Cratfield in Linstead Magna in 1662, when he was about to turn thirty, although a document quoted in Fisk Family Papers show they had been engaged since 1659. The move from Cratfield to Linstead Magna does not imply any great move away for the couple. The distance between the two villages amounts to about five fields, and their reason for marrying there may either have been because that is where one, other or both was living nearest to, or more probably because its church, St Peter, was preferred for some reason.

John and Mary had five children, Henry (1655), William, who was to be the next in our family line (1657), Francis (a son, 1659), John (1661) and finally Elizabeth (1662). The last one was yet another child by the name of Elizabeth to die in infancy. She was buried in Cratfield on May 31 the following year. All of the children were baptised in Cratfield, with the exception of John, who for some reason was anointed in Linstead Magna. The changes were possibly connected with preferences for different ministers serving in the different churches at different times.

Our next ancestor, William, was already born by this stage, so that's clear enough, but there seems to be some confusion over where things went after these five children were born. The claim being made by [www.fiske.co.uk](http://www.fiske.co.uk) is that John then fathered five more children, Ann (1663), another Elizabeth (1663) who like so many namesakes before her never made it to adulthood, being buried at Cratfield in 1678 at the age of 15, then there were Sarah (1665), Anthony (1667) and Thomas (1670). Like the first five, there was one, the ill fated Elizabeth, who was baptised at Linstead Magna, while all the others were baptised in Cratfield.

However, it is hard to work out exactly when Mary died, because no fewer than threewomen called Mary that were wives of a John Fyske were buried in Cratfield or Laxfield over the next few years, one in 1660, one in 1667 and one in 1677.

The claim is that these five were the children of a second wife, and came after Mary (Baker) Fiske had died. There was another John Fyske that married Ann Burwood at Linstead Magna in 1662, and yet another John Fyske that married Jemima Smith



The church in 1924 shortly before complete dereliction

Taken from [www.suffolkchurches.co.uk](http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk):

"Like several Suffolk villages, Linstead Magna has shrunk dramatically. Its church, St Peter, has completely disappeared, and is perhaps the best documented of all Suffolk church disappearances. Suffolk is not short of ruined churches, but many of them date their ruination back to the 18th century decline in Anglican practice. St Peter, however, was still in use as a parish church into the 20th century. At that time, the Magna parish was already combined with its Parva sister, the larger village, and St Peter was used just occasionally, but especially for baptisms and funerals. By 1924, the church had fallen completely into disuse, and the roof was removed. Literally, St Peter was derelicted."

There is nothing left of it now, just a field and a row of electricity pylons.

of Honersfield, but not until 1683, and which seems likely to have been a second wife, but Fisk Family Papers has a number of documents referring to this couple, and the only child they mention is one called James, so I would imagine this is a completely different person and that claims our John Fyske married Jemima Smith are wrong..

So, neither of the claims for John's second wife seems to fit the bill very well, and I'm a bit sceptical whether the second batch of five kids were even his at all, but have been confused with the children, and possibly spouse, of a completely different John Fiske entirely. But then again, there could be all kinds of bizarre reasons to explain the marital misdoings of John Fiske the butcher. But although there is some lack of clarity regarding John Fiske's second wife, if he had one at all, but at least none of this affects his second oldest, William, our direct ancestor, and who was a child of the first marriage to Mary Baker.

John Fiske died in 1710, and was buried in Laxfield.

## THE CHURCHWARDENS ACCOUNTS OF CRATFIELD 1640-1660

During the twenty years covered by the book "Churchwardens' Accounts of Cratfield, 1640-1660", there were four different Fiskes that functioned as churchwardens. Our own ancestor was the one called John Fiske senior, and the William Fisk senior is his brother. William Fisk junior was that William's son (i.e. John Fisk senior's nephew).

The John Fiske junior who also appears was not John Fiske senior's son (he could not be as he was only five years younger!). The Accounts reckon that he was William Fiske's senior's cousin, but if that's right, then I'm not sure how that works out as there are no John Fiskes that would fit that description. Suffice to say that he was related somehow, but was not John Fiske's son. The accounts don't reveal an awful lot about the Fiskes themselves, other than how much money they were paid for their work, but do reveal a lot about the kind of problems they dealt with in their work, and what life was like in Cratfield in the mid 17th century. Other than wages for

their churchwarden duties, there is not one entry in which a member of the Fiske family was given money, but this is no surprise.

The Fiskes were a wealthy lot on the whole, and would not have needed to go to the church looking for handouts. They were more likely to be the people, either through tax or donations, that were supporting the more needy of the community.

The following is a fairly random selection of some of the different entries while the Fiskes were churchwardens:

"Item to Hirbirt, his wife and sister and children, the 21 of Julij, driven out of Ireland, and Captain Herbirt there father, by the rebels barbarously slain."

"Item to Thomas Bennit whose house was burnt at Thorpe and lost £200 as appeared by certificat."

"Item to Thomas Tallent for weeding the church/door/porch."

"To poor passengers who came with certificats upon the weeke dayes at severall times."

"Item laid out to Doll Addams for her releife ... [followed by] more allowed me for keeping the poor woman."

"May 3th for my journey to Halsworth concerning the minister."

"Allowed to John Williams .... And 2s 9d for tobacco and pipes." [smoking had arrived from America and was apparently considered something the church should help people to obtain!]

"Paid to William Crosse for keeping the clocke for the yeere befor the last." [this William Crosse, who looked after the clock, did his job despite being blind]

"Given to the town of Southwold being burnt."

"Given to Thomas Johnson a trained soldier going to Blyburgh."

"Laid out to John Williams for powder and match which the souldgers have had to carry to the trainings with them."

"Item to Barnabas Allyot a minister driven out of Ireland."

"Item to Wyllyam Nunn a mayned soldier in the Parlements service."

"Item to Edward Davis undon by malignants in Lincoln."

"Item to Hatherin Graye and hir sister who had ther house burned and husbands slayne as appeared."

"Item to a soldier who lost his hand in the

Parlements service."

"Item layd out amongst the trayned soldiers that morning theye advanced for Bury."

"Item to Magaret Myller and Ann Harison ther husbands slaine at Woodstock in Derbyshire as appeared."

"Item laid out for stowing and bratling the pore folkes wood and laying it of heapes."

"Item laid out the 8th of October for beere for the ringers, being a day of thankes giveing."

"Item laid out att the Widow Mary Brodbanks for bread and beere for the man which cam to bring word of the woman which left the child in our church porch." [one of the major talking events in the village, who was the woman that dumped her child on the church gate?]

"Item laid out to Bottres for his paynes to seek after the woman and to find her."

"Item to eightene poore people comong from Lincolnshire."

"Item 2 ounces Spanish tobacco, 1 dozen pipes."

"Item for a gatt post and for a new gatt and for palling and mending of a bother gatt, and for iome worke and nailes and other things about the churchyard."

"Item to the poore saylors cast away at seae."

"Item to pore Robert Pacie in the time of great siknes." [this probably refers to the smallpox epidemic which caused thousands of deaths in Suffolk]

"Item given to a poore Irish woman with a brefe and 2 children."

"Item for our exspence at Woodbridg, and for the messenger that brought the towne word of a woman taken with the hue and crye upon susspition to be the woman that left hir child in our towne."

"Item given unto John Edger bannised out of Germine for relegion." [a German religious exile now a refugee in England]

"Item for the dyet of six pore people that travelled by certificat, being mayned, for ther super and breakfast."

"Item for my exspence for my selfe and my horse to Bliborough about our towne land."

"Item layd out unto John Stannard for a coat that he had taken to pane of a begger, that cam with the woman that was taken upon suspicion for leaveing hir child in towne."

"Item payd unto Mr Moulling for his charge and truble in indevoing to cure Samuell Milles wife of hir dropsie."

One of the original pages of the Churchwardens' accounts. This one was written by John's brother, William Fiske senior, for the years 1665-1666.

## The other child of John Fiske and Elizabeth Day

Although there are claims in some studied that John Fiske and Elizabeth Day had a son called William, and think that was a confusion with the William that was actually their nephew.

The only child, other than John Fiske junior, that the couple definitely seem to have had was his older sister, **Elizabeth**, born in 1632. She married a William Warren of Nether Linstead (nowadays known as Linstead Parva and essentially part of Linstead Magna). It's curious to note such interest all of a sudden in the village of Linstead, which was only a stone's throw away, but until now had never been mentioned in our family history, despite existing since at least the 11th century. But their wedding was in Cratfield in 1657.



Gravestones from Linstead Magna, rescued from a ditch in 1980. That is all that remains of the site where several Fiskes were once buried.

## The 'missing' William Fiskes

### William Fiske (1657-unknown) and Mary Emmories (?)

#### William Fiske (Maybe married Elizabeth Borrett in 1709?)

It is in the second half of the 17th century that we come across an unidentifiable William Fiske.

The Fisk Family Papers state that William Fisk, our great great grandfather's own great grandfather, who was born in 1715, was the son of William Fiske, the son of William Fiske, who was the son of the very John Fiske of Cratfield who married Mary Baker ... and thanks to later research this line can now be traced all the way back to the very earliest Fyskes on record.

So, there is a line of three consecutive William Fiskes here. If the facts are right, then this starts with the William Fiske, the second child of John and Mary Baker, and who was born in Cratfield in 1657, and ends with his grandson that was born in 1715. But I can't work out who he is.

That is not to say there is no evidence of him, rather that there is too much, and there are several contrasting William Fiskes drifting around at this point, not helped by the fact that it was around this time that mobility considerably improved and the feudal system was largely scrapped, meaning people are now much harder to keep of track because they keep moving around all the time.

Gone are the simple days when a couple would have eight children that were all born, married and buried in the same village.

So there is no definite evidence of the fate of John and Mary Baker's second oldest.

The [www.fiske.co.uk](http://www.fiske.co.uk) website starts getting a bit

shaky around this point, and doesn't provide, or perhaps more likely does not have, any specific proven evidence of either his wife or offspring. I've written to Hugh Fiske, who runs the site, and he hasn't been able to provide the answer.

One William Fiske that has caused several headaches in the one that was born in 1683 at Dennington (just down the road from Cratfield). This one is believed to have married a Hannah Webb and was buried at Badingham on June 7, 1756. Hannah was also buried at Badingham, on February 8, 1758.

But although he is indeed claimed to be the son of a William Fiske, who married Judith Keble, that one was not the son of John and Mary, but of an Amos Fiske and a Margaret Bateman. And although William and Hannah did have a son called William, he wasn't born until 1724, and it is only theory that he was actually William and Hannah's son at all – so, it's all a bit unclear as to where this particular William fits in.

With others, it's worse. But if William Fiske the grandfather was born in 1657, and his grandson William Fisk was born in 1715, then the middle William Fiske must have been born somewhere between 1676 and 1686, in order to give his father enough time to reach adulthood, and to also have time to grow up him-

self (assuming that none of these fathers were only teenagers when they had their son, a possibility, of course).

Even so, that leaves us with a load of possibilities. Just to quote the most obvious ones, there was a William born to a William Fiske and Susanna in 1676 at Kenninghall, about 30 miles away.

The William Fiske born to a William in 1677 was born in on the coast, in Bacton, 51 miles away, perhaps a bit too far?

Marlesford is only 11 miles away from Cratfield, and a William Fiske and Elizabeth Finer had a William there in 1680. A William had a son called William just 16 miles away from Cratfield in 1880 in a village called Bungalow.

And that's just the William Fiskes who had fathers called William, and that were born reasonably close to Cratfield between 1676 and 1686. There are plenty more of unknown date of birth, unknown parents or unknown place of birth.

Aldeburgh is just ten miles from Cratfield, where a mariner called William Fiske, son of William and Margaret wrote his will in 1692.

You have William Fiskes getting married here, there and everywhere, but these weddings then have to be matched up with evidence, the same goes for the William Fiskes dying – many of these would have actually been the exact same people, it's just finding evidence of it that's difficult.

However, there are two William Fiskes that I am pretty sure are the ones, if only there was a way to prove it and find out more about them without all the other William Fiskes getting in the way!

The first was a William Fiske, the son of a John Fiske and a lady called Mary that for whom no date of birth is given, but who first married a lady called Elizabeth and later a Mary Emmories in 1670 in Thurlton, 22 miles away from Cratfield. There is no more on him, but he could quite conceivably have been our own William, son of John and Mary, married exactly at the right time, perhaps a bit far away, but that is not even to say they lived in Thurlton, perhaps that is just where Elizabeth was born.

And then there is a very interesting wedding recorded in 1709. This is between a William Fiske of Heveningham, a village just six miles away from Cratfield, and an Elizabeth Borrett of Laxfield. That's not the first time the Borrett name has cropped up, our Fiskes and the Borretts had been producing children together for generations, and the Borretts were the ones that now occupied Studhaugh Manor. The wedding was held in none other than Cratfield itself, six years before the third William Fiske was born. There is nothing else to go on them, but they married just six years before we know the next William Fisk was born. In the hope of discovering more evidence, it seems reasonably safe to assume that the William Fiske born in 1718 was the son of William Fiske and Elizabeth Borrett, and that that William Fiske was the son of the William Fiske and Mary Emmories that married in 1670.

### The other children of John Fiske and Mary Baker

Though John Fiske has been associated to ten different children and three different wives, the evidence for both his second wives and his later children is sketchy at best, and probably best not taking too seriously.

Of the five he definitely had with Mary, we know William, and also that Elizabeth died as a baby. Henry was buried in 1673 in Cratfield at the age of eighteen. Francis there is nothing to go on, but John, born in 1661, five years after our William, married Mary Ellis of Badingham, the village just down the road, in her local church in 1684. They had three children, all baptised at Cratfield, Mary (1683), Henry (1686) and James (1690), who went on to become a surgeon in nearby Hoxne.

At some point in their lives the couple moved four miles up the road to the little village of Peasenhall, where John died and was buried 1720, his wife following him seven years later.

### WILLIAM DOWSING OF LAXFIELD (1596 - 1668)

Worth mentioning at this point is perhaps the most notorious person ever to come out of the Laxfield area, William Dowsing, who was at large during this period, busy relieving local churches of offensive artwork.

According to Wikipedia he "was an English iconoclast who operated at the time of the English Civil War. Dowsing was a puritan soldier who was born in Laxfield, Suffolk.

"In 1643 he was appointed by their Captain-General, the Earl of Manchester as "Commissioner for the destruction of monuments of idolatry and superstition" to carry out a Parliamentary Ordinance of the 28th of August 1643 which stated that "all Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry should be removed and abolished", specifying: "fixed altars, altar rails, chancel steps, crucifixes, crosses, images of the Virgin Mary and pictures of saints or superstitious inscriptions."

"In May 1644 the scope of the Ordinance was widened to include representations of angels (a particular obsession of Dowsing's), rood lofts, holy water stoups, and images in stone, wood and glass and on plate.

"Dowsing carried out his work in 1643-4 by visiting over 250 churches in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, removing or defacing items that he

*thought fitted the requirements outlined in the Ordinance. He recruited assistants, apparently among his friends and family, and where they were unable to perform the work themselves he left instructions for the work to be carried out. Sometimes the local inhabitants assisted his work, but often he was met by resistance or non-cooperation. His commission, backed up by the ability to call on military force if necessary, meant that he usually got his way. He charged each church a noble (a third of a pound) for his services.*

*"When Manchester, his patron, fell out with Oliver Cromwell in late 1644, his commission ceased. Dowsing is unique amongst those who committed iconoclasm during this period because he left a journal recording much of what he did, with many detailed entries such as:*

*"We brake down about a hundred superstitious pictures; and seven fryers hugging a nun; and the picture of God, and Christ; and divers others very superstitious. And 200 had been broke down afore I came. We took away 2 popish inscriptions with Ora pro nobis and we beat down a great stoning cross on the top of the church" (Haverhill, Suffolk, January 6, 1644).*

*"His portrait is in the Wolsey Art Gallery, Ipswich."*

## OUR FISK GENEALOGY



The information about the 'missing' Williams was provided by the Reverend Thomas Fisk in the late 19th century, and if he hadn't done that, then tracing our own Fisk line would probably never have gone back any further than 1715. He was our great great grandfather's own brother, and there is no reason to doubt him.

Fisks always seem to have had a proud interest in their family heritage, reflected even today by the disproportionate number of genealogy websites for the surname.

They never seem to have been too bothered about the input from the generations of wives, but the way the Fisk(e) name was passed down the line was cherished as if they were royalty with a sometimes overinflated sense of importance.

G. Andrews Moriarty, an American genealogist who himself made several contributions to research of Fiske history, made some interesting points along these lines in a 1932 journal:

*"The ancient Suffolk family of Fiske and its connection with New England have long been known, and two books, one compiled by an American and the other by an Englishman, have*

*been published about the family."*

*"In the American book the progenitor of the family in the fifteenth century, one branch of whose descendants became Lords of the Manor of Studhaugh in Laxfield, Co. Suffolk, is styled "Lord Symon Fiske," the compiler evidently being under the impression that the lord of a manor and his remote ancestors were peers of the realm and entitled to be called 'Lords'.*

*"In the sixteenth century the ancestors of the American family exercised the useful but hardly noble calling of wheelwrights, and they probably served the community in this capacity as well as they would have served it in the mythical capacity of barons of England which their American descendant has foisted upon them.*

*"There is a great difference between a peer and a wheelwright, and, although the latter may be and probably is the better man - well, he is not a peer."*

*"The ancestors of the New England Fiskes were notable for their adherence to the Reformed Religion and for their sufferings on its behalf in the dark days of Queen Mary; and this heritage is one on which their descendants may justly pride*

*themselves far more than on any mythical peerage.*

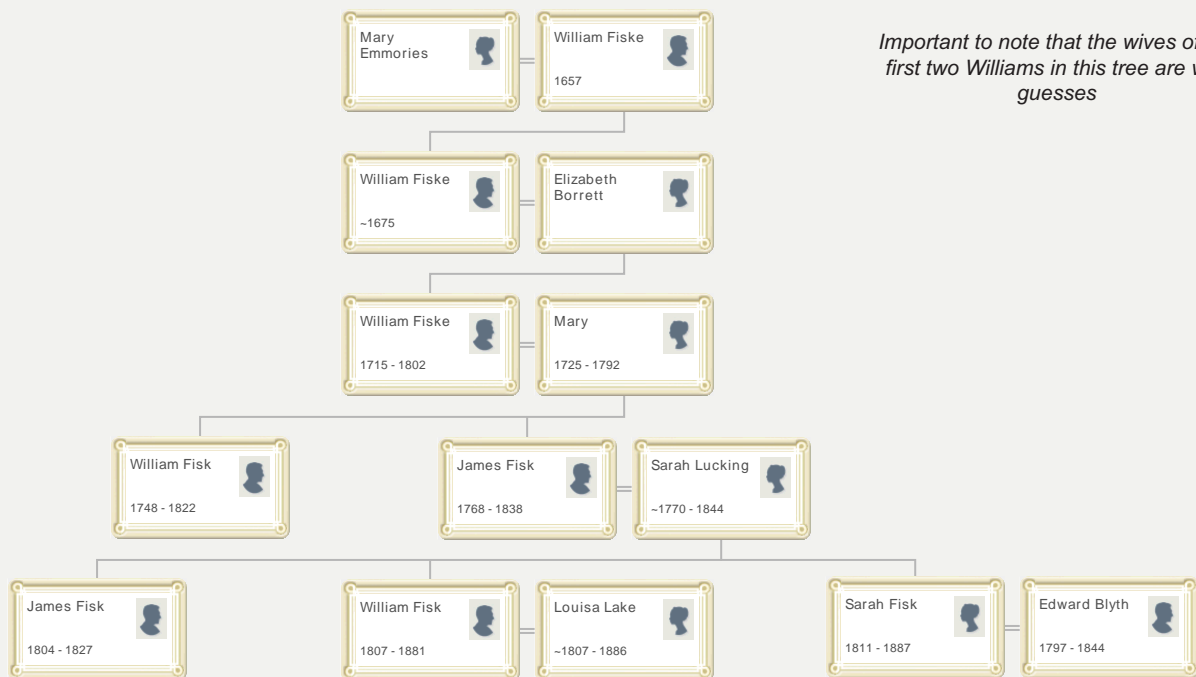
*"At the time of the settlement of New England the Fiskes were a family of exceedingly prosperous artisans and yeomen, who sent several of their sons to the universities, whence they went forth to become Puritan ministers."*

Many of our own 19th century Fisk ancestors, as we shall soon see, were also church ministers.

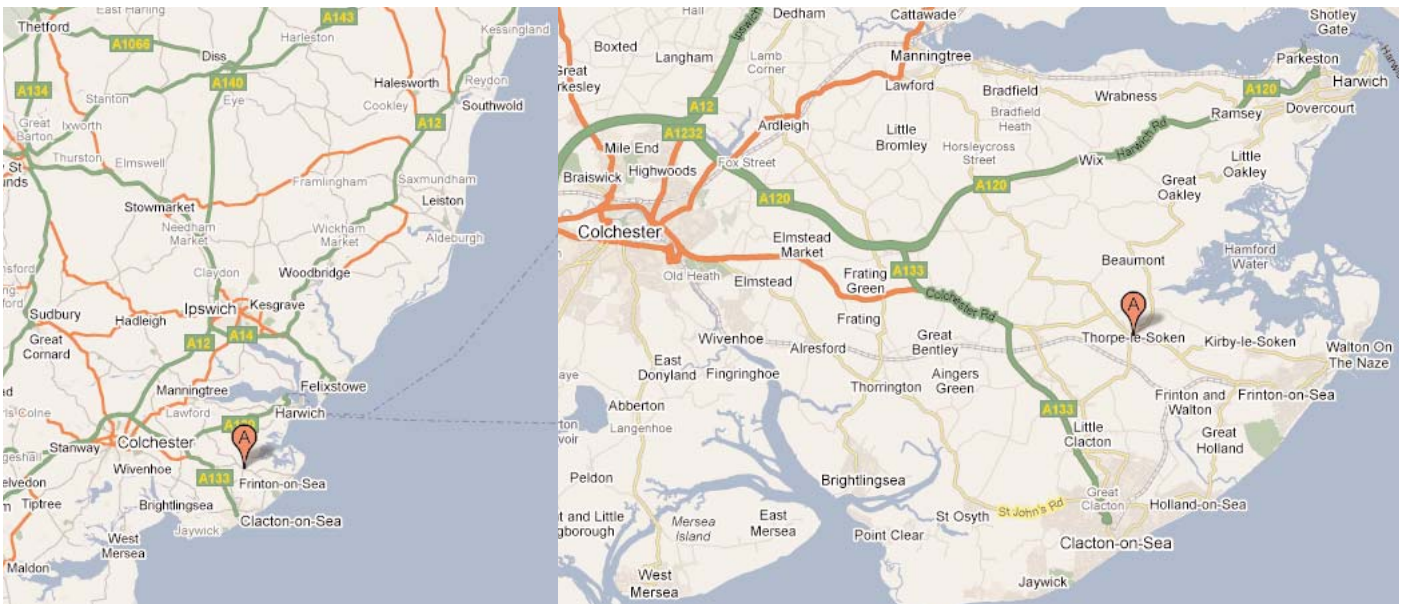
But down our line, this fascination for the family heritage seemed to stop with the Reverend Thomas, who had no children of his own, and despite being from a family of nine only had four male nephews to carry on the Fisk name.

One of them, our great grandfather, pretty much severed all links with his bible-bashing family, and it seems to have been at this point, going into the 20th century, and as the family drifted off around the world, that pride for the family's noble roots in Laxfield and Craftfield turned into total indifference.

You can be pretty sure that our grandmother didn't keep a treasured copy of the Fisk Family Papers in Cot Valley Cottage.



## William Fisk (1715-1802) and Mary (1725-1792)



So, details are thin on the ground regarding the two William Fisks that led to the third in a row down our line, and who was born in the early 19th century.

Details surrounding his birth are a bit ropery. Fisk Family Papers claims he was born in 1718, but also that he was baptised in Dennington in 1715. Not many children are baptised three years before they are born. That William Fisk, who many people seem to have got confused with ours, was probably the child of William Fisk and Hannah Webb, and had nothing to do with our own.

So, it isn't clear where he was born, but there is one who fits the bill very nicely. A William Fisk was born to another William, wife of Elizabeth, at Wingfield in 1715, a village 15 miles west of Cratfield. All fits. Nothing is known about how that William Fisk might fit into the scheme of things, but it seems very likely that he was the son of William Fisk and Elizabeth Borrell.

It is also around this time that there was a growing tendency among Fiske families to drop the 'e' from their surnames and become Fisks. There doesn't seem to be any logical reason or pattern for how this came about, but our Fisks were among the ones

that decided to save on ink and shorten the family name.

What we do know is that, if he was born in the Cratfield area, William Fisk didn't stay there all his life. By at least 1748, he moved to a place called Thorpe-le-Soken. This wasn't miles away, it was about 50 miles down to the south of Cratfield, just over the Suffolk border, in Essex, but it would be the last our Fisk line would be seeing of Laxfield and its surrounding villages, to the extent that by the end of the 19th century, as American traveller John Fiske discovered, there would be none left there at all.

Thorpe-le-Soken, which has a history going back to Saxon times, lies 12 miles to the southeast of Colchester, and within reasonable walking distance of the sea at Clacton and Frinton on Sea.

William Fisk married a lady some ten years his junior called Mary, born in 1725. She was from St Osyth in Essex, a village seven miles down the road from Thorpe-le-Soken. According to Wikipedia, *"the village was a focus for witch persecutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a total of ten local women being hanged as a result. In 1921 the skeletons of 2 women were dis-*

*covered in the garden of a house in the village. One was claimed to be the witch Ursley Kempe who was the first to be prosecuted."*

If she'd been born much earlier, then Mary herself may well have come in for accusations of witchery, but by her time this was all a thing of the past. But her grandmother would certainly have thought twice before adopting any black cats or sweeping the floor with a broomstick.

No maiden name is known for Mary, and we can only guess whether William met her there, or whether he moved down to live in his own wife's part of the world.

It was a time of major shifting about in East Anglia, with the alluvial land being drained for arable use and opening up new possibilities for local agriculture.

There is plenty of evidence of our Fisks buying plots of land nearer to the coast, and as Williams' own will, written in 1802, says, he was a farmer. I'm hoping to eventually get to see this 1802 will and see if there is any more to be said.

The actual text of Williams' will is not given on [www.fiskes.co.uk](http://www.fiskes.co.uk), but the basic details are, including the fact that he mentions his two sons.

The first of these was born in 1748, when he would have been in his thirties and his newlywed wife in her twenties. They didn't put an awful lot of thought into the name of their son, and just called him William like they all did.

But William is not our ancestor, that was William senior and Mary's other son, James, who didn't appear for a whopping twenty years after. This all seems very odd, but all of the evidence supports it, and there is nothing to suggest that there were any other children in between.

William was approaching his eighties by the time he wrote his will, and he died on September 20, 1802. As mentioned in his will, his wife Mary had already died, on October 12, 1792, at the age of 67.

They had seen the eighteenth century through almost from start to finish, born under George I, the German king that couldn't even speak a word of English and hardly ever came near the country, by the time they died, Isaac Newton had sussed what gravity was all about, the American War of Independence was over, and lost, the French Revolution was also over and done with, and the industrial revolution was already having its first effects.

The steam train had been invented, although it was still some time before anybody would see the potential for carrying people as well as goods, but what would have the deepest effect, perhaps not so much on the Fisks but certainly the people around them was the Enclosure Acts and the riots they set off. Our Fisks were fairly comfortable landowners, and the 1780 anti-Catholic riots may have been more up their street.



Thorpe-le-Soken today

Lord Dalmeny, after the funeral, proceeded to Norwich to seek comfort from his intimate friend the Rev. John Kinderley, rector of St. Helen's in that city. He became third Earl of Rosebery in 1755, and in 1764 married Susan, only sister and heiress of Sir Rowland Ward, of Bixley, in Norfolk. This third Earl of Rosebery died in 1814, at the age of eighty-six.

COMMUNICATED BY THE REV. THOMAS FISK, OF HIGHCLIFFE,  
KIDDERMINSTER.

WILLIAM FISK, born 1718 (?), probably baptized at Dennington, April 17th, 1715, died Sept. 20th, 1802. Mary, his wife, born 1725, died Oct. 12th, 1792, aged 67, leaving two sons.

- Issue:—(1) WILLIAM FISK, born 1748, died Jan. 1822, aged 74, at Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex; leaving one son.  
Issue:—(1) WILLIAM FISK, born 1771, became a Farmer residing at Can Hall, Gt. Clacton. After retiring from business, he lived for some years at Mandahill, London, where he died in 1854, aged 83; leaving six children, as follows:—  
(1) William H. Fisk, b. 1798; became an Artist; res. at Danebury near Maldon; died Nov. 1872; aged 74; leaving several children.  
(2) George Fisk (J.L.B.), b. 1799, was originally a Lawyer, then became a Vicar at St. John's Wood, London; later on at Walsall and Gt. Malvern, also Prebendary of Lichfield. He died in 1872, aged 73. Had a son and daughter, both of whom died young.

- (3) John Fisk, died young.  
(4) Mary; married (Sheldrake)  
(5) Jane; married (Thorpe).  
(6) Elizabeth; married (Smith).

Issue:—(2) JAMES, born 1768, died suddenly July 12th, 1838, aged 70. Was a farmer at St. Osyth, Essex. Sarah (Lucking) his wife, b. 1770, died Feb. 5th, 1844, aged 74. They left three children, as follows:—

- (1) James Fisk, b. 1804, died at sea, and was buried at Bombay, 1827, aged 23.  
(2) Sarah, b. Aug. 4th, 1805, married (a) Blyth, (b) Miller; died 1887, aged 85.  
(3) William, b. 1807, spent the greater part of his life at St. Albans, died in 1881, aged 74, leaving a family of ten children, of whom four are deceased, among them:—

James Fisk, J.P. and Alderman, of St. Albans, Herts, the survivors being:—  
Rev. Wm. Fisk, of Aylestone, Leicester.  
Rev. Thos. Fisk, of Kidderminster.  
Rev. Ebenezer Fisk, of Bradford.  
and three daughters.

WILLIAM FISK,—MARY,  
1718(?) 1802,  
probably baptized  
at Dennington,  
17 April, 1715,  
(see registers),  
son of

William Fiske,  
son of William,  
son of John Fiske  
of Cratfield,  
son of John Fyske,  
the son of  
Henry Fyske.  
See *Genealogy*  
*N. S.*



William Fisk, born in 1748, the grandfather of W. H. Fisk, the Artist and his brother George the Vicar, was of Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex, and was buried there in the churchyard. This brief inscription is upon his tombstone: "Reader, he was a plain honest man,—if more thou canst not say, in pity say not less."

Some few years ago, three paintings by Mr. W. H. Fisk were exposed for sale in a gallery at Eastbourne. They were striking pictures, rich in colour and in careful manipulation of fine detail. The largest one, a scene in Paris from "The Reign of Terror," in which the inmates of a religious house are brought to the foot of the guillotine, was offered at a reserved price of a hundred guineas; the two smaller ones,—"The last morning at Nazareth," and "The Rivals" being offered at eighty guineas each. His brother George entered at first the profession of a solicitor, earning the sobriquet of "The Honest Lawyer," but finding it was not likely to be

## James Fisk (1768-1838) and Sarah Lucking (1770-1844)

So, William and Mary had two sons. If there were any other children, then there is absolutely no record of them. The most likely scenario is that it was only these two, despite the two decade gap between their births.

The younger of the two, born in Thorpe-le-Soken in 1768, was James Fisk. He was the direct ancestor of our own Fisks, and we're getting closer, he was our great great great great grandfather. He married a lady called Sarah Lucking, who was two years younger than he was, born in 1770, although like so many Fisk wives, there are no further details of her.

According to his father's will of 1802, he too was a farmer. James himself made a will in 1834, which mentions the fact that he had a daughter called Sarah, who was the wife of Edward Blyth of Thorpe-le-Soken, and a son, yet another one called William.

He did indeed, Sarah was born on August 4, 1805 and William was born two years earlier in 1807, and would eventually become our great grandfather George William Fisk's own grandfather.

But there was also another son, James, who was born in 1804. He must have had a short but interesting life, dying at sea in 1827, and being buried in Bombay, India in 1827.

So, that means James and Sarah Lucking would have married around 1803, about a year after James' father William died, and when they were both in their early thirties.

### LUCKING: ORIGIN OF THE NAME

The surname of Lucking is a baptismal name meaning 'Son of Luke'. The name was originally from the Latin given name Lucas, meaning 'the man from Lucania, a region of South Italy. The name owed its popularity in the Middle Ages to St. Luke the Evangelist.

Or possibly from Old English Leofecing, a patronymic from Leofeca, or a late derivative of Lovekin, which in turn comes from the German Lücken.

James Fisk	41	Independent
Mary Ann Walling	15	General Servant



St Osyth today

Also, although James Fisk was born in Thorpe-le-Soken, all three of his children were born in nearby St Osyth, so the couple must have lived there.

Having made his will in 1834, James the farmer died 'suddenly' (in the words of Fisk Family papers) in St Osyth in 1838 at the age of 70. It doesn't look they ever moved away from the Thorpe Le Soken / St Osyth part of the world.

James' wife Sarah Lucking lived on a further six years to the age of 74. The first detailed British census was conducted in 1841, and Sarah was still around to feature in it (image left), probably making her our oldest direct ancestor to appear in a census.

She was 71 at the time. She was now living in Thorpe-le-Soken with a 15 year old girl called Mary Ann Walling, who can guess how that came about? She also gives some kind of profession, as shown in the picture, but I can't work what either she or her young housemate were doing.

Her death in 1844 was recorded in Tendring, a village 3 miles up the road from Thorpe-le-Soken, where she had presumably moved in her old age because that was where her daughter Sarah was living, two doors down the road, with her husband Edward Blyth.

### William Fisk and Mary's other son, William



**The Fugitives from the Massacre of Glencoe (1859 – an event that happened in 1692, when members of the MacDonald clan were massacred for not pledging allegiance to William of Orange. It was sold at Sotheby's Glasgow on February 14, 1995.**

The (considerably) older of the two sons was William (born in 1748), who lived all of his life in Thorpe-le-Soken and died there in 1822 at the age of 74. His father's will of 1802 just tells us that he was a shopkeeper, and when he died he was buried in Thorpe-le-Soken graveyard, and the inscription on his gravestone reads "Reader, he was plain honest man, - if more thou canst not say, in pity say not less." He had one son, yet another William Fisk, a yeoman farmer who lived from 1771 to 1854, and whose residence was called Can Hall. There is little to be said of him, but it is worth mentioning his sons, the children of our own great great grandfather's cousin, another William Fisk, because two of them achieved quite a lot in life, but I don't know anything about the third and youngest, called John.

The family had become quite an institution in Thorpe-le-Soken by this time, and the sons were all born there.

The oldest was William Henry Fisk, born in 1798, and who went on to become quite a famous 19th century artist.

The Dictionary of National Biography has an entry for him, as follows: "FISK, WILLIAM (1796-1872), painter, born in 1790 at Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex, was the son of a yeoman farmer named William at Can Hall in that county, of a family which boasted of some antiquity, dating back to the days of Henry IV".

"Drawing very early became Fisk's favourite occupation, but his inclination to art was discouraged by his father, who sent him to school at Colchester, and at nineteen year of age placed him in a mercantile house in London. In this uncongenial profession Fisk remained for

ten years, though he never neglected his artistic powers and in 1818 sent to the Royal Academy a portrait of Mr G Fisk and in 1819 a portrait of a 'Child and favourite Dog'.

"He married about 1826 and after the birth of his eldest son he devoted himself seriously to art as a profession. In 1829 he sent to the Royal Academy a portrait of William Redmore Bigg, R. A. and continued to exhibit portraits there for a few years. At the British Institution he exhibited in 1830 'The Widow' and in 1832 'Puck'.

"About 1834 he took to painting large historical compositions. These compositions, though a failure from an artistic point of view, possessed value from the care Fisk took to obtain contemporary portraits and authorities for costume which he faithfully reproduced on his canvas. They comprised 'Lady Jane Grey, when in imprisonment in the tower, visited by Feckenham' (British Institution, 1834), 'The Coronation of Robert Bruce' (Royal Academy, 1836), 'La Journée des Dupes' (Royal Academy, 1838), 'The Chancellor Wriothesley approaching to apprehend Katherine Parr on a charge of heresy' and 'Mary, widow of Louis XII of France, receiving Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, ambassador from Henry VIII' (British Institution, 1838), 'The Queen Mother, Marie de Medici, demanding the dismissal of Cardinal Richelieu' (British Institution, 1839), 'The Conspiracy of the Pazzi, or the attempt to assassinate Lorenzo de Medici' (Royal Academy, 1839); the last-named picture was in 1840 awarded the gold medal of the Manchester Institution for the best historical picture exhibited in their gallery.

"About 1840 Fisk commenced a series of pictures connected with the reign of Charles I, namely, 'Cromwell's Family interceding for the life of Charles I' (Royal Academy, 1840); 'The Trial of the Earl of Strafford' (never exhibited, engraved by James Scott in 1841, and now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool); 'The Trial of Charles I in Westminster Hall' (Royal Academy, 1842); 'Charles I passing through the banqueting-house, Whitehall, to the Scaffold' (Royal Academy, 1843); 'The last interview of Charles I with his Children' (British Institution, 1844).

"After these his productions were of a less ambitious nature, and he eventually retired from active life to some property at Danbury in Essex, where he died on 8 Nov. 1872. He was also a frequent contributor to the Suffolk Street exhibition."

What this does tell us is that the Fisks of Thorpe-le-Soken were a relatively bright, well-educated lot. William Fisk the artist's talents were also passed down to his son, & there's also a biography entry for him. It says: "William Henry Fisk (1827 - 1884). Born at Homerton, Middlesex, he was the son and pupil of William Henry Fisk. He was a student at the Royal Academy Schools, later appointed anatomical draughtsman to the Royal College of Surgeons. He exhibited landscapes from 1846, there are examples at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. He also taught drawing and painting at University College, London where he was very successful and highly regarded. He lived in and around London and died aged 58 in Hampstead."

William Fisk the artist's brother George was an important figure in his own right.

According to Fisk Family Papers he "entered at first the profession of a solicitor, earning the sobriquet of 'The Honest Lawyer', but finding it was not likely to be remunerative in his hands, turned his attention to the church and entered holy orders. After spending a period at St John's Wood, London, where his preaching attracted large congregations, he became incumbent of Walsall and enjoyed a wide popularity. During that period he was appointed Prebendary of Lichfield. Later on, he laboured for some fifteen years as Vicar of Gt Malvern, exercising a powerful influence upon its religious and social life. A modest slab of marble on an open piece of greensward in the Cemetery there marks his last resting place, and reads as follows:

"This stone is to the memory of  
The Rev. George Fisk: Vicar of Gt Malvern  
Born Jan 1st 1799  
Died August 31, 1872"



This one is called **Awaiting News of the Arrest of Robespierre** (one of the best-known and most influential figures of the French Revolution, instrumental in the period of the Reign of Terror, which ended with his arrest and execution in 1794.)

On one of the pillars of the Abbey Church is a brass tablet with this inscription:

To the glory of God  
And in loving remembrance of  
The Rev George Fisk LLB  
Prebendary of Lichfield and Vivar of  
Malbium from 1836 to 1872  
Mainly by whose exertions  
This church was completely restored:  
In commemoration  
Of his zealous labours  
For the spiritual welfare

Of this parish  
His parishioners and friends  
Have united to build  
A memorial church  
For the new parish  
Of Christ Church:  
And place this tablet  
To record the fact  
Of its erection  
AD 1876"

Over the door of the beautiful memorial church near to the railway station is a stone thus inscribed:

This Church was erected  
To the glory of God  
And in memory of  
The Rev George Fisk LLB  
Late Vicar of Gt Malbium  
And Prebendary of Lichfield:  
And on the 17th day of Sep 1874  
This memorial stone was laid  
By the Right Honourable  
Lady Emily Foley  
Nine years after, his wife died  
Jan 29, 1881. Thei two children  
died in infancy.

A user of the [www.fiskes.com](http://www.fiskes.com) website wrote a message in 2001 saying "my name is Clive Ward, about 15 years ago I with my wife Carol purchased Gay Bowers Cottage. It is a property which was originally built at or about 1820. In 1856 Gay Bowers Cottage was sold to William Fisk of Danbury, Gentleman, for the princely sum of £380, which by the way included a cottage and gardens to the north (which I believe to be Cape Cottage). William Fisk died here in 1872 and is buried at Danbury Parish Church. The property was transferred to his wife Sophia but she died in 1873. Gay Bowers Cottage was then transferred to their daughter Sophia. Sophia conveyed the cottage to William Silbauer Fisk in 1913."



A painting called **The Cheapjack**. On this painting, an Internet site says "This scene depicts the arrival of a travelling merchant – or "cheap jack" – at a small Flemish town in the 17th century. It is a rare and exciting event in the lives of local people, and it seems as though the whole town has assembled in the market square, laughing, chatting, shouting and bargaining.

A richly dressed black boy with a monkey can be seen at the bottom right of the picture. The Dutch were well acquainted with dark-skinned people from Africa and West India, who arrived not only as slaves, but also as home servants and sailors, merchants and workers.

Despite the detail of this painting, its artist was neither Flemish nor lived during the 17th century. William Henry Fisk lived in Victorian London and lectured on painting at University College. As a result, he was very well acquainted with London and European art collections, and many of the characters in this picture can also be found in the paintings of Flemish and Dutch artists held at the National Gallery and elsewhere."





This one from 1858 is called *The Secret*. It is described by Mary Cowling's "Victorian figurative painting: domestic life and the contemporary social scene" as "a delightful and unusual rendering of the sudden revelation to a young girl of the workings of true love ... In Fisk's picture, the young woman is happily receiving a declaration of love, and probably a proposal of marriage, from a young man who has drawn her away from the family picnic; heedless of the portly father who calls vainly from the distance. Emerging through the bushes, the child marvels at this tender scene. Young as she is, she intuitively understands the magnitude of the occasion. One day, this will be her fate too; the only possible one for a respectable woman of her class. The man's hat, beard and the North American porcupine-quill handbag, presumably a present from him, suggest that he may have returned from making his fortune abroad." Like most of Fisk's paintings, it now belongs to a private collector. Below, a painting called *Troublesome Days*.

