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### James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback letters, 1892-1893

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# **James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback letters**

## **MS.000640**

**Finding aid prepared by the Arkansas State Archives**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Arkansas State Archives
<b>Title</b>	James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback letters
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1892-1893
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 Cubic feet 1 box
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials</b>	Materials entirely in English.

### Preferred Citation

James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback letters, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

## Biographical/Historical note

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James Phillip Eagle (1837-1904) served as Governor of Arkansas from 1889-1893. Eagle was born in Maury County, Tennessee, on August 10, 1837. His family moved to Arkansas, where James was educated in the county schools. He served as sheriff of Prairie County before the Civil War. During the Civil War, Eagle enlisted as a private, and rose later to the rank of colonel. He served as a member of the Arkansas Legislature, serving from 1873 to 1878, and in 1885, he served as speaker of the house. Eagle was nominated by the Democratic State Convention for governor in 1888, and was elected in September of that year. He was reelected to a second term in 1890. During his tenure, he advocated reform in the state penitentiary system, supported a progressive policy on immigration, and endorsed liberal support for education. In 1902, he was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and twice was reelected. Governor James P. Eagle died of heart failure on December 19, 1904, in Little Rock and is buried at Little Rock's Mount Holly Cemetery.

William Meade Fishback (1831-1903) was born on November 5, 1831, in Jeffersonton, Culpeper County, Virginia, to Frederick Fishback and Sophia Ann Yates Fishback. Fishback attended the University of Virginia and taught school after his graduation in 1855. In 1857, he moved to Springfield, Illinois, where he was admitted to the bar. Around 1858, Fishback moved to Sebastian County, Arkansas, settling near Fort Smith. Fishback was elected Sebastian County delegate to the state convention considering secession due to his Unionist stance. In the first session of the convention, Fishback voted with the majority against secession. During the second session of convention following the firing on Fort Sumter, however, he joined the majority endorsing secession. Armed hostilities in reaction to Fort Sumter caused Fishback to take the oath of allegiance to the Union in Missouri. After Little Rock, fell in 1863, General James Schofield appointed him a colonel with the responsibility of forming the Third Arkansas Infantry Regiment. Upon his return to Little Rock, he published a Unionist newspaper, the Unconditional Union, instead of recruiting for the Third Arkansas, but he later recruited 900 men for the Fourth Arkansas Cavalry.

After the war, Fishback returned to Sebastian County, reopened a law office in Fort Smith, and spent the next decade building his practice into one of the most prosperous in western Arkansas. On April 4, 1867, he married Adelaide Miller, whose father had been a prominent Fort Smith merchant. They had six children. His wife died on December 6, 1882. He never remarried.

Fishback switched to the Democratic Party because of Reconstruction policies. He was a delegate to the 1874 constitutional convention. He was nominated for governor in 1892 and won, but due to a national depression lost reelection in 1894. He remained active in his law practice in Fort Smith until he suffered a stroke in early February 1903. He died in his sleep on February 9, 1903, and is buried in Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith.

## **Scope and Contents**

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This collection contains a letterbook of letters received by James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback between 1892-1893.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Arkansas State Archives 09/02/2014

### **Conditions Governing Access**

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### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Unknown.

## Collection Inventory

1892-1893: Letterbook, letters received, James P. Eagle and William M. Fishback