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Elisabeth Sifton papers 12876292

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Rare Book and Manuscript Library

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Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
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New York, NY 10027

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Sifton, Elisabeth
Title:	Elisabeth Sifton Papers
ID:	12876292
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Date [bulk]:	1984-2000
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Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Elisabeth Sifton Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Elisabeth Sifton was born Elisabeth Niebuhr in New York City in 1939; a magna cum laude graduate of Radcliffe College, she also studied at the University of Paris. She began her career in book publishing at Frederick Praeger in 1962, a partly academic partly general-interest publisher with a considerable art-book list and a reputation [later established as fact] as being somehow supported by the Central Intelligence Agency. When Praeger was sold to Encyclopedia Britannica, she left it and in 1968 became an editor at The Viking Press; she was named its editor in chief in 1980. In 1983, by which time Viking had been sold to Pearson, the British company that owned Penguin Books, she was named publisher of Elisabeth Sifton Books and vice president of Viking Penguin; her imprint won the Carey-Thomas Award for Creative Publishing in 1986. In 1987-92, she was executive vice president of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., then joined Farrar Straus and Giroux as its senior vice president; she was also Publisher,

then Editor-at-Large, of its subsidiary Hill and Wang. In 2008 she retired from active editorial work.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1962 Ms Niebuhr married Charles Proctor Sifton, a lawyer and later a federal judge; they had three sons--Sam, Tobias, and John Sifton. They separated in 1984, and in 1996 Mrs. Sifton married the historian Fritz Stern.

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Biographical / Historical

A former member of the Freedom to Read Committee of the Association of American Publishers and the advisory council to Princeton's Department of Comparative Literature, Mrs. Sifton also served on the board of directors of Union Theological Seminary, of the French-American Foundation, and of the Harvard University Press, as well as on the board of advisers to the Beacon Press and the visiting committees to Harvard's Department of English and American History and to its University Press.

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Biographical / Historical

Poets, novelists and critics whom Elisabeth Sifton edited and published include John Ashbery, Bruce Chatwin, Robertson Davies, Don DeLillo, Stuart Dybek, Leslie Forbes, Carlos Fuentes, William Gaddis, Allan Gurganus, Richard Howard, Frank Kermode, Peter Matthiessen, J.D. McClatchy, Péter Nádas, R.K. Narayan, Richard Poirier, Gregor von Rezzori, Charles Rosen, William Trevor, Marina Warner, and Geoffrey Wolff.

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Biographical / Historical

Other writers whose books Elisabeth Sifton edited and published include Neal Ascherson, Isaiah Berlin, John Brewer, Frederick Brown, Natalie Zemon Davis, Vladimir Dedijer, Andrew Delbanco, Ann Douglas, Ronald Dworkin, Susan Eisenhower, David Gilmour, Philip Gourevitch, Gerald Gunther, James Hershberg, Stanley Hoffmann, Michael Howard, Michael Ignatieff, Roy Jenkins, Stanley Karnow, John Keegan, Sunil Khilnani, Stephen Kinzer, Nicholas Lemann, J.R. MacArthur, Robert MacNeil, Avishai Margalit, Ernest May, Edward Mendelson, Newton Minow, Dan Morgan, Victor Navasky, Michael Novacek, Lynne Olson, Fintan O'Toole, Sydney Schanberg, Jonathan Spence, Thomas Slaughter, Stella Tillyard, Lewis Thomas, Adam Ulam, Henry Wiencek, and Jules Witcover.

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Biographical / Historical

Mrs. Sifton is also the author of a book, *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Peace and War* [2003], and numerous articles in *The Nation* and other periodicals. She and Fritz Stern together wrote *No Ordinary Men: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hans von Dohnanyi, Resisters Against Hitler in Church and State* [2013].

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Summary

The Elisabeth Sifton Papers span much of Mrs. Sifton's working life. General correspondence is filed alphabetically by last name and includes correspondence related to the day-to-day business of publishing, as well as correspondence related to projects ultimately not realized by Mrs. Sifton. Author-specific files deal with projects that Mrs. Sifton worked extensively on. Some files lack information that remains in the archives of the publishing house where the project was completed. Work life files deal with involvement in various professional associations, classes taught by Mrs. Sifton, and some of Mrs. Sifton's own published writing.

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Arrangement

Arranged in four series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2017-10-13 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

2017.2018.M046: Source of acquisition--Elisabeth Sifton. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--10/6/2017.

Processing Information

Papers processed, ptl 10/10/2017.

Accrual

Accruals are expected

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- 20th century
- Novelists
- Poets
- Book editors
- Publishers and publishing
- Book editors
- Sifton, Elisabeth
- Niebuhr, Reinhold, 1892-1971
- Stern, Fritz, 1926-2016
- Bellow, Saul
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 1906-1945
- Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973

Collection Inventory

Series I: Work life

Title/Description	Instances
About ES	box 1 folder 1

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Articles on Publishing Rights	box 1	folder 2
Bonhoeffer-Beck	box 1	folder 3
Booksellers	box 1	folder 4
The Business of Publishing	box 1	folder 5
CUNY Levy Fellow	box 23	folder 10
Carey-Thomas Award, 1987	box 1	folder 6
Century Association	box 23	folder 9
Isabel Colegate	box 1	folder 7
Columbia University	box 1	folder 8
Council on Foreign Relations	box 2	folder 1
Denver Publishing Institute	box 2	folder 2
Early job searching	box 23	folder 5
Elmhurst College (Honorary Doctorate)	box 23	folder 11
Elisabeth Sifton Books	box 2	folder 3
<i>News from Elisabeth Sifton Books</i> (Viking)	box 23	folder 7
French-American Foundation	box 2	folder 4
Harvard University Press	box 2	folder 5
Hill & Wang	box 2	folder 6
Knopf Organization	box 2	folder 7
Knopf -- FSG	box 2	folder 8
Lewis Thomas Committee	box 2	folder 9
Libya	box 2	folder 10
MacDowell Colony	box 3	folder 1
Mailing Lists	box 3	folder 2
Miller Theater	box 3	folder 3
Miscellaneous, professional	box 23	folder 6
1997 National Endowment for the Humanities (Carter Names Panel), 1997	box 3	folder 4
New School	box 3	folder 5
New York Review of Books	box 3	folder 6
Organizations & Conferences	box 3	folder 7
Penguin Modern Masters Series	box 3	folder 8
Praeger -- Misc.		

	box 3	folder 9
Price vs. V -- P and Matthiessen	box 3	folder 10
Princeton Comparative Literature Department	box 23	folder 12
Progress Re	box 3	folder 11
PUBWATCH	box 4	folder 1
Prague/PUBWATCH	box 4	folder 2
"Reinhold Niebuhr: Writings" Library of America	box 4	folder 3
Serenity <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 folders)	box 4	folder 4&5
The Serenity Prayer	box 4	folder 6
E. Sifton SMU, 2007	box 4	folder 7
E.S. Speeches and Articles	box 4	folder 8
Twentieth Century Fund	box 5	folder 1
UMBA Trip	box 5	folder 2
Viking	box 5	folder 3
Viking Reviews	box 5	folder 4
Viking-Knopf, 1987	box 5	folder 5

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Series II: General publishing correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
Miscellaneous A	box 5	folder 6
Miscellaneous B	box 5	folder 7
Miscellaneous C-D	box 5	folder 8
Miscellaneous E-F	box 5	folder 9
Miscellaneous G	box 5	folder 10
Miscellaneous H	box 6	folder 1
Miscellaneous I-K	box 6	folder 2
Miscellaneous L	box 6	folder 3
Miscellaneous M (MacArthur-Miller)	box 7	folder 1
Miscellaneous M (Mindlin-Murray)	box 7	folder 2
Miscellaneous N-O	box 7	folder 3

Miscellaneous P	box 7	folder 4
Miscellaneous Q-R	box 7	folder 5
Miscellaneous S	box 8	folder 1
Miscellaneous T	box 8	folder 2
Miscellaneous U-V	box 8	folder 3
Miscellaneous W (Wagner-Willis)	box 8	folder 4
Miscellaneous Willrich-Z	box 8	folder 5

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Series III: Author-specific papers

Title/Description	Instances	
Alba, Victor	box 8	folder 6
Alexander, Caroline	box 8	folder 7
Andrew, Christopher	box 8	folder 8
Apple, Max	box 9	folder 1
Aron, Raymond	box 9	folder 2
Aynor, Hanan S.	box 9	folder 3
Bellow, Saul (correspondence)	box 23	folder 1
Blondel, Jean	box 9	folder 4
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich	box 23	folder 8
Brewer, John	box 9	folder 5
Brown, Frederick	box 9	folder 6
Brown, J.F.	box 9	folder 7
Brumberg, Abraham	box 9	folder 8
Buchan, Alastair	box 9	folder 9
Calvocoressi, Peter	box 9	folder 10
Caton, Steven	box 9	folder 11
Cavell, Stanley	box 9	folder 12
Chatwin, Bruce	box 9	folder 13
Colgate, Isabel	box 9	folder 14
Cornwell, David	box 9	folder 15
Cowley, Malcolm	box 9	folder 16

Craig, Gordon A.	box 10	folder 1
Crankshaw, Edward	box 10	folder 2
Davies, Robertson	box 10	folder 3
Davis, Terry	box 10	folder 4
De Chirico, Giorgio	box 10	folder 5
Dedijer, Vladimir	box 10	folder 6
Devillers & Lacouture	box 10	folder 7
Donhoff, Marion	box 10	folder 8
Dostoyevsky [trans. Pevear, Richard]	box 10	folder 9
Draper, Theodore	box 10	folder 10
Eisenhower, Susan	box 10	folder 11
Eisler, Colin	box 10	folder 12
Epstein, Leon D.	box 10	folder 13
Finley, M.I.	box 11	folder 1
Fisher, Rose & Huttenback	box 11	folder 2
Frey, Julia	box 11	folder 3
Furbank, P.N.	box 11	folder 4
Fussell, Betty	box 11	folder 5
Gaddis, William	box 11	folder 6
GardnerRichard N.	box 11	folder 7
Goldman, Marshall I.	box 11	folder 8
Gordimer, Nadine	box 11	folder 9
Gould, Milton	box 11	folder 10
Graham, Katherine	box 11	folder 11
Granquist, Hans	box 12	folder 1
Griffith, Samuel	box 12	folder 2
Grosser, Alfred	box 12	folder 3
Guillermoprieto, Alma "Samba"	box 12	folder 4
Halperin, Morton "China and the Bomb"	box 12	folder 5
Gunther, Gerald "Biography of Learned Hand"	box 12	folder 6
Halpern, Daniel	box 12	folder 7
Hansen, Victor "The Western Way of War"	box 12	folder 8

Hershberg, James	box 13	folder 1
Hill, Christopher	box 13	folder 2
Hirschman, Albert	box 13	folder 3
Hodgson, Godfrey	box 13	folder 4
Hoffman, Stanley	box 13	folder 5
Hollander, Anne	box 13	folder 6
Holmes, Richard	box 13	folder 7
Hooker, John	box 13	folder 8
Hope, Christopher	box 14	folder 1
Horne, Alistair	box 14	folder 2
Horwitt, Sanford	box 14	folder 3
Hughes, Robert	box 14	folder 4
Ignatieff, Michael	box 14	folder 5
Jackson, Henry M.	box 14	folder 6
Johnston, Sir Charles	box 14	folder 7
Kamarck, Andrew M.	box 14	folder 8
Karnow, Stanley	box 14	folder 9
Keegan, John	box 14	folder 10
Kissinger, Henry [ed.] "Problems of National Security"	box 14	folder 11
Geir, Kjetsaa	box 14	folder 12
Kolakowski, Leszek	box 14	folder 13
Kunin, Madeline	box 14	folder 14
Kuttner, Robert	box 14	folder 15
Lear, Frances	box 14	folder 16
Leigh-Fermor, Patrick	box 15	folder 1
Leonhard, Wolfgang	box 15	folder 2
Lish, Gordon	box 15	folder 3
Lopez, Barry	box 15	folder 4
Lubman, Stanley [ed.] "Man and Sate in Communist China"	box 15	folder 5
MacArthur, J.R.	box 15	folder 6
Mann, Golo	box 15	folder 7
Matthiessen, Peter	box 15	folder 8

McCrum, Robert and Robert MacNeil "The Story of English"	box 15	folder 9
McGee, Celia	box 15	folder 10
Miles, Jack	box 15	folder 11
Miller, Arthur	box 15	folder 12
Miller, Jonathan	box 15	folder 13
Mintz, Sidney	box 15	folder 14
Mintz, Sidney	box 16	folder 1
Mintz, Sidney (correspondence)	box 23	folder 2
Morgan, Dan	box 16	folder 2
Morton & Lyons	box 16	folder 3
Nadas, Peter -- FSG	box 16	folder 4
Nadonly, Stein	box 16	folder 5
Narayan, R.K.	box 16	folder 6
Navasky, Victor	box 16	folder 7
Norwich, John Julius	box 16	folder 8
Novacek, Michael	box 16	folder 9
Nuland, Sherwin	box 16	folder 10
Ozick, Cynthia	box 16	folder 11
Pachter, Henry M.	box 16	folder 12
Parker, Richard	box 16	folder 13
Polk, William R.	box 16	folder 14
Postman, Neil	box 16	folder 15
Praeger Books on the Dynamics of American Society	box 17	folder 1
Praeger Books on International Economics and Development	box 17	folder 2
Prittie, Terence	box 17	folder 3
Raban, Jonathan	box 17	folder 4
Randal, Jonathan	box 17	folder 5
Renouvin/Duroselle	box 17	folder 6
Rezzori, Gregor von	box 17	folder 7
Rezzori, Gregor von "Tales of Maghrebina" [English translation]	box 17	folder 8
Rosen, Charles	box 18	folder 1
Rosenblatt, Roger		

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	box 18	folder 2
Rosenfield, Israel	box 18	folder 3
Rosinski, Herbert "The German Army"	box 18	folder 4
Rosinski, Herbert "Power and Human Destiny"	box 18	folder 5
Rudenstein, Neil (correspondence)	box 23	folder 3
Ruhn von Oppen, Beate	box 18	folder 6
Rushdie, Salman	box 18	folder 7
Said, Edward	box 18	folder 8
Sanders, James	box 18	folder 9
Schapiro, Leonard	box 18	folder 10
Schorske, Carl E. (correspondence)	box 23	folder 4
Schwartz, Herman	box 18	folder 11
Seibt, Ferdinand	box 18	folder 12
Senghor, Leopold Sedar	box 18	folder 13
Seigel, Jerrold	box 18	folder 14
Silk, Dennis	box 18	folder 15
Sinyavsky, Andre	box 18	folder 16
Skidelsky, Robert	box 18	folder 17
Spence, Jonathan	box 19	folder 1
Spence, Jonathan	box 19	folder 2
Spurling, Hilary	box 19	folder 3
Steinberg, David	box 19	folder 4
Steinberg, Saul	box 19	folder 5 & 6
Stone, Roger "Dreams of Amazonia"	box 19	folder 7
Lewis, Thomas	box 19	folder 8
Lewis, Thomas. Drafts [ultimately unpublished]	box 20	folder 1
Trevor, William	box 20	folder 2
Trilling, Lionel	box 20	folder 3
Twombly, Robert	box 20	folder 4
Ulam, Adam	box 20	folder 5
Unsolicited	box 20	folder 6
Wolff, Geoffrey	box 20	folder 7

Yablonsky, Linda

box 20

folder 8

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)**Series IV: Planners and phone logs**

Title/Description	Instances
Planners and appointment books:	
1974	box 21
1975	box 21
1976	box 21
1977	box 21
1978	box 21
1979	box 21
1980	box 21
1981	box 21
1982	box 21
1983 (2), 1983	box 21
1985 (2), 1985	box 21
1986	box 21
1987	box 21
1988	box 21
1989	box 21
1990	box 21
1990-1991	box 21
1991	box 21
1992	box 21
1994	box 21
1995	box 21
1996	box 21
1997 (2), 1997	box 21
1998 (2), 1998	box 21
1999	box 21
2000 (2), 2000	box 21

2001	box 21
2002 (2), 2002	box 21
2003 (2), 2003	box 21
2004	box 21
2005	box 21
2006	box 21
2007	box 21
2008 (2), 2008	box 21
2009	box 21
Phone logs:	
Sept 2-November 18, 1987	box 22
November 19, 1987-February22, 1988	box 22
February22-June 21, 1988	box 22
June 22-October 19, 1988	box 22
October 19, 1988-January 27, 1989	box 22
January 27-April 13, 1989	box 22
April 27-July 23, 1989	box 22
July 28-December 4, 1989	box 22
December 5-December 29, 1989	box 22
January 2-August 16, 1990	box 22
December 16, 1991-April 27, 1992	box 22

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Series V: Additions to the Collection

Scope and Contents

The 2023 addition is primarily family letters between Elisabeth and her parents and husband, Fritz Stern. There are also copies of letters between Reinhold Neibuhr and his wife, Ursula Neibuhr.

Title/Description	Instances	
2023:		
Childhood photographs (7)	box 24	folder 1
Reinhold and Ursula Niebuhr:		

Ursula Niebuhr and Paul G. Sifton re. Paul F. Sifton, 1985	box 24	folder 6
Reinhold Niebuhr Testaments on His Wife, 1971	box 24	folder 23
Family Correspondence (Keppel-Compton, Reinhold Niebuhr), 1934-1981	box 24	folder 24
Ursula Mary Keppel-Compton letters, 1931	box 24	folder 25
Transcript of Reinhold Niebuhr and W. H. Auden correspondence, 1946-1970	box 24	folder 28
"The Cross as Symbolic" Conversations between Reinhold Niebuhr and Ursula Niebuhr	box 24	folder 29
Copies of letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr, 1936	box 24	folder 30
Copies of letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr, 1931	box 24	folder 31
Copies of letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr, 1931-1951	box 24	folder 32
Gifford Lectures and Copies of letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr, 1947	box 24	folder 33
Letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr (IX European Trip), 1947	box 24	folder 34
Letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr (IX England and Germany), 1946	box 24	folder 35
Postlude. Letter to a Dear but Departed Spouse, 1987	box 24	folder 36
Letters from Reinhold Niebuhr to Ursula Niebuhr (V), 1936	box 24	folder 37
John Strachey to Reinhold Niebuhr, 1960	box 24	folder 38
Reinhold Niebuhr Biography	box 24	folder 39
Tapes 2 & 3: Childhood of Ursula and Reinhold Niebuhr/First Roosevelt Campaign/Political Situation in Later 1920s, 1931	box 24	folder 40
Biographical Tapes re. Ursula and Reinhold Niebuhr	box 24	folder 41
Biographical Tapes re. Ursula and Reinhold Niebuhr	box 24	folder 42
"Continuation: Reinhold Niebuhr and British Friends"	box 24	folder 27
"Sex and Birth Control" M-6, 30 November 1979	box 24	folder 26
Elisabeth Sifton letters:		
Elisabeth Sifton poem "The Judge", 1956	box 24	folder 7
Elisabeth Sifton and Fritz Stern letters, photographs, and manuscripts, 1981-1993	box 24	folder 8

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Sifton Family letters, 1947-1978	box 24	folder 9
Sifton Family letters, 1966-1972	box 24	folder 10
Sifton Family letters, 1950s-1960s	box 24	folder 11
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1960-1961	box 24	folder 12
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1958-1959	box 24	folder 13
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1958	box 24	folder 14
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1957	box 24	folder 15
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, January-February 1957	box 24	folder 16
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters. Radcliffe, September-December 1956	box 24	folder 17
Elisabeth Niebuhr poem "The Judge", 1956	box 24	folder 18
Elisabeth Niebuhr letter, July-August 1953	box 24	folder 19
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1950s	box 24	folder 20
Elisabeth Niebuhr letters, 1948-1949	box 24	folder 21
Biblical/Historical study notes	box 24	folder 22
Fritz Stern:		
Fritz Stern letters to Elisabeth Sifton and associated material, 1981-2018	box 24	folder 2
Letters, etc. relating to the wedding of Elisabeth Sifton and Fritz Stern on 1 January 1996	box 24	folder 3
Fritz Stern Letters/"Five Germanies I Have Known"/"Historians and the Great War" <i>Foreign Affairs</i> Vol. 75, No. 6/Reception for Fritz Stern/Photographs (7), 1980-2001	box 24	folder 4 & 5

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