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JOHN P. HEISS
FAMILY PAPERS, 1835-1872

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The John P. Heiss Family Papers, 1835-1872, were a gift of Robert Lusk, nephew of Mary Lusk Heiss. The collection consists of ca. 500 items and two volumes and carries no restrictions on its use.

The papers are composed of correspondence, editorials, dispatches, legal documents, etc. John P. Heiss began his career as a newspaper man in charge of the financial department of the printing establishment of the Nashville *Union* under the editorship of Jeremiah George Harris in 1840. For two years beginning in 1842 he joined with Thomas Hogan as co-editor of the Nashville *Union* and at the same time was a Major in the Tennessee Militia. In 1845 he became business manager of the Washington *Union*, the newly established organ of the Polk administration, joining with Thomas Ritchie of the Richmond *Enquirer*. This partnership ended in 1848, and from 1851 to 1855 Heiss was editor of the New Orleans *Delta*. William L. Marcy, U.S. Secretary of State, employed him to carry dispatches to Nicaragua where he became associated with William L. Walker. After becoming a citizen of Nicaragua he served as chargé d'affaires in place of Father Vijil and was authorized to ratify on behalf of Nicaragua a treaty with the United States. Heiss continued his interest in Nicaragua and was appointed in 1860 as bearer of dispatches to the U.S. Legation. On his return to this Latin American country he served as agent for Spanish-American and British bondholders. His chief concern, however, was the cultivation of cotton in Central America and he was very much interested in the development of the cotton gin. Numerous letters of David Hoadley, President of the Panama Railroad, are concerned with opportunities for capitalists in Latin America by means of cotton and hemp cultivation, development of transportation, building of steamers, and construction of a canal and railroads. Heiss was appointed by Great Britain and the United States as special commissioner to negotiate the "Mosquito Territory question." Some correspondence with William Walker deals with this question. There are 41 letters written by Heiss in the collection. The letters from James K. Polk deal primarily with political matters while Heiss was editor of the Nashville *Union*. Other correspondents in this collection, in addition to those already mentioned, include Joseph Brenan, Lewis S. Coryell, J. R. Cox, George M. Dallas, John Davis, Daniel E. Delavan, Fermin Ferrer, Hugh Fraser, George B. Mathew, A. O. P. Nicholson, J. D. Powles, William H. Trescot, Alexander Walker, and Henry A. Wise.

Two scrapbooks contain numerous clippings about Nicaragua. Some agreements, indentures, and editorials make up the remainder of the collection.

Papers published in Volume II, *Tennessee Historical Magazine*.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John P. Heiss and son Henry Heiss

- ca. 1812 John P. Heiss born
- 1835 September 15, married Anna Molineaux at Trinity Church in Philadelphia
- 1840 A resident of Nashville, Tennessee, in charge of the financial department of the printing establishment of the Nashville *Union*, then conducted by J. George Harris
- 1842-1844 A Major in the Tennessee Militia; joined with Thomas Hogan as co-editor of the Nashville *Union*
- 1845-1848 Became business manager of the Washington *Union*, newly established organ of the Polk administration, with Thomas Ritchie of the Richmond *Enquirer*. This newspaper was established after the purchase of the Washington *Globe* by Ritchie and Heiss
- 1848 Retired from the partnership but remained in Washington for some time
- 1851-1855 Editor of the New Orleans *Delta*
- 1856-1857 Associated with William Walker. Employed by William L. Marcy, U.S. Secretary of State, to carry dispatches to Nicaragua. He was left as chargé d'affaires by Father Vijil to look out for interests of Nicaragua. Authorized to ratify on behalf of Nicaragua a treaty with the United States. Authorized by the Walker Government as a citizen of Nicaragua. In close touch with Walker until autumn of 1857
- 1857 Returned to Washington and established a newspaper known as *The States*
- 1860 Retained his interest in Nicaragua and was appointed bearer of dispatches to U.S. legation, receiving his commission from William Henry Trescot, acting Secretary of State
- 1861 Returned to Nicaragua; chief concern was cultivation of cotton in Central America
- 1863 Served as agent of British bondholders who had claims against Nicaragua
- 1865 Died August 22, in New York (obituary). Buried at Bristol, Pennsylvania
- 1865-1872 Son Henry Heiss, veteran of the Confederate Army, served as one of the editors of the *Republican Banner*

- 1872 Managing editor of the St. Louis *Times*
- 1874 Returned to Nashville and was managing editor of the *Union and American* for about a year until it was consolidated with the *Republican Banner*
- 1875 Managing editor of the *American*; married Miss Mary Lusk of Nashville

CONTAINER LIST

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1. Articles--"Heiss Papers"--*Tennessee Historical Magazine*, I, 331-345; II, 208-230
2. Articles of Agreement--Consul General of Nicaragua and Barclay House, 1865
3. Articles of Agreement--Heiss, John P. and Russell Fitzgerald, 1862
4. Articles of Agreement--Republic of Guatemala and Spanish American Bondholders, 1856
5. Biographical Sketch--Vijil, Don Augustus
6. Broadside--Challenge to Duel--Brenan, Joseph to E. J. Carrell, New Orleans, Louisiana, 185?
7. Certificate--Heiss, John P.--Niagara Falls, Canada, 1842
8. Certificate--Stock--Compania de Diligencias--Nicaragua, 1864
9. Certificate--Stock--New York Cemetery Company, 1851
10. Clippings--General
11. Clippings--Heiss, Henry
12. Commission--N. A. Chontates Co. to John P. Heiss, 1856
13. Commission--Walker, William to John P. Heiss, 1856
14. Commission--State of Louisiana to John P. Heiss, Delegate, Memphis Convention, 1853
15. Commissions--U. S. State Department to John P. Heiss, 1856, 1860
16. Contract--Heiss, John P. and Sam Butterworth with R. L. Allen and Co., New York, 1856
17. Contract--Ritchie and Heiss with J. A. Houston, New York, 1845
18. Epitaph--Nashville, Tennessee, 1840
19. Estate Papers--Heiss, Clarissa, Newport, Rhode Island, 1882
20. Extracts--Scrapbook
21. Genealogical Data--Heiss Family
22. Index--Letters, Notes, Newspaper Clippings
23. Invitation--Democratic Party Dinner, New York, 1847
24. Invitation--Democratic Union and California Club Ball, New York, 1850
25. Land Record--Deed--Bondt, Ian to G. D. Crommelin, Washington, D. C., 1843
26. Land Record--Warrant--Republic of Nicaragua to D. N. Ingraham, 1856
27. Land Record--Warrant--Republic of Nicaragua to Thomas Reilly, 1856
28. Marriage Certificate--Heiss, John P. to Anna Molineaux, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1835
29. Memorandum--Dissolution of Partnership, Ritchie and Heiss, 1848
30. Memorandum of Agreement--Ritchie and Heiss, 1849
31. Newspaper--*Gaceta de Nicaragua*, 1864
32. Newspaper article--by Alexander Walker
33. Newspaper article--"Col. Polk alias Peter Doodle"
34. Newspaper articles--re: W. B. Lewis
35. Newspaper articles--*The Globe* and *National Intelligencer*, 1845
36. Note--Committee of Spanish Bondholders
37. Note--Attack by J. P. Heiss on Cyril V. Gray
38. Notes--Central America
39. Notes--Transit Company and Canal Grant--Nicaragua
40. Receipt--Medical Services, John Phillips, 1846
41. Receipt--School Expenses, Heiss, Henry, 1855
42. Receipt--Heiss, John P., 1864

43. Scrapbook--Nicaragua, ca. 1855-1857
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Correspondence

1. Author unknown - Coxe
2. Dallas - Donelson
3. Ferrer - Fraser
4. Gay - Heiss, Henry
5. Heiss, John P., 1840-1864
6. Heiss, John P., 1865
7. Hoadley, David
8. Jerez - Kirkwood
9. Lusk - Mathew
10. McManus - Nicholson
11. Perez - Polk
12. Powles, J. D.
13. Ritchie - Smith
14. Teledon - Tyson
15. Vijil - Wise

Scrapbook Separately Wrapped (Oversize Box)

Scrapbook--Nicaragua, 1845-1859

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