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FOSTER-WOODS PAPERS
1809-1908

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Harriett Chappell Owsley
Archives & Manuscripts Unit

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INTRODUCTION

The Foster-Woods Papers consist of correspondence, accounts, and other documents of the Foster and Woods families of Middle Tennessee, spanning the years 1809-1908. The bulk of the papers are dated prior to the Civil War. The papers were obtained through gifts and by purchase. Miss Emmaline Cockrill, Nashville, Tenn., donated 35 Foster family letters on behalf of the National Society of Colonial Dames in America (NSCDA); Mrs. L.D. Maney, Nashville, Tenn., donated 15 items concerning the Woods family, also on behalf of the NSCDA; Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb, Nashville, Tenn., donated several items concerning the Foster family; Vernon M. Jones, Nashville, Tenn., donated 6 Foster letters; some 110 items concerning the Woods family were purchased from Mrs. Garnett Andrews; Rev. Paul B. Freeland donated letters and accounts; Murray Brosius, Nashville, Tenn., donated copies of 13 Woods family business letters; and Elizabeth Woods Walker, Memphis, Tenn., donated 12 Woods family letters.

The collection occupies .42 linear feet of shelf space and consists of approximately 225 items. Literary rights to the unpublished writings contained in the Foster-Woods Papers have been dedicated to the public. Single photocopies of unpublished writings may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Foster-Woods Papers are divided into two series: Foster family papers (Series 1) and Woods family papers (Series 2). Although the families intermarried, the papers have been divided for ease of understanding. Correspondence makes up the largest part of the papers, but accounts, land records, legal documents, and sketches are also included. The Foster family series includes letters of Ephraim H. Foster, prominent in Tennessee politics in the 1830s and 1840s and one of the founders of the Whig Party in Tennessee. The papers also include letters written by the children of Ephraim H. and Jane Dickinson Foster, particularly Robert III, John D., Julia, and Sallie. The double connection between the Foster and Woods families comes in the marriages of Robert Coleman Foster IV to Julia Hannah Woods and Joseph Leonidas Woods to Francis (Fanny) M. Foster (see attached family charts). Julia and Joseph Leonidas Woods were children of Robert Woods and Sarah West, thus connecting the West family. Julia eventually became the owner of her parent’s home, “Westwood.” Featured in the Woods family series are letters of Julia’s brother, James A. Woods, to his father, Robert Woods. There are also items in the papers relating to painter William E. West, brother of Sarah West Woods, and to Charles Armistead and his wife, Mary Robina Woods.

The Foster-Woods Papers not only shed light on the political activities of Ephraim H. Foster; they also document the daily lives of two prominent Middle Tennessee families.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ephraim Hubbard Foster

1794  Born September 17 at Bardstown, Ky., son of Ann Hubbard and Robert Coleman Foster.

1797  Moved to Nashville, Tenn. area.

1813  Graduated from Cumberland College, began study of law in John Dickinson’s office.

1814-1815  Private Secretary to Andrew Jackson during the Creek War. Returned to law practice at end of war, became a partner of William L. Brown (later a Supreme Court justice).

1817  Married widow of John Dickinson, Jane Mebane Lytle Dickinson.


1833  Opposed John H. Eaton, John Bell, and Felix Grundy in contest for U.S. Senate. Grundy was elected on the 55th ballot.

1835  Broke with Andrew Jackson. Persuaded Hugh L. White to become candidate for President.

1837  Elected to the U.S. Senate to succeed Grundy, whose term expired in 1839.

1838  Appointed to succeed Grundy, who resigned to accept a seat in Van Buren’s cabinet.

1838-1840  Served as Senator from Tennessee with Hugh L. White as his colleague.

1840  Foster and White resigned from the Senate because they could not follow the instructions given by the Tennessee legislature, which had become Democratic.
1840 Whig candidate for Elector for the state at large. Whigs were triumphant.

1843 Elected Senator for the second time, defeating William Carroll.

1845 Term as Senator ended. Ran for Governor as Whig candidate but was defeated by Aaron V. Brown. Voted against annexation of Texas.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1
Series 1: Foster Family Papers
1. Accounts
2. Appointment--Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871)
3. Correspondence--Allen-Fogg
4. Correspondence--Foster, Ephraim H.
5. Correspondence--Foster, Francis Fogg-Foster, John D.
6. Correspondence--Foster, Robert Coleman (1769-1844)-Foster, Sarah C.
7. Correspondence--Henry-Otey
8. Correspondence--Pageot--Webster
9. Court Records--Law License--Foster, Robert Coleman (1796-1871)
10. Election Certificate--Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871)
11. Inventory, Personal--Booth, William
12. Land Records
13. Legal Documents--Affidavit--Foster, Robert Coleman (1769-1844)
15. Photograph--Foster, J.D.
16. School Records--Foster, Francis Fogg
17. Stock Certificate--Foster, Robert Coleman (1824-1879)

Series 2: Woods Family
18. Accounts--Armistead, Jane Foster
19. Accounts--Armistead, Robina Woods
20. Accounts--Foster, Julia Woods
21. Accounts--Woods, James Campbell
22. Accounts--Woods, S.B.W.
23. Auction Notice--Armistead, Robert Lewis
24. Correspondence--Abeel-Campbell
25. Correspondence--Foster-Handy
26. Correspondence--Layton-West
27. Correspondence--Wood, Frances Foster-Woods, Jane West
28. Correspondence--Woods, Joseph
29. Correspondence--Woods, Joseph Leonidas-unidentified
30. Diary Fragment--Woods, S.B.W.
31. Inventory, Household--"Westwood"
32. Land Records--Hay, Ann
33. Land Records--Woods Family
34. Legal Documents--Marriage--Woods, Robert
35. Legal Documents--Will--Woods, Robert
36. Miscellaneous Items
37. Obituary--Houston, Catharine C.
38. Sketches--West, William Edward
39. Sketches--Woods Family
40. Sketches--Woods Family Gardens
41. Veterinary Records--Diary Herd Health Certificate--Armistead, Carl M.

**Box 2**
Contains photographs of James A. Woods and Elizabeth Campbell Woods
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Crittenden, J.J., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 8-7-1845
Eve, Paul F., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 7-28-1853
Ewing, Andrew, to [Ephraim Hubbard Foster], 7-31-1850
Fogg, Ellen S., to [Ephraim Hubbard Foster], 2-15-1849
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Foster, Ephraim Hubbard, to Sarah Foster Cockrill, 8-8-1851
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Foster, Francis Fogg, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (2), 1852
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Foster, James H., to Robert Coleman Foster (1818-1871), 12-7-1837
Foster, John Dickinson, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (4), 1850-1852, n.d.
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