Guide to the Leonidas Polk Family Papers

MS 468

compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

August 1981
Revised: January 2008

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Paging Instructions

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Overview

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Phone: (203) 432-1735
Fax: (203) 432-7441

CALL NUMBER: MS 468

CREATOR: Polk, Leonidas, 1806-1864

TITLE: Leonidas Polk family papers

DATES: 1825–1939

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.25 linear feet

LANGUAGE(S): The materials are in English.

SUMMARY: The collection consists of papers relating to several generations of the family of Leonidas Polk (1806-1864), Episcopal bishop and general in the Confederate army. Correspondents include Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, James T. Holly, first black Episcopal bishop of Haiti, and several Confederate military leaders.

FINDING AID LINK: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, use the following address:
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Administrative Information

Information about Access

The entire collection is available on microfilm. Patrons must use FILM HM 276 instead of the originals.

The materials are open for research.
Ownership & Copyright

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Cite As

Leonidas Polk Family Papers (MS 468). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Alternative Formats

Entire collection is also available on microfilm (171 frames on 1 reel, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM276.

Biographical / Historical

LEONIDAS POLK

Graduated from West Point in 1827; ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1831; appointed missionary bishop of the Southwest, 1838; in 1841 appointed bishop of Louisiana; helped found the University of the South, 1856-1860; commissioned into the Confederate Army in 1861 and was made lieutenant-general in 1862.

* * * * *

FRANK LYON POLK, B.A. 1894. Born September 13, 1871, in New York City; died February 7, 1943, in New York City. Father, William Mecklenburg Polk, LL.D. (M.D. Columbia 1869), a physician and surgeon in New York City; professor of obstetrics and gynecology and dean Cornell Medical College; served in Confederate Army in Civil War; son of Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D., LL.D. (grad. U.S. Military Academy 1827), and Frances Ann (Devereaux) Polk of Tennessee and Louisiana. Mother, Ida Ashe (Lyon) Polk; daughter of Francis Strother and Sarah Serena (Glover) Lyon of Demopolis, Ala. Yale relatives include a brother, John M. Polk, '96 S.

Groton (Mass.) School. Freshman Football Team and Freshman Crew; Class crew three years; substitute University Football Team Freshman year; Class cup committee; member University Club, Hé Boulé, Psi Upsilon, and Scroll and Key.

1931-1937; M.A. Hon. Yale 1918; D.C.L. Rollins College 1930 and New York University 1935; created grand officer Order of Leopold (Belgium) 1920 and Légion d'Honneur (France) 1926; awarded Grand Cross of Order of the Crown of Roumania, and Order of Polonia Restituta (1st class); received Heraldic Order of Cristóbal Colón (Dominican government) 1940; chairman Atlantic division Yale Endowment Fund Campaign 1926; on advisory committee Human Welfare Group; member council Yale-in-China 1927-1931; president Kingsley Trust Association 1926-1928; governor Yale Publishing Association; councilor American Geographical Society; on board of governors New York Hospital 1923-1943; member Bar Association of the City of New York, New York County, New York State, and American Bar associations, National Civic Federation, National Municipal League (president 1924-1927, honorary vice-president 1929-1941), The Pilgrims, Sons of the Revolution, Society of the Cincinnati, Southern Society of New York, Tennessee Society, and Church of the Heavenly Rest (Episcopal), New York City.

Married January 27, 1908, in Philadelphia, Elizabeth Sturgis, daughter of James and Elizabeth (Sturgis) Potter. Children: John Metcalf, '3r; Elizabeth Sturgis, the wife of Raymond R. Guest, '31; Frank Lyon, Jr., '34; James Potter, ex-'38; and Alice Potter, the wife of Winthrop Rutherford, Jr. (B.A. Princeton 1928)

Death due to coronary occlusion. Buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City. Survived by wife, children, and eight grandchildren.

From Yale University Obituary Record.

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JOHN METCALFE POLK (1875-1904), younger son of William Mecklenburg Polk, M.D., LL.D., Dean of Cornell University Medical College, and Ida (Lyon) Polk, and grandson of the Rt. Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D., LL.D., first Bishop of Louisiana, and one of the founders of the University of the South, was born at Demopolis, Ala., on May 6, 1875. While in the Sheffield Scientific School he was Vice-President of the University Club, and a member of the Class Committee at graduation.

After graduation he took a course in the Cornell University Medical School, in New York City, receiving the degree of M.D. in 1899. He then entered Bellevue Hospital as interne on the Medical Side and served two years. He spent 1902 mainly in Vienna, studying pathology and medical diagnosis. In January, 1903, he entered upon his duties as Instructor in Medicine and Physical Diagnosis in Cornell Medical College. In this connection, he was appointed Adjunct Assistant Visiting Physician to Bellevue Hospital.

While studying in Europe, Dr. Polk became specially interested in the blood changes produced by infectious diseases, particularly influenza, and the pneumonias associated with influenza. Continuing his studies in this direction, he had succeeded, at the time of his death, in making observations of much value, his paper upon the subject being included in the original articles published annually by the Pathological Department of the Medical School. He had already shown himself to be an instructor of great efficiency.

While making an autopsy he became chilled, acute pneumonia developed in a few hours, and from this he died, on March 29, 1904, in the 29th year of his age.

From Yale University Obituary Record.

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Description of the Collection

This small collection contains correspondence and other papers relating to several generations of the family of Leonidas Polk, Episcopal bishop and general in the Confederate army. Of particular interest are letters from two presidents of the United States, Andrew Jackson (1825) and James K. Polk (1848), letters from a number of Confederate military leaders including Pierre G. T. Beauregard, Nathan B. Forrest, Josiah Gorgas, William J. Hardee, and Earl van Doren, and a letter from the first black Episcopal bishop of Haiti, James T. Holly.

Arrangement

Arranged by record type.
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<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>John M. Polk, medical certificates and diplomas</td>
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<td>1U, 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oversize</td>
<td>1896–1902</td>
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<td>&quot;Sacred to the Memory of Ezekial Polk&quot;</td>
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<td>1U, 1</td>
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<td>&quot;The Death of Dr. John M. Polk&quot;</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
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<td>1U, 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings re: death of Leon Polk, Ida Lyon Polk</td>
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<td>1U, 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Photograph of Brig. Gen. &quot;Stonewall&quot; Jackson (reproduction)</td>
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Access Terms

Families
Clergy.
Soldiers.
Beauregard, G. T. (Gustave Toutant), 1818-1893
Forrest, Nathan Bedford, 1821-1877
Gorgas, Josiah, 1818-1883
Hardee, William Joseph, 1815-1873
Holly, James Theodore, 1829-1911
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845
Polk, James K. (James Knox), 1795-1849
Polk, John Metcalfe.
Polk, Leonidas, 1806-1864
Polk, William Mecklenburg, 1844-
Polk, William, 1758-1834
Van Dorn, Earl, 1820-1863
Polk family
Confederate States of America. Army ($x: Officers.)