

# FRANCIS von BICHOWSKY PAPERS, 1841-1909

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**Collection #**  
SC 2594

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Processed By:  
Paul Brockman  
17 March 1997

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## USER INFORMATION

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 3 folders

**COLLECTION DATES:** Inclusive, 1841-1909, bulk, 1851-1864

**PROVENANCE:** Foord von Bichowsky, Wilmington, DE, 28 July 1967

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

**REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:** Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

**ALTERNATE FORMATS:** None

**RELATED HOLDINGS:** None

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 67.0706

**NOTES:**

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Francis von Bichowsky (1827-1906) was born in Frankfort am Oder, Prussia (Germany). His father, John Andrew,

was a Prussian Army officer of Polish origins. Francis von Bichowsky was educated at the Polytechnic Institute in Berlin with a major in mechanical engineering. In July, 1851, he immigrated to the United States and lived briefly in Poland (Clay County), Indiana, before settling in Terre Haute (Vigo County), Indiana, where he was part owner of a wholesale grocery and notions trade under the name Claussen and Bichowsky. In 1855 he married Mathilde Gust, and they produced three children, Cora, Alfred, and Emmo. Poor health forced Francis von Bichowsky to sell his business interests in 1869. Initially a member of the Democratic Party, von Bichowsky switched political allegiances in 1860. From 1871-1878 he was a member of Terre Haute School Board, and from 1881-1889 he served in the Indiana State Senate from Vigo County. Francis von Bichowsky was also president of the Terre Haute Building Loan & Savings Association.

Sources: Information in Collection.

H. C. Bradsby. *History of Vigo County Indiana*, pp. 679-680.

*Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly*, vol. 1, p. 25.

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### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains correspondence, a diary, family documents, and some financial materials of Francis von Bichowsky. The largest portion of the correspondence is letters from von Bichowsky in Poland, Clay County, and Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana to his future wife, Mathilde Gust, in Frankfort am Oder, Prussia (Germany), 1851-1855. Subjects contained in the letters include descriptions of everyday life, his work, and his views on American women. There also are two letters from von Bichowsky's father in Frankfort am Oder, 1862, regarding family matters including the death of his sister, his father's failing health from asthma, and the longing for his son. The diary, kept by von Bichowsky from July, 1851 to November, 1851, gives a detailed account of his voyage across the Atlantic and his first months in the United States. Other items in the collection include family documents such as a copy of Francis von Bichowsky's birth certificate, apparently made for his immigration to the United States in 1851, and birth certificates for his son Alfred, 1858 (who died in childhood), and his daughter, Cora, 1860. There are also a few business records and newspaper clippings regarding his mercantile interests. Other general items include sketches apparently made by von Bichowsky, a land plat (Terre Haute?), and a copy of a book written in German, *History of the Hutte* (1862). The family letters and documents are all written in German as are all but two pages of the diary of von Bichowsky's immigration. There are translations of the November 2, 1851, letter from Francis to Mathilde, the two letters from von Bichowsky's father, 1862, and the first page of the diary in the collection.

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### FOLDER LISTING

#### FOLDER CONTENTS

1 Correspondence, 1851-1862

2 Documents, Finances, General Materials, 1841-1864, 1909

3 Diary, 1851; *History of the Hutte*, 1862

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### CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Bichowsky, Francis von, 1827-1906

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Bichowsky, Francis von, 1827-1906--Diaries

Germans--Indiana--Terre Haute

Immigrants--Indiana--Terre Haute

Wholesale trade--Indiana--Terre Haute

Voyages and travels

Courtship--Indiana--Terre Haute

Terre Haute (Ind.)--History--Sources

END