



Logan Uriah Reavis Papers (S0066)

Collection Number: S0066

Collection Title: Reavis, Logan Uriah Papers

Dates: 1844-1888

Creator: Reavis, Logan Uriah, 1831-1889

Abstract: The Logan Uriah Reavis Papers consists of microfilmed correspondence written and received by Logan Uriah Reavis, a St. Louis businessman and civic booster who, from 1876 to 1889, lobbied to move the nation's capital from Washington, D.C. to St. Louis, Missouri.

Collection Size: (1 roll of microfilm)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Logan Uriah Reavis Papers* (S0066). The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by John Norma on September 14, 1970 (Accession No. SA0005).

Existence and Location of Originals: The Chicago Historical Society holds the original manuscripts.

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the *Logan Uriah Reavis Papers* can be found in the following collections:

[Capital Removal Convention Resolutions, 1868 \(C1711\)](#)

[William Clark Breckenridge Papers \(C1036\)](#)

Processed by: Processed by Reilly McDonald and AJ Medlock, August 1, 2023

Historical Note:

Logan Uriah Reavis was born in Sangamon Bottom, Illinois, on March 26, 1831, to James Reavis (1771-1838) and Polly Harlan (1807-1851). Following his father's death in 1838, Reavis and his two siblings relocated to Cass County, Illinois, where he received his primary education. Reavis began teaching high school from 1851 to 1855 after graduating from eighth grade. During this time, he involved himself with the Beardstown *Gazette*, a local Republican newspaper. Soon after, Reavis became interested in publishing and bought a share of the paper, renaming it *The Central Illinoian*. However, as news began to spread about new opportunities in the West, Reavis relocated to the Nebraska Territory in 1857, where he made a living purchasing and selling land.

Although finding success in the West, Reavis returned to *The Central Illinoian* in 1860, spurred on by Abraham Lincoln's presidential nomination and the rising tensions between the Northern and Southern States. During this time, he began working closely with other prominent political voices such as Richard Yates (1815-1902) and Horace Greeley (1811-1972). The three men regularly exchanged correspondence to express their fears of growing tensions between anti-slavery and pro-slavery groups in the wake of well-known conflicts such as Harper's Ferry and Bleeding Kansas.

Most watchful of these tensions was Richard Yates, a politician who served in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1842 to 1845 and played an instrumental role in creating the Illinois Republican Party. Yates is most well-known, however, for serving as the Governor of Illinois from 1861 to 1865. His anti-slavery, anti-compromise, and anti-secession standpoints gained him infamy among other politicians of the time. During the Civil War, Yates successfully encouraged enlistment and was unyielding in his intolerance of pro-slavery groups, evidenced by the 1862 occupation of Cairo, Illinois. His leadership during the war earned him recognition from Governors of other states, such as Maine and Indiana, as well as President Lincoln.

Although these men supported Lincoln as the Republican candidate, they often criticized him for his apprehension regarding the nationwide abolition of slavery. Most vocal was Horace Greeley, a politician and journalist from New Hampshire. As a member of the Whig Party, Greeley used his newspaper, *The New York Tribune*, to speak out against wage exploitation, capital punishment, and slavery. He was an advocate for not only abolition but complete equality among freedmen. However, Greeley was not entirely opposed to the secession of Southern States, instead pushing for a quick and peaceful resolution to the war.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the three men stayed in touch but moved on to different pursuits. Richard Yates became a member of the United State Senate in 1865 and was later appointed as United States Commissioner by Ulysses S. Grant in 1873 before passing away suddenly in November of the same year. Horace Greeley allied himself with a radical section of the Liberal Republican party, which voiced opposition to Lincoln's bid for re-election in 1864 and pushed Greeley as their candidate in the 1872 presidential election. He was defeated in a landslide by Ulysses S. Grant, ending his career in politics. Horace Greeley later died in November of the same year.

Logan Uriah Reavis relocated once more to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1866 and published *The St. Louis Daily Press*. He was also an enthusiastic booster for the city and busied himself with a new agenda of moving the United States Capital from Washington D.C. to St. Louis. He used his platform as a businessman and booster to advocate for the change, stating that St. Louis was “the Babylon of the New World” and argued that the Mississippi Valley was the ideal location as it represented “the great vitalizing heart of the Republic.” Aside from the United States, Reavis traveled as far as England to promote the change. He published several books on the topic, such as *Saint Louis: the Future Great City of the New World* in 1868 and *A Change of National Empire* in 1869. Through his efforts, he gained the attention of ninety delegates from seventeen States who, in 1869, met at the Mercantile Library in St. Louis for the National Capital Removal Convention. In 1870, another convention was held in Cincinnati, although it received less support than the first. His cause ended in the mid-1870s after going head-to-head with President Ulysses S. Grant and the United States Congress.

Reavis returned to the publishing business with *The American Tribune* and authored an 1878 biography of Horace Greeley, whom he viewed as a mentor. In 1888, he married Irish-born poet Rebecca Morrow (1856-1923) and had two children. Just a year later, Reavis died from surgical complications while receiving treatment for chronic kidney infections in April of 1898.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into a single series in chronological order.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains microfilm correspondence sent and received by Logan Uriah Reavis, Richard Yates, and Horace Greeley. Also included is *L.U. Reavis*, an unpublished manuscript by Norma Switzer. Topics of interest include the American Civil War, the early Republican Party, and the movement to remove the United States Capital to St. Louis, Missouri. Correspondence of interest includes letters written by Illinois Governor Richard Yates, expressing his anxiety in the months before the start of the Civil War, following conflicts such as Bleeding Kansas and Harper’s Ferry. Additional correspondence reveals Reavis’ efforts to move the United States capital from Washington, D.C., to St. Louis, Missouri, evidenced by letters to various state delegates regarding the National Capital Removal Committee held at the Mercantile Library in St. Louis. The collection dates from 1831 to 1888 and is arranged chronologically.

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