



Shalor W. Eldridge Correspondence (K0217)

Collection Number: K0217

Collection Title: Shalor W. Eldridge Correspondence

Dates: 1863

Creator: Eldridge, Shalor W., 1816-1899

Abstract: The collection contains letters relating to Eldridge's petitions for aid to rebuild his hotel, the Eldridge House, in Lawrence, Kansas, following its destruction during Quantrill's Raid in August 1863.

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic foot
(1 folder)

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-Kansas City](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the University all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Shalor W. Eldridge Correspondence* (K0217); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Kansas City].

Donor Information: The papers were transferred to the University of Missouri by the University of Missouri-Kansas City, General Library on October 24, 1980 (Accession No. KA0054).

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Historical Note:

Shalor Winchell Eldridge was born in West Springfield, Massachusetts, on August 29, 1816. The New England Emigrant Aid Company hired Eldridge to come to Kansas City in 1855 to operate the American Hotel, also known as the Gillis House. The hotel acted as the headquarters for immigrants brought to the Kansas Territory. As tensions heightened within the city over the slavery question and opposition to the Emigrant Aid Company developed, Eldridge bought the hotel and was able, for a time, to maintain better relations with the community. In 1856, Eldridge leased the newly constructed Free State Hotel in Lawrence, Kansas, from the Emigrant Aid Company and established the first stage lines from Kansas City to Lawrence, Topeka, Leavenworth, and other towns in Kansas.

In May 1856, a mob erupted over the issue of slavery, and the Free State Hotel was destroyed by fire. The Emigrant Aid Company decided not to rebuild the hotel. Eldridge bought the site and constructed the Eldridge House, sometimes still called the Free State Hotel. At the outbreak of war, Eldridge enlisted in the 2nd Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was not present when William Clark Quantrill and his men attacked and burned Lawrence on August 21, 1863. Again, the Free State Hotel was destroyed, and Eldridge sought reparations from the city, state, and federal governments to assist him in rebuilding. There is no indication he received any federal or state aid, however, the city of Lawrence raised \$15,000 to help replace the structure.

After the war, Eldridge returned to Lawrence and became a building contractor. He rebuilt the Eldridge House, along with hotels and buildings in other cities. Eldridge died on April 5, 1899.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into a single folder and the items in the folder have been arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection consists of six letters related to Eldridge's petitions for aid to rebuild his hotel after it was destroyed during Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence, Kansas, in August 1863. The letters record support from a number of prominent Kansas men.

f. 1 Correspondence, 1863

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