

MS 0680
REAVIS, JAMES ADDISON, 1843-1914
PAPERS, 1885, 1909-1911

DESCRIPTION

James Addison Reavis gained fame as the “Baron of Arizona” in a land fraud escapade of the late 19th century. He served a short term in a New Mexico Prison and returned to Arizona under the alias of J. A. Ashley-Reavis. The letters in this collection promote the Gila River Water Company of Arizona, of which Reavis was president. A proposition to build a dam on the San Carlos Indian Reservation was exposed as another fraudulent scheme by Albert T. Colton, water commissioner of Safford, A.T. The collection includes letters from Reavis to a Judge D. C. Stevens concerning the plan for the dam and several letters signed by Reavis announcing a meeting of the stockholders of the Gila River Water Company of Arizona between 1909-1911. There is one photographic copy of a handwritten letter signed by Reavis in 1885 organizing the joint stock company for the Gila River Water Company.

1 Box, .25 linear feet

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Addison Reavis was born in Missouri in 1843 and worked as a salesman and invested in real estate. He arrived in Arizona in 1882 and filed claim on more than twelve million acres of land in Arizona and New Mexico based on altered Spanish documents. The fraudulent land claim and resulting court cases are detailed in Donald M. Powell’s book *The Peralta Land Grant: James Addison Reavis and the Barony of Arizona*.

ACQUISITION

Provenance is unknown.

ACCESS

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PROCESSING

The collection was processed by Riva Dean in November 1997.