



Samuel Medary, “Old Wheel-Horse of Democracy”

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

Samuel Medary (1801-1864) was a newspaper publisher, politician and spokesperson for the Democratic Party in Ohio. He moved to Batavia, Ohio, in 1825 and started his first newspaper, the Democratic Ohio Sun, three years later. After a short career in the Ohio General Assembly during the 1830s, first as a Representative and then as a Senator, Medary returned to the newspaper business and edited the Columbus Ohio Statesman from 1838 to 1857. He remained active in politics during this time, participating in the 1844 and 1856 Democratic National Conventions and using his paper to endorse Democratic candidates and policies. President Buchanan appointed him Territorial Governor of Minnesota in 1857 and Territorial Governor of Kansas in 1858. He returned to Columbus in 1860 where he started the Crisis, a Peace Democrat (Copperhead) newspaper comprised entirely of editorials critical of President Abraham Lincoln, the Republican Party and the Civil War. His views were unpopular and led to a mob destroying his newspaper office in 1863. The next year, he was charged with conspiracy against the United States government. He died before the case went to trial and is buried in Greenlawn Cemetery in Columbus.

Important Dates

- February 25, 1801: Samuel Medary is born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- 1825: Medary moves to Bethel, a village in Clermont County, Ohio.
- 1828: Medary establishes the Ohio Sun, a Democratic newspaper, in Batavia, Ohio.
- 1834: Medary serves in the Ohio House of Representatives.
- 1836-1838: Medary serves in the Ohio Senate.
- 1838-1857: Medary edits the Ohio Statesman (formerly the Western Hemisphere) in Columbus.
- April 23, 1857 – May 24, 1858: Medary serves as 3rd Territorial Governor of Minnesota.
- December 1858 – December 1860: Medary serves as 6th Territorial Governor of Kansas.
- 1860: Medary returns to Columbus and establishes the Crisis, a Democratic newspaper.
- March 5, 1863: Medary’s newspaper office is destroyed by a mob of soldiers from Camp Chase.
- May 20, 1864: Medary is arrested for conspiracy against the federal government.
- November 7, 1864: Medary dies in Columbus, Ohio, before being tried for treason.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try combining “Samuel Medary” or “Medary” with the following terms as an “all” word search, in proximity or as phrases: Crisis, Columbus, colonel, governor, arrest, wheel horse, Buchanan, Democrat.
- Limit your search by date to find information about specific events.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- [“War” Holmes County Republican](#) (Millersburg, OH), October 24, 1861, Image 3, col. 1.
- [“Sam Medary Doing the Pathetic” Emporia News](#) (Emporia, KS), April 11, 1863, Image 1, col. 3.
- [“Medary’s Crisis” Dayton Daily Empire](#) (Dayton, OH), November 20, 1863, Image 2, col. 2.
- [“Arrest of Mr. Medary” Daily Ohio Statesman](#) (Columbus, OH), May 21, 1864, Image 2, col. 1.
- [“Death of Col. Sam. Medary” M’arthur Democrat](#) (McArthur, OH), November 10, 1864, Image 2, col. 2.
- [“Samuel Medary—1857-1858” New Ulm Review](#) (New Ulm, MN), September 1, 1909, Image 8, col. 1.