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## River City Blues: The Quest for Municipal Home Rule & Economic Security in St. Louis

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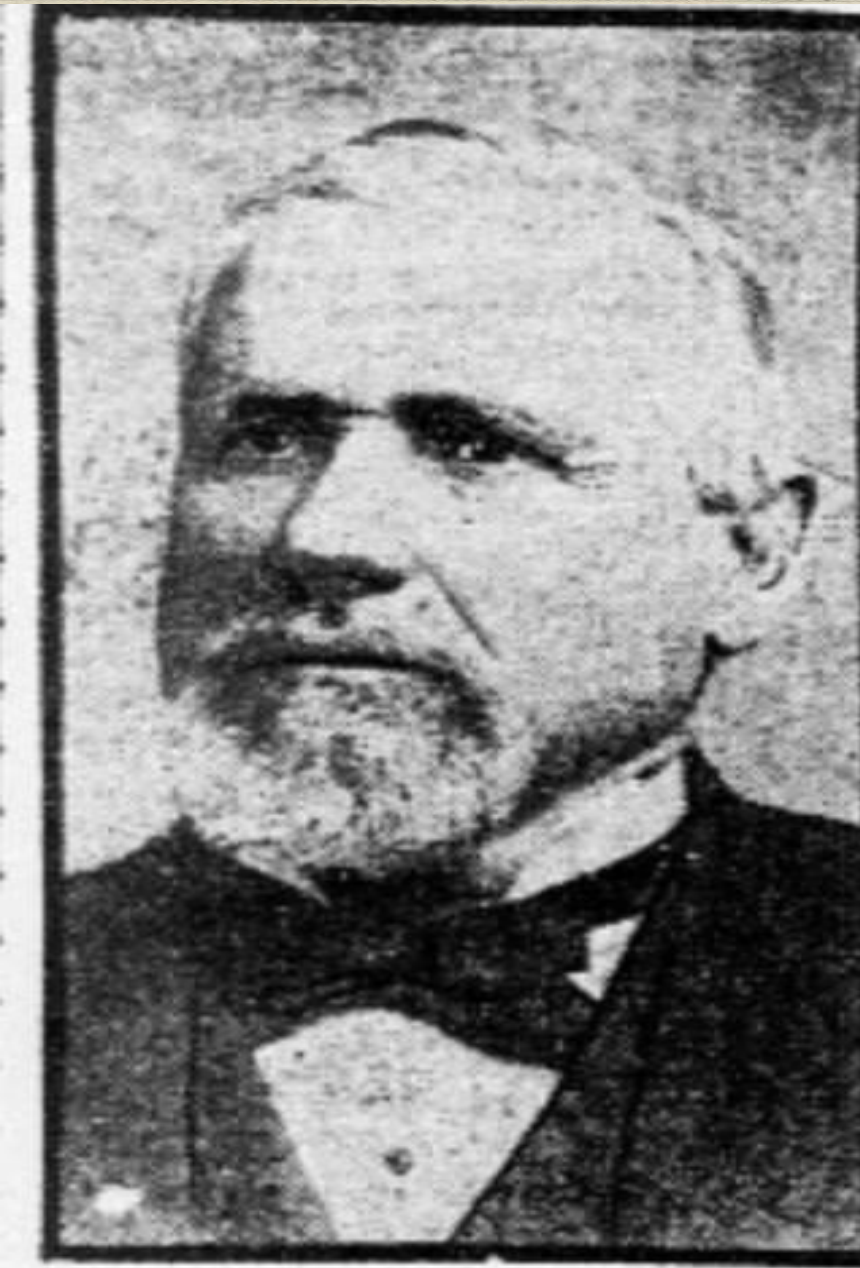
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# River City Blues: The Quest for Municipal Home Rule & Economic Security in St. Louis

By: Josef Wibbenmeyer



CHAUNCEY F. SHULTZ



Col. "Ed" Butler

- City had been reliant on MO State approval of budget items in the time prior to the split
  - Tax changes, even bond issues had to go through the MO legislature as a bill as if it were a law of statewide pertinence
  - Legislators usually did what the St. Louis lobby wanted, but there was always the possibility the State of Missouri could outright reject the wishes of St. Louis or its lobby

- City was constantly needing more money to improve & expand infrastructure of all kinds, needed to move quickly due to city's sustained growth
  - Need for infrastructure made debt & which was worsened by the economic downturn that was the Panic of 1873
  - People believed change was needed, & had a belief growth would not stop

- City & County relations always tenuous
  - Corruption issues made this worse such as the vast discrepancy in pay for County officials over City officials like the mayor
  - Numerous funds known to go fund projects that largely helped non-City residents in the County.
  - Tensions flared up when MO give County tax apportionment auth over City
  - Recount & vote fraud in Scheme & Charter for separation polling showcased the corruption not only in the County, but the City too, in wards under men like Edward Butler

❖ The results of the 1<sup>st</sup> vote in 1876 showed the separation measure failing

- Some in City felt removal of Jefferson City & County influence needed for achieving civic & financial goals, thus preserving future growth – City needed the ability to make its decisions independent of its state's government, AKA: Home Rule
- Opponents stood to lose their position or a large tax base that supported them, some favored options other than separation (such as a merger of City & County)
  - County officials stood to lose their position as their office would no longer exist
  - Some political bosses like Ed Butler stood to have reduced influence as City Charter's new wards reduced the zones he'd have under his thumb



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ST. LOUIS COURT HOUSE. Built 1839-1861.  
Replacing Old Brick Court House. Built 1826-1830.

