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Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990

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72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990
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INTRODUCTION

Personal and professional correspondence, organizational newsletters, legal documents, and other items collected by David J. "Papa Joe" Saia during his tenure as Crawford County Commissioner and chairman of the Crawford County Democratic Party.

DONOR INFORMATION

The David Joseph Saia Papers were donated to Pittsburg State University by Mr. Saia on 28 July 1975. Materials in the collection dated after 1975 were compiled by curator Eugene DeGruson.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David Joseph "Papa Joe" Saia was a long-time resident of Frontenac, Kansas and one of the most prominent figures in the Kansas Democratic Party. Saia was born on 2 May 1904 in Chicopee, Kansas and began working in the coal fields of Crawford County at age thirteen. His political career began at the same time as a member of the United Mine Workers "pit committee," a group which carried grievances to the pit bosses in the mines. After the mining industry decline of the 1920s and working railroad jobs in Kansas City, Saia returned to Frontenac where he became involved with the Crawford County Democratic Party. Although Saia claimed to have never sought a political office, once there, he held positions of significant political power both within the Democratic Party, where he eventually became permanent chairman of the Crawford County Democrat Central Committee, and in the county itself, where he became the longest-tenured County Commissioner in the state of Kansas, serving from 1938 to 1988. He died on 10 June 1990 at the age of 86.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The David Saia Papers contains correspondence, newspaper clippings, Crawford County Democrat Central Committee records and communications, Crawford County Commission records and communications, newsletters, and ephemera spanning the political career of David Saia from 1938 to 1988. The collection is divided into the following ten series: **Newspaper Clippings; Miscellaneous Correspondence; Politics and Business Issues; Highway, Road and Bridge Projects; Kansas Democratic State Committee; Crawford County Democrat Central Committee; Crawford County Commission; Kansas Young Democrat Club; South East Kansas Planning and Economic Development Committees; City of Pittsburg; Social, Economic and Political Conventions; John F. Kennedy; Campaign Memorabilia; and Photographs**

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

The **Newspaper Clippings** series contains articles related to the life and the career of Saia from 1938 to 1975. It also includes articles on Saia's retirement and his obituaries.

The **Miscellaneous Correspondence** series contains personal letters to and from Joe Saia, thank you notes, invitations to events, requests for assistance on specific matters, and blank applications for State of Kansas jobs.

72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990

2

The **Politics and Business Issues** series contains copies of the Congressional Record, the Capitol Political Report, copies of House and Senate bills, grant approval letters, handwritten notes, newsletters from organizations, event invitations, maps, incorporation papers for Saia Explosives, property deed, Clarence Prettyman black lung benefit hearing, Ervin Herd clemency correspondence, a proposal to reopen Jayhawk fertilizer plant, and assisted care homes abuse investigations.

The **Highway, Road and Bridge Projects** series contains US 69 Highway freeway conversion correspondence, a traffic light study for the US 69-Girl Scout Road intersection at Frontenac Junction, US 69 road improvements from Crestline to Crawford County Line, miscellaneous state highway commission correspondence, Rouse Street improvement, and overpass project correspondence.

The **Kansas Democratic State Committee** series contains general correspondence, directives, and informational memos.

The **Crawford County Democrat Central Committee** series contains 1970 Democrat Election board recommendations, an August 1972 Primary Election Board worker roster, blank financial reporting forms, Challenge of 1970 committee meeting election naming Joe Saia permanent chairman, blank committee stationery, Kansas Governmental Ethics Committee instructional memos, rules for selecting convention delegates along with candidate resumes and other correspondence, Vernon Grassie misuse of campaign funds investigation correspondence, 1974 Democratic Party election correspondence, vote proxy sheets for a 14 August 1970 Committee meeting, list of Kansas Democratic party officers by county from 1972-1974, 1972 Democratic primary precinct committee persons, 1962 and 1970 precinct election totals, Central Committee financial reports and documents from 1968-1972, miscellaneous correspondence, Governor Robert Docking appointment of Robert Blythe to Civil Service Commission, and newspaper campaign ads for Vernon Grassie.

The **Crawford County Commission** series contains reimbursement memos from the Kansas Highway Safety Coordinator's office to the Crawford County Sheriff, Crawford County Reappraisal Process and Controversy 1965 to 1973, 1960 Brief on Budget Violations by Crawford County Commission, request from the City of Cherokee for street work, three issuances of opinion by the Kansas Attorney General's office, US District Court papers for case W-4052 on reapportionment of voting districts, juvenile detention facility discussions, and Court of Justice complex discussions.

The **Kansas Young Democrat Club** series contains letters and correspondence to and from the Kansas Young Democrat Club.

The **South East Kansas Planning and Economic Development Committees** series contains letters, correspondence, and meeting minutes for the Southeast Kansas Community Action Program, Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission, Southeast Kansas Resource

72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990 3

Conservation and Development Project, Southeast Kansas Area Agency on Aging, and the National Association of Counties Health Steering Committee.

The **City of Pittsburg** series contains miscellaneous memoranda from the City of Pittsburg offices and a letter from Marty Stricklan to Governor Robert Docking asking for Joe Saia to be appointed Highway Commissioner.

The **Social, Economic, and Political Conventions** series contains handouts and programs from Democratic National Conventions in 1960, 1964, and 1972; Fraternal Order of Eagles programs from 1964 and 1972; and the 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 56th Annual Kansas Official Council Programs.

The **John F. Kennedy** series contains a copy of Lyndon Baines Johnson's speech to a Joint Session of Congress on 27 November 1963 and a 2 December 1963 commemorative issue of *The Washington World*.

The **Campaign Memorabilia** series contains flyers, business cards, bumper stickers, and Democratic Party election propaganda, mostly undated.

The **Photographs** series contains photographs of Congressman Denver D. Hargis, David J. Saia, Karen J. Smith, Dennis Daniels, and seven unidentified persons.

FOLDER LIST

Newspaper Clippings

- f. 1 1938-1941
- f. 2 1953-1954, 1957-1959
- f. 3 1960-1969
- f. 4 1970
- f. 5 1971
- f. 6 1972
- f. 7 1973-1975
- f. 8 Undated
- f. 9 9 June 1988 Parsons Sun on Joe Saia retirement from public office
- f. 10 Obituaries for David J. Saia

Miscellaneous Correspondence

- f. 11 Miscellaneous letters, invitations, requests for assistance

- f. 12 Invitations to Governor Robert Docking and responses accepting or declining
- f. 13 Blank State of Kansas job applications

72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990

4

Politics and Business Issues

- f. 14 Congressional Record, 31 Jan. 1973, Kansas Gov't Journal, March, 1971
- f. 15 Capitol Political Report, 15 January and 20 April, 1973
- f. 16 Copies of HB 1141 and SB 151
- f. 17 Improving Police Traffic Services Grant Approval letters
- f. 18 J. Robert Dowd to Joe Saia and Robert Docking re: Hunter safety
- f. 19 Kansas Air Pollution Emission Control Regulations
- f. 20 Miscellaneous Organizational Newsletters
- f. 21 Black Lung Benefit hearing for Clarence B. Prettyman
- f. 22 Deed for property owned by Charles and Ellen Goodwin and promissory note
- f. 23 1972 Clay County Bridge Reconstruction Program
- f. 24 Receipts, billing statements, vouchers, other ephemera
- f. 25 Maps
- f. 26 Saia Explosives Incorporation Papers
- f. 27 Joe Saia handwritten notes and ephemera
- f. 28 Miscellaneous Event Invitations
- f. 29 The "Journalism Code of Ethics" and "Functions of a Newspaper"
- f. 30 Claim procedures and equipment rates under Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1970
- f. 31 Fiscal Year 1974 Office of Economic Opportunity Budget Outline and changes
- f. 32 Proposals for Crawford County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs
- f. 33 Transfer of Social Welfare functions to State and subsequent Policy memoranda
- f. 34 Complaints to Kansas Department of Health re: Abuses at Assisted Care Homes
- f. 35 Affidavit by Philip Saia re: Richards Subdivision
- f. 36 Statement by Governor Robert Docking on Shawnee County indictments
- f. 37 Proposal to reopen Jayhawk fertilizer plant
- f. 38 Ervin Herd Clemency Case
- f. 39 Wheat State Bank Application, Johnson County
- f. 40 L. E. Potter complaint to Kansas Department of Health about Landfill

Highway, Road and Bridge Projects

- f. 41 Traffic Light Study at US 69-Girl Scout Road Junction Frontenac
- f. 42 Road Construction supply list and budget data
- f. 43 US 69 Highway improvements Crestline to Crawford County Line
- f. 44 US 69 Freeway Project Correspondence
- f. 45 State Highway Commission Miscellaneous Correspondence
- f. 46 Rouse Street Improvements and Overpass Project

Kansas Democratic State Committee

f. 47 General Correspondence 1970 to 1974

72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990

5

Crawford County Democrat Central Committee

- f. 48 Democrat Election Board Recommendations-Nov. 1970 general election
- f. 49 Democrat Election Board Workers, August 1972 Primary election
- f. 50 Blank Financial Reporting Forms
- f. 51 Challenge to Election of Joe Saia as Committee Chairman on 14 August 1970
- f. 52 Crawford County Democrat Central Committee Blank Letterhead
- f. 53 Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission instructions to Committees
- f. 54 Committee Delegate Selection Rules, Resumes, correspondence
- f. 55 Vern Grassie investigation of Joe Saia on misuse of Campaign Funds
- f. 56 Democratic Party Election Correspondence and Saia Election statements
- f. 57 Vote Proxies for 14 August 1970 Central Committee Meeting
- f. 58 Kansas Democratic Party Officers by County, 1972 to 1974
- f. 59 Precinct Committeepersons, 1972 Democratic Primary
- f. 60 Precinct Election Totals 1962, 1970
- f. 61 Financial Documents and Annual Reports, 1968-1972
- f. 62 Miscellaneous Central Committee Correspondence
- f. 63 Governor Docking appointment of Robert Blythe to Civil Service Commission
- f. 64 Vernon Grassie Campaign ads for County Attorney election

Crawford County Commission

- f. 65 Kansas Highway Safety Coordinator's Office Reimbursement to Crawford County Sheriff
- f. 66 Crawford County Property Tax Reappraisal Controversy 1965 to 1973
- f. 67 Brief on Budget Violations by Crawford County Commissioners in 1960
- f. 68 City of Cherokee Letter to Crawford County Commission re: Road/Drainage work
- f. 69 Grant Application to study remodeling of Crawford County Sheriff's Office/Jail
- f. 70 Bourbon or Crawford County Regional Law Enforcement Center planning
- f. 71 Kansas Attorney General opinion 73-309: Lease vs. Conditional Purchase
- f. 72 Kansas Public Employment Program memos and investigation by Grassie
- f. 73 Crawford County Commission Budget Reports, Employment Rosters, memos
- f. 74 Crawford County Commission Miscellaneous Business and memos
- f. 75 Vernon Grassie v Crawford County Commission re: Reimbursement of expenses
- f. 76 Kansas Attorney General opinion 74-141: limits on county home rule powers
- f. 77 US District Court W-4052 Simone/Kelly v Crawford County Commission re: reapportionment
- f. 78 Crawford/Cherokee County cooperative mental health services proposal 1974
- f. 79 Kansas Attorney General opinion 70-19-7: City Reimbursement of Ambulance
- f. 80 Joe Saia County Commission correspondence
- f. 81 Kansas Attorney General ruling on location of Crawford County Attorney's Office

- f. 82 Crawford County Attorney opinion on Publication of Monthly Expenditures
- f. 83 Kansas Attorney General opinion 74-175: Qualifications for Judge of City Court
- f. 84 Court of Justice Complex correspondence
- f. 85 Juvenile Detention Facility correspondence
- 72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990 6

Kansas Young Democrat club

- f. 86 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1959, 1973

South East Kansas Planning and Economic Development Committees

- f. 87 Southeast Kansas Community Action Program (SEK-CAP) newsletters, 1973 to 1974
- f. 88 Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission newsletters, meeting minutes 1973 to 1974
- f. 89 Southeast Kansas Resource Conservation and Development Project newsletters 18 February 1974 to 15 October 1974
- f. 90 Southeast Kansas Area Agency on Aging program overview 30 March 1973
- f. 91 National Association of Counties Health Steering Committee correspondence 5 February to 13 July 1973

City of Pittsburg

- f. 92 Miscellaneous memoranda, 1966 and 1973
- f. 93 Marty Stricklan to Governor Docking re: Saia as Fourth District Highway Commissioner 12 January 1973

Social, Economic, and Political Conventions

- f. 94 1972 Democratic National Convention guides, rosters, agenda
- f. 95 1964 Democratic National Convention visitor's guide, map
- f. 96 1960 Democratic National Convention guides, rosters, agenda
- f. 97 1964 Fraternal Order of Eagles Kansas Aerie convention program
- f. 98 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 56th Annual Kansas Official Council Programs

John F. Kennedy Memorials

- f. 99 Lyndon B. Johnson address to joint session of Congress, 27 November 1963
- f. 100 2 December 1963 commemorative issue of *The Washington World*

Campaign Memorabilia

- f. 101 Miscellaneous folders, stickers, cards and handouts for Democrat candidates, circa 1964-1974

Photographs

- f. 102 Photograph of U.S. Representative Denver David Hargis, Coffeyville, KS
 f. 103 Photographs of David J. Saia, Dennis Daniels, Karen J. Smith, and seven others

72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990

7

INDEX ENTRIES

69 Highway Association of Kansas	f. 44, 45
Allegrucci, Donald	f. 51
Allison, W. E.	f. 46
Armstrong, Paul	f. 43, 44
AuBuchon, James	f. 51
Baden, Steve	f. 6, 47
Benage, C. H.	f. 11, 78
Bird, John T.	f. 56
Bitner, Robert	f. 6
Blunk, Robert	f. 11
Blythe, Donald	f. 6, 11, 63
Bradley, Forest	f. 11
Brennan, Charles	f. 47
Brueck, Karl	f. 4, 41, 43, 44, 47
Brunetti, Pauline	f. 51
Cameron, John	f. 47
Coonrod, Guy	f. 3-7, 51
Cornish, Dudley T.	f. 3, 11
Crawford County (Kan.) – History	f. 1-103
Crawford County (Kan.) – Politics and Government	f. 1-103
Crawford County (Kan.) – Politics and Government – Committees	f. 87-91
Crowley, Rex	f. 43
Davied, Minnie	f. 51
DeMarco, Patrick	f. 11
Democratic Party – Kansas	f. 47, 58-60, 86, 101
Democratic Party – Kansas – Crawford County	f. 57-62, 64, 101
Democratic Party – Fifth District	f. 3, 47, 58-60, 101
Democratic Party (Kansas) State	f. 47, 103
Democratic Party. National Convention, Los Angeles, 1960	f. 96
Democratic Party. National Convention, Atlantic City, 1964	f. 3, 95
Democratic Party. National Convention, Miami, 1972	f. 94
Deutsch, Henry	f. 38
Diskin, Frances	f. 51
Docking, George	f. 2, 11
Docking, Robert	f. 3-9, 11, 12, 36, 38, 45, 63
Docking, Dick	f. 36
Dowd, J. Barney	f. 18
Dowd, Matthew	f. 38

Dreiling, Norbert	f. 3, 5, 6, 11, 47
Dunnick, Frankie	f. 3-5, 11
Dwyer, Ron	f. 4, 5
Franklin, Benjamin E.	f. 38
72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990	

INDEX ENTRIES continued

Fry, Joe	f. 5, 6, 65
Gaines, Frank	f. 56
Gariglietti, John	f. 6-8
Gendusa, Joe	f. 4, 6, 8
Gillard, Ed	f. 3-8
Gilligan, Dennis	f. 86
Gilmore, Frank	f. 44
Goodwin, Charles	f. 22
Grassie, Vernon	f. 3-8, 55, 64, 81, 82
Gray, A. J.	f. 45
Hale, Neil	f. 11
Hargis, Denver D.	f. 2, 8, 102
Harney, Ted	f. 11
Herd, Ervin	f. 38
Herd, William	f. 38
Highway – Kansas – U.S. 160	f. 41, 44
Highway – Kansas – U.S. 69	f. 41, 44
Highway Planning – Kansas – History	f. 41, 44
Hill, Delmas	f. 11
Hinnegan, F. J.	f. 38
Hutchins, Harold	f. 4-8, 55
Jackson, Henry	f. 10, 47
Johnson, Frank	f. 36
Johnson, George	f. 4
Jones, Keeth	f. 4, 6-8, 37
Jones, Robert	f. 11
Kansas. State Highway Commission	f. 41, 44, 45
Koontz, G. M.	f. 44-46
Loffswold, Richard	f. 4, 6, 7, 85
Loux, Richard C. “Pete”	f. 56
Loy, Kenneth	f. 11
Loy, Mike	f. 55
MacPhail, Donald	f. 3
Malloy, Richard	f. 11
Masterson, Gene	f. 4, 6-8
McCurdy, Mike	f. 7, 55
McNally, Ed	f. 11
McNeal, John	f. 46

Menghini, Charles	f. 4, 7, 51
Millard, Velma	f. 51
Miller, Vern	f. 5, 6, 11, 55, 71, 76, 79, 81, 83
Montgomery, John	f. 4, 41, 45, 56
72 Saia, David Joseph (1904-1990), Papers, 1938-1990	9

INDEX ENTRIES continued

Murry, Pete	f. 4-8
Murry, Thomas	f. 6
Musser, Donald	f. 4, 6-8
Nemecek, Vivian	f. 51
Niggeman, Bill	f. 4, 5, 46
Owsley, Perry	f. 4, 5
Pendergraft, Marvin	f. 11
Pingry, Thomasf	. 11
Potter, L. E.	f. 40
Prettyman, Clarence B.	f. 21
Roy, Bill	f. 11, 56
Saar, Ted	f. 3, 6, 11, 44
Saffels, Dale	f. 8, 11, 37
Saia, David Joseph "Papa Joe"	f. 1-103
Saia, Phil	f. 4
Saia, Olga	f. 6, 11
Schneider, Curt	f. 56
Schultz, Reynolds	f. 6
Simoncic, Rudolph	f. 46
Simoncic, Tony	f. 56
Skubitz, Joe	f. 5, 6, 21
Spigarelli, Fred	f. 4, 7
Strauss, Robert	f. 47
Strukel, Bill	f. 11
Taylor, John M., II	f. 6
Theis, Frank	f. 3, 11