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D. J. "JOE" SAIA

THE PADRONE OF CRAWFORD COUNTY POLITICS

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

by

Steven K. Baden

APPROVED:

Thesis Adviser

Committee Member

Committee Member

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KANSAS STATE COLLEGE OF PITTSBURG

Pittsburg, Kansas

July, 1975

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ABSTRACT

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commissioner has spent much of his time since taking office in 1939 listening and responding to the many requests from his constituents. This thesis examines D. J. Sals's career from the time he entered the political scene and looks into accomplishments during the many years he has served in office. It also reviews the economic and social environment which acted as a catalyst for his involvement in politics. By studying the career of this Crawford County politician, some insight can be gained into why politics has meant so much to American ethnic groups.

ABSTRACT

D. J. "Joe" Saia, of Frontenac, Kansas, has been county commissioner and the leader of the Democratic Party in Crawford County, Kansas, for the past three decades. An unemployed coal miner with an eighth-grade education, the county commissioner from Frontenac came from the bottom of the social pyramid. He was able, through his adaptability, tenacity, basic understanding of human nature, and undying concern for those in need, to fight his way to the position of chairman of the Crawford County Board of Commissioners and the leader of a successful political organization.

The road to power was not an easy path, and Joe Saia collected his scars in the rough-and-tumble world of grass-roots politics. The scar tissue accumulated from his political bouts did not harden him to the needs of those who came to him for assistance. The Crawford County commissioner has spent much of his time since taking office in 1939 listening and responding to the many requests from his constituents.

This thesis examines D. J. Saia's career from the time he entered the political scene and looks into accomplishments during the many years he has served in office. It also reviews the economic and social environment which acted as a catalyst for his involvement in politics. By studying the career of this Crawford County politician, some insight can be gained into why politics has meant so much to American ethnic groups.

INTRODUCTION

Politics in Crawford County has been influenced by the large number of eastern and southern European immigrants who migrated into the county to work in the coal mines. The Italian immigrants, not knowing the English language and unfamiliar with the ways of the new land, depended upon a man who lived in America and could speak English and Italian, the "padrone". The padrone, usually appointed by the Italian consul, directed the immigrants to their jobs and found them housing. The immigrants, after settling in the county, continued to depend upon the padrone to represent them in disputes with their employers, to lend them money when unforeseen circumstances occurred, and generally to look after their interests.

The residents of the coal fields of Crawford County often depended upon a strong man to represent them in politics after the padrone system vanished. The immigrants in the county, largely from Austria and Italy, had been farm workers before they migrated to the United States. They brought from their small villages the concept that politics was a personal concern. In Italy the function of government was vested in a powerful local ruler called the "padrone", a term carried over to America by the immigrants. The peasants of the village depended upon this patriarch to provide the services they needed. The immigrants in America soon looked to their party leaders in the same fashion.

Joe Saia since the 1930's has been a padrone to the residents of the second commission district of Crawford County. He was trusted because he shared many of their experiences and could understand their problems and concerns. It was only natural that when someone had a problem, such as needing employment or assistance in filing claims for

social security benefits, he would immediately call the county commissioner from Frontenac. Saia, no matter when called, listened to the caller's problem and tried to help; he usually could help because of his office and stature in the Democratic Party. This is why his constituents have re-elected him nine times and why, under his leadership, the Democratic Party developed into an efficient political machine.

The political system of Crawford County is, perhaps, the most unique in the state of Kansas. The county's chief industry, coal mining, was sharply curtailed in the 1930's creating large numbers of unemployed and underemployed laborers. Economically displaced workers were so numerous and so heavily dependent on governmental assistance that they changed the total political perspective of the county, developing what may be accurately described as the "politics of relief." To understand this unusual political development, it is necessary to consider the economic and political history of Crawford County.

Crawford County, located in southeastern Kansas and bordering on the state of Missouri, had a population of 37,330 in 1970. The population is concentrated in two of its nine townships, the southeastern townships of Baker and Washington. Pittsburg, the largest urban area, has a population of 20,171 and is located in Baker Township. Washington Township's largest concentrations of population are the cities of Arma, with a population of 1,368, and Frontenac with 2,223 inhabitants. These two townships contain sixty-five per cent of the population of Crawford County. The only other concentration of population in the county is the city of Girard, the county seat, with a population of 2,391. The rest of the county is composed of farm land with a few farm oriented hamlets in each township.

It was in Washington Township where most of the mining camps were located. The coal field of Crawford County cuts diagonally from the southwest to the northeast across the county from Cherokee

CHAPTER I

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CRAWFORD COUNTY

The political system of Crawford County is, perhaps, the most unique in the state of Kansas. The county's chief industry, coal mining, was sharply curtailed in the 1930's creating large numbers of unemployed and underemployed laborers. Economically displaced workers were so numerous and so heavily dependent on governmental assistance that they changed the total political perspective of the county, developing what may be accurately described as the "politics of relief." To understand this unusual political development, it is necessary to consider the economic and political history of Crawford County.

Crawford County, located in southeastern Kansas and bordering on the state of Missouri, had a population of 37,850 in 1970. The population is concentrated in two of its nine townships, the southeastern townships of Baker and Washington. Pittsburg, the largest urban area, has a population of 20,171 and is located in Baker Township. Washington Township's largest concentrations of population are the cities of Arma, with a population of 1,348, and Frontenac with 2,223 inhabitants. These two townships contain sixty-five per cent of the population of Crawford County. The only other concentration of population in the county is the city of Girard, the county seat, with a population of 2,591. The rest of the county is composed of farm¹ land with a few farm oriented hamlets in each township.

It was in Washington Township where most of the mining camps² were located. The coal field of Crawford County cuts diagonally from the southwest to the northeast across the county from Cherokee

County to Arcadia and then slopes eastward into Missouri. Throughout the area there are reminders of bygone coal days; graded mounds of subsoil, old rusting abandoned coal cars, and an occasional dilapidated miner's house or company store. A large ethnic population is evidenced by the names of some of the businesses, such as Naccarato's grocery in Capaldo and Mama Frasco's restaurant in Frontenac, and by social events such as the bocce tournaments each year at the Arma Homecoming and polka dancing every Friday night at Barto's Idle Hour. The heavy percentage of eastern and southern European stock in this area of Crawford County helped cause state politicians to refer to Southeast Kansas as "the Balkans." The 1930 census indicated that forty-eight per cent of the foreign stock in Crawford County resided in Washington Township.

3

The usual image of Kansas—one of wheat fields and farmers—is not entirely accurate. Kansas, in fact, ranked third in the United States in total coal production in 1898 according to the United Mine Worker's Journal, and the Dillingham Commission on Immigration in Industries went so far as to label the coal miners in Kansas in 1911 as the "stronghold of unionism" in the southwestern part of the United States. Furthermore, eighty-five per cent of the coal production in Kansas came from the Cherokee-Crawford coal fields.

5

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Before the Eastern railroad companies appeared and a mining industry developed, Crawford County had indeed fitted the usual Kansas image. It was largely a prairie with a small amount of timber flourishing along the banks of the county's streams. The county was

Joplin area could turn the mining of coal into a profitable

sparsely inhabited by Osage Indians whose members continued to reside in the county until 1907 when they were removed to a reservation in Oklahoma.⁷ 1877, the first underground mine in the county was sunk

The first white settlers staked claims in the early 1850's in the northeastern area, now Lincoln Township. Originally, Crawford, Cherokee, and a part of Bourbon County were a single unit named McGhee County. In 1867 the area had grown sufficiently that it was subdivided, and on February 13, 1867, Crawford County was formed.⁸

The thinly settled area received a boost when the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Gulf Railroad laid tracks through Crawford County in order to connect Fort Scott and Baxter Springs. The railroad soon proved to be an important factor in the county's economic growth, but not all of the residents of the area welcomed its coming. Much of the land purchased by the railroad had been staked out by the early settlers, and they were not inclined to give up their land.¹² The settlers soon organized and tried to forestall the progress of the railroad by harassing surveyors and agents employed by the railroad. The situation became uncontrollable, and a detachment of U.S. troops were sent to restore the peace and insure the railroad's construction.⁹ This would not be the last time that troops would be sent into the county to quell civil strife. By 1888 a boom had

Coal was discovered early in Crawford County's history, but its commercial value was not realized until the 1870's. It was during that decade that local entrepreneurs began to realize that the demand for cheap fuels by the lead and zinc smelters in the Joplin area could turn the mining of coal into a profitable

business. The biggest impetus to the development of coal mining was the demand for fuel caused by the growth of railroads in Southeast Kansas. In 1877, the first underground mine in the county was sunk in Pittsburg near where Second and Pine Streets intersect. 10

The demands for coal increased attracting interest of outsiders to the coal fields. The first Eastern railroad to become involved in the Crawford County coal fields was Jay Gould's Missouri-Pacific. The Missouri-Pacific laid its tracks through Crawford County in 1885 and soon began buying coal lands. Mining operations were begun immediately by the Western Coal and Mining Company, also controlled by the Gould interests. 11

The same year that the Western Coal and Mining Company began operations, the Santa Fe railway began purchasing coal lands and setting up company houses in the area which was to become Frontenac. 12 Not wanting to be left behind, the Frisco railway invested in coal land and established the Kansas Texas Coal Company. Heavy investments by the Eastern interests soon forced the small independent mining companies to withdraw. The coal fields became controlled by the "Big Four"; the Western Coal and Mining Company, the Kansas Texas Coal Company, the Central Coal and Coke Company, and the Southwestern Coal and Improvement Company. By 1886 a boom had developed in the county's coal district. The increased demand for coal caused a desperate need for miners. Since most of the native residents did not want to work in the mines, outside sources of labor were needed. 15

percentage of these "new immigrants" were Italians who migrated to Crawford County between 1895 and 1915. 18

The first influx of miners from outside of Kansas were of English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh stock from the Pennsylvania coal fields. A large number of these Pennsylvania miners came to Kansas after they had lost their jobs because of their union activities in the East. This migration of union activists planted the seeds of unionism which flourished in the county. The miners had a sense of workers' solidarity from the start. Others came because they were displaced by the flood of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe which had engulfed the Eastern United States' coal fields with cheap labor. This oft repeated cycle partially explains the difficulties in organizing labor during the late nineteenth century. Every time a group would attempt to organize, it would be replaced by the newest immigrants who possessed little knowledge of the economic system and were willing to work for lower wages. This situation eventually affected Crawford County, for with the influx of the new immigrants, the English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh miners moved on to Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico.

The increased supply of labor helped coal mining become Crawford County's major economic activity. New mines were sunk, but still the demand for coal was not satisfied. Coal operators sought foreign labor to work in the mines, prompting eastern and southern Europeans to migrate to Crawford County. Thus the "new immigrants" ultimately composed three quarters of the miners in Kansas. A large percentage of these "new immigrants" were Italians who migrated to Crawford County between 1895 and 1915.

This migration into Crawford County coincided with the late nineteenth century exodus of seven million Italians to the United States.¹⁹ The Italian migration was caused by the depleted soil and the loss of Italy's two chief foreign markets. In the late 1880's the French government imposed high tariffs on Italian wines, which meant that they could no longer compete with French wines. Furthermore, the United States developed her own citrus fruit industry,²⁰ decreasing the demand for Italian lemons and oranges.

The rapidly deteriorating economic situation in Italy caused thousands of Italians to come to America. So many Italians left Italy for America that at the turn of the Nineteenth Century the mayor of an Italian town greeted an honored visitor on behalf of the town's eight thousand citizens, "three thousand of whom are in America and the other five thousand preparing to follow them."²¹ The bulk of the Italian immigration to America came from the southern provinces of Italy; Abruzzi, Avellino, Basilicates, Sicily,²² Naples, and Calabria.

The demand for unskilled labor along with the large numbers of Italians coming to America developed a system in which a middle man, the padrone, supplied laborers to industries. The padrone system worked as follows: the padrone would make an agreement with a mine operator to furnish him with necessary labor. The padrone would then find a large concentration of unemployed Italians and send them to the mine where they were contracted to work. The padrone system relieved employers of the need to find the labor supply.²³

The padroni were often bankers who would lend to the immigrant, at six per cent interest, the train fare to the job. The Banco Italiano has been credited with sending 14,000 Italians to America between 1861 and 1884. The padrone, after securing the necessary number of immigrants, made sure the workers made it to their jobs, and often supplied credit for food, clothing, and shelter.

Overall, the padrone system played a key role in the Italians' settling in America. It helped the Italian immigrant, who was unfamiliar with the English language, to secure employment. The Italians, by banding together, avoided some of the cultural shock experienced by other immigrants. Some padroni exploited immigrants, but a majority provided the immigrant with a job and security, thus fulfilling the same function that political ward heelers had provided for the Irish in New York and Boston.

Some of the new immigrants came to Crawford County from the Eastern coal fields, but a great majority came directly to the Kansas coal fields after getting off the boat. The immigrants whose destination was Kansas were processed at Ellis Island and then hurried to the Jersey City railway depots where they boarded trains to the coal fields. Since the immigrants could not read English, a tag was placed on their person stating their name and destination. When the immigrants arrived in Crawford County they were met at the railway station in Pittsburg by the local padrone, Nick Simion. Simion, who was appointed by the Italian consul, could speak Italian and directed the immigrants to the mining camps where they would live

and work. Simion saw that the immigrants had work and acted as their
 27 guardian. The mining camps were well suited for the Italian immi-
 grants, most of whom had been farm laborers in Italy, for they could
 28 readily maintain their customs in the camps. Perhaps this explains
 why many Italians who left Crawford County to seek employment elsewhere
 29 returned to the area upon their retirement.

The greatest number of European immigrants in Crawford County
 were Italians and Austrians, with the former comprising the largest
 ethnic group in the coal fields. Ethnic groups, however, did not
 form the basis of political organization in Crawford County. There
 were instances in which an ethnic group dominated a particular mining
 camp, as the Italians did in Little Italy. Most of the camps could be
 considered melting pots since they were composed of several different
 European groups along with the native-born. The miners developed a
 class consciousness, and, instead of concentrating on making gains
 for their particular group, they realized that only through a united
 movement could the miners achieve their goals. This social awareness
 displayed by the miners is unusual in the United States and helps
 explain why the residents of the coal fields were to have such an
 influence on the politics of Crawford County.

New mining camps were organized as each influx of immigrants
 reached Crawford County. Litchfield, the first company town in
 30 Crawford County, was constructed in 1880 by the Oswego Coal Company.
 Several factors gave rise to the mining camps; the pressing need for
 quick and inexpensive housing for the miners, the relative permanence

workers and the New Deal relief programs under the Roosevelt

of the mining shaft, and the lack of cheap transportation. In addition, the record keeping was easier since a miner would have his rent and his account at the company store withdrawn from his paycheck. This explains the existence of so many mining camp towns
31
in Crawford County.

The coal industry remained the major economic activity in the county until the 1930's. The decline in coal production actually began in the 1920's, but the sharpest decrease came in the 1930's.

The number of miners dropped from 5,460 to 998 between 1923 and
32
1938. The main causes of this decline were: the general economic impact of the depression, the rise of the less expensive strip mining method that required fewer miners, labor problems, and competition from oil and gas as cheaper sources of fuel. Therefore,
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Crawford County miners were forced to move to other mining areas, give up mining and seek employment elsewhere, retire, or rely on
34
welfare. The effects of the demise of underground coal mining are

reflected in the population figures of the county. The population of the county decreased twenty-five per cent between 1927 and 1940, while the population of Washington Township, whose economic life depended on mining, dropped forty-nine per cent during the same
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period. Joe Saia's political career began during this period when the mining area was struggling to diversify its economy. Diversification of any economy means a certain amount of displacement and hard times for the workers, but in this instance, the problem was compounded by the national depression. The large number of displaced workers and the New Deal relief programs under the Roosevelt

Administration meant that the laborer increasingly relied on the federal government to provide solutions to their problems. County politics took on the characteristics of what can be best described as the "politics of relief." It was under these conditions that Joe Saia was first elected as a county commissioner in 1938.

Crawford County politics were strange and anachronistic, but with justification. Many miners left school at an early age to work in the mines and, therefore, had only a limited education. In 1940, the average citizen of Crawford County had the equivalent of an eighth grade education. This lack of formal education meant that politics lacked sophistication. Another important factor that made politics in the county so unique was the fact that the immigrants brought with them to America the belief that they had a personal stake in politics. In Italy, power was vested in the local ruler upon whom they depended to supply them with services. In Crawford County they viewed the local party leader in the same light; he was the one to decide who would get jobs and assistance. This is why political machines, reminiscent of the 1920's, still play a role in the 1970's. When one has no job and a family to feed, a job with the County Roads Department meant much more than any ideological argument. Crawford County had a long tradition of supporting reform movements that offered to improve the conditions of the citizens. From the outset, its residents have looked with suspicion at outside business interests and have given in to them only after a fight. This was evidenced by the land squatters who, in 1869, fought the railroad attempts to construct a railway through their land.

One of the first political movements to gather considerable support in the county was the Greenback movement. The Greenbackers were strong in the county, as well as in most of the rest of the state, from 1876 to 1886. Although the Greenbackers were never strong enough to elect their county candidates, they did exert
37
enough strength to influence the two major parties. The Greenback Party made many Crawford County voters aware of the need for some basic changes in the economic and political system.

In 1888, the Union Labor Party was formed from the remnants of the Greenback movement and the coal miners of the area. The Union Labor Party embraced most of the Greenbacks' policies but added demands, such as governmental ownership of the railroads, which appealed
38
to the miners. The Union Labor Party united the causes of the farmers and workers paving the way for an organization that would have enough power to place the reformers in control of the county.

The first organization to take advantage of this coalition was the Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union. The Alliance grew so fast that soon after its formation every school district in the county had its Alliance organization. By 1890, the Alliances were so strong that the Democratic Party disappeared in the county as a viable
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political organization. Out of the Alliance, the People's Party (Populist) was formed. The People's Party drew such support that in
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1890 the Populists elected every county official. The nomination of William Jennings Bryan and the adoption of many of the Populist's programs in 1896 rejuvenated the Democratic Party in Crawford County.

By molding together a fusion of Populists and workers, the Democrats were able to carry the county for Bryan with fifty-five per cent of the vote, ⁴¹ three per cent above the state total for Bryan. While these organizations included in their platforms some programs for the working man, they were, on the whole, aimed at the needs of the agrarians. The coal industry had become important in the county drawing large numbers of workers, therefore a separate organization was needed to represent the demands of the proletariat. On December 3, 1898, District 14 of the United Mine Workers of America (U.M.W.) was organized, initially consisting of eleven local unions ⁴² with 901 members.

Earlier attempts to organize the miners were thwarted by the efforts of the "Big Four" coal companies. In 1893, a strike was called by the miners to achieve recognition of their right to organize. The strike was broken when the "Big Four" imported black ⁴³ miners as strike breakers. Some 375 black miners were recruited ⁴⁴ and sent into the coal fields. This practice was not new. It was in fact, used frequently by management because the blacks were generally unaware of the concept of unionism and hence less likely to join a union. Therefore, the first attempt at organization was defeated.

The miners regrouped and went on strike again on May 13, 1899. The main objective was to force the "Big Four" to recognize the ⁴⁵ United Mine Workers as the sole bargaining agent for the miners. The strike lasted for a month, at which time management again brought

miners of Kansas have been the stronghold of unionism" in the

large numbers of blacks from southern Alabama into the coal fields. Some 1,300 blacks were brought into the area and housed in stockades to protect and shield them from the union miners whom they replaced.⁴⁶ The coal operators intended this large migration of black miners to break the strike, but the union miners were able to convince the black miners of the worthiness of their cause and the need for solidarity. This campaign by the union miners turned the tide in favor of the miners and by July, 1899, all of the local coal companies had recognized District 14 of the U.M.W. While the "Big Four" still refused to recognize the miners' union, they were forced to sign a contract stating that they would not discriminate between union and non-union miners.⁴⁷

An uneasy truce existed between the operators and the miners after this successful strike. The union took advantage of this truce and concentrated its efforts upon organizing the coal fields. This was not an easy task because of the large influx of immigrants into the county. The Dillingham Commission on Immigration in Industries described the problems of organizing the coal fields:

The problem confronting the labor unions at the outset was difficult, and steadily grew harder and more exacting. The new workers in the fields were without knowledge as to what wages, hours, or conditions of work they should seek. Most of the incoming foreigners were without resources and under the necessity of obtaining work immediately on the best terms that could be secured. Very few could speak the English language, and agitation among them had to be conducted through interpreters.⁴⁸

Despite these difficulties, the organizational efforts of District 14 were successful and the Dillingham Commission reported "the coal miners of Kansas have been the stronghold of unionism" in the

Southwestern United States. What was most unusual about the efforts of District 14 was its success in organizing the newly arrived immigrants. While nationwide only nineteen per cent of the southern Italians were affiliated with trade unions, in Kansas ninety-eight
49
per cent belonged to a union.

In 1906, with the election of Alexander Howat as president of District 14, a new, powerful, and humane voice came to the miners. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Howat migrated with his parents to America where he ended up in Crawford County. Howat, who began working in the mines at the age of ten, was a highly respected leader in the
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union movement. Mother Jones, the nationally known labor leader from the Trinidad coal fields in Colorado, called Howat one of the
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greatest labor leaders of all time. In his lifetime, Howat was held in confidence by such great leaders as Clemenceau, Garibaldi, Lloyd George, Ramsey McDonald, and was probably one of the few men to hold
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the confidence of Kerensky, Stalin, and Trotsky at the same time. Even more remarkable, this man from Franklin, Kansas, had the coal
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fields organized to the point where union membership reached almost one hundred per cent.

Howat's influence was tested in 1919, when a national strike was called by the international board of the U.M.W. over working hours and wages. Soon after the strike was called, the Attorney General of the United States, A. Mitchell Palmer, secured an injunction against the strike and John L. Lewis, president of the U.M.W., backed down and called off the strike. Being independent and committed to his

miners, Howat continued the strike in his district. This resulted in the governor of Kansas, Henry J. Allen, ordering the state to take over mining operations. This still had no effect on the striking miners. In desperation, the governor advertised in newspapers for mine workers. The following is taken from the Pittsburg Daily Head-
light:

WANTED - One thousand able bodied men to dig coal to keep the home fires burning in Kansas. Experience unnecessary. Hardy, young men, able to take care of themselves and to wield a pick and shovel preferred. Travelling expenses and at least \$5 a day guaranteed by the state of Kansas . . . Apply in person, by telegraph, or by mail to Governor Henry J. Allen, State House, Topeka.⁵⁴

The miners' places were soon taken by eager ex-service men and college students. A regiment of Kansas National Guard and a detachment of Federal troops were sent into the county to make sure that the mines operated. This added to the burden of the miners for they now faced a coalition of business and government, determined to keep them in their places. The miners realized that pure and simple unionism was not enough, and that in order to break this oppressive coalition they must turn to politics.

The coalition of business and government was joined by big unions during the strike of 1921. This strike was initiated over the issue of the Industrial Code Act passed by the Kansas legislature in 1920. This act gave the courts the full power to arbitrate labor-management disputes. The most controversial part of the act was Section Five, which stated that no union or person could call a strike "for the purpose of willfully hindering, delaying, or suspending the act."⁵⁵

Howat, in 1921, backed a strike to test the validity of the act. Soon after the strike was called the Attorney General of Kansas countered by securing an injunction against the strike. Howat refused to recognize the injunction, and he and the vice president of District 14 were arrested and jailed. Despite efforts by John L. Lewis, the mine operators, and the state of Kansas, the strike continued. Lewis, faced with a challenge to his control of the U.M.W., reacted harshly, suspended District 14's charter, and set up a new provisional union. The miners reacted by blowing up mines, and the coal field was on the verge of open warfare. John Walker, president of the Illinois Federation of Labor, reported to his organization: "They [Crawford County miners] are made serfs down there. The kids are going without food and so are their parents. But they will stand like men, stand and die standing."

The strike of 1921 was climaxed by a series of marches conducted by the wives and families of the striking miners. Frustrated by the lack of progress of the strike and having felt the economic pinch of their husband's loss of pay, the miners' families decided to take action on their own. In a series of marches, in which the procession of marchers would extend over a mile in length, these women stopped work at the mines still in operation. These efforts by the women frequently led to violence. In response to the violence and the rumors that the women would march on Pittsburg and lay siege to the city, the Governor ordered three companies of the National Guard into the coal field.

The strike ended with the appearance of the troops. The miners who took part in the strike found that it would not be easy to return to their jobs. In an effort to destroy the influence of Howat, whom he feared as a rival for the presidency of the U.M.W., Lewis gave the provisional unions sole power to accept or reject applicants for membership in the new locals. This coincided with the coal operators' decision not to replace any provisional union members with

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returning strikers. This situation lent itself to corruption. Joe Saia, who was himself involved in the strike, reported there were cases where a man who wanted a job would have to bribe the head of

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the local with a jug of wine or some pigs.

The 1921 strike, although ending the career of Howat in the U.M.W., did not permanently damage the labor movement in the county. It served however to show the miners that "pure and simple unionism" could not break the coalition that was pitted against them. The rise of the Socialist Party in the early twentieth century in the county involved the miners once more in politics. One of the aims of the Socialist Party was to break the hold the older parties had upon the immigrants. The two parties had adopted corrupt practices in the coal field to secure the immigrant vote. The miners from Austria and Italy were unfamiliar with the democratic process, making them easy prey to the cynical political operators. An example of this was the naturalization of the immigrants. The aliens signed declarations of intention

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for naturalization which entitled them to vote. The clerk of the district court was also the custodian of the naturalization forms. Before an election, the clerk would circulate blank forms in the mining camps. Those

aliens who signed the forms were eligible to vote. The clerk then handed a marked ballot to the alien, instructed him to vote accordingly and provided a free drink. The filing fee of one dollar for each intention was paid by the clerk through his political party. It has been estimated that there were hundreds of votes cast this way
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from 1890 to 1906.

The miners, faced with a hostile coalition of business and government, felt that they had to effect some drastic changes in the economic and political system. The feelings of the miners were best expressed by their attorney when testifying before the state legislature: "but don't forget that for years these miners have lived like dogs. You have turned your backs on them, session after session. Society put out its fangs against them."
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Many miners joined the Socialist Party in order to break the hold that the coal operators had on the government and to challenge the corrupt political parties. When J. A. Wayland moved the Appeal to Reason to Girard, Kansas in 1902, the Socialist Party established its first effective mouthpiece. A Socialist party was organized,
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composed mainly of miners and former Populists. The Socialist Party grew strong enough to carry the county for Eugene V. Debbs for President in 1912 in addition to electing every county official except
64
the county coroner and superintendent. Alarmed by the success of the Socialist Party in 1912, the older parties initiated desperate tactics against the Socialists. Soon a red scare developed in the county.

This mood was reflected on the front page of the Pittsburgh Daily Headlight just before the 1914 elections, "THE QUESTION AT THE POLLS TODAY:
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Shall the Stars and Stripes be replaced by a red flag?"

The Socialist Party declined following World War I as a result of "the red scare" and the party's opposition to the war, and Crawford County followed the national trend to "normalcy." Republican candidates for President carried the county from 1920 to 1928 despite opposition from the miners. With the depression and the decline of the mining industry, the main concern for the miners was who could best provide them with relief and jobs. It was in this atmosphere that the Democrats, under Franklin D. Roosevelt, became the dominant party.

It is fundamentally because of coal mining that Crawford County politics are so unique. The eastern and southern Europeans settled in the county because of the demand for large numbers of unskilled labor to work in the mines. Although the immigrants had been farm workers and had little knowledge of the concept of industrial democracy, a class consciousness developed. The social awareness manifested itself in the numerous coal field strikes and ultimately in the rise of the Socialist Party in the county. With the decline of mining and ensuing high unemployment, the former miners depended upon the government for assistance paving the way for "politics of relief."

LIBRARY

11. Joseph Skubitz interview with A. L. Toenges, June 23, 1934, as found in Skubitz, "Deep Mine Production," 11. A. L. Toenges was Chief Engineer of the Western Coal and Mining Company.

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28. Immigration Commission Report, 5. *A History of the Farmer's (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961).*
29. Powell, "Historic Geography," 201.
30. Home Authors, Crawford County, 109.
31. Powell, "Historic Geography," 250. A sizeable number of these camps were located on the main railways through Crawford County and this fact helped contribute immensely to the survival of such former mining communities as Arma, Frontenac, and Mulberry.
32. For an illustration of the decline of deep shaft mining in Crawford County see Appendix III, 131.
33. William E. Powell, "Former Mining Communities of the Cherokee-Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas," The Kansas Historical Quarterly, (Summer, 1972) Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, 195. Cited hereafter, Powell, "Former Mining Communities."
34. A new activity took place in the coal fields during this period of economic decline. Prohibition was in effect and alcohol was illegal to manufacture; therefore, there was a demand for illegally manufactured liquor. There were few government relief programs in the 1920's, and the production of whiskey was an easy skill to learn; former miners began manufacturing whiskey as a source of income. Soon the bootlegging business began to flourish in the county, and the price of a gallon of homemade whiskey was as low as two dollars a gallon. The smoothness of the local whiskey encouraged outsiders to invest in the illegal activities. Crawford County whiskey was consumed in Chicago and as far east as New York. Much of the whiskey was made in the shafts of abandoned coal mines, therefore, the name given the county's whiskey was "deep shaft." The bootlegging trade in the county was halted in the early 1930's because of the efforts of federal agents and the repeal of prohibition. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
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57. Pittsburg Headlight, December 15, 1921.
58. Pittsburg Headlight, January 13, 1922.
59. Pittsburg Headlight, July 12, 1937.

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62. Pittsburg Headlight, January 8, 1920.
63. Home Authors, Crawford County, 78.
64. Pittsburg Daily Headlight, November 7, 1912.
65. Pittsburg Daily Headlight, November 3, 1914.

background and the influences involved in his entrance into politics.

David Joseph Sais was born on May 3, 1904, to Phillip and Elizabeth Piraro Sais, in Chicago, Kansas, a small mining community to the south and west of Pittsburg. Phillip Sais was born in Cefalvo, a small farming hamlet in Sicily, and was an unskilled farm laborer. With the economic decline that crippled Italy in the late nineteenth century, Phillip Sais and his cousin Joseph left for America on the Dandelion. On May 19, 1907, the Sais family arrived in New York and went directly to the Crawford County coal field.¹

Phillip Sais, like the other unskilled immigrants who came into Crawford County, chose coal mining because it was an easy skill to learn. Sais became involved in union activities almost immediately and became good friends with District 14 leader Alexander Howat. Joe Sais today states that his skills in politics were on a large part inherited from his father's union activities.²

At the age of thirteen, Joe Sais quit school and began working in the Jackson-Walker mine number eleven. Joe was forced to quit school to work because he was the eldest of eight children and

THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF D. J. SAIA

Any study of recent politics in Crawford County must center around the career of D. J. "Joe" Saia. Saia, who left school at an early age to work in the mines to help support his family, has been the main influence on the Democratic Party of Crawford County. Joe's political expertise resulted from many years involvement in labor union organizing. It was therefore necessary to consider the background and the influences involved in his entrance into politics.

David Joseph Saia was born on May 2, 1904, to Phillip and Elizabeth Piraro Saia, in Chicopee, Kansas, a small mining community to the south and west of Pittsburg. Phillip Saia was born in Cefalvo, a small farming hamlet in Sicily, and was an unskilled farm laborer. With the economic decline that crippled Italy in the late nineteenth century, Phillip Saia and his cousin Joseph left for America on the Dandeline. On May 19, 1897, the Saias arrived in New York and went directly to the Crawford County coal field.¹

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At the age of thirteen, Joe Saia quit school and began working in the Jackson-Walker mine number eleven. Joe was forced to quit school to work because he was the oldest of eight children and

his father's salary was not sufficient to support the family.

Like his father, he was active in the miners' union. Young

Saia was selected to serve on the mine's pit committee, the

grass roots organization of the U.M.W.. Each mine had a

committee to represent the workers and bring to the pit bosses their

grievances. If the pit bosses did not settle the dispute, the

pit committee would take their case to the superintendent of

the mine and to their local union. It was here that Saia learned

the value of organization and leadership.³

Joe Saia never forgot his experiences as a coal miner. He

enjoyed working in the mines and recalls to this day that despite

the weather on the outside, the temperature was always moderate in

the mines. With the decline of underground coal mining, Saia, like

the rest of the miners, was forced to find another source of

income.⁴

Saia left Crawford County in 1927 and went to Kansas City

to work on the railroads. He was first employed by the Rock Island

in railroad construction and then served as a special agent for the

Frisco railroad.⁵ Joe held this position for two years before

returning to Crawford County where he opened a gasoline station in

Frontenac at the corner of McKay Street and Highway 160.⁶

Joe Saia first became involved in Democratic politics during

the Alfred E. Smith campaign for President in 1928. This campaign

is considered a significant election for American ethnic groups.

Samuel Lubell considers that Smith's campaign was the mouthpiece

of the "underpaid melting pot." It was Smith's appeal to the

Catholic immigrant stock that absorbed many of the eastern and southern European hyphenates into the Democratic Party.⁷

Crawford County Democrats openly recruited the coal field ethnic groups and, as a result, the party became a means for their economic and social advancement. Subsequently, voters in the former mining area became an important element in the county's Democratic organization. Governor Harry Woodring, in recognition of the ex-miners importance in the party, appointed the young politician from Frontenac a state vehicle inspector in 1930. With this appointment, politics became Joe Saia's life and career.⁸

Robert Lane in his study, Political Life, identified six basic reasons why people become involved in politics: for economic gain, for social advancement, to gain a better understanding of world events, to relieve intra-psychic tensions, to achieve power, and to improve one's self-esteem.⁹ These motivations, according to Lane, exist in varying degrees among people who are active in politics, but social and economic advancement are the strongest motivations among ethnic groups. Social advancement is important to an ethnic group such as the Italians because they came to America for economic opportunities and not for political liberty. The immigrant was told that American streets were lined with gold, yet when the Italian arrived he found himself in the lower class of what was alleged to be a classless society.

The second generation immigrant, unlike his parents, demanded his fair share of the American dream. This phenomenon is described by Herbert Gans:

Culturally only a few traces of the immigrant Italian way of life are left in the second generation semi-skilled and unskilled workers. They still prefer "Italian cooking" and they retain a speaking knowledge of their particular Italian dialect as a second language, although their own children, the third generation, are not being taught the language and will grow up knowing only English. In short, this second-generation Italian-American group is ethnically (and class) enclosed, structurally, but overwhelmingly acculturated to an American working-class way of life.¹⁰

This desire to rise socially and economically was frequently frustrated as second generation Italian-Americans found many doors closed to them. Politics assumed an important role for the ambitious Italian-American to compensate for a lack of opportunities in other areas. American politics were fluid, and any group that organized its members and produced votes was accepted by a political organization. Since most ethnic groups in America lived in physically segregated areas, as was the case in Crawford County, their vote would be more dominant and a political party would, accordingly, be inclined to listen to their demands.

Ethnic politicians initially became involved in local politics because ethnic voters are more concerned with local issues. Robert Lane explains this as the lack of impartial non-political bureaucracy in local and county governments causing the distribution of jobs and public services to be in relation to the voting strength of each group in the community. This relationship between political strength and distribution of public services was

more profound when the ethnic group resided in physically separated areas. Street paving, sewage disposal, school facilities, and jobs became political issues of great concern to the ethnic groups.¹¹

Joe Saia, reared in the belief of the workers need to organize, naturally involved himself in political and union affairs. When the Democratic Party recruited the labor community in 1928, it was inevitable that Saia would become active in party politics. Saia, in fact, believes that he was forced by circumstances into politics. He insists he never dreamt of seeking an elective office and stated that with his lack of formal education he probably could not have accomplished all that he had without politics.¹² Politics is one of the few fields where an individual, without much formal education, can advance economically and socially.

Saia's success in politics can be directly attributed to his understanding of human nature. Saia worked diligently in Crawford County's Democratic Party and rose rapidly in the party's ranks. He was elected Democratic precinct committeeman for the fourth ward in Frontenac in 1934, and on August 24, 1934, Saia became vice chairman of the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee.¹³

D. J. Saia made his first bid for public office in 1935 when he ran for mayor of Frontenac. This first attempt holds the distinction as the only election the venerable politician from Frontenac ever lost. In the 1935 mayor campaign Saia ran on the slogan "Down with

Political Rings." The young, up-and-coming politician portrayed himself as "a progressive candidate from the ranks who has no political boss, who is not ruled by the privileged class or the money changers."¹⁴ On election day, Joe was defeated by Henry Charosset in one of the most heated city elections in Frontenac's history. Charosset received 438 votes to Saia's 349. The interest aroused in this election was illustrated by the fact that eighty-three per cent of the registered voters of Frontenac cast a ballot, a very high percentage for a local election.¹⁵

The Democratic landslide that took place throughout the nation in 1936 swept E. W. Patterson into Congress. Patterson, who was from Crawford County, was in sympathy with the plight of the unemployed in the county and would be an important voice in Washington for the poor in Southeast Kansas. With the general Democratic sweep in Kansas in 1936, the Democrats in the county were elated. In Frontenac, enthusiasm over Roosevelt's re-election and Patterson's victory was shown when several hundred Democrats staged a mock funeral. The group found a coffin to represent the defeated Republican candidates and place it on a bier. The crowd then marched down the main street of Frontenac and out to the city's cemetery where "Rev. Saia" officiated over a mock funeral accompanied by two accordionists playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The parade marched on to Pittsburg and stopped at several vantage points for Saia to read the "final service" for the defeated Republicans.¹⁶

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt elevated the Democratic Party to a position of importance in the economic life of the residents of Crawford County. It has been commonly assumed that enactment of many of the relief programs during the New Deal caused the power of political machines to decline. The practice of party hacks distributing food baskets to the poor became obsolete as the federal government distributed relief funds; in reality, however, political machines grew out of the New Deal. The machines developed during the New Deal era became distribution agencies for relief funds and determined who would get relief jobs. In Crawford County this was true and was evidenced in Dr. Allen Sandidge's Democratic organization.

Sandidge, a physician from Mulberry, forged a Democratic machine in the county that was powerful and well organized. He built a political organization that was loyal to him and ignored the precinct committeeman.¹⁷ Sandidge's Democratic organization depended largely on the machine of C. C. Strand, a Pittsburg pharmacist. Strand, who was nicknamed "C. Cigar Stub," bragged of a machine with a membership of nine hundred. In order to receive political favors, such as a federal relief job, a person would have to pay a twenty-five dollar "membership fee." It was reported in the Frontenac Press that a grocer's son received a Work Progress Administration job by checking off a grocery bill.¹⁸ Once a person received a relief job, he would have to donate a certain per cent of his salary to the Democratic Central

Committee.¹⁹ In August, 1937, an investigator from the WPA's Department of Investigation was sent to Crawford County to investigate charges that the Sandidge organization had misused federal funds.²⁰

Joe Saia was appointed relief foreman for the WPA through the efforts of Congressman E. W. Patterson. In the 1930's the Democratic County chairman was responsible for the appointment of job-foremen and time-keepers in Kansas. The power that the county chairman exercised explains how politics infiltrated the WPA. Soon after his appointment as a relief foreman, Saia became active in the WPA workers' union in order to challenge the influence of Sandidge in the WPA. Sandidge resented this affront to his control over relief programs and had Saia fired. Congressman Patterson interceded and had Saia reinstated, but Sandidge found another excuse to have Saia fired. In fact, Saia was fired and rehired three times in one month.²¹ Consequently, Joe quit his WPA job and started his work in the Farmer-Labor Union.

The Farmer-Labor Union was organized to represent relief workers and the unemployed. Its small dues of ten cents a month enabled the poor to join the union. The Farmer-Labor Union ultimately became a state-wide organization and Joe Saia was elected its first state president. The Union in Crawford County was composed mainly of farmers who had lost their farms during the Depression and former coal miners.²²

As a reaction to the local WPA hiring practices the relief workers' union was formed. One first had to be certified that his income was low enough to be eligible for a relief job. After certification, the hiring decision was up to the WPA job foreman. Since a majority of the foremen were political appointees of the Democratic County chairman, their hiring methods had political overtones.²³ With 4,069 unemployed in the county and only 2,037 WPA jobs,²⁴ it is easy to perceive the control the Democratic Party had over the WPA workers and the desire on the part of the unemployed in the county to have an equitable system of securing relief jobs without political interference.

Joe Saia, in an address over radio station KOAM, expressed his philosophy on the hiring system of the WPA:

To have good government, you cannot have hungry men made desperate by the needs of their families. I am bitterly opposed to any system that makes provisions to take care and provide for half of the needy while the other half literally starve to death. That sort of condition breeds discrimination and is unjust.²⁵

The discontent of the unemployed in Crawford County was responsible for an open revolt in 1937 when the national director of the WPA, Harry Hopkins, announced plans to cut the rolls of the WPA by 1,600,000 by July 15.²⁶ Clarence Nevins, WPA director for Kansas, in compliance with the nationwide WPA reduction, was forced to cut 1,300 from WPA rolls in Southeast Kansas.²⁷ As a protest to this reduction of WPA jobs and the corrupt hiring practices, the Farmer-Labor Union held a rally

at Frontenac on July 4, 1937, with Joe Saia the featured speaker.

In his speech, Saia assailed Dr. Sandidge and charged that in order to receive WPA jobs applicants had to "pay for them."²⁸

A decision was made at the rally for the Farmer-Labor Union to lead a march on the district WPA headquarters in Chanute, Kansas. Immediately after the rally, Saia began the necessary preparation for the protest march. Union members were asked to donate fifty cents each to finance it.²⁹

Early on the morning of July 6, some eighty-three unemployed persons from Crawford County met at the Crawford County State Park north of Frontenac and left for Chanute in a caravan of ten cars and a large truck. The cars ranged from vintage 1920 to new 1937 models. Some of the cars carried up to seven passengers, and fourteen rode in the truck. Saia experienced problems in distributing the gasoline for the trip to Chanute. Some vehicles got into line to get their tanks filled and did not make the march but instead went home with free gas.³⁰

When the marchers arrived in Chanute, Saia had a meeting with Rex Singleton, acting WPA district director. The district director, Ben Hudson, was out of the state on vacation. Saia told Singleton of the marchers' grievances and demanded that Ben Hudson return to Chanute from his vacation. In addition, Saia told Singleton, "The only difference between us and Hudson is that he is on full pay during his vacation, while we are not accustomed to being on a payroll."³¹ After his meeting

with Singleton, Saia led the marchers to the city park where they stayed overnight sleeping on benches and the grass. Saia and the other leaders of the march had rooms at the Tioga Inn where they held conferences with Chanute businessmen and city officials to secure food and some funds for the marchers.³²

Saia talked to state director Clarence Nevins by telephone on July 7. Nevins promised to check the employment rolls with a view of adding from one hundred to one hundred and fifty additional workers in the district.³³ The director additionally agreed to reduce the 1,300 planned layoffs to 700. The marchers returned to Crawford County at 11:30 a.m. but before leaving, Saia told reporters, "We didn't get all we wanted but we feel that we gained at least a part of our objectives."³⁴

E. J. Terill, the WPA district supervisor, went to Crawford County on July 10 and, with Ed Christian, county WPA engineer, held a conference with Joe Saia to discuss the possibility of creating the one hundred new jobs which Nevins had promised. During the talks it became evident that there would not be any additional job assignments.

The Crawford County WPA union leader called a second march on Chanute after it became clear that the talks with Terill led nowhere. At the conclusion of the conference Saia told reporters:

Political officers are the ones who are drawing their money. We have to stay here without work and starve. Why should some eat and others starve? I think the state officials are stalling us off. . . .

A sit-in on the WPA office was planned to dramatize the demands

It is getting so now, and I know it's so, that a man has to buy his job as they did following the big strike in 1921 when he had to take a jug of wine or some pigs to the "big boy" to keep his job. We're going to do something about it too, I am sure that my boys will want to go back to Chanute and this time they are not going to feel so good about this. They will be there to get results. The fight has just now started.³⁵

The time between the conference with Terill and the second march on Chanute was used by Joe Saia to collect funds and organize. He planned to have a much larger and better organized group which would be willing to stay until their demands were met. Efforts were also made to insure that the marchers would be not only from Crawford County, but from all over the district. On July 22, at a rally in Arma, over seven hundred people heard the plans for the next march on the WPA offices in Chanute. The main speaker at the rally was again Saia who called for the resignation of WPA district director Ben Hudson and his assistants, Rex Singleton and E. J. Terill. The young labor organizer charged that these officials of the WPA should resign because they were "unfair to organized labor" and reminded the audience that there were 1,800 unemployed in Crawford County.³⁶

This second march, called the "hunger march", took place on July 27, 1937, and was considerably better organized than the first. Saia appointed several lieutenants to check the vehicles which received gasoline. The "hunger march" was also much better financed; WPA workers contributed to a fund for several weeks, and the march's war chest was around three hundred dollars. A sit-in on the WPA office was planned to dramatize the demands

of the marchers. Discipline was stressed, with Joe making it clear before the march began that he was in charge and anyone who would not listen to him would best stay home.³⁷

The "hunger march" consisted of two hundred and fifty demonstrators of whom approximately half were women. When the marchers reached Chanute they occupied the WPA offices. Saia told Rex Singleton, as the marchers poured into the offices, "It's a holiday for your office workers."³⁸ The marchers' leader explained why they were conducting the sit-in strike in his speech to the WPA officers before occupying the offices:

Our main objective is that the way your foremen are discharging the men who won't run political errands for the bosses in our counties. Just the boys who can get the approval of the county Democratic chairman are keeping their jobs. And they are dismissing men who have eight and ten in the family to feed, and are leaving single men on the job.³⁹

Giving recognition to the women who participated in the march, a new demand included that "women be given the same consideration as men employees."⁴⁰

The two hundred and fifty demonstrators spent the night sleeping in chairs and on the tops of desks. The WPA offices did not have enough room for all, and some of the demonstrators were forced to sleep on the lawn in front of the building housing the WPA offices. Saia left the WPA offices during the evening and entered into negotiations with WPA and city officials.⁴¹ In the negotiations, the leader of the marchers made it clear to Chanute officials that his goals were peaceful. He told the

officials: "Our idea is merely to demonstrate to the higher-ups that more money is needed for those starving people. They are all hard working honest people who would gladly work if given a chance." When the city officials asked him to lead the demonstrators out of the WPA offices, Joe called for the city attorney, T. R. Evans. Evans was asked about the legality of the demonstrators occupying the offices. Evans replied that "there is nothing legal about it" and the demonstrators would have to leave the offices. Saia then promised that the marchers would leave the WPA offices the next morning.⁴² At 11:45 a.m. on July 27, he led the protestors to the city park and declared, "If our demands are not met, we will move back into the building."⁴³

The marchers' funds were soon depleted, and funding matters were made worse by the arrival of seventy more demonstrators from Columbus, Fort Scott, and Independence. The marchers soon became dependent upon aid from the citizens of Chanute. The "hunger march", without the support received from the people of Chanute, would have been called off after the first day because of lack of food to feed the demonstrators. Aid from the townspeople was supplemented by trot lines set in the Neosho River to catch fish. This aid from the people of Chanute still was not enough, and food for the protestors had to be rationed. Breakfast consisted of oatmeal and milk, and for supper the demonstrators ate "Mulligan Stew", a dish made famous by hoboes.⁴⁴

A rally was held in the city park on the evening of July 27 to inform the people of Chanute of the marchers' demands and to stiffen the morale of the demonstrators. Speaking at the rally, Saia told the crowd about having witnessed cases where children would cry themselves to sleep because of hunger while the parents, filled with agony, tried to explain why they couldn't find work.⁴⁵ He also let it be known he would offer no compromises this time. "They would gladly give me a WPA job if I would stop fighting for you," the leader from Frontenac shouted, "but the only job I would take is Ben Hudson's job as district director."⁴⁶

Saia spent the next day in negotiations with city officials and WPA officers. He demanded Nevins come to Chanute and take part in the negotiations. Joe stopped the talks and went back to the city park to join the protestors after word came from Topeka that it would be impossible for Nevins to come to Chanute. This meeting decided, by an overwhelming vote, that Saia and Ralph Ridley, president of the Kansas Allied Workers, another WPA union, would conduct a sit-in strike in the district director's office.⁴⁷

Saia, upon entering the WPA offices, stated that he and Ridley intended to occupy Hudson's office until Nevins would come to Chanute. The sit-in lasted for only half an hour. Lee Knapp, the Chanute chief of police, and several officers soon arrived at the WPA offices and forced the protestors to vacate the offices. The two leaders upon leaving the WPA offices led the

marchers gathered around the building back to the city park.

Joe then telegraphed Governor Walter Huxman asking him to send the National Guard into Chanute to "assist in the peaceful presentation of demands."⁴⁸

Huxman immediately wired Saia back stating that while it was impossible for him to send the National Guard to Chanute, he would use his influence to help the workers. Huxman also stated he would call a meeting between the state WPA director and four of the marchers. Saia agreed to this, returned to the park, and announced that the demonstration was over. Joe issued a statement to the press before leaving Chanute explaining why he had called off the demonstration:

It is impossible for us to continue in our fight for employment justly entitled to us. In the face of such conditions, I shall urge these hungry marchers to return to their homes. However, this fight is not yet ended. Organized labor and the forgotten man and woman will not fail to remember the occasion at the ballot box next election.⁴⁹

The following week Saia and three other representatives of the Farmer-Labor Union and Kansas Allied Workers went to Topeka for the meeting arranged by the Governor. The organizer from Frontenac became the spokesman for the WPA workers and forcefully presented their case to Nevins. The state director assured the union representatives that the reduction orders were made only for the summer months and that it was expected the Kansas quota for WPA jobs would be increased in the fall. Saia, besides talking with state WPA officials, also used his growing political influence in the state Democratic Party to

help find more jobs for the unemployed in Southeast Kansas. He first talked with Evan Griffith, state highway director, telling him that while 1,900 men were working on WPA projects in Crawford County, an additional 1,700 men were certified as eligible for relief work but had not been provided with jobs. Griffith, who had been WPA state director until he stepped down to take the state highway director post, was sympathetic with the plight of the unemployed in Crawford County.⁵⁰ Griffith promised to discuss projects with Charles Wells of Baxter Springs, a member of the state highway commission, with the goal of "putting as many men to work in the southeast [Kansas] district as possible."⁵¹

Saia met with Lynn Brodrick, Democratic National Committeeman for Kansas, after talking with Griffith. Brodrick assured him that a Kansas congressional delegation would call on Harry Hopkins, national director of WPA, on September 1, to urge him to increase the WPA quota for Kansas from 23,000 jobs per month to 29,000.⁵² Crawford County's protest (and other similar protests throughout the country) had its desired effect, for on August 24, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced there would be no further WPA reductions.⁵³ While this announcement solved the temporary problem of cutbacks in WPA jobs, the basic problem of political interference in the hiring of WPA workers remained.

Joe Saia, through his activities in Chanute and Topeka, became the spokesman for the entire former mining area of

Crawford County. He was trusted by the people because he shared their plight and was considered to be one of them. People respected his willingness to fight for them. Despite the demagoguery the young leader from Frontenac often used in his speeches, the people in the coal fields soon began to look to him as an alternative to Sandidge's Democratic organization. Saia's control over the coal fields would lead him to become a power in Crawford County politics. A direct result of his WPA fight would be his election as county commissioner in 1938.

Joe Saia on July 29, 1938, at the age of thirty-five, announced he would seek the Democratic nomination for County Commissioner of the Second District.⁵⁴ Saia's interest in the county commission was natural. The county commissioners were responsible for the distribution of welfare funds and also certified the unemployed for relief funds.

The Frontenac Democrat originally did not plan to seek the office of county commissioner. He felt that because of his Italian origins, he could not win. Other Italian-Americans had sought elective office in Crawford County on both the Democratic and Republican tickets and had failed. Furthermore, Saia did not want to run for office because his wife and children were opposed to the idea. They had borne the trials of his WPA days when he had been fired and hired several times a week. Joe now had a steady job with the Joseph Smith Tobacco Company and they wanted him to keep it.

Saia instead sought to find another candidate to make the race. He asked three different individuals to run for the office. After each person agreed to run, Dr. Sandidge would force him to withdraw by threatening his job. Joe, faced with this situation, decided to make the race himself. The reluctant candidate, with his interest in relief programs, entered the race for county commissioner feeling that he could accomplish more as county commissioner than in any other position open to him.⁵⁵ It is because of this commitment that the political leader of Crawford County never left his job as county commissioner despite offers of more prestigious offices.⁵⁶

Saia's 1938 platform reflected his concern for the unemployed in the county. The platform had three major planks which he reiterated in every campaign speech:

1. I favor an equitable distribution of the social security for the old people.
2. I positively do not favor the hiring of snoopers to be your case workers and will neither hire or recommend any. I propose the hiring of women who have been mothers [as case workers] - women with a heart who know what it is to try to raise a family on \$38.50 a month.
3. I believe that this county is entitled to a commissioner who will see that unemployed coal miners get their certification before their families starve to death or before they die from lack of medical attention.⁵⁷

Sandidge selected Ed Fleming to run against Saia in the Democratic primary and made sure Fleming's campaign was well financed. On the other hand, Joe depended upon contributions from WPA workers. The Saia campaign, in the primary election, cost less than one hundred dollars.⁵⁸ Instead of depending upon a well financed campaign,

Saia depended on the popularity he gained in the WPA fight and on grass roots campaign stumping. He spoke at every school district and town meeting or anywhere he could gain the attention of a crowd of voters. Throughout the campaign, references were made to his experience as a former coal miner and reminded the voters of his fight for more WPA jobs.⁵⁹ Saia, at the beginning of the primary campaign, experienced some problems delivering his campaign speeches. Sandidge sent WPA foremen and timekeepers to the place where Joe was to speak. These men would heckle Saia's attempts to present his case. The booing and cat-calling continued to plague Saia's campaign until one evening when the candidate was to speak at Pittsburg. At the meeting Joe was escorted by one known throughout the county as a "strong arm man." When the hecklers began to boo Saia, this escort stood up and threatened to bodily throw out the next man who booed. That was the last attempt to heckle Saia and he experienced no more problems during the rest of his campaign.⁶⁰

Saia won the nomination in the primary with fifty-two per cent of the vote receiving 1,332 votes to Fleming's 840, while 442 votes were scattered between two minor candidates, George Hallam and W. P. Johnson. The Frontenac Democrat's success in the primary is best explained by his overwhelming popularity in the former coal mining area of Washington Township. In Washington Township, Saia received 65.9 per cent of the total vote compared to only 38.2 per cent in the five precincts outside of Washington Township. Without this overwhelming vote

in Washington Township, which was largely composed of hyphenated Americans over whom Sandidge had little influence, Joe would have had a hard time winning the primary.⁶¹

Saia's next target was Dr. Sandidge himself who was up for re-election as county chairman. At the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee organization meeting on August 20, 1938, in Girard the insurgent Democrats were out-manuevered by Sandidge. The Democrats who opposed the Crawford County boss demanded a secret ballot. They realized that a large number of the committee persons were WPA foremen, timekeepers, and their relatives and would not openly oppose Sandidge for fear of their jobs. James Harvey, a committeeman from Girard and spokesman for the insurgents, advocated a secret ballot. Harvey charged that there had been a considerable amount of intimidation on the part of Sandidge on WPA employees and declared "it's time for this to stop."⁶²

Sandidge, as presiding officer of the meeting, out-manuevered the insurgents by ruling that a roll call vote on the question of a secret ballot be taken. This strategy cancelled the fight for a secret ballot. The vote, as expected, overwhelmingly supported Sandidge's position, with ninety-seven votes for a roll call and only twelve voting for a secret ballot. Saia, knowing he had no chance of success, nominated his half brother, Charles Cicero, a precinct committeeman from Frontenac, for county chairman. Sandidge defeated Cicero by a vote of ninety-five to thirteen and was re-elected

to a third term as county chairman.⁶³ The editor of the Pittsburg Headlight, after the party fight in Girard admonished Saia for his naiveté. The editor advised that instead of moral indignation Saia must be the "master of his situation" in his political fights:

The political game is played according to certain rules. Sometimes there are variations of these rules to fit occasions. The variations often arouse indignation and other emotions. But the fact remains that in politics as in war and love, there is a disposition to count everything fair. The leader who is master of his situation and wins, commands a certain respect, and often admiration.⁶⁴

Saia would not soon forget this advice and it played an important part in his political education. The political neophyte would never again permit moral indignation to cloud his perspective. Joe Saia admired Dr. Allen Sandidge, despite their ideological differences for his political mastery and many times in his career Saia would use tactics he had learned from Sandidge. The neophyte had learned from the mentor that a politician must be the master of the situation.

An informal truce between Saia and Sandidge was agreed upon after the Girard meeting for the sake of party unity. The Democratic candidate for commissioner conducted his campaign in the same manner as he had in the primary, speaking anywhere a crowd gathered to listen to him. Saia, by this stage of the campaign, had attracted quite an amount of notoriety for his fight against Sandidge and had no problem finding a forum for his colorful speeches.

The 1938 campaign in Crawford County was climaxed by a high election-eve rally by the Democrats at Lincoln Park in Pittsburg. Rallies were an important element in election campaigning during the 1930's. They offered vast amounts of food and in a time of depression, when money was scarce and before the age of television, an offer of free food and entertainment attracted many prospective voters. The parties, competing for the largest crowd to hear their candidates, would try to outdo the other in either the amount of food or the most grandiose entertainment. The practice of having large election-eve rallies with free food and entertainment is still retained in the 1970's preserving a part of a colorful past. The Democrats pulled out all stops in 1938. This Democratic rally offered a free barbecue in which 1,600 pounds of beef, 1,000 loaves of bread, 10,000 doughnuts, and 1,000 gallons of coffee were prepared.⁶⁵ The Democrats also provided for entertainment a pre-rally parade through Pittsburg with drum corps and floats. Congressman Patterson was the main speaker at the rally. A New Deal Democrat slightly to the left of Roosevelt, he spoke on the need for more federal programs for the aged and the needy. Saia and the rest of the county ticket delivered short addresses. Joe Saia on November 18, 1938, was elected to his first term as county commissioner. He won despite the Republican sweep that took place in Kansas in 1938. The Republican victories which saw Democratic Senator George McGill, Governor Huxman, and E. W.

Patterson defeated were, in part, a Kansas reaction against Roosevelt's courtpacking plan. The Democrats in Crawford County controlled only three county offices while, the Republicans won seven on election day.

Saia received fifty-six per cent of the vote in defeating Ross Parmenter, the Republican candidate. The Frontenac Democrat did as well in Washington Township as he had in the primary. Saia's popularity in the former coal mining area is demonstrated by comparing his vote with that of the rest of the county Democratic ticket and the vote the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State received in Washington Township.⁶⁶ Saia, in Washington Township, received sixty-one per cent while the average for the other Democratic county candidates was fifty-four per cent.⁶⁷ The Democratic candidate for Secretary of State received fifty-five per cent. In the fourth ward of Pittsburg and Smelter Precinct where the strength of Sandidge was greatest, Saia trailed the county ticket by four per cent and the Secretary of State candidate by eleven per cent.⁶⁸

Joe Saia in 1938 became the first person of Italian descent to win an election in Crawford County.⁶⁹ His election depended largely upon his activities with and for the WPA workers and the unemployed in Crawford County. The skills necessary to become a successful candidate and an influential factor in the Democratic party came from many years involvement in union activities. Saia's entrance into politics was a

natural avenue for him, considering his personal ambition, lack of a formal education, and the fact of his Italian descent. The many hardships that the young politician had to face in the rough give-and-take of politics in the coal fields gave him a political education that he would never forget and which would be reflected in his activities throughout the rest of his career.

5. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Sais, February 12, 1973.
7. Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics, (New York, 1952), 39.
8. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Sais, February 12, 1973.
9. Robert E. Lane, Political Life, Why People Get Involved in Politics, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), 102. Cited hereafter, Lane, Political Life.
10. Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin, (New York, 1954), 205.
11. Lane, Political Life, 239.
12. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Sais, February 12, 1973.
13. Frontenac Press, August 24, 1934.
14. Frontenac Press, March 29, 1935.
15. Frontenac Press, April 6, 1935.
16. Frontenac Press, November 6, 1936.
17. Interview with Charles Cicero, February 18, 1973. Mr. Cicero was editor of the Frontenac Press and a Democratic precinct committeeman in Frontenac from 1934 to 1940.
18. Frontenac Press, August 20, 1937.
19. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Sais, February 12, 1973.
20. Frontenac Press, August 20, 1937.
21. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Sais, February 12, 1973.

NOTES

1. Records of Declaration of Intentions of Naturalization Filed in Crawford County, Volume 10, Crawford County Judicial Center, Pittsburg, Kansas.
2. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
3. Ibid..
4. Ibid..
5. Frontenac Press, July 29, 1938.
6. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
7. Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics, (New York, 1952), 39.
8. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
9. Robert E. Lane, Political Life, Why People Get Involved in Politics, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), 102. Cited hereafter, Lane, Political Life.
10. Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins, (New York, 1964), 205.
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12. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
13. Frontenac Press, August 24, 1934.
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16. Frontenac Press, November 6, 1936.
17. Interview with Charles Cicero, February 19, 1975. Mr. Cicero was editor of the Frontenac Press and a Democratic precinct committeeman in Frontenac from 1934 to 1940.
18. Frontenac Press, August 20, 1937.
19. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
20. Frontenac Press, August 20, 1937.
21. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.

22. A large number of WPA workers in Crawford County were former farmers. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
23. Ibid.
24. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Vol. I Number of Inhabitants, Total Populations for States, Counties, and Minor Civil Divisions for Urban and Rural Areas, for Incorporated Places, for Metropolitan Districts, and for Census Tracts, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1942, 68.
25. Frontenac Press, April 12, 1940.
26. New York Times, January 18, 1937.
27. Pittsburg Headlight, July 12, 1937.
28. Pittsburg Headlight, July 5, 1937.
29. Ibid.
30. Pittsburg Headlight, July 26, 1937.
31. Chanute Tribune, July 6, 1937.
32. Chanute Tribune, July 7, 1937.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Pittsburg Headlight, July 12, 1937.
36. Arma Record, July 22, 1937.
37. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
38. Pittsburg Headlight, July 27, 1937.
39. Chanute Tribune, July 26, 1937.
40. Ibid.
41. Pittsburg Headlight, July 27, 1937.
42. Chanute Tribune, July 27, 1937.

43. Pittsburg Headlight, July 27, 1937.
44. Chanute Tribune, July 27, 1937.
45. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
46. Chanute Tribune, July 27, 1937.
47. Pittsburg Headlight, July 30, 1937.
48. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
49. Chanute Tribune, July 30, 1937.
50. Independence Daily Reporter, January 13, 1937.
51. Pittsburg Headlight, August 10, 1937.
52. Ibid.
53. New York Times, August 25, 1937.
54. Frontenac Press, July 29, 1938.
55. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
56. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
57. Frontenac Press, November 4, 1938.
58. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia by Marvin A. Harder, August 11, 1958, recorded by radio station KAKE, Wichita, Kansas.
59. Frontenac Press, November 4, 1938.
60. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.
61. Pittsburg Headlight, August 3, 1938.
62. Pittsburg Headlight, August 20, 1938.
63. Frontenac Press, August 29, 1938.
64. Pittsburg Headlight, August 22, 1938.
65. Pittsburg Headlight, November 7, 1938.
66. Party strength is measured by the vote the party's candidate for Secretary of State received. Interview with Harold Hutchins, December 11, 1974. Mr. Hutchins is the County Clerk of Crawford County.

67. The average of the Democratic county candidates in 1938 was compiled by averaging the votes the Democratic candidates received in contested races. These were County Attorney, County Clerk, County Treasurer, Probate Judge, Register of Deeds, and Sheriff.
68. Records of County Clerk, "Abstract of Votes Casted in General Elections in Crawford County, Kansas." Volume D, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas. For breakdown of 1938 results for the Second Commission District see Appendix VII, 139.
69. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.

morning from people who need his assistance because they know that he will "get on the phone" and look after their interests. The telephone is the most important tool Joe has at his disposal; almost every room in his home has one, including one within reach of his shower in the bathroom.

The second district commissioner will talk to anyone with a problem at his home, place of business, or at his office. Saia's answer, when asked if he ever grows tired of being beseeched by so many people with so many problems, is that he considers it his obligation as county commissioner to try to help the people who call on him for assistance. He believes that the person asking for help is in real need: "The least I can do is help or give him advice, whether it is in my power to do anything for him or not." It is because of this untiring dedicated service that many of the citizens of his district affectionately call him "Papa Joe." It is the purpose of this chapter to examine Saia's conduct in the office of county commissioner.

The typical day in the life of Joe Saia is strenuous. He rises at five every morning to begin his long day as party leader

CHAPTER III

"PAPA JOE"

D. J. Saia has served as county commissioner of the second district for over three decades, a state if not a national record. The Frontenac commissioner has developed a paternal relationship with his constituents in his many years in office. He receives phone calls as late as midnight and as early as 5:30 in the morning from people who need his assistance because they know that he will "get on the phone" and look after their interests. The telephone is the most important tool Joe has at his disposal; almost every room in his home has one, including one within reach of his shower in the bathroom.

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The typical day in the life of Joe Saia is strenuous. He rises at five every morning to begin his long day as party leader

and county commissioner. The time between getting up and leaving for Girard, the county seat, is spent taking telephone calls from constituents, reading the many newspapers to which he subscribes, and reading and answering his mail. The routine continues until around nine when he leaves for Girard. The moment he arrives in the courthouse he is besieged by people with problems ranging from getting a job to helping to get a son admitted to law school.

At ten o'clock, twice a week, Joe bangs the gavel, as commission chairman, calling the Crawford County Board of Commissioners to order. The agenda generally ranges from complaints on conditions of county roads to the providing of home health care for senior citizens. The commission meeting terminates around noon and the chairman of the commissioners then drops by the various county offices to make sure things are moving smoothly or to see if anything needs his attention. Saia, upon completing these duties, returns to Frontenac and makes the telephone calls promised to those who had asked for his help. This routine has been the same since he took office on January 6, 1939. In addition to this busy schedule, the Crawford County commissioner has found time to be a businessman, gardener, and an active participant in civic organizations.

It is difficult to separate Saia the commissioner from Saia the politician for with him the two positions are synonymous. Joe uses both positions to fulfil the expectations of his constituents and to build the power that he enjoys in the county and the Democratic

Party. The Frontenac politician, through his role as party leader, has been able to secure jobs and services from state patronage that the county was not able to provide. He used his position as commissioner to provide the governmental services that maintains the Democratic Party's strength in the county. It is because of his dexterity with the governmental and political offices he holds that has retained his power for more than three decades.

D. J. Saia took office on January 6, 1939, and immediately began consolidating the power that was available to a county commissioner. This consolidation did not take place without a struggle. The other county commissioners were Republicans and were controlled by the Republican political commissar of the county, Dr. J. T. Moore of Pittsburg. Dr. Moore distrusted the young commissioner from the second district and tried to curb the newcomer's influence. The county Republican leader understood politics and he realized that diminishing the number of appointments the Democratic commissioner had at his disposal could effectively undermine Saia's power. Traditionally, each commissioner had responsibility for county highway department appointments for his district. Each commissioner in 1938 would have eleven appointments. Joe Saia immediately replaced the county highway crew with appointments of his own and the other
3
commissioners refused to approve his appointments.

Saia invited the commissioners to his home to clear up the situation. He repeatedly asked them to approve his appointments and upon their refusal he threatened to take his case to the people. The

Democratic commissioner reminded his colleagues that in the last election his Republican opponent charged that it would be no use electing him because it was a Republican board and as a Democrat Joe would have his hands tied. During the campaign, the Frontenac Democrat had responded that while there was a radio station he would be able to speak for the residents of the second district adding,⁴ "They could tie my hands but they couldn't tie my tongue."

The commissioner from the second district threatened to use the radio to inform the citizens of Crawford County that Dr. Moore was ruling the board of commissioners from his home. He claimed he would reveal how the commission was a Charlie McCarthy on the lap of the Republican party leader. The Republican commissioners did not initially believe that Saia would carry out his threat, but when he got up and called the radio station and reserved fifteen minutes for the next evening they took him seriously. An agreement was reached and Joe Saia was granted the power to make appointments⁵ for the second district.

The county commissioner's chief concern was the high unemployment in the county. In fact, two-thirds of Crawford County's budget in 1940 was for relief programs. Of utmost concern to Joe Saia in his first years in office was how to secure more WPA jobs in Crawford County. The Frontenac commissioner lobbied with state, district and national WPA officials for more WPA projects in Crawford County immediately after he was elected.

Crawford County faced a serious WPA crisis in July, 1939. On July 1, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Federal Relief Bill which abolished the practice of paying union rates for WPA employees and required relief workers to work one hundred and thirty hours a month rather than the previous seventy-seven.⁶

Strikes were common at WPA projects in Crawford County protesting the changed schedule of hours and pay. These were, in fact, nationwide as strikers marched from project to project urging relief workers to join the strike. Violence broke out in Crawford County when strikers tried to force all of the projects to close. Eighty-five per cent of the 1,500 WPA employees were on strike in Crawford County by July 11. E. J. Terill, state director of the WPA, reported that in Kansas the WPA protest "has taken the largest proportions in Crawford County."⁷

A mass meeting was held by WPA protestors in Arma on July 12, in which a conference between a committee representing the relief workers and the county commissioners and officials was called. The next evening Joe Saia was asked to address a mass meeting of the strikers because of the real prospect of violence. The disgruntled WPA workers trusted the Frontenac commissioner because of his apparent willingness to fight for them. The second district commissioner, despite the fact that he was attending a meeting in Chanute, rushed to Crawford County to address the strikers. Saia's oratory to the relief workers at the mass meeting was credited with helping cool tempers.⁸

The following day a committee of the WPA protestors met with the county commissioners and city officials. A telegram was composed at the meeting to be sent to Washington. The telegram stated that one-third of Crawford County was on relief and that the proposed changes in the WPA would put stress upon the county budget since the county would have to provide direct relief to those displaced from WPA. WPA strikers voted, after the conference, to return to work for a ten day waiting period to see if Congress would take any action. ⁹ The crisis was resolved on July 28 when Congress voted to ¹⁰ increase the WPA budget.

Joe Saia, not content with this temporary solution, initiated efforts for new relief projects in the county. The Frontenac commissioner's efforts achieved results. He was able to announce in November, 1939, that, after a series of conferences with state and district WPA officials, WPA jobs for virtually every certified unemployed woman in the county. He took particular pride in announcing that the program he had championed, free hot lunches for school ¹¹ children of low income families, would also go into effect.

The Frontenac commissioner proclaimed another increase in the number of relief jobs on January 12, 1940. Joe Saia had visited with Roosevelt's assistant Secretary of War, former Kansas Governor Harry Woodring, on a number of occasions about federal government approval of a dam recharging project in Crawford County. Joe advocated that the labor be done by hand so that more men needing assistance would be employed. Woodring wired Saia on January 12

announcing the approval in Washington of the Crawford County WPA dam project. The dam recharging project not only employed over four hundred additional workers but also helped conserve farm lands¹² in the county.

Congress proposed to cut WPA funds again in April, 1940, and Joe Saia immediately led the fight in the county to oppose the cuts. The Crawford County commissioner again used radio station KOAM to rally support for the WPA. He discussed the economic conditions that existed in the county and what the proposed WPA cut would mean. Commissioner Saia explained that one-third of the county depended upon relief but approximately half were eligible to work on the WPA. He asserted that \$11.60 in groceries was given each month to a family on relief and if the WPA was reduced, that amount would be cut by Crawford County to provide for the greater number on relief rolls. The Frontenac commissioner suggested that the people write their congressman and urge continuation of the WPA program, reminding his radio audience, "To have good government, you cannot have hungry men, women, and children. . .made desperate by the needs of their families."¹³

World War II, with its demand for able-bodied men and the war production effort, temporarily ended the unemployment problem. The need for relief programs such as the WPA no longer existed, and a majority of them were abolished. County government reflected the change from a peace time to a war time economy. Local governments during the war were expected to participate in scrap metal drives

to collect iron and other metals for the defense plants. Joe Saia was selected as chairman of the Crawford County Salvage Committee. The Crawford County commissioner utilized his organizational skills and the scrap metal drive was as efficient as one of his political campaigns. The drive chairman organized the county at the precinct level and appointed two captains in charge of each precinct. The drive was so efficient that in the first month 250 tons of scrap were collected.

The war witnessed the end of the Depression and the role of the county government had to change. The billions of dollars pumped into the economy by defense spending produced a prosperous national economy. The American people, after many years of tightening their belts and depending upon government relief, now expected more governmental services. Since the Second World War, county government's have experienced tremendous growth in their functions. Counties, prior to 1945, were primarily responsible for keeping records, administering justice, road and bridge construction and repair, and relief. The decades following the war witnessed new responsibilities such as health services, creation of utility systems, and administration of ambulance services.

Joe Saia also reflected the changing role of county government by his activities as county commissioner. One of the county's main concerns after the war was highway construction. Crawford County, in the years following the war, was unable to attract new grants were funded by the county. A Mental Health Board, for example,

industries to alleviate its high rate of unemployment. The Frontenac county commissioner believed that the best way to attract new industries and help relieve the economic woes of the county was to link the county with the state highway system. Robert Docking's unprecedented four terms as Governor, beginning in 1966, allowed all members of the State Highway Commission to be appointed by a Democratic Governor. Saia used his influence with the Governor and with the "friendly" highway commission, to secure increased highway construction funds for the county. The second district commissioner was largely responsible for the construction of the by-passes on US 69 around Pittsburg and the Arma-Franklin area as well as the modernizing of Kansas 57 from Pittsburg to the Missouri state line. Congress passed the State and Local Fiscal Act in 1972.

Joe Saia also took an active interest in extending utility services to homes in the rural communities of the second district. He was largely responsible for extending water service to these communities and played an important part in the extension of natural gas service to Arma, Franklin, and Frontenac.

D. J. Saia has taken special interest in health care throughout his career. He feels that his greatest accomplishments have been in this area. The commissioner from Frontenac, who came from a low income family, understood how hard it was for a family on a fixed income to receive adequate health care and sought to remedy the situation. Through Joe Saia's leadership a number of health programs were funded by the county. A Mental Health Board, for example,

was founded in November, 1961. The board, composed of doctors, college professors, leaders of civic groups, and representatives of the city and county governments, determined that the county needed a mental health clinic. It was the second district commissioner who piloted the efforts which created the Crawford County Mental Health Clinic. The commissioner from Frontenac also pioneered the foundation of the Crawford County Health Department. 20

The National Association of Counties, in recognition of his work in the field of health care, appointed Joe Saia as a member of the health steering committee of the association. The committee, comprised of forty-five county officials from all over the nation, reviewed proposed health care legislation pending in Congress. 21

Congress passed the State and Local Fiscal Act in 1972. This act, commonly known as revenue sharing, had important affects upon Crawford County. The law allocated six billion dollars to state and local governments for five years. The revenue sharing act granted local officials the authority to spend the funds as they deemed necessary. 22 Crawford County received in 1972 over a quarter-million dollars in federal funds under this program. The county commission created a planning commission to decide how these federal funds would be used. The hearings of the planning commission were often lively with the various groups and local governments seeking a share of the funds. On one occasion, debate went beyond mere verbal confrontation. A Frontenac city commissioner, Owen O'Hara, who had asked for \$12,000 for the city of 23

Frontenac, became so frustrated with Saia's refusal to accept his demands that he asked Joe to take off his glasses. When the county commissioner obliged him, the Frontenac city commissioner
24
gave him a good punch in the eye.

The county commissioners, after tempers cooled, agreed on how to spend the revenue sharing funds. A large share of the funds were used on road and bridge construction and repair. The commission, with the remainder of the federal money along with county funds, built a new judicial center in Pittsburg and funded one of the few county administered juvenile detention homes in the state. The county was able to accomplish all of this without an increase in the budget or mill levy, thanks to funds
25
received through the revenue sharing plan.

Joe Saia's activities have been critized by his own party as well as Republicans during the years he has served as county commissioner. Controversy surrounds the commissioner from Frontenac and Crawford County commission meetings are often quite exciting. More than once they have turned to fisticuffs, Joe Saia was on one occasion, involved in an heated argument with Republican commissioner, Donald McPhail of Pittsburg. In the course of the debate, McPhail made a derogatory remark about Joe's parents' national origin, calling him a "black dago." The commissioner from Frontenac immediately leaped from his chair and a physical confrontation ensued. It took the other commissioner

and the sheriff to separate the two battling commissioners. The scrapping commissioner recalled with pride that after that day McPhail never again referred to his Italian descent and always addressed him as "Mr. Saia."²⁶

One of the most controversial incidents in Joe Saia's long career as county commissioner involved the charges of the misuse of Emergency Employment Act funds in the Kansas Public Employment Program (K.P.E.P.). Allegations of abuse of the K.P.E.P. made the headlines of the major newspapers of Kansas and pitted D. J. Saia against the county attorney of Crawford County and the Kansas lieutenant governor.

The K.P.E.P. was financed by federal funds from the Emergency Employment Act. Since the program was financed with federal funds, the employees hired were under the restrictions of the Hatch act and other federal guidelines. The board of county commissioners recommended to the Governor's Committee on Man-Power Planning twenty-three unemployed whom they felt were qualified to work under the K.P.E.P. Saia, as chairman of the county commission, served as county coordinator of the program in Crawford County.²⁷

The hiring by the county of the twenty-three unemployed workers under the K.P.E.P. was approved by the K.P.E.P. executive director, John M. Taylor II.²⁸

County attorney Vernon D. Grassie, erst-while opponent of Saia, immediately charged that the funds were being misused. Grassie contended that the county commission used the funds to hire

relatives of the commissioners, full-time college students, persons under investigation for gambling violations, and persons who were out on strike. The county attorney of Crawford County charged that Thomas Murry, son of county commissioner Pete Murry, was hired as a deputy sheriff; that Charles Saia, a cousin of D. J. Saia, was hired to work on road maintenance and that Marjorie Tucker, an ex-wife of Joe Saia, was hired to work as a night custodian. Joe Saia, when contacted by the press, commented on the allegations, "I think somebody's making a damn mountain out of a molehill." The Crawford County commissioner said of a proposed federal investigation, "I have nothing to hide. We can stand an investigation."

The Department of Labor announced on March 1, 1972, that an investigation would be held on the allegations of misuse of Emergency Act Funds by the department's regional office in Kansas. The K.P.E.P. also joined with the Department of Labor in the investigation of Crawford County's use of Emergency Employment Act funds. The state and federal investigators visited Crawford County late in March to inspect the county's program. These officials talked with Grassie, the county commissioners, and other county officials during their investigation.

The investigators found two individuals that were ineligible to participate in the program. One was James Sellers who was hired as a deputy sheriff. Sellers had been employed by Crawford County less than thirty days before he was hired under the K.P.E.P., violating Paragraph 55.7(e) of the regulations. Another participant,

Thomas Murry, was declared ineligible; the executive director of the K.P.E.P. ruling that Murry's appointment violated a policy that had recently been released by the U. S. Department of Labor. 34 Charles Saia was ruled as being eligible because he was a distant relative of the second district commissioner along with Marjorie Tucker since she had been divorced.

Joe Saia immediately wrote the K.P.E.P. office pointing out that he had never received the policy directive from the Department of Labor and hence Murry's appointment had been proper. Partisan politics entered into the dispute on April 25, 1972, when Kansas Lieutenant Governor Reynolds Shultz, a candidate for the Republican nomination for Governor, called for a full scale probe of the situation in Crawford County by Attorney General Vern Miller. Shultz had met with Vernon Grassie on April 24 and had received copies of letters Grassie had written to Department of Labor and K.P.E.P. officials describing his charges against the county commission. The Crawford County attorney gave Shultz 35 permission to make the letters public.

The Kansas Attorney General, after studying Shultz's charges, replied that he had found "nothing that indicates any violation of the law," and declined to conduct an investigation. Miller stated that he was not convinced that Shultz really wanted a probe because he had refused to send him all the material that Grassie had given 36 him.

Crawford County's hiring procedures, which the county immediately adopted, and gave the county's program a clean bill of health. The

Joe Saia, in reply to Shultz's allegations immediately wrote the lieutenant governor accusing him of wanting to "commence a witch hunt reminiscent of 'McCarthyism'." The Crawford County commissioner in his letter reminded Shultz that no evidence produced had shown any unlawful use of federal funds. Saia admitted that one man, James Sellers was erroneously employed and that he was at once terminated when it was shown he was not qualified. The commissioner from Frontenac pointed out that Sellers had recently filed as the Republican candidate for sheriff. Saia concluded the letter ripping the lieutenant governor for immature judgment and saying "your leadership as lieutenant governor has been so sterile as to suggest its [the office] elimination if occupied by people like you."

The Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs of the Department of Labor, in a letter to Congressman Joe Skubitz, cleared the county of any wrong doing when it appointed Thomas Murry. The Labor official wrote that Murry had been hired prior to the county's being informed of the Department of Labor's anti-nepotism policy. The letter concluded that when Crawford County finally became aware of the policy, the situation was cleared "indicating that the county is properly concerned about operating the program in keeping with our guidelines."

The K.P.E.P. after its investigation recommended changes in Crawford County's hiring procedures, which the county immediately adopted, and gave the county's program a clean bill of health. The

remaining Grassie allegation that had not been settled by the March K.P.E.P. and Department of Labor investigation involved the charge of the county hiring strikers on the program. The matter was referred to the office of the Solicitor at the Department of Labor. After checking with the Manpower Administration regional director, it was revealed that the strikers had been replaced by the company that was on strike and therefore the men in question were eligible to participate in the K.P.E.P. program.

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Vernon Grassie's role in the K.P.E.P. controversy in 1972

appears to have been a publicity maneuver in his battle with the Crawford County Democratic chairman. The publicity caused by the Grassie charges of misuse of Emergency Employment Act funds led to the discovery of several discrepancies in the employment procedures of the program in the county. The county attorney's actions, however, suggest that his primary goal was not to remedy the situation but instead to create another furor with Joe Saia and the board of county commissioners. A month before he made his allegations on the administration of the K.P.E.P. in Crawford County, the county attorney complained of his inability to perform his duties in the field of liquor law enforcement and threatened to arrest the Crawford County Bar Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and a state Supreme Court Justice. Grassie, after the publicity died down, dropped his investigation of the case. A few weeks after his K.P.E.P. allegations the Crawford County attorney charged that the county commission had spent \$131,739.96.

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having the toilets in the courthouse painted in pastel pinks and
 41
 blue and in making a single felony conviction.

Grassie's motivations in the K.P.E.P. controversy can be explained in a letter he wrote to Reynolds Shultz. The county attorney could not help but realize that facing an uphill battle for the Republican nomination for Governor, the lieutenant governor would use the information provided to him to mount an attack on the Democratic Party in order to gain some political points among Republicans. Grassie's letter to Shultz thanked him "for your kind remarks in recent news releases." The Crawford County attorney wrote that "I am in a position of being a Democrat criticizing the acts of other Democrats" and complained that before the controversy over the K.P.E.P., "I have attempted, without success, to bring some of the practices of a particular Democrat in Crawford County [D. J. Saia] into the public light. Unfortunately, the people of Crawford County are so used to peddling and political favoritism
 42
 that they react little."

It is logical to presume that if Grassie was indeed serious in his concern over the way the K.P.E.P. was being run in Crawford County, he would have quietly collected evidence of any wrong doing and taken it to the K.P.E.P. and Department of Labor officials before calling a news conference and making allegations.

Joe Saia was to have many more scraps with the county attorney, none of which seriously jeopardized Saia's standing in the county or the party. The years that Saia had worked in the mines and on the

WPA had taught him to be tough and to roll with the punches. The commissioner was able to conduct the duties of his offices when under an attack just as well as he had in more quiet times.

Joe Saia, in the thirty-six years as county commissioner of Crawford County, has accomplished much in the areas of construction of modern roads, connecting the county with the state highway systems and the creation of a mental health clinic. There are, throughout the county, constant reminders of Saia's influence. There is, however, much more to Saia's record than buildings and roads. Of all of Papa Joe's accomplishments, perhaps the greatest is the help extended to the individuals who came to him for assistance.

Joe Saia, in a radio address in 1958, gave an insight on why he has dedicated his life to the office of county commissioner:

I would hate to see the clock turned back to the time when a man in need had to humble himself with hat-in-hand and on bended knee before he could get food or medical attention for his wife and children. It happened to me when my family and I were in need....I shall always place the rights of those in need and in distress above property rights.⁴³

The venerable commissioner has never forgot what it was like to be poor. It was surely for more than votes that Joe dedicated much of his life to helping hundreds of people. In an age when government has become impersonal, Papa Joe has served as a visible link with the people and their government. This explains why so many people come to him. They know that he will listen and help.

NOTES

1. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia by Marvin Harder, August 11, 1958, recorded by radio station KAKE, Wichita, Kansas.
2. Joe Saia belongs to the Eagles, Elks, and Lions clubs. Although invited on several occasions to join the Chamber of Commerce, he has refused saying, "the people I represent doesn't belong to the Chamber of Commerce." Ibid..
3. Pittsburg Sun, January 20, 1939.
4. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
5. Ibid..
6. New York Times, July 6, 1939.
7. Pittsburg Headlight, July 11, 1939.
8. Kansas City Star, November 17, 1968.
9. Pittsburg Headlight, July 15, 1939.
10. New York Times, July 29, 1939.
11. Frontenac Press, November 24, 1939.
12. Frontenac Press, January 12, 1940.
13. Frontenac Press, April 12, 1940.
14. Pittsburg Headlight, October 7, 1942.
15. Kansas Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, Modernizing Kansas Government, A Report with Recommendations of the Kansas Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, December, 1972, 8.
16. League of Kansas Municipalities, County Commissioner's Handbook, Topeka, Kansas, 1973, 58-65.
17. D. J. "Joe" Saia Television Address, KOAM T.V., Pittsburg, Kansas, November 4, 1962. Script in D. J. "Joe" Saia Collection (in his personal possession). Cited hereafter, Saia Collection.
18. Pittsburg Morning Sun, April 30, 1975.
19. Pittsburg Headlight, November 5, 1962.

20. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, February 7, 1973.
21. Gladys Spellman, President National Association of Counties, to J. D. Saia (sic) February 5, 1973, Saia Collection.
22. Susan W. Torrence, Grass Roots Government, The County in American Politics, (New York, New York, 1974), 190.
190.
23. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, December 29, 1972.
24. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
25. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, February 16, 1972.
26. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
27. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, February 23, 1972.
28. John M. Taylor II, Executive Director, Kansas Public Employment Program, to D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 23, 1972, Saia Collection.
29. Wichita Eagle, March 2, 1972.
30. Wichita Eagle, March 1, 1972.
31. Wichita Eagle, March 2, 1972.
32. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, June 17, 1972.
33. John Taylor II, Executive Director, Kansas Public Employment Program, to D. J. "Joe" Saia, March 7, 1972, Saia Collection.
34. John Taylor II, Executive Director, Kansas Public Employment Program, to D. J. "Joe" Saia, March 27, 1972, Saia Collection.
35. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, April 25, 1975.
36. Ibid..
37. D. J. "Joe" Saia to Reynolds Shultz, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Kansas, April 25, 1972, Saia Collection.
38. Frederick L. Webber, Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs, U. S. Department of Labor, to Congressman Joe Skubitz, May 5, 1972, Saia Collection.

39. Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun, June 17, 1972.
40. Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun, February 26, 1972.
41. Vernon D. Grassie, Crawford County Attorney, Press Release April 27, 1975. Text in Saia Collection. Grassie's charges are contained in press release in Appendix IX, 152.
42. Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun, April 25, 1972. J. Saia, attending
43. D. J. "Joe" Saia Radio Address, 1958. Script in Saia Collection.

Saia clearly did not fit into the picture. But somehow there he was on the convention floor, an accomplishment which more heralded politicians were not able to achieve. If the scene seems a bit anachronistic to an outside observer, it must be remembered that Joe Saia's career is a living testament to a by-gone era. That he has succeeded and has defeated every attempt to replace him is a tribute to his prowess and his ability to adapt to almost any situation.

For thirty-seven years B. J. Saia has engaged in the rough and tumble battles of grass roots politics. Whether Saia has been a "two-legged bottled-in-the-bond political boss,"¹ as opponents have charged, or "the people's friend,"² as he likes to think of himself, it must be admitted that he has been a political organizer par excellence and a tireless, dedicated leader in the Democratic Party. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine how Joe Saia has survived and how he continues to wield political power long after many of his political obituaries in the newspapers have turned yellow and cracked with age.

One of the first things the new county commissioner did after winning the 1938 election was to initiate a struggle to wrestle the control of the county's Democratic Party from the hands of Dr.

CHAPTER IV

MASTER OF HIS SITUATION

The scene was the 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida. In the convention hall, among the swirling collection of blacks, youth, and women, was D. J. Saia, attending his seventh national convention. In that year of "new politics" Saia clearly did not fit into the picture. But somehow there he was on the convention floor, an accomplishment which more heralded politicians were not able to achieve. If the scene seems a bit anachronistic to an outside observer, it must be remembered that Joe Saia's career is a living testament to a by-gone era. That he has succeeded and has defeated every attempt to replace him is a tribute to his prowess and his ability to adapt to almost any situation.

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One of the first things the new county commissioner did after winning the 1938 election was to initiate a struggle to wrestle the control of the county's Democratic Party from the hands of Dr.

Alan Sandidge. The experience of his attempt to unseat Sandidge as Democratic County Chairman in 1938 showed him the necessity of being well organized so that at the time of the organizational meeting he would be in control of events. The Hatch Act passed by Congress in July, 1939, strengthened Saia's efforts.

Saia The Hatch Act forbade federal employees to be involved in partisan politics, and these provisions affected the selection of the Democratic County Chairman in 1940. The act also banned political activity by persons on federal relief programs.³ Since much of Sandidge's support in the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee depended upon WPA timekeepers and foremen, groups that could no longer be involved in the Democratic Party, his hold on the party was tenuous. The effect of the Hatch Act on the Crawford County Democratic Party is noticeable when the composition of the Democratic Central Committee in 1938 is compared to 1940. Central committee composition is normally stable from year to year with only a few precinct committeemen or women retiring or being replaced in the primary. In 1940, however, fifty-three per cent of the precinct officers were new, while in Baker Township, Sandidge's stronghold, there was a seventy-seven per cent turnover. Of the precinct people replaced in 1940, only eighteen per cent were defeated in the primary.⁴ This dramatic turnover in the composition of the central committee reflects the large number of WPA and other federal employees who were forced to resign from their precinct committee posts because of the Hatch Act. With his hold on the party weakened, Sandidge retired as

county chairman and chose A. H. Kunshek of Arma to succeed him. There was, however, a movement to block Kunshek's candidacy and take the control of the party away from Sandidge.

These insurgent Democrats were the same faction which had attempted to unseat Sandidge in 1938 and were led by D. J. Saia, State Senator Robert S. Lemon and Leo McKenna. The insurgents had matured since 1938, and their leaders now were skillful politicians ready to face the Sandidge organization.

The first round of the fight took place at the organizational meeting in Girard on August 24, 1940. At this meeting a temporary chairman was selected to preside over the regular central committee meeting which was to be held the next evening. The choice of temporary chairman was important since the chairman ruled on procedural questions. The vote also served to test the strength of the two factions. Sandidge was nominated for temporary chairman, and his opponent was Leo McKenna. The first fight concerned a secret ballot. The insurgents demanded a secret ballot to decrease the influence of Sandidge, while the chairman fought for a voice vote. Jo E. Gaitskill of Girard moved that the vote be taken by secret ballot. Sandidge ruled that the motion was out of order and proceeded to call the roll. Heated protests were raised immediately but the chairman continued with the roll call oblivious of the furor taking place on the floor. No longer able to contain himself, Saia jumped to his feet and shouted at the top of his voice that a vote be taken on a secret ballot. He exhorted to the precinct committeemen

and women: "This time the court room is not packed with time-keepers and foremen. If you have any relatives on WPA they will not be fired. You don't have to worry about Doc [Sandidge] this time. Doc can't get you a job today, and he can't get you fired. This is America and you vote as you see fit."⁵

Saia's speech encouraged a united demand for a vote for a secret ballot. Sandidge, realizing that he was defeated, called the vote for a secret ballot. The motion was adopted with only a few dissenting votes. Following the adoption of a secret ballot, the vote was taken on the temporary chairman. Leo McKenna defeated Sandidge by a vote of 57-55.⁶ That vote demonstrated that the insurgents had control of the central committee and hence would select the county chairman.

The regular central committee meeting was held the next evening. Sandidge nominated A. H. Kunshek and Saia nominated Robert Lemon of Pittsburg for county chairman. Kunshek, however, withdrew from the race, and the insurgents were swept into office. The Sandidge organization was dead, and the young politician from Frontenac's was able to take control of the county's Democratic Party. From 1940 on, either a protégé of Saia, or Saia himself was county chairman of Crawford.

Joe Saia became Crawford County Democratic Chairman in 1944 when Robert Lemon resigned to run for Governor. The newly elected chairman brought with him into office some definite ideas on how the party should be run.

Saia's fundamental priority as county chairman was to offer a Democratic candidate for every local office. He believed that if the Democratic Party was to become the majority party in Crawford County, it would be vital to challenge the Republicans in every race. Throughout his political career Joe placed great importance upon "filling of the ticket." He felt that by challenging the Republicans in every race the opposition party would not be permitted to concentrate their resources on only a few races. The venerable Democrat explained, "when you leave three or four vacancies on the ticket you've got those people out campaigning [for other Republican candidates] because they are assured of their jobs. It has been my theory to keep them busy at their own."⁷

Saia did not seek re-election as Democratic county chairman in 1946 because of a well organized attempt to unseat him as commissioner. In his place, his friend and cohort J. P. Gendusa of Pittsburg was selected. Gendusa served as county chairman until September, 1951, when he was appointed as postmaster of Pittsburg.⁸

D. J. Saia was returned as county chairman of Crawford County in 1952. A group of Democrats led by O. F. Grubbs planned to oppose the man from Frontenac, however, at the party's organizational meeting, Saia had such precinct committee support that the opposition was forced to withdraw and Joe was elected by acclamation. From 1952 until the present time, except for a

brief one-year term by Dr. Alvin H. Proctor, D. J. Saia has remained the Democratic chairman of Crawford County.

Saia stressed the idea of the full ticket but realized it takes more than mere ideas to make a successful political organization. A certain amount of skill and know how is required to attract good candidates. The Crawford County chairman, in recruiting a prospective candidate, tries to make the idea of a campaign attractive. Joe offers to bear the burden of campaign expenses for an aspiring politician and also introduces him to the county's central committee. The candidate, if successful, is asked to give an assessment of three per cent of his salary to the central committee to help defray election expenses. The assessment is eliminated if the candidate is unsuccessful.⁹

The concept of filling the ticket does not imply that just anyone is asked to run for an office. Joe strongly believes that the candidate should be "capable of running for the office he is seeking." He admits that in the past he has resorted to putting some lackluster candidates in the field merely to fill the ticket, but he is the first to concede that this just does not work.¹⁰

Expert advice on how to campaign for office, based on the commissioner's years of experience is provided to a Democratic candidate in addition to financial support. The novice politician is urged to contact and acquaint himself with the precinct committee-men or women, get some campaign cards printed, and shake as many

Republican candidate for commissioner ran a lackluster campaign

voters' hands as possible. Going to the grass roots, Joe believes, is the most important and successful technique in politics.¹¹

Jesse Unruh, the California political operator, once remarked that "money is the mother's milk of politics." In order to recruit candidates and provide financial assistance for their campaigns, money is needed. In the area of fund raising Joe Saia has been quite adept. The most successful methods of fund raising in Crawford County, Saia has found, are dinners and dances. These political rallies provide plenty of Crawford County's famous fried chicken and polka music. In 1968, forty-seven per cent of the party's war chest came from a Democratic dinner.¹² In the 1970 campaign forty-nine per cent of the party's funds were raised at a party dance.¹³ The Democratic Attorney General, Vern Miller, spoke at a dinner in 1972 which raised \$3,820.00 or fifty-two percent of the party's treasury.¹⁴

Commissioner Saia's first re-election campaign was the greatest election victory in his career. The Republican candidate in the 1942 election, Forest W. Pierce, was a friend of Joe's. Saia recounts how the Republican leadership got Pierce out of his bed the night they asked him to run for county commissioner. Pierce explained to his friend that he was promised a state job if he made the race. In fact, after the 1942 campaign Pierce supported Saia in the rest of his campaigns.¹⁵ The 1942 Republican candidate for commissioner ran a lackluster campaign

on the slogan of "Government of Americans, by Americans, for Americans."¹⁶ This appeal did not sit well among the heavily ethnic population of the second district. Saia on the other hand, campaigned on his accessibility. He reminded the voters that he welcomed anyone into his home who could not afford to travel to Girard to talk about his needs.¹⁷ This accessibility was a new concept. In the past, to speak to a county official, one had to make an appointment to see the official in Girard.¹⁸

The voters of the second commissioner district showed their approval of their commissioner by giving him a walloping seventy-two per cent of the vote on the election day. In Frontenac, three of the four wards gave Saia over ninety-one per cent of the vote. The 1942 election was the largest electoral victory that the Frontenac politician received in his thirty-seven years as a public official. What makes the 1942 landslide even more remarkable is that the Republicans actually received a majority of the votes in the second commissioner district for their county ticket, and the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State carried the district with only fifty-five percent of the vote.¹⁹

The 1946 election was one of the most vigorous efforts the Republican Party waged against D. J. Saia. Tony Simoncic, one of the most formidable opponents Saia would face, was the Republican candidate for commissioner from the second district. The Republican candidate had been a trustee of Washington Township for a number of years, a former personal property and real

estate assessor, and, like Saia, began as a coal miner.²⁰ At the outset, Simoncic campaigned on the slogan that it was time for a change and that if elected, he would "devote full time to the office and will not show favoritism to any clique, group, or nationality."²¹

Joe Saia opened his 1946 campaign on October 12, Columbus Day, with an automobile caravan through the second commissioner district. Accompanied by Jo E. Gaitskill of Girard, the Democratic candidate for Congress, and other Democratic county candidates, the Saia caravan visited the towns and hamlets of Washington Township. At each stop Saia would treat the audiences, who gathered in large numbers, with his now famous fiery oratory.²²

On October 29, at a Democratic rally, the Democratic county commissioner sounded out his theme for the 1946 campaign. "I am asking the voters to re-elect me as county commissioner on my record," Joe thundered, "I have fought for the needy and the helpless and those needing assistance of any kind." With particular pride Saia noted that there had been "no foreclosurers for delinquent taxes on homes of anyone on old age pensions." The Frontenac politician concluded his speech admitting that he, as county commissioner, would like to have done more for the district and the county, but reminded the audience that, after all, "I am the only Democrat on the three man board."²³

As the 1946 campaign neared its conclusion, the Republicans charged that the commissioner from the second district had abused his office. First, in a letter to the voters of the second

district, Simoncic accused Mr. Saia of padding his expense accounts and extending favors, as commissioner, to his friends by lowering property valuations.²⁴ The letter was followed by an ad in the Pittsburg Headlight on October 31 entitled "THE RECORD." Simoncic charged in the ad that Saia had not only padded his expense account but had used his influence as county commissioner to settle taxes for his personal gain. The ad charged that the county commissioner bought the building in which he operated his appliance store in Frontenac at a tax sale on January 21, 1946. Saia supposedly settled the taxes due on the building, which added up to \$1,140.79, for the sum of \$76.00.²⁵ Saia's reaction demonstrated that the years he spent in the mines and WPA had taught him how to fight back. He immediately placed ads in the papers defending the purchase of his property and the way he had conducted his office as county commissioner. The ad pointed out that the board of county commissioners of Crawford County followed a procedure whereby all of the commissioners submitted their expenses to the board and would not receive compensation unless approved by the majority. Joe also pointed out that the majority of the commissioners were Republicans. The ad reminded the reader that no single commissioner could reduce the valuation of property or the taxes due on any property. In regard to his appliance store and the property he had purchased, Saia disclosed that the Frontenac Furniture and Appliance Company

was owned by him and managed by his wife Marjorie Saia. The property was purchased from Mike Papish of Frontenac. At the conclusion of the ad was an affidavit by Papish, stating that Papish had sold the property to Saia on October 13, 1945. The building, Papish testified, had not been acquired by a tax deed as was claimed but rather from a direct sale by Papish to Saia.²⁶

Saia next challenged Simoncic to debate the charges he had leveled at him. The debate was held in Arma. Such excitement was aroused by the event that speakers had to be placed outside because the building could not hold the large crowd that had thronged to witness the event.

Simoncic first addressed the gathering and repeated the earlier charges he had leveled against the commissioner. After the Republican candidate had finished his speech, Joe walked up to the podium and unleashed a spirited defense. The Crawford County politician reminded the audience that he had for the past eight years sat across the table from two Republican commissioners, that in the court house there was a Republican judge, county attorney, and that the county accountants and auditors were likewise Republicans. Joe then thundered to the audience that "if I was that smart to get away with padding the expenses as I was being accused, if I was that shrewd that I was taking money on false pretenses that didn't belong to me, then for God's sake give me another term and I'll steal that damn court house out from under them." The audience then broke into a spontaneous demonstration for Saia that lasted for ten

minutes. The county attorney, who was to be the next speaker, went up to Joe, shook his hand, and announced that he was not going to give his address because "I just couldn't compete with that."²⁷ Little more was made of the charges that Joe had padded his expenses.

Not content with merely defending himself, the commissioner from the second district launched an all-out attack upon his Republican foes. As was the case many times when he was faced with a challenge, Saia employed demagoguery. This method of appeal has been a common attribute of politicians who fought their way up from the bottom of the social pyramid. Such political leaders of humble origins as Huey Long, Harry Truman, and Richard Daley often effectively employed demagoguery in their appeals to the voters.

Saia charged in an ad in the Pittsburg Headlight on November 4, 1946: "The reactionaries are making a last desperate and reckless attempt to wrestle control of the Second District from the hands of the people," charging that the forces opposing him had "selfish dictatorial ambitions." The ad exhorted the voters to go to the polls in large numbers to repudiate these attempts. As in other Saia campaigns, it was charged that the opposition was being engineered by "a handful of the greedy living outside the Second Commissioner District." The voters were reminded that by re-electing the Frontenac commissioner, they would assure that "the control of the Second Commissioner District will remain in the hands of the people."²⁸

By election day the voters were satisfied that the charges against Joe Saia were, by and large, unfounded. Even if the charges had been true, it is extremely doubtful that they would have changed the result of the election. The second commissioner district continued to have its problems with high unemployment and underemployment. The voters apparently felt that with this situation, they still needed Joe Saia on the county commission to fight for them. Joe was re-elected in 1946 with sixty-seven per cent of the vote. Saia again led the rest of the Democratic ticket in the district.²⁹

Over the years, despite changes in the district, Joe Saia had retained much of the campaign style which made him so well known in Southeast Kansas. Among the changes that the second commissioner district has gone through are issues of concern to the voters. When Saia was first elected, the main issues among the voters were jobs and relief. Now, although these economic issues are still important, other issues have taken their place. These new issues, however, have not had the same impact on the Frontenac Commissioner's election battles as the gut issues of jobs and relief. The senior commissioner's victory margin has declined since 1966. This decline can be partially ascribed to the reduced number of patronage jobs available as well as the changing composition of the second district's population. The generation of depression-conscious party in the county. Since his election as county commissioner in 1938, Saia has organized the second district and the results

hyphenated Americans in the county is being replaced with new voters unmindful of Joe's past accomplishments. The issues of the 1970's, such as sanitation and mental health are not as emotional as the earlier issues.³⁰

Saia still places emphasis upon grass roots politics; canvassing door to door, telephoning, and getting out the vote. His main effort is to get his "message to the people," principally reminding them of the work he has done for them. Since the commissioner is well known among the voters, this does not require great amounts of campaign funds. In the 1972 campaign, when he faced stiff opposition and the costs of running for office had skyrocketed, Saia spent only \$502.38.

Joe depends upon his own money to finance his campaign and does not spend much time raising money. What money he does raise goes into the central committee's coffers.³¹

Joe Saia has served as the Democratic Party leader in Crawford County since 1952. His tireless dedication to the people and the skill with which he organized the party machinery have caused him to be known as "Mr. Democrat of Southeast Kansas."³² The work the county Democratic leader has put into the Party has played a major role in making Crawford County Democrats a very successful political organization. The Frontenac Democrat, after securing his county commissioner seat, devoted much of his skills to making the Democratic Party the majority party in the county. Since his election as county commissioner in 1938, Saia has organized the second district and the results

are obvious. The Democratic county ticket averaged a little over fifty per cent of the vote in 1934, but by 1954 the Democratic vote had increased to sixty-six per cent in the second district.³³

The returns for the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State confirmed this trend. The 1934 Democratic nominee for Secretary of State received fifty-nine per cent of the vote while, in 1954 the Democratic candidate received sixty-nine per cent.³⁴

With his home district securely in the Democratic column, Joe Saia turned his attention to state and national politics.

Joe Saia's influence in national politics increased as Crawford County produced more and more Democratic victories. In recognition of his service, he was selected as the Party's congressional chairman of his district and elected to attend every Democratic National Convention since 1940, except for two, 1948 and 1968. The Crawford County politician attended his first Democratic National Convention in 1940 as an alternate. At that convention in Chicago, he witnessed President Franklin D. Roosevelt nominated to an unprecedented third term as President. Joe was selected in 1944 as a delegate to attend the Democratic convention which was again held in Chicago. At the convention, Saia participated in the struggle to determine Roosevelt's running mate. Along with the rest of the Kansas delegation, Joe supported Henry Wallace. Despite Kansas support, the Vice Presidential nomination went to a little known man from Missouri about whom the world would soon learn a lot, Senator Harry S. Truman.

Joe Saia, in 1952 and 1956, supported Adlai E. Stevenson for the Democratic nomination for President. Stevenson, in 1956, left the selection of his running mate up to the convention. The top runners, among the various candidates who announced their intentions to seek the position, were Estes Kefauver of Tennessee and Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. Saia first met John Kennedy at the 1956 convention. Mrs. Harry Woodring, wife of the former Governor of Kansas and Secretary of War under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, introduced the Massachusetts Senator to the Crawford County politician. Saia went to the Kansas delegation's caucus after meeting Kennedy and urged that the Sunflower State support Kennedy for Vice President.³⁵ Despite Joe's support, the Kansas delegation supported Kefauver who won the nomination. D. J. Saia's prestige as a Democratic leader had grown so much that he was selected Democratic chairman for the third congressional district in 1958. The third district was composed of the southeastern counties of the state.³⁶ The duty of a district chairman is to manage the congressional campaign and raise funds for the congressional candidate. Saia soon put his organizational skills to the running of a congressional campaign and in 1958, aided by the general Democratic sweep that year, he succeeded in electing the first Democratic Congressman since E. W. Patterson in 1936, Denver Hargis of Coffeyville.

The election of George Docking as Governor in 1956 gave the Democratic organization in Crawford County a boost. Joe Saia was an early supporter of George Docking and, when he was inaugurated in 1957, the Governor did not fail to remember it. Docking always kept Saia informed on developments in Topeka and strengthened the Crawford County organization by making sure patronage was open to Chairman Saia. It is because of the opportunities open to a governor in terms of jobs, construction projects, and other life giving programs to a political organization that Saia placed such emphasis on the electing of a Democratic Governor. Joe believed that it was much more important to the county's Democratic Party to have a Democratic Governor than a Democratic President, Congressman, or U. S. Senator.³⁷ When Robert Docking was elected Governor in 1966, he continued his father's practice of working closely with the Frontenac Democrat.

Saia's growing importance in the Democratic Party caused more and more aspiring politicians to make pilgrimages to Frontenac to court the county chairman's favor. A list of visitors to Saia's home in Frontenac reads like a who's who in American politics, and it is no wonder that many of them returned whenever they have an opportunity. Joe is noted for his culinary skills as well as for his political skills. Guests are frequently treated to a feast of home cooked Italian food along with quantities of "dago red" wine which he produces and bottles himself.

Joe Saia will readily admit that the most exciting event in his career was the Kennedy campaign of 1960. Of all of the conventions Joe has attended, the Democratic convention at Los Angeles in July, 1960, serves as the high water mark. Saia, in the process of the 1960 campaign, would not only help elect a President of the United States but would also become the dominant Democrat in the Third Congressional District, and start a feud with a congressman that would last for years.

D. J. Saia's involvement in the Kennedy campaign began in Kansas City, Kansas at the Townhouse Hotel in 1959, where he attended a meeting with John and Robert Kennedy on the subject of a proposed Kennedy campaign in Kansas. Saia initially had met John Kennedy at the 1956 Democratic National Convention in Chicago where Kennedy was running for the Vice Presidential nomination. Kennedy's defeat in Chicago served as the basis for a try at the Presidency in 1960. Following the 1959 Kansas City meeting, the Crawford County Democrat pledged his support to the Massachusetts Senator, which kept him in constant contact with Senator Kennedy and his staff.³⁸

After the Kansas City meeting, Saia, as the Third Congressional Democratic Chairman, started organizing for Kennedy for the upcoming district convention in which six delegates would be selected to the national convention.³⁹ In 1960 Kansas was entitled to forty-two delegates with each delegate having half a vote. The Sunflower State in 1960 had six congressional districts, and each district selected six delegates to Los Angeles at its

district convention. The remaining six delegates were chosen at large at the state convention.⁴⁰ The delegates to the state and district conventions were elected at the county conventions which were composed of Democratic precinct committeemen and women.⁴¹

The typical delegate to the national convention in 1960 was in many ways similar to most of the delegates of prior Democratic conventions: delegates were selected from the ranks of the county chairmen and active leaders in the party. Saia described the criterion for delegates in 1960: "At that time we didn't have [the rule] that they had to be a certain age or of different groups. We just put the old people we felt that deserved to go—who had contributed to the party and worked."⁴²

The third district convention, held in Parsons on February 13, 1960, saw a battle between members of the western part of the district, who supported Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, led by Frank Theis, the state Democratic chairman and Democratic national committeeman, and those from the eastern section, who supported Kennedy and were led by D. J. Saia.⁴³ The morning before the district convention, Edward Kennedy, John's youngest brother, called Saia and asked him if he needed him to come down to Parsons to help round up support for his brother. Joe likes to tell about this to his friends at Democratic meetings. It seems that when Kennedy called from Washington at 8:00 a.m. he forgot there was an hour difference in time and caught Saia taking a shower at 7:00 in the morning. When Joe got to the

phone he assumed that the phone call was a prank and told Kennedy, "It's funny that I never heard of you. I know there's a Bob Kennedy, are you the other brother?" After clearing up the identity of the caller, Joe assured the younger Kennedy that things were under control and that he did not need to come out to Kansas.⁴⁴

The Crawford County chairman's confidence was justified by events at the district convention. Traditionally third district politics represented a struggle between the western and eastern counties. The western forces led by Frank Theis of Arkansas City, Joe Warren, a state senator from Cowley County, and Richard Rock, a state representative from Arkansas City, demanded recognition for the western half of the district. They demanded that Crawford County withdraw one of her candidates for delegate so that a western county could be represented at the convention. But Saia refused to yield any ground, and he and Joe Pucci, also of Frontenac, declared their intention of becoming delegates. The district chairman outmaneuvered his opponents on every front, and when the dust had settled, Saia was triumphant. All the delegates selected were from the eastern portion of the district and all but two were either pledged or leaning to Kennedy.⁴⁵

Joe Saia's victory in Parsons in 1960 established him as the dominant Democratic figure in the third congressional district. The Parsons Sun editor, Clyde Reed, a veteran of many battles with the politician from Crawford County, gave this analysis of Joe's

victory: "Saia, an operator from the deepest reaches of the Balkans, established himself as the district's Democratic strong man in the balloting Saturday - and at the expense of the Party's state chairman and national committeeman."⁴⁶ The district convention had added importance since it elected enough pro-Kennedy delegates to offset the Symington strength in the western part of the state. Kennedy's strength in Kansas was concentrated in the second and sixth districts in the northeastern portion of the state and the third district in the southeastern portion.

The state Democratic convention took place in Hutchinson on March 4, 1960. Saia was selected chairman of the arrangements committee which invited speakers to the state convention. Two of the Presidential candidates actually appeared before the convention, Kennedy and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. Before speaking to the convention, Humphrey, whom Saia deeply admired, asked Joe why he did not support him. Humphrey reminded Saia that he had come to the district two times to help him raise funds. The Frontenac Democrat told Senator Humphrey that he could not support him because he would not get enough votes in the delegation "at the ratio of Kennedy and Symington."⁴⁷

Kennedy's speech was the best received at the state convention. A few previously uncommitted delegates went over to his side but not enough to give him a majority. The Kansas delegation operated under the unit rule in 1960 under which the entire state's vote had to go to the faction which commanded a

majority of the delegation. One of the reasons why Kennedy failed to gain a majority was reported by the New York Times in an interview with one of the delegates: "An influential delegate pointed out that there was pronounced opposition to Senator Kennedy because he is a Roman Catholic. Of religion as an issue, he said, 'It's hidden, it's ugly, but it's there.'"48 It was decided at the Hutchinson convention to insure unity in the Party by nominating Governor George Docking as Kansas' favorite son.⁴⁹

Saia kept in constant contact with the Kennedy organization by mail and phone between the state and the national conventions, giving them information and advice about wavering delegates who might be persuaded to support the Bay State Senator and also which Kennedy delegates needed encouragement. John Kennedy himself called Saia at least six times during this period.⁵⁰

Religion played an important part in the campaign in Kansas. Saia claimed that religion was the only issue in the state, and it was reflected in the actions of members of the Kansas delegation. Since the Crawford County chairman was such a strong supporter of Kennedy, his business received some of the anti-Catholic backlash. Joe frequently received phone calls from people who would order appliances from the store and then, after ordering the goods, would ask if he was the Joe Saia who was supporting "that Catholic Kennedy." When he would reply that he was, the caller would cancel the order.⁵¹

Another sign of the prejudice against Catholicism in this region of the country was the formation of an organization to oppose the candidacy of Kennedy. The group, composed of Protestants from southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri, opposed Kennedy "on the grounds he is a Catholic." The organization warned that it was important to band together against a "Catholic President." The chairman of the organization went on to say that the group's purpose was not to wage a political battle but to campaign for "Christian principals."⁵² This type of bigotry only made Joe Saia more determined to support Kennedy.

Kennedy's support in Kansas received a shock with the circulation of rumors that third district congressman Denver Hargis was defecting from the Kennedy column. Kennedy, after hearing of these rumors of the defection reported them to Saia, who was also serving as Hargis' campaign manager in his re-election campaign back home. The third district chairman immediately called the congressman and told him of the rumors, to which Hargis replied that he was for Kennedy and that Joe need not worry because he would not let him down. Unknown to Saia, Congressman Hargis was being wined and dined by a Kansas labor leader, Sam Smith of Wichita, and was, in fact, shifting his support to Symington at that very time.⁵³

What made Hargis so important was that with him on Kennedy's side, the Kennedy forces had twenty-two delegates, a majority, and thus could deliver the state's twenty-one votes to Kennedy;

1960, described what happens when a state delegation caucuses:

but without the congressman from the third district, the Kennedy forces would not have a majority and the state would be deadlocked. The Hargis maneuvering would have a decisive effect at the convention.

The Kennedy momentum increased, enhanced by Kennedy's success in the presidential primaries, as the national convention drew closer. The Kennedy bandwagon, along with the possibility that Docking might be chosen as Kennedy's runningmate, increased the pressure on the Kansas delegation. The Sunflower delegation, however, refused to jump on the bandwagon and went to Los Angeles still pledged to Docking on the first ballot.⁵⁴

Coming into the convention, Kansas found herself in a unique position for a small Republican state at a Democratic convention. Newsweek magazine listed Kansas among the eight "all important states." One of the reasons Newsweek gave for the importance of the state was that she was the only state with genuinely strong sentiment for two candidates. Another important reason why the Sunflower State was considered so critical was that most politicians believed that coming into the convention Kennedy was within fifty votes of the nomination. Kansas' twenty-one votes could be critical to Kennedy's chances. The presidential candidates renewed their efforts in wooing the Kansas delegation.⁵⁵

Joe Saia and the Kansas delegation arrived in Los Angeles on July 11, and immediately the state delegation held its first caucus. Theodore H. White, in his book The Making of the President 1960, described what happens when a state delegation caucuses:

As each state gathers its delegation far from home to caucus, the internal politics of every state becomes tangled with the greater national issues, and with the ambitions and personal hopes of their leaders. In each, new wounds are cut, new enmities are seeded.⁵⁶

The caucus that day was filled with heated debate because George Docking had earlier withdrawn as favorite son candidate and requested that the delegation go for Kennedy.⁵⁷ One of the chief motivations for Docking's announcement was the increasing talk that Docking was being considered as Kennedy's running mate. Robert Kennedy, John's campaign manager, appeared before the delegation at the caucus and encouraged the talk of Docking for Vice President. Robert Kennedy stated in his speech before the delegation, "I would say that we have five or six persons in mind for the post and Governor Docking is certainly among these. He has been friendly to us and we certainly regard him highly."⁵⁸

The delegation, however, refused to follow Docking's lead, and led by Paul Aylward, Ellsworth County chairman and leader of the Symington faction, voted to remain committed to Docking. The mood of the rebellious faction was expressed by Congressman J. Floyd Breeding when he declared: ". . . the only way Senator Kennedy would get Kansas' 21 votes on the first roll call. . . would to promise the vice presidency definitely to Docking."⁵⁹

This move by the Kansas delegation upset the Kennedy forces. When Docking withdrew he had promised all of the Sunflower State's twenty-one votes to Kennedy, and according to their calculations these votes were desperately needed.⁶⁰ The Kennedy

organization realized that they would have to win on the first couple of ballots for, as Saia explained, after that time Kennedy's support would decline with each ballot until he was forced out of the race.⁶¹

The Kennedy campaign organization was phenomenal. Led by Robert Kennedy, it kept a constant count on each delegate's position. This was done by floor leaders who were assigned to each state. Each floor leader was given a card for every delegate assigned to him. The card listed the delegate's name, occupation, hobby, marital status, children, and religion. These floor leaders were instructed to report any change in the delegation immediately to the Kennedy headquarters. There in Room 3308 of the Biltmore Hotel, every hour through the convention, the Kennedy organization compiled fresh vote counts,⁶² and had an accurate record on which state delegations needed further work. Saia was impressed with the campaign organization which Kennedy had put together and labeled it the best he had seen.⁶³

The importance of the Kansas vote and the wavering of the delegation prompted Robert Kennedy to seek a personal interview with some of the state's politicians. The request was granted, and in Joe Saia's room in the Alexandria Hotel on Monday evening the younger Kennedy addressed the group. At the meeting Kennedy lost patience with the bickering that was taking place in the Kansas delegation, and standing on Joe's bed, asked why Kansas was not going for his brother. He reminded them that in the past

year John Kennedy came to the state two or three times to help the Democratic Party and he could not understand why Kansas would not go for him. After the meeting with Kennedy, two or three wavering delegates returned to Kennedy, again making Hargis' the key vote.⁶⁴

Saia now had lost patience with Hargis and demanded to know why he was not going for Kennedy as he had promised. The congressman answered that he had to switch to Symington because he received a number of phone calls from his home county of Montgomery, especially from the city of Coffeyville not to vote for Kennedy because he was a Catholic. There was, however, evidence that Hargis was using religion merely as an excuse, and that the real reason was Sam Smith's promised teamster support for his re-election campaign if he went for Symington.⁶⁵

Smith's role in the convention can be explained: he was state president of the teamsters' union. The teamsters developed a considerable amount of animosity toward Kennedy because of Robert Kennedy's role as counsel for the Senate Rackets Committee which investigated charges of corruption by teamsters' president James Hoffa.⁶⁶ Smith was championing Symington because he was more apt than any other candidate to draw votes from Kennedy in Kansas.⁶⁷

The Crawford County politician, confronted with these facts, considered Hargis' maneuverings a personal affront to him. He believed that the Congressman was obligated to keep his promise as a matter of honor to the district chairman. One of

the surest methods of drawing Saia's ire is to go back on a promise behind his back. When confronted with such a situation Saia seldom forgot it and strove to seek retribution. The third district chairman threatened Hargis that he would take care of him at the next election.⁶⁸ In 1962, Saia showed that he was a man of his word.

The Kansas delegation was still stalemated when the second caucus was held on July 12. Symington spoke at the meeting and urged his supporters to continue to stand with him. Bob Kennedy also appeared, circulating as one newspaper reported it, "like an irrigation pump" among the Kansas delegates asking them to follow their Governor's example and go for his brother.⁶⁹

It was decided at the second caucus to ask the parliamentarian of the convention for a ruling as whether it was mandatory for Kansas to vote as a unit. If the unit rule was not ironclad and binding, the state would be free to divide its vote on the roll call since a majority would not be needed.⁷⁰

The political fighting among the delegation was not restricted to the caucus room, nor was it restricted to oral battles. On several occasions political discussions erupted into fist fights as was the case at the Kansas delegation reception. Robert Docking, son of Governor George Docking, and destined to become Governor himself, confronted Paul Aylward charging him of betraying his father by preventing the delegation from going to Kennedy. One word led to another and before anyone

knew it, Docking gave Aylward a good punch. There were to be other
 71
 fights among Kansans during the course of the convention.

On the evening of July 13, the balloting for President took
 place. One Kansan commented about that night, "You know, if we'd
 72
 worked at it, we couldn't have messed it up more." Kansas
 Democratic national committeeman Frank Theis placed George Docking's
 name in nomination. As soon as he was nominated, Docking withdrew
 his name. The Kansas delegation held their final caucus at the
 convention hall during the balloting because neither faction could
 obtain a majority of the delegation.

George Docking announced at the caucus that the parliamentarian
 had ruled that Kansas did not have to follow the unit rule, and the
 delegation immediately voted to suspend the rule. Docking tried one
 last appeal for Kennedy, then the delegation was polled on how the
 Kansas votes should be cast. The delegation voted that Kansas
 should cast ten and a half votes for Kennedy, nine for Symington,
 one for Johnson, and one half for Stevenson. Realizing that any
 hope for national office was now gone, Docking lost his composure
 and left the caucus room. It was reported that as he passed Aylward
 73
 on his way out he muttered, "To hell with it, you take over."

By the time the Sunflower State's delegation had returned to the
 floor, Kansas had already been passed over in the roll, and Wyoming
 had put Kennedy over the top. Realizing that Kennedy had won,
 Aylward gave up the fight and, finally, Kansas cast all twenty-one
 votes for Kennedy. But the vote was now unimportant--Kansas had

Kennedy as a result of the convention, Sala escaped. Shortly after

lost its chance for glory; Kennedy was already nominated. Saia commented that the Kansas delegation had "looked like a bunch of chumps." The Crawford County politician held the view that the delegation's actions cost Kansas a Federal Judgeship by not getting on the Kennedy bandwagon in time. He also thinks that the wavering cost Docking his expected place on the cabinet.

There remained now only the business of nominating a Vice Presidential running mate. When Lyndon Johnson was announced by Kennedy to be his choice, there were quite a few disturbed labor and liberal delegates. They had hoped that someone with a more liberal image would be nominated. Saia also felt disappointment. But the convention nominated Johnson in a mood that was close to Saia's: "I wasn't overenthused with Lyndon Johnson, however I felt that the nominee for President has the right to choose his running mate."

So the delegation returned to Kansas to fight the November campaign. The new wounds and enmities, to use Theodore White's words, made themselves felt in the election, especially in the Hargis race in the third district. Hargis was defeated in 1960 by the Republican candidate Walter McVey of Independence, who campaigned upon the issue of socialism. George Docking lost in his attempt for a third term as Governor of Kansas. Saia returned to Crawford County and gave his attention to the immediate task ahead, the electing of the Democratic ticket.

While most of the Kansas Democrats suffered in the eyes of Kennedy as a result of the convention, Saia escaped. Shortly after

the convention he received a letter from John Kennedy thanking Joe
 77
 for the work he had done for him at the convention. Just before
 election day Kennedy made a campaign appearance in Joplin, Missouri.

At the rally, for which he had organized four chartered buses of
 Crawford County Democrats to attend, Saia sat on the platform with
 78

Kennedy. Kennedy asked Joe to join him in his swing through
 Kansas. Kennedy told Saia that he really needed the Kansas dele-
 gation at the convention, but that he knew that he had done his
 79
 part and he appreciated his efforts.

President Kennedy offered Saia the position of U.S. Marshall
 after the election. Saia turned the offer down because had he
 accepted he would have had to resign as county commissioner. The
 county commissioners and the county clerk would have appointed his
 successor if he had resigned. Since the county clerk and one of
 the commissioners were Republicans his successor would have been
 80
 a Republican, something Joe just would not permit. As Saia put
 it: "I realized that by my leaving that I would throw the [Craw-
 ford County] commission into the hands of the Republicans who
 would put a lot of people out of work, and I felt that I was duty
 81
 bound to not let my voters down."

Saia as district chairman campaigned strenuously for Hargis
 82
 in 1960 and the Congressman carried Crawford County by 1,265 votes
 but Joe had not forgotten what Hargis had done at Los Angeles.
 Saia would wait until 1962 to repay the former congressman from
 Coffeyville for his actions at Los Angeles. Hargis, in a comeback

attempt from his defeat in 1960, filed for the Democratic nomination for Congress in 1962.

The district chairman immediately searched for a candidate to oppose Hargis. Saia settled upon Wade Meyers of Emporia after asking one or two individuals to make the race. Joe accompanied Meyers wherever he spoke and introduced him to party leaders throughout the district. Whenever Hargis also appeared at a meeting he protested the idea of the district chairman taking an active role in a party primary fight.

Saia answered these charges saying that he was there not as a district chairman but as a concerned Democrat because he realized the importance of having a Democrat in Congress. Hargis, the Crawford County Democrat charged, was a "dead horse." Joe stated that he wanted a Democrat nominated who could be elected.

Hargis appointed Joe Pucci, a former Saia lieutenant, as his county chairman in an effort to circumvent Joe Saia's support of Meyers. The former Congressman downplayed the weight of the Saia organization in the county and expressed faith in the ability of Pucci to carry Crawford County for him. The Crawford County Democratic chairman took up the challenge issued over his control of the party in the county. Saia put the full weight of his organization in an all out effort to carry the county for Meyers. On primary election day Joe had his vindication: not only had Meyers carried Crawford County overwhelmingly but had also won the Democratic nomination for Congress.

In the general election Meyers would face Joe Skubitz, the Republican candidate for Congress. Skubitz, since he was born and raised in the county, was expected to carry Crawford. Saia spent so much time working for Meyers that he showed little concern for his own re-election race. Saia's hard work paid off on election day. Meyers carried the county with fifty-three per cent of the vote although losing the district race. However, the effort he spent on Meyers hurt Saia's own campaign. The percentage of the vote Joe received in 1962 dropped almost eleven points below his 1958 vote.

The years between 1964 and 1970 were relatively calm years for the Democratic Party in the county. A Democrat was elected in 1968 from the third district to the board of commissioners giving the Democrats control of the commission. This would not, however, last long. Joe Saia, in 1970, saw two challenges on his control of the Democratic Party in Crawford County. These challenges, one led by his former ally, J. P. Gendusa, the other by a group of Democrats who wanted to reform the party, dominated the political news of the county and created animosities that would last for years.

The first political crisis Saia faced in 1970 involved the Democratic county attorney, Vernon D. Grassie. Joe Saia originally supported Vern Grassie and provided campaign funds when he first sought office in 1966. The origins of the split are still not clear. One factor was Phil Saia, Joe's son, suggestion to Joe Gendusa that he was going to have Grassie defeated. Gendusa was

Grassie's former assistant county attorney, and his son-in-law, Mike McCurdy was Grassie's assistant county attorney.

The furor was initiated when a group of young Pittsburgh lawyers convinced Peter Farabi to run against Grassie in the Democratic primary. Immediately after Farabi announced he was entering the race, charges circulated that Saia had picked Farabi to run. Farabi denied the charges. In an interview with the Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun he stated that he had gone to Saia before he announced to inform him of his intentions. According to Farabi, Joe instructed him that he intended to remain neutral. The Frontenac Democrat recalls that he advised the group to oppose Grassie because they had little chance of success. Saia stated that he absolutely did not ask anyone to enter the race.

Joe Saia was, nevertheless, dragged into the factional dispute. Gendusa, on July 18, ran a large ad in the Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun charging that Phil Saia was behind the campaign against Grassie. Gendusa also charged Phil Saia with threatening Grassie with physical violence and violating the Hatch Act. Gendusa further warned that the "Spigarelli clan of Frontenac, 'Republicans now turned Democrats' were trying to control the party." As expected, the ad temporarily ended the long alliance between Gendusa and Saia that had been responsible for making the Democratic Party a formidable political organization. The Pittsburgh Headlight-Sun realized the importance of the impending schism:

that he received any help from Saia. The Republican candidate for

Destruction of the Democratic Party as the successful political organization it has been in Crawford County for the past 40 years appears to be threatened by a primary election battle for the Democratic nominee for county attorney that has ripped asunder the leadership which has made the party a strong political organization in the county.⁹²

Joe Saia placed an ad in the Pittsburg paper on July 27 to explain his position and state that he was not responsible for the opposition to Grassie. Saia concluded the ad with the following statement:

I will not sacrifice the good of all candidates, the good of the party, for the sake of one race as Gendusa proposes. As far as I am concerned the matter is in the hands of the Democratic voters. After that I hope we can work together towards victory in November. If we do not the party - and the welfare of the people will suffer.⁹³

Grassie defeated Farabi by a large margin in the primary election. Since there was no Republican candidate for the office, Grassie was assured another term. Grassie's second term, 1971-1973 was a constant and open battle between Grassie and Saia. The factional dispute was of consequence to county government - almost every commission meeting witnessed a confrontation between the county attorney and the commissioner from the second district. Joe Saia's dispute with Vern Grassie continued, in fact, through the 1972 election. Grassie in the 1972 campaign accused the Frontenac Democrat of supporting the Republican candidate for county attorney against him. The Republican candidate, John Gariglietti was a Democrat before filing for county attorney. Gariglietti denied throughout the campaign that he received any help from Saia. The Republican candidate for

county attorney admitted, however, that before he decided to make the race as a Republican, he was asked by the Democratic County chairman to run in the Democratic primary against Grassie but he refused.

The schism between the two warring Democrats continued unabated at a Democratic rally in Arma. Grassie accused the county Democratic vice chairman of using volunteers at the party's headquarters to call Democrats and ask them not to vote for Grassie. He also charged the Democratic County chairman with misusing campaign funds.

Saia addressed the Democratic gathering toward the end of the rally. He was greeted with a standing ovation. "Obviously you have confidence in me," the Democratic chairman exclaimed, "On November 8, a mandate of the people will say, 'Honest Joe never told a lie in his life.'" The Frontenac Democrat disclaimed any misuse of party funds and challenged Grassie "to show on the record when I contributed one single dime to the opposition."

The issue of the use of party funds climaxed on November 6, 1972, when Grassie announced he planned to conduct an official investigation into the dispensation of party funds if Saia did not provide him with the party's complete financial records. The Democratic Party chief acceded to the county attorney's demands and on December 19, 1972, after hiring a public accountant to audit the party's records, turned these records over to Grassie. Grassie, after receiving the records took no further action.

The party fight between Grassie and Saia concluded on December 8, 1973. At a special meeting of the Democratic Central Committee a

vote of confidence resolution for Saia was passed overwhelmingly.

Joe addressed the Democratic precinct committee people after the vote of confidence and thanked them for their confidence. Shortly

after the meeting, Grassie left the Democratic Party and was defeated when he ran as a Republican for judge of the district court

in 1974. Another challenge to Saia's power involved a group of

Democrats who felt the party needed to be reformed. This group of young Democrats were led by C. A. (Chuck) Menghini and Donald

Allegrucci. Their successful voter registration campaign in 1968

caused them to believe that they were entitled to have greater

voice in party affairs. Chuck Menghini described the chasm as

"a difference between the old style 'bossism' as opposed to the

new style politics."

As time progressed, the chasm dividing the party regulars and the new politics adherents widened. These Democrats who could be considered as belonging to the liberal wing of the party were concerned that elements were ignored by the Democratic central committee and felt that Saia had served too long as county chairman. The spark that ignited the controversy was the personality conflict be-

tween Menghini and Saia. This is very common in county factional fights. Such disputes were generally between two dominant personalities with differing goals and no intention of compromising. This was the case in the struggles between Saia and Sandidge, Saia and Grassie, and Saia and Gendusa.

Chuck Menghini had been active in the civil rights movement at the University of Kansas in the early 1960's. He became active in politics as a Democrat in 1964 after Senator Barry Goldwater was selected as the Republican nominee for President. Despite the work Menghini had done for the party, Saia never fully trusted him. This distrust is partially due to the fact that the Menghini family had long been Republicans although Chuck himself was not a Republican. 103

The split between Menghini and Saia accelerated with each sniping at the other through the newspaper. The Democratic County chairman had opportunity to end the liberals' agitations in the 1970 party primary. (The Frontenac Democratic leader provided hand-picked opposition for the reform leaders in precinct elections.) Saia explained his actions to the Pittsburg Headlight-Sun saying, "I thought in two or three instances there should be some new faces." 104 These instances involved Allegrucci, Menghini, and the central committee's secretary, Harold McMurry. Saia was, by and large, successful with his purge. Allegrucci and Menghini were defeated, but McMurry retained his party post. With these successes any real chance of unseating Saia disappeared.

The reformers held a meeting after the primary to take stock of the situation and decide their course of action. It was agreed that the only method open to them was to challenge Saia as county chairman. Don Allegrucci warned the group that it was not sufficient to merely want Joe out of office. Some alternate leadership had to be proposed. Several challengers were mentioned but none wanted to

make the race. Menghini made it clear that he wanted Saia out as
 105
 county chairman and that he did not want the job for himself. *Alleged*
 Finally it was informally agreed that Harold McMurry would face Joe,
 106
 and that Pauline Brunetti would run for vice chairman. *anged the*

The Democratic Central Committee reorganizational meeting was
 111
 held in Franklin on August 14, 1970. Don Allegrucci described the
 107
 proceedings as a "pure railroad sham." Soon after the meeting
 was called to order, Claude C. Walker, a precinct committeeman from
 Frontenac and an ally of Saia's, moved that all rules be suspended
 and that the convention re-elect Saia as county chairman. The *ocrat*
 motion was immediately seconded by the precinct committeeman, Peter
 108
 Kennedy, who had defeated Menghini in the primary. The objections
 were that a suspension of the rules motion would require a two-
 thirds vote of approval. The chairman of the meeting, Saia, asked
 113
 that the motion be withdrawn. When Walker refused, the chair asked
 that a standing vote be taken on the motion. Among the shouting and
 confusion the convention attempted to take a standing vote. Cries for
 a secret ballot were raised and ignored; it was determined that Saia
 had been re-elected by a vote of fifty-two to twelve. A similar vote
 114
 was taken for vice chairman and Saia's candidate, Henrietta Scott,
 109
 defeated Pauline Brunetti by a vote of forty-two to twenty-two. The
 reformers met after the meeting to discuss the possibility of a pro-
 test. They considered a law suit, but since state law was ambiguous
 on the matter, it was finally decided to take the appeal to the
 110
 Democratic state committee. *Scott, after securing sixteen precinct*

A letter was drawn up on August 18 by Allegrucci and Menghini and signed by six precinct committee persons. The letter challenged the meeting of August 14, and asked the state committee to call another county organization meeting. The letter challenged the Franklin meeting on eight counts; the main complaints were the vote on the suspension of the rules and a lack of a secret ballot. 111

The letter to the Democratic state committee was released to the press. Saia, when asked by the Kansas City Star to comment on the letter, replied, "Allegrucci and Menghini are just sore because they got defeated as precinct committeemen." The Frontenac Democrat stated that he had supported the call for a secret ballot but that it was ignored by the rest of the meeting. Joe offered a comment to the Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, "I normally welcome new people into the party, but we don't need Mr. Menghini's kind. I offer him back to the Republican party from where he came." 112 113 The state Democratic committee responded on October 1. Norbert Dreiling, the state Democratic chairman, pointed out in a letter to Menghini that the state committee had no authority to deal with the matter and that if the dissidents wished to take any further actions, they would have to go through the courts. 114 Allegrucci and Menghini, upon receiving that reply, admitted defeat and decided not to take the case any further. Not all of the reformers, however, agreed to drop the cause.

Elaine Emmett, a Democratic precinct committeewoman from Pittsburg circulated a petition calling for a new central committee meeting to be held. Mrs. Emmett, after securing sixteen precinct

committee persons signatures, presented the petition to Saia. The petition stirred up the controversy once again, but little came of it and the movement for another election of the party officials died for lack of support.

There were uncanny resemblances between the Franklin meeting and a gathering in Girard in 1938. The fight in both cases centered around an insurgent demand for a secret ballot, and in both cases the insurgents were unorganized and were outmanuevered by the regular Democratic organization. There were important differences, however, between the targets of the protests. Sandidge was defeated and lost his influence in the party because he did not have enough foresight to accommodate the reformers of the party. Joe Saia, on the other hand, realized that in order to survive, the Party needed reformers in the party. He successfully recruited most of the insurgents into the Democratic organization by the 1974 election. Elaine Emmett was selected as a delegate to the 1974 Democratic National Midterm Convention due to, in a large part, Saia's support and Donald Allegrucci was appointed as county chairman for the 1974 Democratic congressional candidate. This is why Saia has retained control of the party today while other "old guard" party leaders in other counties have lost their influence in party affairs.

Joe Saia in the three decades he has been the main force in the Party has built the Democratic Party of Crawford County into an efficient vote-getting machine. He accomplished it through grass

root political organization, filling the ticket, hard work, using his position as county commissioner to carry out the platform of the party, and to securing jobs. The Frontenac Democrat's control of the Party's apparatus has survived over the years despite numerous challenges.

The Crawford County political leader, in a letter to Governor Robert Docking in 1972, described how the Party has achieved its successes:

...when I commenced my life in politics. . . I knew nothing about state or national politics. I only knew that in Crawford County the word Democrat was next to a swear word. . .

A handful of us attempted to and did, in fact, change this condition . . . We did this with hard work, hard-nosed in-fighting putting our money where our mouth was, and most important, by taking care of our own. We got young people jobs. We helped them help themselves out of this poverty stricken area. We indeed worked at grass roots politics and now we are counted in the ranks of the Democratic Counties on election day.¹¹⁶

Joe Saia, in his career in state, national, and local politics has indeed been the "master of his situation" and justly deserves the title of "Mr. Democrat of Southeast Kansas."

15. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.

16. Pittsburg Headlight, August 9, 1942.

17. Pittsburg Headlight, November 2, 1942.

18. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.

19. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C. For the breakdown of the 1942 election results from the Second Commission District see Appendix VIII, 140.

NOTES

1. Parsons Sun, September 5, 1970.
2. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, November 3, 1970.
3. New York Times, July 13, 1939.
4. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at Primary Elections in Crawford County," Volume E, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
5. Pittsburg Headlight, August 24 & 26, 1940.
6. Pittsburg Headlight, August 24, 1940.
7. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
8. Pittsburg Headlight, September 3, 1951.
9. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
10. Ibid. of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C, Office of
11. Ibid. Clerk, Girard, Kansas. For breakdown of the 1948 election results for the Second Commission District see
12. Records of the County Clerk, "1968 Annual Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee," Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
13. Records of the County Clerk, "1970 Annual Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee," Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
14. Records of the County Clerk, "1972 Annual Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Crawford County Democratic Central Committee," Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
15. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
16. Pittsburg Headlight, August 8, 1942.
17. Pittsburg Headlight, November 2, 1942.
18. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
19. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C. For the breakdown of the 1942 election results from the Second Commission District see Appendix VIII, 140.
20. New York Times, March 3, 1939.

20. Pittsburg Headlight, November 4, 1946.
21. Tony Simoncic Campaign Letter, 1946, D. J. "Joe" Saia Collection (in his personal possession). Cited hereafter, Saia Collection. of the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection to the Democratic National Committee.
22. Pittsburg Headlight, October 13, 1946.
23. Pittsburg Headlight, October 30, 1946.
24. Tony Simoncic Campaign Letter, 1946, Saia Collection.
25. Pittsburg Headlight, October 31, 1946.
26. Pittsburg Headlight, November 2, 1946.
27. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
28. Pittsburg Headlight, November 4, 1946.
29. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas. For breakdown of the 1946 election results for the Second Commission District see Appendix VIII, 141.
30. For illustration of Saia's performance in his races for county commissioner from 1938 to 1972 see graph in Appendix IX.
31. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
32. Kansas City Star, November 17, 1968.
33. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
34. Ibid. For breakdown of selected races in the Second Commission District see Appendix VIII, 150.
35. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
36. Kansas Democratic News, December, 1959.
37. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
38. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
39. New York Times, March 5, 1960.

40. Ibid..
41. The Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection, Sen. George S. McGovern, Commission Chairman, Mandate for Reform. A Report of the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection to the Democratic National Committee, Washington, D. C., April, 1970, 8.
42. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
43. Parsons Sun, February 13, 1960.
44. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
45. Parsons Sun, February 13, 1960.
46. Parsons Sun, February 16, 1960.
47. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974. Senator Humphrey withdrew from the race after losing the West Virginia Primary to Kennedy on May 10, 1960.
48. New York Times, March 5, 1960.
49. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
50. Ibid..
51. Ibid..
52. Pittsburg Headlight, July 26, 1960.
53. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
54. New York Times, July 13, 1960.
55. "Backstage with the Democrats," Newsweek, July 18, 1960.
56. Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960, (New York, 1961) 183. Cited hereafter, White, Making.
57. New York Times, July 11, 1960.
58. Kansas City Times, July 11, 1960.
59. Pittsburg Headlight, July 12, 1960.
60. New York Times, July 11, 1960.
61. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.

62. White, Making, 182.
63. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
64. Ibid..
65. Ibid..
66. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House, (Boston, 1965), 653.
67. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
68. Ibid..
69. Pittsburg Headlight, July 13, 1960.
70. Pittsburg Headlight, July 14, 1960.
71. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
72. Pittsburg Headlight, July 14, 1960.
73. Ibid..
74. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974. George Docking was appointed by President Kennedy in 1961 as a member of the Board of the Export-Import Bank, White, Making, 188.
75. Ibid.. Joe Saia was in 1964 a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City that nominated Johnson for President. He was also chosen as a Presidential elector for Johnson and would cast his vote for him.
76. Pittsburg Headlight, October 28, 1960.
77. John F. Kennedy to D. J. Saia, August 12, 1960, Saia Collection.
78. Pittsburg Headlight, October 22, 1960.
79. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
80. Pittsburg Headlight, July 28, 1961.
81. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.
82. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at Primary Elections in Crawford County," Volume E, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.

83. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
84. Ibid..
85. Pittsburg Headlight, August 4, 1962.
86. Pittsburg Headlight, October 27, 1962.
87. Records of the County Clerk, "Abstracts of Votes Casted at General Elections in Crawford County," Volume C, Office of County Clerk, Girard, Kansas.
88. Ibid..
89. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, July 31, 1970.
90. Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, June 16, 1975.
91. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, July 18, 1970.
92. Ibid..
93. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, July 27, 1970.
94. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, July 26, 1970.
95. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, October 15, 1972.
96. It seems that this part of Grassie's charges was true. There were calls made at the Democratic headquarters against Grassie, but when Joe Saia discovered that they were being made he immediately put a stop to them. Interview with Elaine Emmett, June 6, 1975.
97. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, November 6, 1972.
98. Ibid..
99. Vernon D. Grassie to D. J. Saia, November 6, 1972, Saia Collection.
100. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, December 19, 1972.
101. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, June 27, 1970.
102. Interview with Donald Allegrucci, June 17, 1975.
103. Ibid..
104. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, June 27, 1970.

105. Interview with Donald Allegrucci, June 17, 1975.
106. Interview with Elaine Emmett, June 6, 1975.
107. Interview with Donald Allegrucci, June 17, 1975.
108. "Minutes of 1970 Democratic County Convention, held in Franklin Community Hall, Franklin, Kansas, August 14, 1970.", Saia Collection.
109. Ibid.
110. Interview with Donald Allegrucci, June 17, 1975.
111. Donald Allegrucci, C. A. Menghini, et al to Governor Robert B. Docking, August 18, 1970, Saia Collection.
112. Kansas City Star, September 4, 1970.
113. Pittsburg Headlight-Sun, September 1, 1970.
114. Norbert Dreiling, State Democratic Chairman, to C. A. Menghini, October 1, 1970, Saia Collection.
115. Elaine Emmett, et al, to D. J. Saia, September 11, 1970, Saia Collection.
116. D. J. Saia to Governor Robert B. Docking, May 16, 1962, Saia Collection.

It was natural for Joe Saia to become involved in politics. He was raised in an environment where social injustice existed. His father was active in the local district of the United Mine Workers and instilled in his son the spirit of fighting for the disadvantaged and oppressed. Joe obtained his early political education serving on a union pit committee in the mines. It was at this grass-roots level of the United Mine Workers that the young Saia learned the value of organization. After the mines closed, Saia became active in practical politics. He was active in the WPA and led the efforts to organize a WPA workers' union. His WPA activities led to a

CONCLUSION

Crawford County politics have not been the same since D. J. "Joe" Saia was elected county commissioner in 1938. He has, in the thirty-six years, left his mark on almost every governmental activity in the county. Any study of Crawford County's government and politics would not be complete without an examination of the Democrat from Frontenac and the influence he has had on the county's political history.

Crawford County politics before Saia took office were divided into three spheres of influence; the western farm area, Pittsburg, and the coal fields of the northeastern section of the county. Traditionally, the residents of the coal fields were ignored and distrusted because of its large immigrant working-class population. Joe Saia's election and acquisition of power changed the situation; today the former coal fields receives the same attention as the rest of the county.

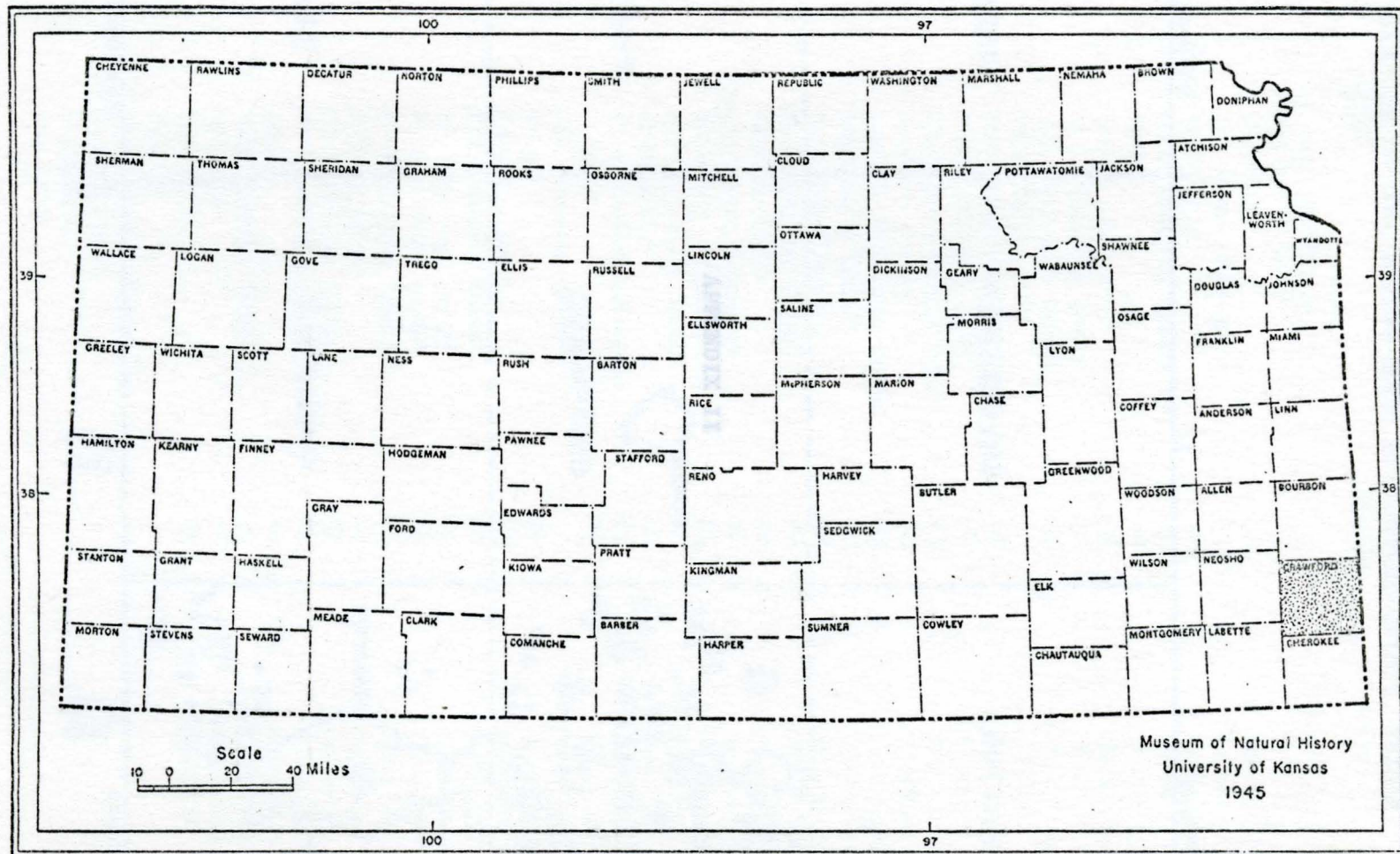
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struggle with the county Democratic chairman and Saia's decision to run for county commissioner.

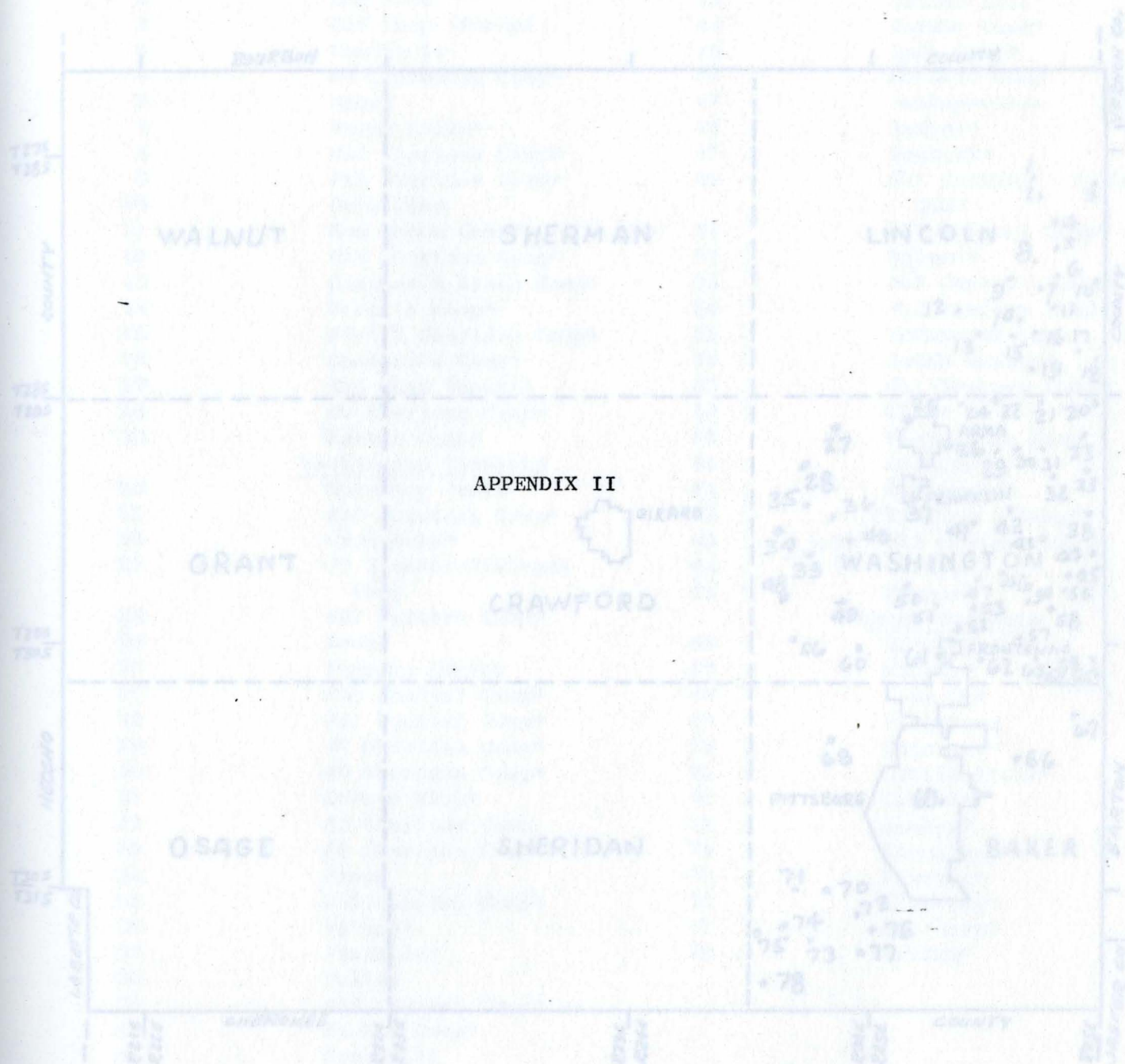
The objective of politics is acquiring, holding, and dispensing of power and no one in Crawford County has understood this better than Joe Saia. He realized that if there was any hope for the oppressed and unemployed in the county it was through control of the county government. The federal government was too distant, and the state government was too preoccupied with rural concerns to help the former coal miners. Saia felt by controlling the machinery of the county government, which administered the relief programs, the most good could be accomplished.

The years spent in the mines and WPA taught Saia how to fight for his beliefs and the value of grass-roots organization. It was these skills he acquired and the trust he gained from the voters that resulted in his election as county commissioner in 1938. Once elected, Joe Saia realized that in order to serve the people, he would have to perpetuate his power. That is why, over the years, he has acquired a reputation as a hard-nosed fighter whenever his authority has been challenged.

MAP OF KANSAS INDICATING LOCATION OF CRAWFORD COUNTY



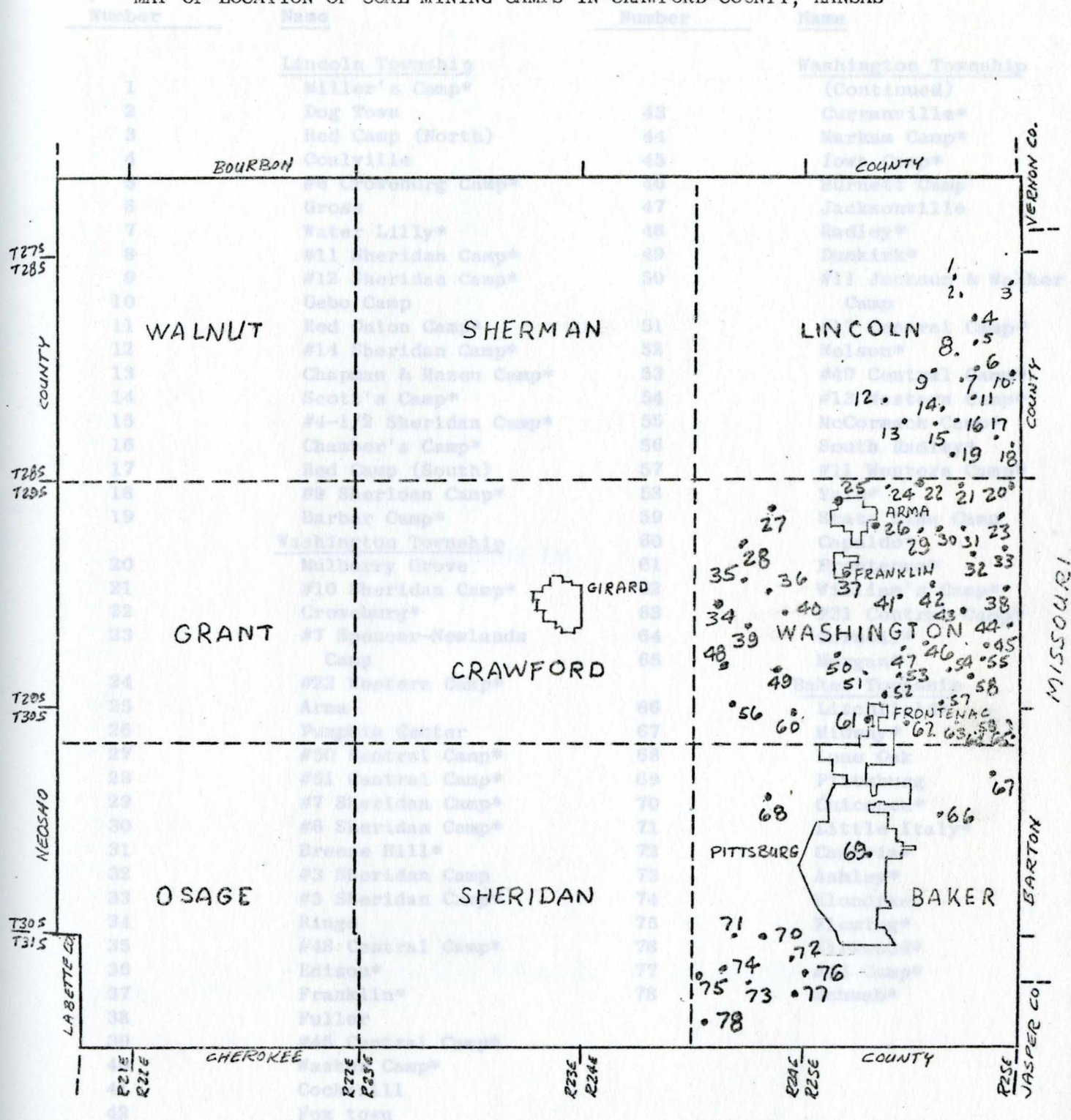
MAP OF LOCATION OF COAL MINING CAMPS IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS



Source: William E. Powell, "The Historical Geography of the Impact of Coal Mining Upon the Cherokee-Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas," 235.

FORMER MINING CAMPS IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

Map II MAP OF LOCATION OF COAL MINING CAMPS IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS



Source: William E. Powell, "The Historical Geography of the Impact of Coal Mining Upon the Cherokee -Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas," 255.

FORMER MINING CAMPS IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

Map Reference Number	Name	Map Reference Number	Name
	<u>Lincoln Township</u>		<u>Washington Township</u>
1	Miller's Camp*		(Continued)
2	Dog Town	43	Curranville*
3	Red Camp (North)	44	Markam Camp*
4	Coalville	45	Iowa Camp*
5	#6 Croweburg Camp*	46	Burnett Camp
6	Gross	47	Jacksonville
7	Water Lilly*	48	Radley*
8	#11 Sheridan Camp*	49	Dunkirk*
9	#12 Sheridan Camp*	50	#11 Jackson & Walker Camp
10	Gebo Camp		
11	Red Onion Camp*	51	#17 Central Camp*
12	#14 Sheridan Camp*	52	Nelson*
13	Chapman & Hazen Camp*	53	#49 Central Camp*
14	Scott's Camp*	54	#13 Western Camp*
15	#4-1/2 Sheridan Camp*	55	McCormack Camp*
16	Chamber's Camp*	56	South Radley*
17	Red Camp (South)	57	#11 Western Camp*
18	#9 Sheridan Camp*	58	Yale*
19	Barber Camp*	59	State Line Camp
	<u>Washington Township</u>	60	Capaldo*
20	Mulberry Grove	61	Frontenac*
21	#10 Sheridan Camp*	62	William's Camp*
22	Croweburg*	63	#31 Central Camp*
23	#7 Spencer-Newlands Camp	64	Cornell*
		65	Morgan*
24	#22 Western Camp*		<u>Baker Township</u>
25	Arma	66	Litchfield*
26	Pumpkin Center	67	Midway*
27	#50 Central Camp*	68	Lone Oak
28	#51 Central Camp*	69	Pittsburg
29	#7 Sheridan Camp*	70	Chicopee*
30	#6 Sheridan Camp*	71	Little Italy*
31	Breeze Hill*	72	Cambria*
32	#3 Sheridan Camp	73	Ashley*
33	#5 Sheridan Camp*	74	Klondike
34	Ringo	75	Fleming*
35	#48 Central Camp*	76	Kirkwood*
36	Edison*	77	#54 Camp*
37	Franklin*	78	Schwab*
38	Fuller		
39	#45 Central Camp*		
40	Washer Camp*		
41	Cockerill		
42	Fox town		

* Company camps

Source: William E. Powell, "The Historical Geography of The Impact of Coal Mining upon the Cherokee - Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas," 250-254

THE DECLINE OF DEEP SHAFT MINING IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Mines</u>	<u>Number of Miners</u>
1923	153	5,483
1924	153	5,066
1925	136	4,837
1926	106	4,253
1927	85	3,581
1928	85	3,344
1929	73	2,947
1930	57	2,657
1931	64	2,328
1932	51	1,547
1933	57	1,391
1934	51	1,238
1935	63	1,224
1936	54	1,383
1937	54	938
1938	57	815
1939	60	785
1940	60	843
1941	44	745
1942	APPENDIX III	
1943	20	428
1944	21	148
1945	13	207
1946	19	133
1947	20	329
1948	13	230
1949	17	188
1950	14	196
1951	10	171
1952	7	136
1953	6	94
1954	5	60
1955	4	58
1956	1	41

Table compiled from Report of Mine Inspection Station and the Mine Safety Station, 1923-1956.

THE DECLINE OF DEEP SHAFT MINING IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Mines</u>	<u>Number of Miners</u>
1923	152	5,460
1924	152	5,066
1925	126	4,837
1926	105	4,253
1927	85	3,591
1928	85	3,344
1929	73	2,549
1930	67	2,657
1931	64	2,326
1932	61	1,541
1933	57	1,391
1934	61	1,239
1935	62	1,224
1936	54	1,393
1937	54	998
1938	57	815
1939	60	765
1940	60	843
1941	44	745
1942	28	416
1943	20	148
1944	21	207
1945	13	133
1946	19	229
1947	20	220
1948	15	188
1949	17	195
1950	14	171
1951	10	136
1952	7	94
1953	6	60
1954	5	58
1955	4	41
1956	1	14

Table compiled from Report of Mine Inspection Station and the Mine Rescue Station, 1923-1956.

ETHNIC POPULATION STATISTICS FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

Foreign Born Inhabitants in Crawford County, Kansas by Principal Country of Origin

Year	Total	Austria	England	France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Poland	Yugoslavia
1890	3,483	149	623	260	1,029	308	98	8	-
1900	4,358	412	638	363	980	207	541	-	-
1910	8,474	1,843	767	706	1,539	214	1,787	-	-
1920	2,482	1,462	706	742	818	144	2,360	338	587
1930	4,623	683	1,232	576	750	523	1,969	279	1,029
1940	3,408	429	242	262	382	32	544	92	441
1950	2,441	322	245	167	191	20	694	60	338

APPENDIX IV

Chart compiled from U. S. Census 1890-1950

Numbers of Immigrant Stock in Crawford County (1930)

Township	Number of Immigrant Stock	Percent of Immigrant Stock
Baker	4,561	26.3
Crawford	583	3.8
Grant	177	1.1
Lincoln	969	6.4
Osage	121	.8
Shelbiana	750	5.2
Sheridan	224	1.5
Walcott	356	2.3
Washington	7,350	48.6

Chart compiled from Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930

ETHNIC POPULATION STATISTICS FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

Foreign Born Inhabitants in Crawford County, Kansas by Principal Country of Origin

Year	Total	Austria	England	France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Poland	Yugoslavia
1890	3,483	149	623	260	1,029	308	98	8	-
1900	4,368	412	639	385	929	267	541	-	-
1910	8,474	1,843	767	708	1,339	214	1,787	-	-
1920	9,483	1,462	706	749	812	144	2,300	338	567
1930	4,923	685	1,232	576	1,760	523	1,989	239	1,029
1940	3,498	429	249	262	352	33	984	92	441
1950	2,444	322	246	197	191	20	694	60	335

Chart compiled from U. S. Census 1890-1950

Numbers of Immigrant Stock in Crawford County (1930)

Township	Number of Immigrant Stock	Percent of Immigrant Stock
Baker	4,561	30.3
Crawford	583	3.8
Grant	177	1.1
Lincoln	969	6.4
Osage	121	.8
Sheridan	790	5.2
Sherman	224	1.5
Walnut	356	2.3
Washington	7,250	48.6

Chart compiled from Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930

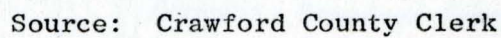
MAP OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS INDICATING VOTING
 PRECINCTS AND NOMINATIONS OF SECOND COMMISSIONER
 DISTRICT - 1935 UNTIL REAPPORTIONMENT IN 1970.

TERMINAL LINE
 DISTRICT LINE

APPENDIX V

Source: Crawford County Clerk

TOWNSHIP LINES
 PRECINCT LINES



MAP OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS INDICATING VOTING
PRECINCTS AND BOUNDARIES OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT FOLLOWING REAPPORTIONMENT IN 1970

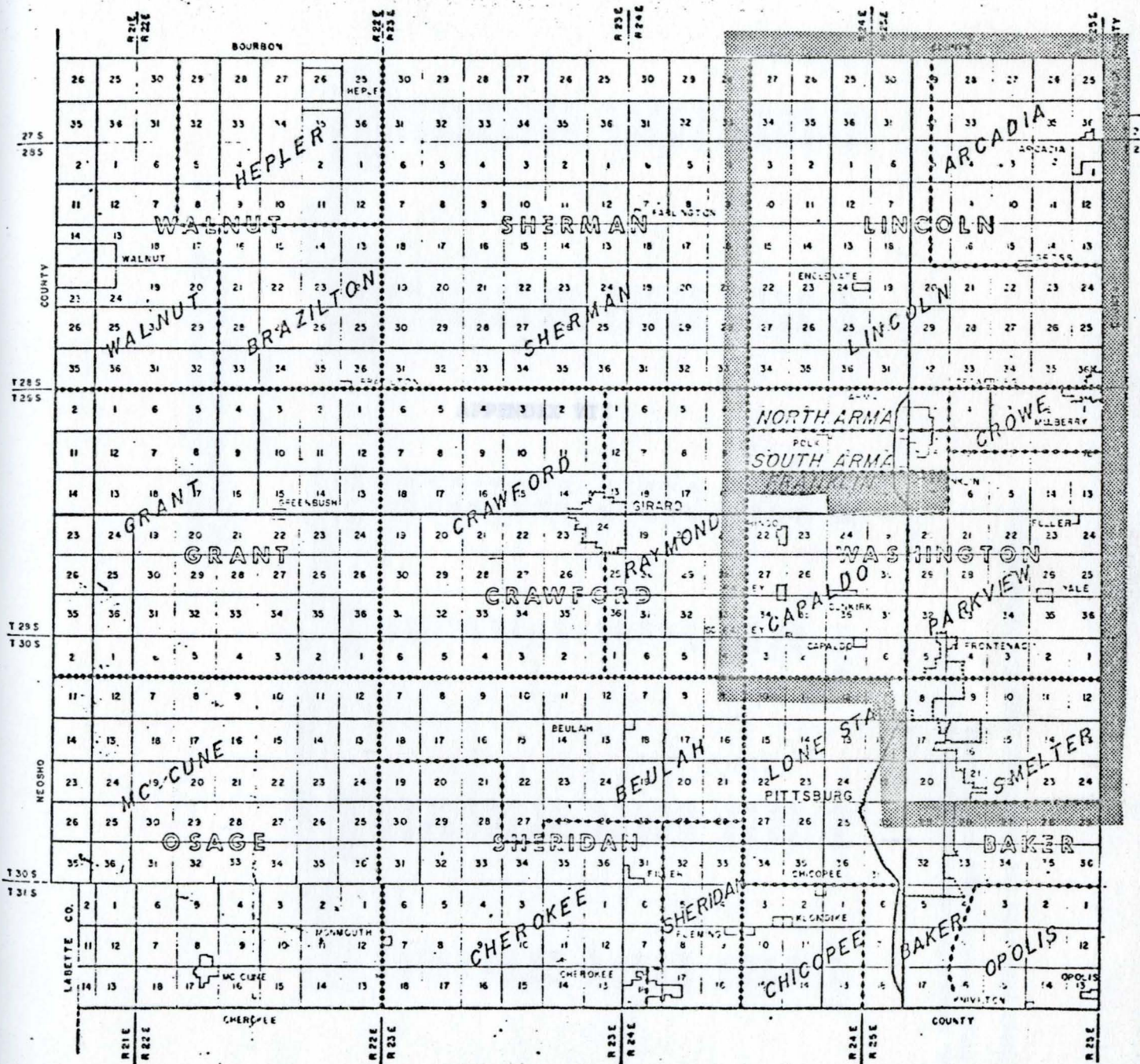
TOWNSHIP LINES
PRECINCT LINES

APPENDIX VI

Source: Crawford County Clerk

MAP OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS INDICATING VOTING
PRECINCTS AND BOUNDARIES OF SECOND COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT FOLLOWING REAPPORTIONMENT IN 1970

TOWNSHIP LINES
PRECINCT LINES



Source: Crawford County Clerk

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CLATSOP COUNTY, OREGON

YEAR 1988

APPENDIX VII

Precincts	County Commissioners				Average				Percentage of Total			
	Total		Percent		Total		Percent		Total		Percent	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Clatsop	137	60.9	76	33.1	34.0	14.7	34.0	14.7	34.0	14.7	34.0	14.7
Walla	58	26.3	33	14.5	15.5	6.7	15.5	6.7	15.5	6.7	15.5	6.7
Malheur	145	64.8	83	36.3	38.3	16.6	38.3	16.6	38.3	16.6	38.3	16.6
Wallowa	70	31.1	42	18.1	19.1	8.3	19.1	8.3	19.1	8.3	19.1	8.3
Union	170	75.5	100	43.1	45.5	19.8	45.5	19.8	45.5	19.8	45.5	19.8
Clatsop	44	19.6	26	11.3	11.3	4.9	11.3	4.9	11.3	4.9	11.3	4.9
North Area	246	108.3	146	63.7	63.7	27.8	63.7	27.8	63.7	27.8	63.7	27.8
South Area	208	92.4	121	53.4	53.4	23.3	53.4	23.3	53.4	23.3	53.4	23.3
Frontier	135	59.5	80	34.5	34.5	15.1	34.5	15.1	34.5	15.1	34.5	15.1
Springfield	137	60.7	82	35.3	35.3	15.3	35.3	15.3	35.3	15.3	35.3	15.3
Walla	151	67.8	91	39.4	39.4	17.2	39.4	17.2	39.4	17.2	39.4	17.2
Wallowa	90	40.3	55	23.9	23.9	10.4	23.9	10.4	23.9	10.4	23.9	10.4
Union	104	46.8	62	26.8	26.8	11.7	26.8	11.7	26.8	11.7	26.8	11.7
Frontier	120	53.2	73	31.3	31.3	13.6	31.3	13.6	31.3	13.6	31.3	13.6
Clatsop	251	110.3	151	64.3	64.3	27.8	64.3	27.8	64.3	27.8	64.3	27.8
Walla	223	98.3	135	58.3	58.3	25.3	58.3	25.3	58.3	25.3	58.3	25.3
Malheur	258	113.3	155	67.3	67.3	29.3	67.3	29.3	67.3	29.3	67.3	29.3
Wallowa	205	90.5	125	53.5	53.5	23.3	53.5	23.3	53.5	23.3	53.5	23.3
Total	3,424	100.0	2,043	59.7	59.7	25.9	59.7	25.9	59.7	25.9	59.7	25.9

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds
County Attorney, Probate Judge and Sheriff

on Percent of total vote cast for candidates from the major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1938

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Parmenter		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Curranville	117	60.9	75	39.1	56.0	44.0	59.1	40.9
Yale	68	52.3	62	47.7	55.0	45.0	55.8	44.2
Nelson	145	66.5	73	43.5	60.1	39.9	59.1	40.9
Radley	72	58.1	52	41.9	55.2	44.8	55.0	45.0
Dunkirk	136	81.9	30	18.1	68.8	31.2	71.9	28.1
Ringo	85	62.0	52	38.0	60.4	39.6	62.3	37.7
North Arma	268	54.3	226	45.7	56.2	43.8	54.0	46.0
South Arma	208	53.4	181	46.6	49.1	49.9	48.6	51.4
Franklin	219	57.5	162	42.5	55.9	44.1	59.0	41.0
Frontenac:								
1-W	187	64.7	102	35.3	55.3	44.7	56.7	42.3
2-W	151	72.6	57	27.4	54.2	45.8	54.5	45.5
3-W	99	63.1	58	36.9	41.9	58.1	43.5	56.5
4-W	104	63.8	59	36.2	43.1	56.8	45.3	54.7
Smelter	236	60.2	156	39.8	61.6	38.4	67.0	33.0
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	351	54.3	295	45.7	55.6	44.4	58.5	41.5
2-P, 4-W	233	41.8	325	58.2	48.8	51.2	51.8	48.2
3-P, 4-W	328	58.0	238	42.0	52.7	47.3	65.5	34.5
4-P, 4-W	395	47.4	439	52.6	56.2	43.8	67.8	32.2
Total	3,404	56.3	2,642	43.7	55.2	44.8	58.9	41.1

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds
County Attorney, Probate Judge and Sheriff

** Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1942

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Pierce		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Curranville	81	68.6	37	31.4	55.7	44.3	66.7	33.3
Yale	83	66.9	41	33.1	47.1	52.8	51.9	48.1
Nelson	93	75.6	30	24.4	56.5	43.5	61.8	48.2
Radley	92	74.2	32	25.8	47.3	52.7	56.4	43.6
Dunkirk	109	38.6	14	11.4	54.0	46.0	58.0	42.0
Ringo	82	66.1	44	33.9	56.0	44.0	63.7	36.3
Crowe	311	78.5	86	21.5	35.1	64.9	39.7	60.3
South Arma	263	80.9	62	19.1	43.6	56.4	49.4	50.6
Franklin	282	80.1	70	19.8	42.5	57.5	50.6	49.4
Frontenac:								
1-W	176	78.2	49	21.8	52.2	47.8	51.5	48.5
2-W	173	92.5	14	7.5	54.2	45.8	57.9	42.1
3-W	139	91.4	13	8.6	38.6	61.4	34.4	65.6
4-W	160	93.0	12	7.0	49.1	50.9	47.5	52.5
Smelter	165	63.2	96	36.8	52.8	47.2	53.9	46.1
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	288	64.1	161	35.6	52.1	52.1	48.6	51.4
2-P, 4-W	231	61.9	142	38.1	49.6	50.4	58.2	41.8
3-P, 4-W	230	65.0	124	35.0	56.5	43.5	63.0	37.0
4-P, 4-W	323	58.8	226	31.2	50.0	50.0	70.2	29.8
Total	3,316	72.5	1,257	27.5	49.5	50.5	55.8	44.2

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds,
County Attorney, Probate Judge, and Sheriff

** Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1946

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Simoncic		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Curranville	55	51.9	51	48.1	47.0	53.0	64.8	35.2
Yale	39	41.9	54	58.1	58.4	41.6	57.1	42.9
Nelson	81	71.7	32	28.3	56.2	43.8	64.8	35.2
Radley	113	84.3	31	15.7	57.4	42.6	67.9	32.1
Dunkirk	107	81.1	25	18.9	60.9	39.1	72.8	27.2
Ringo	90	61.6	56	38.4	56.7	43.3	62.1	37.9
North Arma	298	66.2	152	33.8	55.6	44.4	64.8	35.2
South Arma	203	55.8	161	44.2	49.9	50.1	51.4	48.6
Franklin	236	63.1	138	36.8	47.7	52.3	57.7	42.3
Frontenac:								
1-W	251	85.7	42	14.3	49.3	50.7	57.3	42.7
2-W	192	88.1	26	11.9	55.8	44.2	58.3	41.7
3-W	172	90.1	19	9.9	53.6	46.4	55.0	45.0
4-W	193	86.5	30	13.5	52.4	47.6	54.2	45.8
Smelter	235	72.1	91	27.9	56.6	43.4	60.6	39.4
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	340	62.3	206	37.7	57.5	42.5	60.4	39.6
2-P, 4-W	251	55.7	194	44.3	54.2	45.8	61.6	38.4
3-P, 4-W	269	65.6	141	34.4	61.3	39.7	69.1	30.6
4-P, 4-W	425	59.9	284	40.1	57.1	42.9	63.0	37.0
Total	3,546	67.1	1,737	32.9	55.0	45.0	60.9	39.1

* County Clerk, Register of Deeds, County Attorney,
Probate Judge, and Sheriff

** Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1950

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Geier		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Curranville	58	52.4	35	37.6	58.7	41.3	73.8	26.2
Yale	64	80.0	16	20.0	63.5	36.5	64.4	35.4
Nelson	57	65.5	30	34.5	50.0	50.0	56.1	43.9
Radley	111	80.4	27	19.6	60.3	38.7	65.3	34.7
Dunkirk	113	84.3	21	15.7	71.7	28.3	80.1	19.9
Ringo	64	59.8	43	40.2	57.4	42.6	69.0	31.0
North Arma	344	75.4	112	24.6	49.7	50.3	69.8	30.2
South Arma	282	77.3	83	22.7	52.6	47.4	61.4	38.6
Franklin	212	68.6	97	31.4	50.5	49.5	54.4	35.6
Frontenac:								
1-W	202	79.2	53	21.8	58.5	41.5	65.2	34.8
2-W	211	89.4	25	11.6	64.1	35.9	63.6	36.4
3-W	144	83.2	29	16.8	58.9	41.1	63.7	36.3
4-W	163	84.5	30	15.5	59.7	40.3	63.0	37.0
Smelter	298	72.0	116	28.0	60.9	39.1	68.6	31.4
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	364	75.4	119	24.6	57.8	42.2	62.7	37.3
2-P, 4-W	172	62.5	103	37.5	58.5	41.5	70.6	29.4
3-P, 4-W	288	65.1	154	34.9	54.5	45.5	73.9	26.1
4-P, 4-W	463	62.0	284	38.0	60.3	39.7	69.1	30.9
Total	3,610	72.3	1,377	27.7	57.5	42.5	67.0	33.0

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Attorney, Probate Judge and Sheriff

** Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1954

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Schallo		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Currenville	55	73.3	20	26.7	69.9	30.1	78.9	21.1
Yale	54	70.1	13	29.9	76.1	23.9	77.0	23.0
Nelson	57	63.3	33	36.7	65.9	34.1	70.7	29.3
Radley	83	72.2	32	28.8	71.8	28.2	75.0	25.0
Dunkirk	91	81.3	21	18.7	76.2	23.8	80.6	19.4
Ringo	53	54.6	44	45.4	65.3	34.7	75.9	24.1
North Arma	324	78.6	88	21.4	71.4	28.6	73.7	26.3
South Arma	196	69.5	86	30.5	56.0	44.0	56.3	43.7
Franklin	213	73.4	77	26.6	69.9	30.1	69.2	30.8
Frontenac:								
1-W	196	80.0	49	20.0	64.7	35.3	64.3	35.7
2-W	217	86.8	33	13.2	73.1	26.9	74.2	25.8
3-W	120	85.1	21	14.9	68.0	32.0	72.3	27.7
4-W	132	80.0	34	20.0	70.1	29.9	63.4	36.6
Smelter	270	73.4	93	26.6	67.0	33.0	67.9	32.1
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	248	58.9	173	41.1	60.3	39.7	62.9	37.1
2-P, 4-W	265	60.1	176	39.9	62.4	37.6	68.3	31.7
3-P, 4-W	250	62.5	150	37.5	66.8	33.2	72.1	27.9
4-P, 4-W	460	66.4	233	33.7	65.1	34.9	68.2	31.8
Total	3,284	70.4	1,382	29.6	66.4	43.6	68.8	31.2

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Attorney,
Probate Judge and Sheriff

* Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1958

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Schallo		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Curranville	45	60.8	29	39.2	64.4	35.6	81.8	18.2
Yale	53	72.6	20	27.4	66.2	33.7	82.5	17.5
Nelson	64	68.0	30	32.0	54.6	45.4	68.4	31.6
Radley	73	64.6	40	35.4	61.7	38.3	73.3	26.7
Dunkirk	88	85.4	15	14.6	66.3	33.7	81.6	18.4
Ringo	56	58.9	39	41.1	56.0	44.0	75.3	24.7
North Arma	307	69.3	136	30.7	62.1	37.9	77.0	23.0
South Arma	251	68.8	114	31.2	60.5	39.5	64.0	36.0
Franklin	237	76.5	73	23.5	64.2	35.8	71.3	28.7
Frontenac:								
1-W	225	77.3	66	22.7	60.6	39.4	72.8	27.2
2-W	264	86.0	43	14.0	64.8	35.2	73.3	26.7
3-W	137	85.1	24	14.9	63.9	36.1	79.7	20.3
4-W	156	84.3	29	15.7	63.0	37.0	77.5	22.5
Smelter	335	65.2	179	34.8	59.5	40.5	71.2	28.8
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	250	55.6	200	44.4	57.0	43.0	67.1	32.9
2-P, 4-W	276	59.4	189	40.6	61.7	38.3	72.2	27.8
3-P, 4-W	333	66.1	171	33.9	65.1	34.9	77.8	22.2
4-P, 4-W	535	68.8	269	31.2	61.4	38.6	74.1	25.9
Total	3,685	68.9	1,666	31.1	62.2	37.8	73.2	26.8

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Attorney and Sheriff

* Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1962

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Dechairo		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Murranville	20	37.7	33	62.3	56.0	44.0	63.8	36.2
Sale	40	63.5	23	36.5	63.9	36.1	75.4	24.6
Nelson	48	48.5	51	51.5	54.5	45.5	54.3	45.7
Madley	56	59.6	38	40.4	65.6	34.4	76.2	23.8
Munkirk	68	70.8	28	29.2	70.5	29.5	75.0	25.0
Lingo	37	50.0	37	50.0	63.9	46.1	62.1	37.9
North Arma	231	59.1	160	40.9	65.3	34.7	72.6	27.4
South Arma	190	51.9	176	48.1	59.5	40.1	60.4	39.6
Franklin	165	59.6	112	40.4	58.1	41.9	68.0	32.0
Frontenac:								
1-W	177	60.8	114	39.2	59.9	40.1	62.8	37.2
2-W	227	73.9	80	26.1	69.0	31.0	70.3	29.2
3-W	117	81.8	26	18.2	73.6	26.4	83.5	16.5
4-W	101	63.9	57	36.1	60.0	40.0	61.0	39.0
Smelter	129	61.4	81	38.6	58.0	42.0	64.9	35.1
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	257	61.6	160	38.4	58.8	41.2	65.9	34.1
2-P, 4-W	208	47.2	233	52.8	58.4	41.6	68.1	31.9
3-P, 4-W	257	54.6	214	45.4	56.4	43.6	66.4	33.6
4-P, 4-W	196	60.7	127	39.3	61.6	38.9	70.4	29.6
5-P, 4-W	227	55.5	182	44.5	58.0	42.0	63.4	36.6
Hospital	103	43.5	134	56.5	49.4	50.6	57.4	42.6
Total	2,854	58.0	2,066	42.0	60.2	39.8	66.1	33.9

County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Attorney & Sheriff

Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1966

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Dechairo		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Parkview	114	63.7	65	36.3	61.5	38.5	58.9	41.1
Capaldo	157	69.2	70	30.8	67.1	32.9	68.1	31.9
North Arma	261	63.5	150	36.5	72.5	27.5	68.0	32.0
South Arma	232	61.2	147	38.8	68.4	31.6	58.8	41.2
Franklin	196	71.0	80	29.0	73.2	26.8	73.2	26.8
Frontenac:								
1-W	215	73.9	76	26.1	64.4	35.6	66.2	33.8
2-W	253	80.1	63	19.9	68.3	31.7	60.9	39.1
3-W	115	79.9	29	20.1	72.6	27.4	73.9	26.1
4-W	113	72.4	43	27.6	68.7	31.3	68.3	31.7
Smelter	80	65.0	43	35.0	54.9	45.1	53.2	41.8
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	250	68.7	114	31.3	58.2	41.8	60.0	40.0
2-P, 4-W	247	58.8	173	41.2	59.3	40.7	63.5	36.5
3-P, 4-W	411	67.6	197	32.4	60.9	39.1	66.8	33.2
4-P, 4-W	258	73.7	92	26.3	67.4	32.6	71.3	28.7
5-P, 4-W	263	64.9	142	35.1	59.8	40.2	66.5	33.5
Hospital	82	59.0	59	41.0	54.3	45.7	57.0	43.0
Total	3,247	67.8	1,543	32.2	64.5	35.6	65.2	34.8

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, County Attorney and Sheriff

* Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

YEAR 1970

Precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Bowers		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
Arcadia	133	71.5	53	28.5	60.7	39.3	69.9	30.1
Lincoln	71	56.8	54	43.2	54.8	45.2	66.0	34.0
Mulberry:								
1-W	79	71.8	31	28.2	60.7	39.3	70.8	29.2
2-W	83	76.1	26	23.9	66.4	33.6	70.2	29.8
Crowe	56	65.9	29	34.1	47.7	52.3	56.3	43.7
North Arma	256	65.6	134	34.4	60.1	39.9	67.1	32.9
South Arma	274	65.1	147	34.9	60.5	39.5	62.7	37.3
Franklin	78	66.1	40	33.9	64.7	35.3	73.7	26.3
Frontenac:								
1-W	231	80.5	56	19.5	60.6	39.4	70.8	29.2
2-W	315	76.1	99	23.9	55.9	44.1	62.3	37.7
3-W	114	83.2	23	26.8	57.8	42.2	71.8	28.2
4-W	120	75.5	39	24.5	58.1	41.9	57.9	42.1
Smelter	59	39.6	90	60.4	46.7	53.3	54.5	45.5
Pittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	178	59.7	120	40.3	54.9	45.1	62.1	37.9
2-P, 4-W	186	48.4	198	51.6	53.2	46.8	62.8	37.2
3-P, 4-W	351	59.0	244	41.0	58.4	41.6	65.7	34.3
4-P, 4-W	181	61.1	115	30.9	66.7	33.3	76.2	23.8
5-P, 4-W	202	53.9	173	46.1	53.8	46.2	62.6	37.4
Total	2,967	64.0	1,671	36.0	58.0	42.0	65.4	34.6

* County Clerk, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds and Sheriff

** Percent of total vote cast for candidates from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS
FOR CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

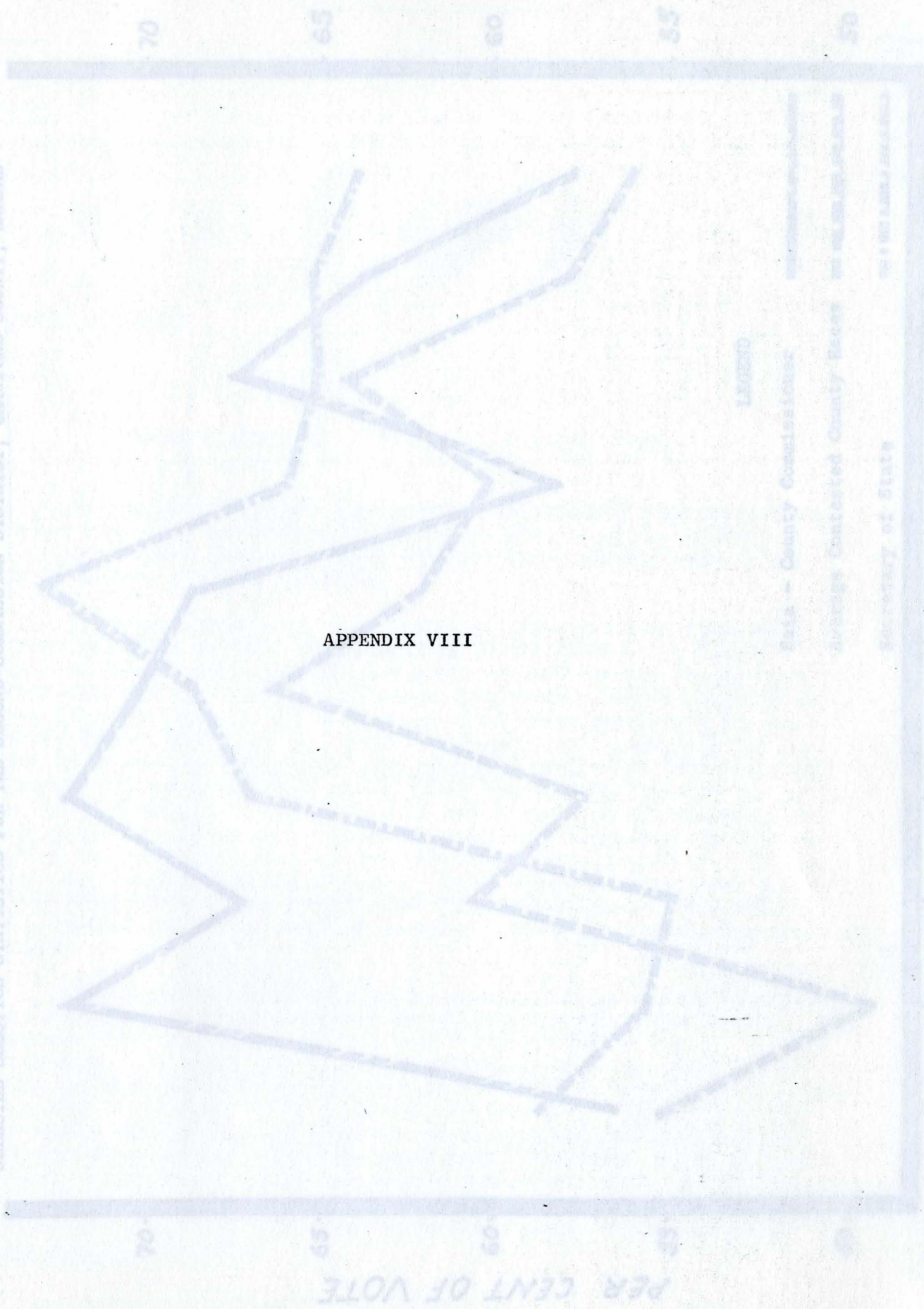
YEAR 1972

precinct	County Commissioner				Average		Secretary of State	
	Saia		Schallo		Contested County Races *		Democratic	Republican
	Votes	Percent	Votes	Percent	Democratic (Percent)	Republican (Percent)	(Percent)**	(Percent)**
arkview	83	59.7	56	40.3	55.8	44.2	73.8	26.2
rcadia	166	66.4	84	33.6	54.9	45.1	68.3	31.7
lincoln	62	51.7	58	48.3	53.7	46.3	52.6	47.4
ulberry:								
1-W	84	58.7	59	41.3	56.2	43.8	63.2	36.8
2-W	109	67.7	52	32.3	59.7	40.3	70.4	29.6
Crowe	63	61.2	40	38.8	53.4	46.6	48.9	51.1
North Arma	282	63.1	165	36.9	61.3	38.7	67.6	32.4
South Arma	294	62.2	179	37.8	58.7	41.3	64.9	35.1
rontenac:								
1-W	214	69.3	95	30.7	54.6	45.6	68.0	32.0
2-W	321	67.4	155	32.6	55.4	44.6	65.5	34.5
3-W	122	78.2	34	21.8	53.0	47.0	70.5	29.5
4-W	132	66.3	67	33.7	59.3	40.7	66.1	33.9
Smelter	93	55.7	74	44.3	49.7	50.3	60.6	39.4
ittsburg:								
1-P, 4-W	144	40.6	211	59.4	52.1	47.9	61.6	38.4
2-P, 4-W	225	44.6	280	55.4	54.2	45.8	61.5	38.5
3-P, 4-W	343	54.9	282	45.1	56.6	43.4	68.8	31.2
4-P, 4-W	200	62.1	122	37.9	63.8	36.2	73.8	26.2
5-P, 4-W	236	43.9	301	56.1	52.3	47.7	56.8	43.2
total	3,173	57.8	2,314	42.2	56.1	43.9	64.1	35.9

County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Attorney, and Sheriff

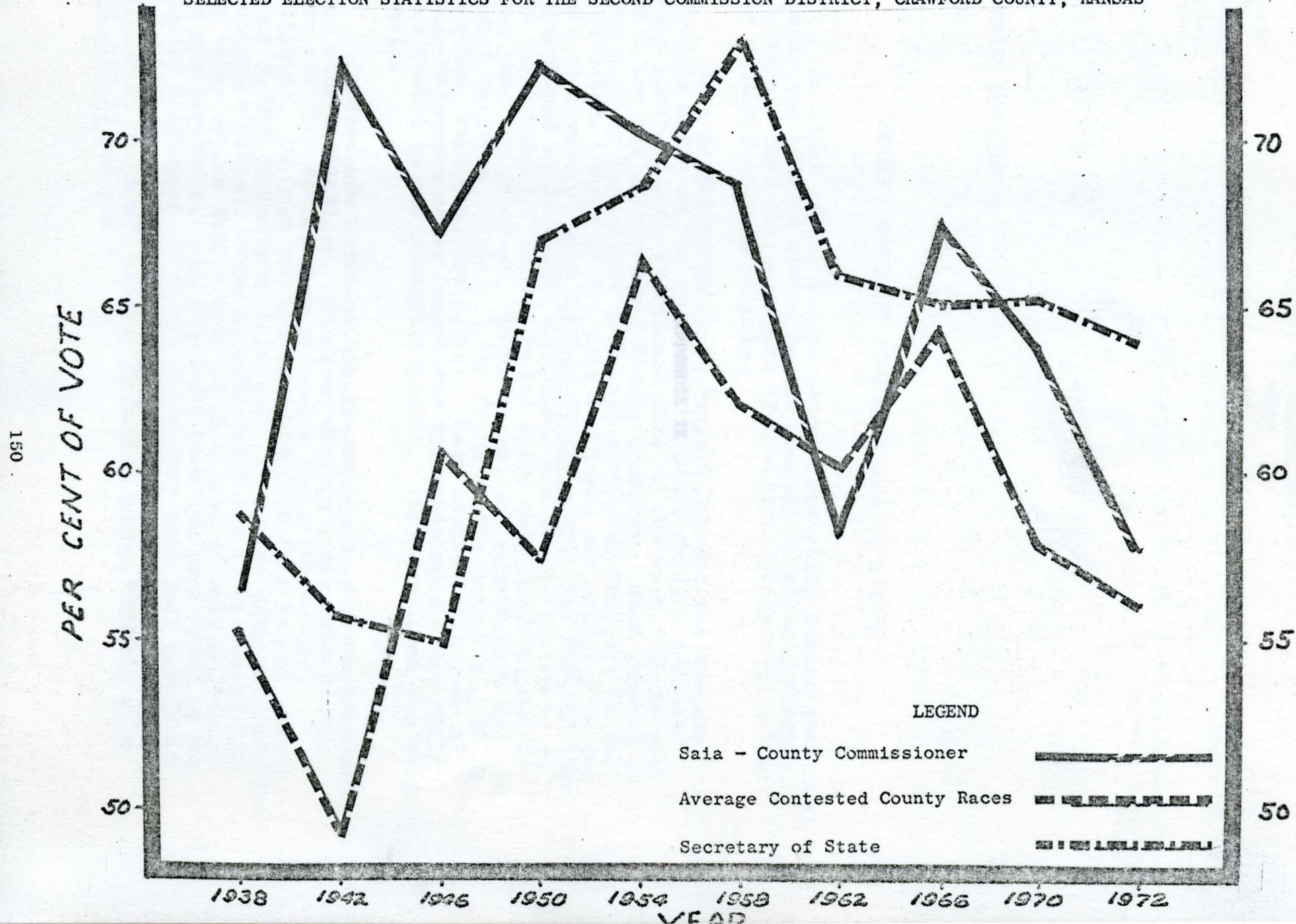
Percent of total vote cast for candidate from two major parties.

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS FOR THE SECOND COMMISSION DISTRICT, CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS



APPENDIX VIII

SELECTED ELECTION STATISTICS FOR THE SECOND COMMISSION DISTRICT, CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

JOHN D. SPANIEL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

W. F. McCurdy

JOHN D. SPANIEL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

RETURN TO: 2

BOX 14
CHANDLER, KANSAS 67420
PH. 313 724-2211

SEE PROFESSIONAL BLDG.
PETERSON, KANSAS 67420
PH. 313 221-0220

April 27, 1972

PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY ATTORNEY ADVISES TAXPAYER'S TOUR

In light of the recent report concerning hiring practices under the KPEP as stated by the Governor's press secretary, I suggest that the taxpayers of Crawford County take a tour as outlined in this article.

As a beginning point, I suggest 4th and the By-pass. Proceed north on the By-pass about a quarter mile north of 29th Street and look to the west. There you will see the county owned Fresto property. Rest assured as you gaze on the vacant buildings that your property is well protected. Three of Mr. Seis's friends are watching it for you at a cost of only \$14,400.00 per year. The \$98,500 item (purchased at less than \$100,000 so you wouldn't have to go to the trouble of voting on it) costs only about \$4,000.00 per year for interest. While there, you should note the red brick building located at the front of the property. It is now the County Welfare Office. Rest assured that none of your taxpayers money (meant for the unemployed under KPEP) was wasted on these welfare people. They remain on the welfare rolls.

Proceed now north on the By-pass, across north Broadway and east to Michigan. There on Michigan, 811 feet south, you can look to the west and see a large three-story building. It cost you taxpayers \$98,500 (see reason above) plus \$4,000.00 per year interest. It is the unopened Juvenile Detention Center. From November to March it was cared for by three of Joe Seis's friends at a cost of only \$6,000.00 to you taxpayers. The personnel have now been moved to the County Courthouse in Girard where they have just completed painting the toilets in pastel pinks and blues; all for only \$1,200.00 per month of your taxpayers money. That's only \$14,400.00 per year!

152
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

5

BOX 34

RETURN TO: ☒

GIRARD, KANSAS 66743

PH. 316 724-8216

323 PROFESSIONAL BLDG.

☐ PITTSBURG, KANSAS 66762

PH. 316 231-1030

April 27, 1972

PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY ATTORNEY ADVISES TAXPAYER'S TOUR

In light of the recent report concerning hiring practices under the KPEP as stated by the Governor's press secretary, I suggest that the taxpayers of Crawford County take a tour as outlined in this article.

As a beginning point, I suggest 4th and the By-pass. Proceed north on the By-pass to a point about a quarter mile north of 20th Street and look to the west. There you will see the county owned Freeto property. Rest assured as you gaze on the vacant buildings that your property is well protected. Three of Mr. Saia's friends are watching it for you at a cost of only \$14,400.00 per year. The \$98,500 item (purchased at less than \$100,000 so you wouldn't have to go to the trouble of voting on it) costs only about \$4,000.00 per year for interest. While there, you should note the red brick building located at the front of the property. It is now the County Welfare Office. Rest assured that none of your taxpayers money (meant for the unemployed under KPEP) was wasted on these welfare people. They remain on the welfare rolls.

Proceed now north on the By-pass, across north Broadway and east to Michigan. There on Michigan, 611 feet south, you can look to the west and see a large three-story building. It cost you taxpayers \$98,500 (see reason above) plus \$4,000.00 per year interest. It is the unopened Juvenile Detention Center. From November to March it was cared for by three of Joe Saia's friends at a cost of only \$6,000.00 to you taxpayers. The personnel have now been moved to the County Courthouse in Girard where they have just completed painting the toilets in pastel pinks and blue; all for only \$1,200.00 per month of your taxpayers money. That's only \$14,400.00 per year!

Go south now, to East Jefferson Street. There you will find the Wal-Lite plant. See any strikers? Seven of them, all democrats and friends are being paid \$400.00 each month of your taxpayers money. That's only \$33,600 per year to subsidize strikers.

Go west now to Broadway and south to the college. You have an interest there, too. At least two loyal friends are full-time students there who receive \$400.00 of your tax money each month, but that's only \$9,600 per year.

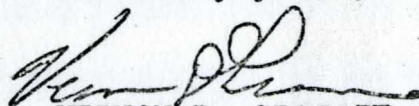
Let's go to Girard now. I still haven't borrowed the money to pay my income tax yet, and we can see some interesting items there. We may even be able to get into the courthouse to use the pastel toilets, in case any taxpayer feels the urge to vomit.

A block from the courthouse is the county jail. There we find 12 deputies, special deputies, typists, etc., all loyal friends of Mr. Saia who were paid salaries for the month of February of \$4,978.33. That's only \$59,739.96 a year. After all they did make one arrest which resulted in a felony conviction in the last year and a half.

As you drive back home, to Pittsburg or wherever, you might ask yourself, again, again, again and again why your taxes are so high. If your math fails you, I might help by saying that you got one felony conviction and several pastel toilets for only \$131,739.96, if you only consider wages.

I hope when Joe Saia has his tax protest clinics, you'll all try to be there. It's a shame how high taxes are. You know how Joe hates those taxes, how he is for the little man, the poor man, the man on welfare (as long as they aren't Republicans). Joe's so generous it's unbelievable, but it's easy when it's tax money. He is so generous it makes me sick! Does anyone know where I can find a pastel toilet?

Sincerely yours,


VERNON D. GRASSIE
County Attorney

VDG:jf

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Interview with Charles Cicero, February 19, 1975. Mr. Cicero was editor of the Frontenac Press, and was Democratic precinct committeeman of the Fourth Ward in Frontenac from 1934 to 1940.

Interview with Charles Cicero by Kathy Spigarelli, November 1, 1974, Oral History Collection, Department of History, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Interview with Elaine Emmett, June 6, 1975. Ms. Emmett is a Democratic precinct committeewoman of Pittsburg.

Interview with Eaye James, March 11, 1975. Ms. James was vice chairperson of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee and vice chairperson of the Third District Democratic Committee.

Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Roy T. Heller by Mary E. Cash, February 15, 1971. Mr. Heller was elected Register of Deeds of Crawford County in 1936, Oral History Collection, Department of History, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Interview with Harold Hutchins, December 11, 1974. Mr. Hutchins is county clerk of Crawford County.

Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Dan Margrave by Mary E. Cash, February 11, 1971. Mr. & Mrs. Margrave were residents of Arma in the 1920's and 1930's. Oral History Collection, Department of History, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, April 4, 1974.

Interview with D. J. "Joe" Saia, February 12, 1975.

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