

Organized Crime Files (SC205)

Introduction

This collection contains files relating to organized crime in Kansas City from the 1930s to the 1970s. Contents include records from the Kansas City Police Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation, reporter's notes, newspaper clippings, and photographs of local mafia members.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: *The Kansas City Star*

Title: Organized Crime Files

Dates: ca. 1934-1972

Size: .83 linear feet, 2 boxes

Collection Number: SC205

Donor Information

Gift, 2016, William M. (Mike) McGraw.

Citation Note

Organized Crime Files (SC205), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Administrative Information

Additional form available: This collection has been photocopied and digitized for preservation. For fragile items, please use the photocopies found at the beginning of each series. The entire collection is available online at www.kchistory.org.

Related Collections: Additional information relating to organized crime in Kansas City may be found in the library catalog and in the Missouri Valley Special Local History Index. Related collections include the Kansas City Police Historical Society Collection (SC122), the Zeldin Collection of Journal-Post Glass Negatives (P29), and the following Vertical Files: Gangsters, Organized Crime, and Kansas City Crime Commission.

Historical Sketch

Organized crime had an undeniable presence in Kansas City for a large part of the twentieth century. Often shrouded in mystery, the topic elicits a variety of associated terms, including the Syndicate, Mafia, Black Hand, Outfit, Mob, and Cosa Nostra.

In its 1970 publication "[Hoods Who](#)" *Spotlight on Organized Crime*, the Kansas City Crime Commission defined the crime syndicate as "that association of hoodlums, gangsters, corrupted public officials, hangerson and fellow travelers who operate in

multifarious activities, legal and illegal, for the express purpose of organized preying on the public.”

These “multifarious activities” included the Mafia-like tactics of a small group of Sicilian criminals that flourished during the 1920s and 1930s, due in large part to the power of political boss Tom Pendergast. An influx of illegal activity during Prohibition and Pendergast’s control over city politics and law enforcement provided an environment conducive to the growth of organized crime.

Though the syndicate’s power waned in the following years, its presence continued through the mid-century and into the 1970s in the River Quay. Increased scrutiny from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the deaths of notable mob leaders signaled the decline of organized crime in Kansas City, and its influence diminished by the early 1980s.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains files relating to local organized crime that were assembled by staff at *The Kansas City Star*. Found by retired reporter Mike McGraw, the files include Kansas City Police Department mugshots, photographs, reports, memoranda, research notes by *Star* reporter Ira McCarty, and various newspaper clippings about local mob members from the 1930s to the early 1970s. Some records from the Federal Bureau of Investigation are also included among the local police records.

This collection is arranged into five series based upon the original folders that were donated. The original order and folder titles were preserved whenever possible.

[Series 1: Mugshots, 1945-1972 and n.d.](#)

This series contains miscellaneous Kansas City Police Department mug shots from various dates. Some include a physical description and record of previous arrests on the back side of the photograph. Please note that the individuals in these mugshots do not have a corresponding police file in this collection. Mugshots of those listed in Series 2 and 3 were kept with their corresponding file. This series is arranged alphabetically by surname.

[Series 2: Kansas City Gangsters - Italian, 1934-1964 and n.d.](#)

This series contains files on criminals of Italian descent. Items include: mugshots, photographs, KCPD and FBI records, short biographies, and newspaper clippings. While most of the documents are undated, many contain arrest records from the 1930s until the year 1950. This series is arranged alphabetically by surname.

[Series 3: Kansas City Gangsters – Other Nationalities, 1944-1970 and n.d.](#)

This series contains information on non-Italian criminals including mugshots, photographs, police records and newspaper clippings, as well as The Kansas City Crime Commission’s “Hoods Who” Spotlight on Organized Crime. This series was kept in its original order.

[Series 4: Unione Sicilione, 1950-1961 and n.d.](#)

This series contains photographs, miscellaneous documents, and newspaper clippings pertaining to the Sicilian-American criminal brotherhood known as the Unione Sicilione or Unione Siciliana. This series was kept in its original order.

[Series 5: Records and General Data, 1947-1959 and n.d.](#)

This series contains miscellaneous police records, newspaper clippings, *Kansas City Star* staff correspondence, and information on various mafia members, including Charles Gargotta and several others listed in Series 2. Loose mugshots were removed and interfiled with Series 1-3. The remaining content was kept in its original order.

Collection Inventory**Series 1: Mugshots, 1945-1972 and n.d.**

- f. 1 Photocopies, 1945-1972 and n.d.
- f. 2 Mugshots
 - #1 Brancato, Anthony (Tony), 1949
 - #2 Brancato, Norfie
 - #3 Caldrone, John Carl, 1965
 - #4 Costanza, John Anthony
 - #5 Greathouse, James Lee, 1972
 - #6 Greathouse, Kenneth, 1972
 - #7 Harris, Mike
 - #8 Harris, Turk, 1945
 - #9 Licavoli, Joe
 - #10 Licavoli, Sam
 - #11 Mandato, Nick A., 1969
 - #12 Sciortino, John Joseph, 1962
 - #13 Spalitto, Pete
 - #14 Spero, Michael Angelo, 1963
 - #15 Unknown

Series 2: Kansas City Gangsters - Italian, 1934-1964 and n.d.

- f. 3-5 Photocopies, 1934-1964 and n.d.
- f. 6 Index
- f. 7 Mafia men in KC
- f. 8 Newspaper clippings, ca. 1949-1950
- f. 9 Ancona, Jack
- f. 10 Ardese, Carl
- f. 11 Balano, Tony
- f. 12 Benamina family
- f. 13 Binaggio, Jack
- f. 14 Blando, Giovanni (John) Battista
- f. 15 Bonino, Anthony (Tony Bilello)

- f. 16 Bruno, Charles
- f. 17 Cacioppo, Charles Anthony (Chuckie Morgan)
- f. 18 Cammisano, Joe
- f. 19 Cangelose, Louis (Black Louis)
- f. 20 Catanzaro, Paolo
- f. 21 Chiapetta, Vincent
- f. 22 Cusumano, Joe; Cusumano, Phil
- f. 23 DeLuca, Frank
- f. 24 DeLuca, Joseph
- f. 25 DeMayo, Alfonso (Fonzie)
- f. 26 DeSimone, James
- f. 27 Duardi, James Salvador
- f. 28 Fasone, Augustus (Gus) Charles
- f. 29 Fillardo, Joseph
- f. 30 Forte, Charles
- f. 31 Gargotta, Gus (Skinny)
- f. 32 George, Anthony (Tony)
- f. 33 George, James Samuel (Jimmy)
- f. 34 Gizzo, Anthony Robert (Tony)
- f. 35 Gulotta, Anthony
- f. 36 Gurera, Carl
- f. 37 Gurera, Joe
- f. 38 Impastato, Nicolo (Nick)
- f. 39 Labriola, Paul
- f. 40 Lamento, Steno
- f. 41 LaRocca, Frank
- f. 42 LaRocca, Louis
- f. 43 Lascuola, Joseph (Joe School)
- f. 44 Lascuola, Michael (Mike School)
- f. 45 Lascuola, Phillip (Phil School)
- f. 46 Licausi, Joe
- f. 47 Lococo, Gaetano (Tano/Thomas)
- f. 48 Mangiaracina, John (Johnny Mag)
- f. 49 Mangiaracina, Tony
- f. 50 Marcella, Anthony
- f. 51 Nigro, Angelo (Bossie Nigro)
- f. 52 Oliver, Joe
- f. 53 Patito, Joe
- f. 54 Porrello, Joe
- f. 55 Strada, John Joe
- f. 56 Trombino, Tony
- f. 57 Ventola, Louis
- f. 58 Ventola, Patsy

Series 3: Kansas City Gangsters – Other Nationalities, 1944-1970 and n.d.

- f. 59 Photocopies, 1944-1970 and n.d.
- f. 60 The Kansas City Crime Commission’s “Hoods Who” Spotlight on Organized Crime: Syndicate, Mafia, Black Hand, Outfit, Mob, Cosa Nostra, 1970

- f. 61 Miscellaneous Gangsters, 1950 and n.d.
- f. 62 Hoelzel, Carl F.
- f. 63 Maroon, Nagel J. (Snake), ca. 1944-1950
- f. 64 Rainey, Walter, ca. 1948-1950

Series 4: Unione Sicilione, 1950-1961 and n.d.

- f. 65 Photocopies
- f. 66 Unione Sicilione

Series 5: Records and General Data, 1947-1959 and n.d.

- f. 67 Photocopies
- f. 68 Records and General Data

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