



## Robinson-Craig National Life & Accident Collection

### Collection Summary:

**Title:** Robinson-Craig National Life & Accident Collection

**Summary:** A collection of artifacts, business records, photographs, and printed materials relating to National Life & Accident Insurance Company. Dates range between 1893-1983. Bulk dates: 1935-1962.

**Physical Description:** 8 boxes; 3.5 linear feet

**Language:** English

**Stack Location:** Section 9, shelves 19-20

**Repository:** Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

### Historical Note:

The National Life & Accident Insurance Company originally began in 1900 in Nashville as the National Sick & Accident Association. The company was bought by Cornelius Abernathy Craig in 1901 on the Davidson County Courthouse in the settlement of an estate. Craig was elected president of the company in 1902, with W.R. Wills as secretary and treasurer, and C. Runcie Clements as assistant treasurer. In the beginning, National Life & Accident sold only health and accident premiums, mostly to industrial workers. Craig, Wills, and Clements later expanded their services, opening its first life insurance department in 1920. By 1924, the company was offering an even wider range of insurance policies.

Edwin Wilson Craig, son of C.A. Craig, is credited with coming up with the idea of a company radio broadcasting station. WSM, the acronym for National Life & Accident's motto ("We Shield Millions"), first launched in 1925, and broadcast country music from the Grand Ole Opry. The company owned both the radio station and the Opry until the 1980s.

By the mid-1960s, National Life & Accident had outgrown its building at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and Union Street. The new National Life building, which sat across from the Tennessee State Capitol, rivaled its largest competition,

the Life & Casualty Tower. The building was sold to the State of Tennessee in the late 1990s and became the William R. Snodgrass Tower.

In 1982, American General Corporation gained control of National Life in a hostile takeover. American General, which had already owned Life & Casualty Insurance Company since the 1960s, merged the two companies together in the 1980s, effectively ending a significant era in Nashville's economic and business history.

**Scope and Contents of the Collection:**

This collection contains artifacts, business records, photographs, and printed materials relating to the history of National Life & Accident Insurance Company, its leadership, and its staff. Dates range from 1893 until the early 1980s, with bulk dates between 1935 and 1962. The collection documents the business history of one of Nashville's oldest insurance companies and what was one of the top insurance companies in the nation.

**Index Terms:**

**Subjects:**

Insurance companies.

Insurance companies--1890-1900.

Insurance companies--1900-1910.

Insurance companies--Employees

Insurance companies--United States.

National Life & Accident Insurance Company, Inc. (Nashville, Tenn.)

**Related Collections:**

Jerry Parker Life & Casualty Collection

Life and Casualty Collection

Vertical Files--Buildings--American General Center (National Life Building) (TN Towers)

**Arrangement:**

This collection is arranged alphabetically into four series: *Artifacts*, *Business Records*, *Photographs*, and *Printed Materials*.

The *Artifacts* series contains items relating to National Life, American General, and Life & Casualty insurance companies. Items include an ashtray, dice, a grooming kit, coasters, pins, and a paperweight. This series also includes a seven-inch reel-to-reel of a speech by C.A. Craig, II and vinyl records honoring Edwin Wilson Craig.

*Business Records* includes financial statements, correspondence, and legal documents relating to the day-to-day business of National Life & Accident Insurance Company.

The *Photographs* series includes photographs taken at various events and celebrations, people associated with National Life, and the various sites of National Life & Accident offices from 1900 until 1970.

*Printed Materials* includes newspaper clippings, programs, publications, and speeches relating to National Life & Accident Insurance Company. A large part of this series includes issues of "Our Shield" from 1934 to 1982.

### **Contents Listing:**

#### **Box 1:**

- Item 1: Artifacts--Ashtray (n.d.)
- Item 2: Artifacts--Blue Star (1922)
- Item 3: Artifacts--Commitment to Excellence Button (1979)
- Item 4: Artifacts--Dice (1979)
- Item 5: Artifacts--Grooming Kit (n.d.)
- Item 6: Artifacts--Leather Bookmark (n.d.)
- Item 7: Artifacts--Life & Casualty Coasters (n.d.)
- Item 8: Artifacts--Life & Casualty Knife (n.d.)
- Item 9: Artifacts--Life & Casualty Paperweight (1924)
- Item 10: Artifacts--Life & Casualty Pin (n.d.)
- Item 11: Artifacts--Life & Casualty Plaque (n.d.)
- Item 12: Artifacts--Loyalty Club Paperweight (1981)

#### **Box 2:**

- Item 1: Artifacts--Reel-to-Reel--C.A. Craig, II Speech (1972)
- Item 2: Artifacts--Reel-to-Reel--Unidentified (n.d.)
- Item 3: Artifacts--Reel-to-Reel--WLIJ (n.d.)
- Item 4: Artifacts--Vinyl Record--A Century of Service (n.d.)
- Item 5: Artifacts--Vinyl Record--E.W. Craig (1959)

#### **Box 3:**

- Fol. 1: Business Records--Correspondence--Craig, Cornelius A. 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday (1948)
- Fol. 2: Business Records--Correspondence--Craig, Cornelius A., II (1971-1983)
- Fol. 3: Business Records--Correspondence--Craig, Edwin W. (1938-1968)
- Fol. 4: Business Records--Correspondence--Craig, Edwin W. Death (1969)
- Fol. 5: Business Records--Correspondence--Craig, Elizabeth (1969)
- Fol. 6: Business Records--Correspondence--Miscellaneous (1969-1977)
- Fol. 7: Business Records--Correspondence--Parker, Margaret (1969)
- Fol. 8: Business Records--Correspondence--Stevenson, Eldon (1943, 1968)
- Fol. 9: Business Records--Financial--Annual Reports (1980-1981)

Fol. 10: Business Records--Financial--Audits (1911-1915)  
Fol. 11: Business Records--Financial--Premium Receipt Books (c.1920s)  
Fol. 12: Business Records--Financial--Shares (1970)  
Fol. 13: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1921-1928)  
Fol. 14: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1930-1939)  
Fol. 15: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1940-1949)  
Fol. 16: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1951-1958)  
Fol. 17: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1960-1967)  
Fol. 18: Business Records--Financial--Statements (1970-1972)  
Fol. 19: Business Records--Legal--By-Laws & Trust Agreement (1928-1961)  
Fol. 20: Business Records--Legal--Court Records (1893-1894)  
Fol. 21: Business Records--Legal--Insurance Certificates (1898-1928)  
Fol. 22: Business Records--Legal--Memo (1938)  
Fol. 23: Business Records--Legal--Stock Purchases (1903)

**Box 4:**

Fol. 1: Photographs--Events--Clements, C.R. 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday (1940)  
Fol. 2: Photographs--Events--Craig, C.A. 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday (1948)  
Fol. 3: Photographs--Events--Fishing Trip (1947)  
Fol. 4: Photographs--Events--Football Rivalry Anniversary (n.d.)  
Fol. 5: Photographs--Events--Hunting Trip (1943)  
Fol. 6: Photographs--Events--National Life Anniversary (1948)  
Fol. 7: Photographs--Events--National Life Meetings (n.d.)  
Fol. 8: Photographs--Events--Service Pin Presentation (1942-1958)  
Fol. 9: Photographs--Events--UGF Campaign (1956)  
Fol. 10: Photographs--Office Sites--Arcade (c.1903-1904)  
Fol. 11: Photographs--Office Sites--Cedar Street Building (c.1899)  
Fol. 12: Photographs--Office Sites--Lea Residence (c.1911-1923)  
Fol. 13: Photographs--Office Sites--National Life Building (c.1923-1970)  
Fol. 14: Photographs--Office Sites--Presbyterian Building (c.1900-1901)  
Fol. 15: Photographs--Office Sites--Stahlman Building (c.1908-1910)  
Fol. 16: Photographs--Office Sites--Union Street Building (c.1902)  
Fol. 17: Photographs--Office Sites--Vanderbilt Building (c.1905-1907)  
Fol. 18: Photographs--Office Sites--WSM Tower (1933)  
Fol. 19: Photographs--People--Autographed Portraits (n.d.)  
Fol. 20: Photographs--People--Broadcast Advertising (1938)  
Fol. 21: Photographs--People--Clements, C. Runcie, Sr. (n.d.)  
Fol. 22: Photographs--People--Craig, Edwin Wilson (n.d.)  
Fol. 23: Photographs--People--Family Portrait (n.d.)  
Fol. 24: Photographs--People--Group Photos (1930s-1960s)  
Fol. 25: Photographs--People--National Association of Broadcasters Board (1940-1941)  
Fol. 26: Photographs--People--Robinson, Margaret Ann (n.d.)  
Fol. 27: Photographs--People--Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Frank (1940)

Fol. 28: Photographs--People--Staff (1981)  
Fol. 29: Photographs--People--Staples, E.C. (1962)  
Fol. 30: Photographs--People--Unidentified Women (n.d.)  
Fol. 31: Photographs--People--Wills, Ridley, Sr. (n.d.)  
Fol. 32: Photographs--People--WSM Studio Group Photos (c.1940s)

**Box 5:**

Fol. 1: Printed Materials--Clippings--Craig, C.A. Obituary (1957)  
Fol. 2: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1928)  
Fol. 3: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1941-1948)  
Fol. 4: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1950-1954)  
Fol. 5: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1955-1959)  
Fol. 6: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1960-1962)  
Fol. 7: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1963-1964)  
Fol. 8: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1965-1966)  
Fol. 9: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1967-1969)  
Fol. 10: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1970-1974)  
Fol. 11: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1975-1979)  
Fol. 12: Printed Materials--Clippings--National Life & Accident (1980-1983)  
Fol. 13: Printed Materials--Clippings--Ryman Auditorium (1983)  
Fol. 14: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Building Dedication Pamphlet (1970)  
Fol. 15: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Clear Channel Broadcasting (1967)  
Fol. 16: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Eagle Recognition Dinner (1977)  
Fol. 17: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Fiftieth Anniversary Ceremonies (1962)  
Fol. 18: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Fifty Years of Service Album (1962)

**Box 6:**

Fol. 1: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Industrial Insurers' Conference (1939)  
Fol. 2: Printed Materials--Ephemera--Pipe Organ Dedication (1952)  
Fol. 3: Printed Materials--Publications--Army Air Forces Report (1945)  
Fol. 4: Printed Materials--Publications--Corporate Factbook (1968)  
Fol. 5: Printed Materials--Publications--Country Music Who's Who (1970)  
Fol. 6: Printed Materials--Publications--Craig, C.A. 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday (1943)  
Fol. 7: Printed Materials--Publications--From Acorn to Oak (1926)  
Fol. 8: Printed Materials--Publications--Guide Book to Ordinary Production (1932)  
Fol. 9: Printed Materials--Publications--Guide to English & French Furniture (1940)  
Fol. 10: Printed Materials--Publications--Home Office Shield (Apr.-May 1971)  
Fol. 11: Printed Materials--Publications--Home Office Shield (Jul. 1982)  
Fol. 12: Printed Materials--Publications--Insurance Field (1977-1978)

**Box 7:**

Fol. 1: Printed Materials--Publications--Irish Messenger (1971)  
Fol. 2: Printed Materials--Publications--Management in Action (1941)  
Fol. 3: Printed Materials--Publications--National Underwriter, The (1953, 1962)

Fol. 4: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1934, 1938)  
Fol. 5: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1943,1945)  
Fol. 6: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (Jun. 1948)  
Fol. 7: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1950-1952)  
Fol. 8: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1953-1954)  
Fol. 9: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1957-1959)  
Fol. 10: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1962-1963)  
Fol. 11: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1966-1967)  
Fol. 12: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1971)  
Fol. 13: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (Dec. 1979)b  
Fol. 14: Printed Materials--Publications--Our Shield (1981-1982)  
Fol. 15: Printed Materials--Publications--Shield News, The (1969)  
Fol. 16: Printed Materials--Publications--Shield News, The (1970-1973)  
Fol. 17: Printed Materials--Publications--Shield News, The (1976-1979)  
Fol. 18: Printed Materials--Publications--Shield News, The (Aug. 1981)

**Box 8:**

Fol. 1: Printed Materials--Publications--Southern Insurance (May 1978)  
Fol. 2: Printed Materials--Publications--Taxes & Estates (1969)  
Fol. 3: Printed Materials--Publications--Three Cheers for 80 Years (1948)  
Fol. 4: Printed Materials--Publications--U.S. Constitution & Amendments (1976)  
Fol. 5: Printed Materials--Publications--What People Think (1938)  
Fol. 6: Printed Materials--Speeches--75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1977)  
Fol. 7: Printed Materials--Speeches--Building & Restoration of the State Capitol (1959)  
Fol. 8: Printed Materials--Speeches--Early Radio Broadcasting (1971)  
Fol. 9: Printed Materials--Speeches--Five Billion Celebration/45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1958)  
Fol. 10: Printed Materials--Speeches--King Is Dead, The (1968)  
Fol. 11: Printed Materials--Speeches--Management Sets the Pace in Public Relations (1948)  
Fol. 12: Printed Materials--Speeches--Public Approval, Our Continuing Challenge (1948)

**Restrictions:**

**Restrictions on Access:** In-library use only.

**Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:** The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County owns the intellectual rights to these materials. Materials may be used for research purposes only, and cannot be used in a publication or reproduced.

**Administrative Information:**

**Copyright:** The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions

may apply.

**Provenance:** Created and donated by Margaret Ann Robinson.

**Processing Information:** Processed by Kelley Sirko, October 2022.

**Accruals:** No further accruals expected.