

# Black Archives of Mid-America / Kansas City Public Library Oral History Collection (AC12)

Interview #2: Anderson, James  
Interviewer: Horace M. Peterson III  
Date: 10/05/1976  
Length: 46:12

## Summary:

- 00:00 – 02:00: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's family. James Anderson was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 13, 1907. His mother was a housewife, and his father was a porter at a saloon.
- 02:00 – 05:00: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's schooling and his employment as a child. Mr. Anderson went to Sumner School in Leavenworth, Kansas. He later attended school in Kansas City, Missouri, leaving school after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Anderson left home at age 14 to work in a Mississippi oil mill.
- 05:00 – 05:34: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's experience in East St. Louis during a period of recession.
- 05:34 – 06:04: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's attendance at Morningstar Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri.
- 06:04 – 07:00: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's life in Edwardsville, Kansas. During World War II, Mr. Anderson owned a farm, raising hogs and chickens on about five acres.
- 07:00 – 08:16: Discussion of Bertie Lee, a wife of Mr. Anderson. Mrs. Anderson was from Armourdale, Kansas; they were married in 1940.
- 08:16 – 09:09: Discussion of Jack Johnson. Mr. Anderson saw Jack Johnson while living in Chicago, Illinois.
- 09:09 – 10:14: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's first marriage to Annabelle Dean. They were married at Sunflower Baptist Church in Leavenworth, Kansas. They were married for two years.
- 10:14 – 11:03: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's interest in running businesses. He was not a very successful farmer.
- 11:03 – 13:06: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's businesses. Mr. Anderson has been at 2310 Vine for twelve years. Previously he ran Anderson's Chicken Shack in Edwardsville, Kansas for twenty-five years. The Chicken Shack was successful,

but he left the business because of “politics.” Mr. Anderson also discusses the death of his second wife and his marriage to his current wife, Emma Oakland.

13:06 – 17:59: Discussion of Mr. Anderson’s antique business and the museum he opened at 2310 Vine. He earned enough money to retire. Mr. Anderson opened the museum in May 1975. All types of people visit from around the country. Mr. Anderson would like more history on Kansas City and the surrounding area. He would also like a bigger place. He discusses reactions to the museum from both blacks and whites.

17:59 – 19:32: Discussion of riots in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Anderson believes that the rioting only hurt people in the African American neighborhoods. Mr. Anderson also discusses segregation; he feels that now he can go anywhere he wants to go in the city.

19:32 – 21:55: Discussion of the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Anderson also discusses President Nixon.

21:55 – 23:05: Discussion of Mr. Anderson’s daughter, Berta Lee Tatum, and his son-in-law.

23:05 – 24:22: Discussion of Mr. Anderson’s “hustling.” Mr. Anderson discusses some of the musicians he saw in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine district.

24:22 – 25:46: Discussion of some of Mr. Anderson’s friends. Mr. Anderson also briefly discusses the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

25:46 – 27:47: Discussion of James McKinley Neal and D. A. Holmes.

27:47 – 29:58: Discussion of Tom Pendergast. Mr. Anderson also talks about politics in general.

29:58 – 30:29: Discussion of crime in Kansas City in the 1940s.

30:29: End of side one.

30:29 – 32:53: Continued discussion of crime in Kansas City. Mr. Anderson discusses “sporting houses.” He also discusses organized crime in Chicago, Illinois.

32:53 – 33:38: Discussion of cars owned by Mr. Anderson.

33:38 – 34:38: Discussion of education.

34:38 – 36:11: Discussion of Kansas City in 1935.

36:11 – 37:11: Discussion of Mr. Anderson’s experience in New York City. Mr. Anderson also discusses his other travels.

37:11 – 37:46: Discussion of money.

37:46 – 40:57: Discussion of local institutions and where African Americans lived in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Anderson also mentioned a number of prominent African American citizens, including Robert Sweeney, Bill Saunders, and Charlie Goodman.

40:57 – 43:46: Discussion of Mr. Anderson's church attendance and Mr. Anderson's feelings about Christianity.

43:46 – 46:12: Discussion of national politics. Mr. Anderson comments on abortion and divorce and discusses his seventieth birthday.

46:12: End of side two.

Index Terms:

18<sup>th</sup> and Vine District  
Anderson, James W.  
Business  
Crime  
Edwardsville, Kansas  
Holmes, Daniel A.  
Johnson, John A.  
Kansas City, Missouri  
Leavenworth, Kansas  
Neal, James M.  
Pendergast, Thomas J.  
Riots and Disturbances

**Summary compiled by Dianne Johnson, January 2014. Edited by Michael Sweeney, Collection Librarian, January 2014.**