

Black Archives of Mid-America Oral History Collection

The Black Archives of Mid-America/Kansas City Public Library oral history project took place in the mid-1970s. A number of African Americans prominent in that time period were interviewed.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Black Archives of Mid-America

Title: Black Archives of Mid-America oral history collection

Dates: 1975-1976

Size: 9 boxes, 97 sound cassettes (ca.60 minutes), 82 CDs, 4 MP3 discs, 57 printed guides

Location: SC69-2

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Terms governing use and reproduction: Donor imposed restrictions may apply to reproduction of interviews.

Additional physical form available: Typewritten extracts of interviews available in collection folder and in Local History Database entry for each interviewee.

Related collections in other repositories: Kansas City Jazz Oral History Collection (KC0012), Kansas City Monarchs Oral History Collection (KC0047), Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Kansas City.

Acquisition information: Project was a grant-funded collaboration between the Kansas City Public Library and the Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc. Results were shared between institutions. Cassette tapes transferred to CD format, November 2008.

Citation note: Black Archives of Mid-America oral history collection (SC69-2), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

This oral history project was a grant-funded collaboration between the Kansas City Public Library and the Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc. The Library served primarily in a consulting role, providing training to prospective interviewers. The Black Archives directed most other aspects of the project, including identifying interviewees, performing interviews, and creating summaries of the interviews. Those individuals who did the interviews were: Horace M. Peterson III, Ella Pruitt, Edward Scott, and Milton Smith. The library's consultant on the project was Rose Bell. She maintained a progress diary which is dated from March 1975 to September 1976 and a copy can be found in the collection folder. The cassette tapes were converted to CD format in 2008.

Scope and content note

This collection was originally comprised of 97 audiocassettes containing interviews of 56 people, largely from Kansas City's African American community. It was conducted from mid-1975 until late 1976. Subjects covered in the interviews include: politics, education, journalism, labor, law, medicine, military, music, sports, the theater, business, religion, and community affairs. The interviews center on the history of the African American community in the Kansas City metropolitan area, and focus on the individual's role in and perception of that history. The collection also includes the paperwork that accompanied the project, such as interviewer evaluations, contracts for both staff and interviewees, and indexes to the collection of tapes. All the interviews have a printed guide which summarizes the contents of the tapes. There are no typescripts of the interviews.

Some of the non-African Americans interviewed include Richard Bolling, Ilus Davis, and Dr. Richard Farnsworth. African Americans with interviews in this collection who later played a strong role in the city's political leadership include Alvin Brooks, Emanuel Cleaver, Joanne Collins, Ollie Gates, Lewis Clymer, and others. Arrington "Bubbles" Klice, known in the local boxing scene, is the only person representing sports. Most of the interviewees represented business, community affairs, education, politics, and religion.

Collection Inventory

Interviewees and Tape and CD Numbers

Ala-adeen, Ahmad -- Tape 1 (2 parts), CD 1

Anderson, James -- Tape 2, CD 2

Bacchus, Rev. Clemmie -- Tape 3 (2 parts), CD 3 (2 parts)

Blankenship, B. Lawrence -- Tape 4 (2 parts), CD 4

Bly, Lt. Albert --Tape 5 (2 parts), CD 5 (2 parts)

Bolling, Richard -- Tape 6 (2 parts), CD 6

Brisco, Rev. Charles -- Tape 7 (2 parts), CD 7 (2 parts)

Bronson, Arthur J. -- Tape 8 (2 parts), CD 8

Brooks, Alvin -- Tape 9 (2 parts), CD 9 (2 parts)

Bryant, Girard T. -- Tape 10, CD 10

Cameron, Dr. Jeremiah -- Tape 11 (2 parts), CD 11

Cleaver, Rev. Emmanuel -- Tape 12, CD 12

Clymer, Judge Lewis -- Tape 13 (2 parts), CD 13 (2 parts)

Collins, Joanne -- Tape 14 (2 parts), CD 14 (2 parts)

Curls, Fred -- Tape 15 (2 parts), CD 15 (2 parts)

Curls, Phillip -- Tape 16 (2 parts), CD 16

Daniels, Fletcher -- Tape 17 (2 parts), CD 17

Davis, Illus -- Tape 18 (3 parts), CD 18 (3 parts)

**Dumas, Mrs. Thelma M. and
Gentry, Mrs. Johnnie Mae** -- Tape 19, CD 19

Dwight, Charles -- Tape 20, CD 20

Farnsworth, Dr. Robert -- Tape 21 (2 parts), CD 21(2 parts)

Fennel, Sgt. Major Herbert -- Tape 22, CD 22

Fields, Dr. Edward -- Tape 23 (2 parts), CD 23 (2 parts)

Forester, Dr. Norman -- Tape 24, CD 24

Franklin, John -- Tape 25, CD 25

Gardner, Isaac Jr. -- Tape 26, CD 26

Gates, Ollie -- Tape 27, CD 27

Gates, Samuella -- Tape 28 (2 parts), CD 28 (2 parts)

Gibson, Elvis -- Tape 29, CD 29

Goodseal, Wilbur -- Tape 30, CD 30

Hall, Gerald -- Guide, no tape

Harris, Alexander -- Tape 31 (2 parts), CD 31

Holliday, Harold Lee -- Tape 32 (4 parts), CD 32 (4 parts)

Hollowell, Thelma L. -- Tape 1, Part 2, B side, CD 57

Hughes, Mamie -- Tape 33 (2 parts), CD 33 (2 parts)

Hughes, Michael -- Tape 34 (2 parts), CD 34

Jackson, Ruby -- Tape 35 (2 parts*), CD 35 (2 parts)
*tape 2 missing in master copies

Jenkins, Carroll -- Tape 36 (2 parts), CD 36 (2 parts)

Karriem, Malik -- Tape 37, CD 37

Klice, Arrington -- Tape 38, CD 38

Knuti, Dave -- Tape 39 (2 parts), CD 39 (2 parts)

McKamey, Leo -- Tape 40 (2 parts), CD 40

Moore, Augustus -- Tape 41, CD 41

Moore, Chuck -- Tape 42 (2 part)

Neal, James M. -- Tape 43 (2 parts*), CD 43 (2 parts)
 *no summary guide; full extract with collection papers in folder "Extracts"

Newby, W.N. -- Tape 44, CD 44

Pemberton, Lounner -- Tape 45 (2 parts), CD 45 (2 parts)

Reese, Eddie -- Tape 46, CD 46

Ridgway, Adolph -- Tape 47, CD 47

Ross, Henry -- Tape 48 (2 parts), CD 48

Sewing, Henry Warren -- Tape 49 (2 parts), CD 49 (2 parts)

Sweeney, Robert -- Tape 50 (3 parts), CD 50 (2 parts)

Taylor, Dr. Billy James -- Tape 51 (2 parts), CD 51 (2 parts)

Thompson, Rev. Nelson "Fuzzy" -- Tape 52 (2 parts), CD 52 (2 parts)

Thurman, Odell -- Tape 53 (2 parts), CD 53

White, Luther -- No Tape

Williams, Chee Chee -- Tape 54 (2 parts), CD 54

Williams, Rev. John -- Tape 55 (2 parts), CD 55

Wilson, Adolph -- Tape 56, CD 56

The Black Archives of Mid-America's Oral History Project

Subject (alphabetical list)

Interviewees by Specific Subject

1. Business

- Blankenship, G. Lawrence
- Curls, Fred
- Gates, Ollie
- Gibson, Elvis

- Harris, Alexander
- Newby, W.N.
- Sewing, Henry Warren
- White, Luther

2. Community Affairs

- Anderson, James
- Brooks, Alvin
- Daniels, Fletcher
- Farnsworth, Dr. Robert
- Franklin, John
- Gates, Samuella
- Hall, Gerald
- Jackson, Ruby
- Knuti, Dave
- Moore, Augustus
- Pemberton, Lounner
- Ridgway, Adolph
- Wilson, Adolph

3. Education

- Bryant, Girard T.
- Cameron, Dr. Jeremiah
- Dwight, Charles
- Farnsworth, Dr. Robert
- Fields, Dr. Edward
- Gardner, Isaac Jr.
- White, Luther

4. Journalism

- Moore, Chuck
- Reese, Eddie
- Williams, Chee Chee

5. Labor

- Pemberton, Lounner

6. Law

- Clymer, Judge Lewis

7. Medicine

- Forrester, Dr. Norman
- Taylor, Dr. Billy James

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- Bly, Lt. Albert
- Fennell, Sgt. Major Herbert
- Hollowell, Thelma L. (wife of Harry H. Hollowell)

9. Music

- Ala-adeen, Ahmad
- Jenkins, Carroll
- Karrium, Malik

10. Politics

- Bolling, Richard
- Bronson, Arthur, J.
- Clymer, Judge Lewis
- Collins, Councilwoman Joanne
- Curls, Phillip
- Davis, Ilus
- Holliday, Harold Lee
- Hughes, Mamie
- Hughes, Michael
- McKamey, Leo
- Ross, Henry
- Sweeney, Robert

11. Religion

- Bacchus, Rev. Clemmie
- Briscoe, Rev. Charles
- Cleaver, Rev. Emmanuel
- Dumas, Mrs. Thelma M.
- Gentry, Mrs. Johnnie Mae
- Thompson, Rev. Nelson "Fuzz"
- Williams, Rev. John

12. Sports (Boxing)

- Klice, Arrington

13. Theater

- Goodseal, Wilbur

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Stuart Hinds, July 1998.