

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson, Abner Jean, 1933-2002
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson,
Dates:	August 30, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:25:02).
Abstract:	Mortuary owner and civic activist Abner Jean "Val" Jackson (1933 - 2002) is co-owner of Jackson's Mortuary in Wichita, Kansas. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 30, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_171
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

For nearly sixty years, the Jackson Mortuary has been an institution in Wichita, Kansas. The family-owned and -operated mortuary and its owners, twin brothers Abner Val Jean Jackson, Sr. and Anderson Eugene Jackson, hold a place of honor in the community of Wichita.

Abner Val Jackson, Sr. was born in Wichita in 1933. He graduated from North High School. He served in the U.S. Army and had the distinction of being one of the first African American to serve with the Wichita Fire Department. He left the department in 1967 after twelve years to join the family business. While running the business, he and his wife, Erma, operated Jackson Realty and Skin Appeal Cosmetics, managed Calvary Towers Senior Citizen Housing Project and had other business holdings. In 1982, Jackson retired and turned the mortuary business over to his twin sons.

Along with his position as vice president of Jackson Mortuary, earning his funeral director's license in 1961, Jackson served his community through his membership in organizations like the National Urban League and the NAACP. He was involved in policymaking for the City of Wichita and was honored by the city and the State of Kansas in acknowledgment of his commitment to the community. He served as chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Board of Directors for the City of Wichita and the Board of Trustees for Wichita's Calvary Baptist Church. Jackson has four children: Val Jean Jackson, Jr.; Michael E. Jackson; Kimberly Jackson-Landrum; and Stephanie Jackson Cousin. He also has eleven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Jackson passed away on October 14, 2002.

Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 30, 2002.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 30, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Mortuary owner and civic activist Abner Jean "Val" Jackson (1933 - 2002) is co-owner of Jackson's Mortuary in Wichita, Kansas.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Jackson, Abner Jean, 1933-2002

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Abner Jean, 1933-2002--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Mortuary Owner

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson, August 30, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson, Section A2002_171_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

Abner Val Jean Jackson begins this portion of the interview describing his family's history and how they arrived at settling in Wichita, Kansas. Jackson then talks about his grandfather's ability to learn the mortuary business with no formal training, and his business savvy in forming a company without relying on commercial loans. He then talks about the roles his parents, brother and wife play in making Jackson Mortuary a successful family-owned business. Jackson then recalls growing up in a segregated neighborhood and the black-run businesses that sustained it. Lastly, he talks about the pros and cons of being an identical twin.

Video Oral History Interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson, Section A2002_171_001_002, TRT:

0:30:13 ?

Abner Val Jean Jackson talks about his early childhood working in his family's mortuary business. He then recalls attending a segregated school in Wichita, Kansas, and the corporal punishment administered at school and at home when he and his twin brother got into mischief. Jackson talks about his high school years and his negative attitude towards formal education. He later details his decision to follow a different career path than his father's by becoming a fireman and realtor. Abner Val Jean Jackson then discusses joining his brother in running the family business after his wife's death and details what makes it successful. Lastly, Jackson talks about the pleasures of growing up in a tight-knit community and the long-term relationships he's maintained with some of his childhood friends.

Video Oral History Interview with Abner Jean "Val" Jackson, Section A2002_171_001_003, TRT: 0:25:16 ?

Abner Val Jean Jackson talks about some of the funeral services that Jackson Mortuary provides, and briefly reflects on his life and career. Jackson details his other civic activities outside of running the family business. He then ponders his legacy, his parents' pride in his accomplishments and how he would like to be remembered. Lastly, Abner Val Jean Jackson provides commentary to the photographs he has provided.