



## James B. Tatum Papers (SP0122)

**Collection Number:** SP0122

**Collection Title:** James B. Tatum Papers

**Dates:** 1852-2016

**Creator:** Tatum, James Bernard, 1925-2020

**Abstract:** The James B. Tatum Papers contain the personal papers of James Bernard Tatum, an Anderson, Missouri, native and founder of Crowder College. The collection also includes materials related to McDonald County history, Crowder College, and servant-leadership theory.

**Collection Size:** 3 cubic feet  
(51 folders, 17 photographs, 6 volumes)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [springfield@shsmo.org](mailto:springfield@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

**Restrictions on Use:** Copyright held by Margaret Lynn Tatum. Permission to publish materials must be granted by the Donor during her lifetime.

**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *James B. Tatum Papers* (SP0122); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Maragret Lynn Tatum on May 12, 2026 (Accession No. SPA0159).

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the James B. Tatum Papers can be found in the following collections:

[David A. Lockmiller Papers](#) (C0405)

[John M. Dalton Papers](#) (C2417)

[Jean Carnahan Papers](#) (C4015)

[Southwest City, Missouri, Centennial History](#) (R0993)  
[Young-Hie Nahm Kromm Papers](#) (S0449)  
[Ruby Rose Stauber Papers](#) (SP0015)

**Processed by:** Processed by Haley Frizzle-Green, June 12, 2026

### **Historical Note:**

James Bernard Tatum was born in Carthage, Missouri, on July 24, 1925, to James Marshall Tatum and Ruth Bernard. He was raised in Anderson, Missouri, where he attended public school. During his youth, he worked for his grandfather, George Tatum, at the Tatum Mercantile Company. In 1942, James attended Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri, and later received a Congressional appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. After graduating in 1947, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas. James served in the Korean War as a Commander in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment. During active duty, he was severely wounded while helping a fellow injured soldier. For his service, he was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts, and the Combat Infantry Badge.

In 1948, James married Kathryn Grace Pickens, and the couple had four children including Susan, Kathryn, James, and David. After James medically retired from the military in 1953, the family settled in Anderson where he took over Tatum Motor Company, an automobile and farm equipment company. James served as President of the local PTA and the Anderson and McDonald County school boards. He later co-authored the legislation creating community colleges in the state of Missouri and led the campaign to create a local junior college district. The campaign successfully acquired 600 acres of land from the federal government after Fort Crowder was closed, leading to the founding of Crowder College in 1963. James was elected the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees, a position he held for over forty-five years.

James was Board President of the Association of Community College Trustees, served on the boards of the Association of Governing Board of Colleges and Universities, the Association of Community Colleges, and the Missouri Community College Association. From 1982 to 1988, he served on President Ronald Reagan's United States Educational Advisory Board. James was named "Outstanding Missourian" in 2014 by the Missouri Legislature and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Public Affairs degree by Missouri State University. In 2016, the state legislature approved the designation of the "James B. Tatum Highway" for a portion of Interstate Highway 49 in Newton County.

James met and befriended Robert K. Greenleaf, a proponent of "servant leadership," in 1978. Servant leadership is a philosophy that focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. After Greenleaf's death, James served as Board Chairman for the Robert K. Greenleaf Center. James continued to promote servant leadership and instilled this philosophy at Crowder College. After the death of his wife Kathryn Tatum in 1997, James was remarried to Lynn Tatum in 2000. On December 8, 2020, James Tatum passed away. He is buried in Anderson Cemetery.

### **Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following 5 series with 2 subseries:

**Personal Papers**

## Military Records

## Crowder College

## McDonald County History

## Servant Leadership

## Robert K. Greenleaf

## Oversize

**Scope and Content Note:****Personal Papers**

This series contains James B. Tatum's personal papers including family-owned property abstracts and warranty deeds, correspondence, genealogy records, and investment newsletters. This series also contains three photographs, one of which is of James with Congressman Gene Taylor. Of particular note, are correspondence between James and Robert K. Greenleaf. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

The Military Records subseries contains James' service record, special orders, ration books, and a photograph of unidentified military men on a ship. This subseries also includes materials related to the West Point Military Academy and a newspaper titled *The Trumpeter*, published by Wentworth Military Academy on February 22, 1943. This subseries is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

**Crowder College**

This series consists of materials pertaining to Crowder College, located in Neosho, Missouri. These include an Alumni Association newsletter, documents related to the Board of Trustees, two commencement programs, a Foundation directory and donation records, a President's Report dated 1966, and a quality checkup report from 2007. There are also programs and schedules pertaining to the Roughriders, Crowder College's basketball team. In addition to local newspaper articles, this series contains copies of *The Crowder Call* and *The Sentry*. Folder 22 includes draft copies of the Junior College District Act proposals. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

**McDonald County History**

This series contains records related to McDonald County's history including photocopies of photographs, newspaper articles, and election results from 1976. There are also programs for the Bicentennial Committee and the 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary of First Baptist Church. Folder 37 includes materials related to Tatum family businesses and cattle breeding. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

**Servant Leadership**

This series includes documents related to servant leadership and Robert K. Greenleaf. Included are seminar materials, servant leadership literature, and a draft of "The Unhurried Life" by James D. Riley. Also included are documents related to the Religious Society of Friends. The Robert K. Greenleaf subseries consists of booklets, conference and workshop materials, and a "Charitable

Trust Agreement.” Of particular note are Robert K. Greenleaf’s personal written works. The series and subseries are arranged by subject and then chronologically.

### Oversize

This series contains oversize documents and ledgers. The oversize documents include James Tatum’s awards and accolades, a scrapbook containing Crowder College materials from 1966 to 1967, a copy of the *Anderson Advertiser* from 1969, and a 1960 plat map of McDonald County. Also included is a property plan of the Crowder College building in McDonald County. The oversize ledgers are account books from Tatum family businesses dated 1890 to 1914, as well as a record book of automobile sales between 1964 and 1974. Volume 5 contains stocks and shares certificates belonging to the Tatum family. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

### Container List:

#### Personal Papers

Box 001	f. 1	Abstract of Title, 1852-1965
	f. 2	Abstract of Title, 1866-1977
	f. 3	Correspondence, 1953, 1973
	f. 4	Correspondence, 1981-1989
	f. 5-6	Correspondence, 1991-2013, no date
	f. 7	Genealogy, 1966-2002
	f. 8	Investment newsletters, 2007, 2011
	f. 9-13	Military Records
	f. 9	Ration books and photograph, 1942-1951
	f. 10	Service record, 1951-2021, no date
	f. 11	Special Orders, 1948-1953
	f. 12	<i>The Trumpeter</i> , February 22, 1943
	f. 13	West Point Military Academy, 2007
	f. 14	Photographs, circa 1960s, 2005, no date
	f. 15	Warranty Deeds, 1939-1951

#### Crowder College

f. 16	Alumni Association newsletter, March 1987
f. 17	Board of Trustees records, 1975-1977, no date
f. 18	Commencement programs, 1967, 1975
f. 19	“Crowder Clarion” newsletter, May 1986
f. 20	Dedication ceremonies, 1970, 2003, 2008
f. 21	Foundation directory and donations, 1967, 2001-2014
f. 22	Junior College District Act proposal drafts, no date
f. 23	McDonald County building, 2014
f. 24	Newspaper articles, 1965-2014
f. 25	President’s Report, 1966-1967
f. 26	Quality Check-Up Report, 2007
f. 27	Roughriders basketball team, 1964-1967, 1977
f. 28	Student assignments, no date

- f. 29            *The Crowder Call*, 1965-1968  
 f. 30            *The Sentry*, 1989, 2009, 2014

### McDonald County History

- f. 31            Benton family, 1924, 1975  
 f. 32            Bicentennial Committee program, 1976  
 f. 33            Election results, 1976  
 f. 34            First Baptist Church history, 1957  
 f. 35            Newspaper articles, 1938-2007  
 f. 36            Photographs, 1907-1910, no date  
 f. 37            Tatum family businesses, 1942-1985, no date

### Servant Leadership

- f. 38            Literature, 1979, 1990-1991  
 f. 39            Religious Society of Friends, 1977-1989  
 f. 40-44        Robert K. Greenleaf  
     f. 40            Charitable Trust Agreement, 1988  
     f. 41            Leadership conference program, 2002  
     f. 42            Robert K. Greenleaf Center workshop materials, 1990  
     f. 43            "Voices of Servant Leadership" booklets, 2001  
     f. 44            Written works, 1977-1987, no date  
 f. 45            Seminars, 1977, 2005, no date  
 f. 46            "The Unhurried Life" draft by James D. Riley, 2002

### Oversize

- Box 002 f. 47            *Anderson Advertiser*, 1969  
 f. 48            Awards and accolades, 1920, 1947-2016  
 f. 49            Crowder College, McDonald County building plan, 2013  
 f. 50            Crowder College scrapbook, 1966-1967  
 f. 51            McDonald County plat map, 1960  
 Box 003 v. 1-3         Tatum account ledgers, 1890-1892  
 v. 4            Tatum account ledger, 1914  
 v. 5            Stocks and shares certificate ledger, 1908-1990  
 v. 6            Tatum Motor Company automobile sales, 1964-1974

### Index:

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Abstracts of title	1-2		
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Awards	48		
Basketball teams	27		Yes

Index Terms	Folder	Mediums	Image
Benton County (Ark.)	15		
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<b>Index Terms</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Mediums</b>	<b>Image</b>
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Tatum family	1-7, 15, 35-37, 47-48	v. 1-6	Yes
Tatum Mercantile Company (Anderson, Mo.)	2, 35-37, 47	v. 1-5	Yes
Tatum Motor Company (Anderson, Mo.)	35-37, 47, 51	v. 1-6	Yes
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