



Smithsonian Institution Archives

John C. Ewers Oral History Interviews, 1974-1975

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	John C. Ewers Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9505
Date:	1974-1975
Extent:	7 audiotapes (Reference copies). 11 digital .mp3 files (Reference copies).
Creator::	Ewers, John C. (John Canfield), 1909-1997, interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9505, John C. Ewers Oral History Interviews

Historical Note

John Canfield Ewers (1909-1997) was an ethnologist for the National Museum of Natural History. After pursuing his graduate work in anthropology at Yale University, Ewers was a field Curator for the National Park Service from 1935 to 1940 and developed exhibits for many National Park Service sites. From 1941 to 1944, he was Curator at the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning, Montana, under the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1945 Ewers was appointed Associate Curator of Ethnology in the United States National Museum and worked on the Museum's Exhibits Modernization Program. From 1956 to 1959, Ewers served as Planning Officer for the development of the National Museum of History and Technology (now the National Museum of American History), as Assistant Director of the Museum of History and Technology from 1959 to 1964, and as Director from 1964 to 1965. Ewers was Senior Ethnologist in the Department of Anthropology of the National Museum of Natural History from 1965 to 1997. Ewers' research concentrated on Plains Indian ethnology and art depicting American Indians.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives' record and manuscript collections with an Oral History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Ewers was interviewed for the Oral History Program because of his significant scholarly and administrative contributions to the Smithsonian Institution during the prior thirty years.

Descriptive Entry

Ewers was interviewed by Pamela M. Henson on December 17, 1974; January 15 and 18; and February 4, 1975. The interviews consist of reminiscences of his education, career with the National Park Service, Museum of the Plains Indian, and Smithsonian Institution, especially his work in exhibits modernization, the development of the National Museum of History and Technology, and ethnological research.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Anthropology
- Ethnology
- Interviews
- Museum curators -- United States -- Interviews
- Museum directors -- United States -- Interviews
- Museum techniques
- Oral history

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

Names:

- Bureau Of Indian Affairs
- Ewers, John C. (John Canfield), 1909-1997
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- Museum of the Plains Indian and Crafts Center (U.S.)
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.)
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). Office of the Director
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Anthropology
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Ethnology
- United States National Museum. Exhibits Modernization Program
- United States. National Park Service

