



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Paul H. Oehser Oral History Interviews, 1974-1975

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Smithsonian Institution Archives  
Washington, D.C.  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	Paul H. Oehser Oral History Interviews
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9507
<b>Date:</b>	1974-1975
<b>Extent:</b>	7 audiotapes (Reference copies). 12 digital .mp3 files (Reference copies).
<b>Creator::</b>	Oehser, Paul H. (Paul Henry), 1904-1996, interviewee
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9507, Paul H. Oehser Oral History Interviews

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## Historical Note

Paul Henry Oehser (1904-1996), began his career as an editor with the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, after receiving his B.A. from Greenville College in 1925. In 1931, he was appointed Editor of the U.S. National Museum, and in 1950 he advanced to Chief, Smithsonian Editorial and Publications Division. Oehser also served as the Institution's Public Relations Officer from 1950 to 1966. Following his retirement in 1966, Oehser was appointed a Research Associate of the Smithsonian Institution and Editor of Research and Exploration Publications for the National Geographic Society. In addition to his work at the Smithsonian, Oehser published essays, poetry, and books about the Smithsonian and its scientists, and was active in the conservation movement.

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## 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 conducts 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.

Paul Henry Oehser was interviewed for the Oral History Program because of his extensive knowledge of the history of the Institution and because he made significant contributions to the Smithsonian throughout his career.

## Descriptive Entry

Oehser was interviewed by Pamela M. Henson on December 4, 1974; February 2; and March 5 and March 13, 1975. The interviews consist of his reminiscences of his education, career as an editor for the Bureau of Biological Survey and Smithsonian, role as a public relations officer, and work as an author and conservationist.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Conservation of natural resources
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Public relations
- Publishing

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Transcripts

Names:

- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- National Geographic Society (U.S.)
- Oehser, Paul H. (Paul Henry), 1904-1996
- Smithsonian Institution Press. Editorial and Publications Division
- Smithsonian Institution. Public Relations Officer
- United States National Museum. Editor
- United States. Bureau of Biological Survey



- Preservation Masters: 3 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes; 3 digital .wav files
- Reference Copies: 2 audiocassettes, 3 digital .mp3 files

Interviews

**Interview 4: March 13, 1975**

Interviews

Interview covers the *War Background Series*, Ethnogeographic Board, Institute of Social Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution Series Publishers, and cooperative publishing ventures. Oehser discusses his publications, work as a conservationist, role as secretary of the Cosmos Club, and work with Webster P. True, c. 1931-1966.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 126-173, of audio recording, 2 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours

Note:

- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel audiotapes
- Preservation Masters: 4 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes; 4 digital .wav files
- Reference Copies: 2 audiocassettes, 4 digital .mp3 files