



Smithsonian Institution Archives

James C. Bradley Oral
History Interviews, 1974-1978

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Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	James C. Bradley Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9515
Date:	1974-1978
Extent:	26 audiotapes (Reference copies).
Creator::	Bradley, James C., 1910-1984, interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9515, James C. Bradley Oral History Interviews

Historical Note

James C. Bradley (1910-1984) was a Smithsonian administrator responsible for planning and development of programs and facilities. After receiving a B.S. in civil engineering from the Catholic University of America in 1931, he served as an engineering administrator for the District of Columbia Government from 1935 to 1945. He worked as a budget and legislative analyst in the Bureau of the Budget from 1945 to 1950. Bradley then joined the Department of the Interior as principal assistant to the Under Secretary from 1950 to 1953, and as engineering and administrative assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior from 1953 to 1959.

In 1959, Bradley came to the Smithsonian as Assistant to the Secretary and in 1960 he was appointed Assistant Secretary. Bradley was responsible for administrative, fiscal, and legislative planning for the Institution. His special responsibilities included securing legislation authorizing a National Portrait Gallery (NPG); securing authorizations and appropriations to renovate the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries; securing appropriations for the wings of the Natural History Building; securing appropriations for a National Air and Space Museum (NASM); establishing administrative procedures for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO); securing legislation and appropriations for the capital improvement program for the National Zoological Park (NZN); securing authorizing legislation and appropriations for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (HMSG); preparing Congressional testimony; negotiating the Hillwood bequest; establishing the Office of Audits; and securing a site, authorization, and appropriations for a Museum Support Center.

Bradley received a Smithsonian Achievement Award in 1963 and the Smithsonian Exceptional Service Award in 1966. When the Board of Regents created the title of Under Secretary in 1970, Bradley assumed that position. After his retirement in 1972, he continued to serve the Institution as Consultant to the Secretary for Management and Planning and was an honorary Research Associate of the Institution until his death.

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.

James C. Bradley was interviewed for the Oral History Collection because of his central role in the Smithsonian administration for over twenty years.

Descriptive Entry

Bradley was interviewed by Miriam S. Freilicher and Pamela M. Henson in nineteen sessions from 1974 to 1978. The interviews cover Bradley's career at the Smithsonian, especially his administrative, fiscal, and legislative responsibilities for programs and capital improvements.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Interviews
- Oral history

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

Names:

- Bradley, James C., 1910-1984
- Carmichael, Leonard, 1898-1973
- Freilicher, Miriam S., interviewer
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- Hillwood Museum (Washington, D.C.)
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- National Air and Space Museum (U.S.)
- National Collection of Fine Arts (U.S.)
- National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institution)
- National Zoological Park (U.S.)
- Ripley, S. Dillon (Sidney Dillon), 1913-2001
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
- Smithsonian Institution. Assistant Secretary
- Smithsonian Institution. Museum Support Center
- Smithsonian Institution. Office of the Secretary. Assistant to the Secretary

Smithsonian Institution. Office of the Secretary. Consultant for Management and Planning
Smithsonian Institution. Office of the Under Secretary

Container Listing

Interviews

Interviews **Interview 1: April 9, 1974**

Interviews Covers his education, and early career, c. 1910-1965, including work in the with the District of Columbia Government; career at the Bureau of the Budget; work at the Department of the Interior; his early career at the Smithsonian Institution as Assistant to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary; his work with SAO, NASM, and the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries; Smithsonian administrative procedures; and reminiscences of Leonard Carmichael.

Interviews Transcript, pp 1-30, of audio recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours
Note: • Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 • Reference Copies: 2 audiocassette tapes

Interviews **Interview 2: April 17, 1974**

Interviews Covers the administrative procedures of the Office of the Secretary, c. 1959-1968, including the establishment of the Office of the General Counsel; Leonard Carmichael's role as Secretary, especially in the development of the National Museum of History and Technology (NMHT) and the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries; and the long range planning and growth of the Institution.

Interviews Transcript, pp 31-49, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour
Note: • Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 • Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews **Interview 3: November 27, 1974**

Interviews Covers his three initial assignments at the Smithsonian, c. 1959-1965, including establishing administrative procedures for SAO; securing appropriations for a NASM; work with the Fine Arts and Portrait Galleries, focusing on securing and renovating the Patent Office Building and securing legislation for the NPG.

Interviews Transcripts, pp 50-62, of audio recordings, 1 hour.

- Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 7: April 9, 1975

Interviews

Covers his administrative responsibilities for the SAO, c.1959-1973, including the development of the Mount Hopkins Observatory; the formation of the Office of Contracts and Grants; and the merger of SAO and the Harvard College Observatory (HCO) into the Center for Astrophysics (CFA).

Interviews

Transcript pp. 145-160, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 8: April 16, 1975

Interviews

Covers the negotiations for the SAO/HCO merger into the CFA, c. 1959-1973.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 161-171, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 9: May 30, 1975

Interviews

Covers the CFA, c. 1959-1973, including the development of the multi-mirror telescope.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 172-182, of audio recordings, 0.5 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 30 minutes

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 10: June 4, 1975

Interviews

Covers SAO, c. 1959-1975, including the development of the Multiple-Mirror Telescope with the University of Arizona; and the early planning for NASM.

- Interviews Transcript pp. 183-198, of audio recording, 1 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape
- Interviews **Interview 11: June 27, 1975**
- Interviews Covers the development of NASM, c. 1959-1975, including the hearings held by the Committee on House Administration, Subcommittee on Library and Memorials in July of 1970.
- Interviews Transcript pp. 199-224, of audio recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 2 audiocassette tapes
- Interviews **Interview 12: March 10, 1976**
- Interviews Covers the July 1970 hearings on the Smithsonian held by the Subcommittee on Library and Memorials, c. 1959-1972, including the Museum Support Center (MSC); NASM; the HMSG; the General Accounting Office audit; disposition of art works by the National Collection of Fine Arts (NCFA); and a proposal for parabolic receiver and transmitter for the SAO.
- Interviews Transcript pp. 225-246, of audio recording, 1 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape
- Interviews **Interview 13: April 6, 1976**
- Interviews Covers the establishment of the HMSG, c. 1964-1976, including: the negotiations with Joseph H. Hirshhorn and Lyndon Baines Johnson; removal of the Armed Forces Museum of Pathology from the site; redesign due to increased construction costs; and the relocation of the sculpture garden.
- Interviews Transcript pp. 247-265, of audio recording, 1 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 14: May 4, 1976

Interviews

Covers the legislative history of the HMSG, c. 1964-1972.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 266-279, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 15: August 5, 1976

Interviews

Covers Bradley's role in museum development, c. 1959-1976, including the construction of the NMHT; the establishment of the NPG; and preliminary work on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Interviews

Transcripts pp. 280-289, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 16: November 30, 1976

Interviews

Covers the capital improvement program for the NZP, c.1959-1975.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 290-302, of audio recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 audiocassette tapes

Interviews

Interview 17: February 3, 1977 Covers the bequest by Marjorie Merriweather Post of her Hillwood estate to the Smithsonian, c. 1961-1977.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 303-321, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Reference Copies: 1 audiocassette tape

Interviews

Interview 18: May 12, 1977

Interviews

Covers more of Bradley's administrative duties, c. 1959-1972, including the establishment of the Office of Audits; securing appropriations for the Natural History Building Wings; and early planning for the MSC.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 322-342, of audio recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 audiocassette tapes

Interviews

Interview 19: November 7, 1978

Interviews

Covers the development of the MSC, c. 1959-1978, including the site acquisition; authorizing legislation; and authorizing appropriations.

Interviews

Transcript pp. 343-363, of audio recording, 2 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 2 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 audiocassette tapes