



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Jennie V. Emlong Oral History Interview, 1980

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Smithsonian Institution Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Jennie V. Emlong Oral History Interview
Identifier:	Record Unit 9518
Date:	1980
Extent:	2 audiotapes (Reference copies).
Creator::	Emlong, Jennie V., interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9518, Jennie V. Emlong Oral History Interview

Historical Note

Jennie Emlong's son, Douglas Ralph Emlong (1942-1980), was an amateur field collector of fossils in the Pacific Northwest. He had close ties with the Department of Paleobiology, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) which purchased many of his collections and often supported his field work. Douglas Emlong was self-educated in paleontology and displayed an early penchant for collecting. During his childhood, he spent much of his time roaming the hills and desert of Southern California, collecting cacti, minerals, agates, and fossils. When he was in the eighth grade, his family moved to the Oregon coast, and he began collecting marine fossils found on the beach and in surrounding cliffs. For several years after high school, he operated a fossil and rock museum and shop, and lectured extensively on the paleontology of the Oregon coast. He became acquainted with many prominent West Coast paleontologists, notable Arnold Shotwell, in his search for information on the complex geology of the region.

Douglas Emlong's first contact with the Smithsonian was with A. Remington Kellogg of the NMNH who was interested in his fossil cetaceans. His relationship with the museum was solidified by Clayton E. Ray, curator of the Department of Paleobiology, who encouraged and funded Emlong's fossil collecting, and purchased his unique marine fossils.

Emlong possessed the individualistic and brilliant mind of the gifted amateur collector. He was largely self-taught, worked alone, and was truly enthralled by the search for clues to the past. These searches produced many new specimens of fossils, ranging from plants to invertebrates to marine mammals, notably fifteen new species of marine mammals and two previously unknown families. Emlong was a creative and intuitive individual. He was a musician and composer, a painter and a writer. He was intrigued by mysticism, telepathy, and other frontiers of human intellect.

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 student on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Jennie V. Emlong was interviewed for the Oral History Program to provide a full picture of her talented and multi-faceted son, Douglas Ralph Emlong, who had close ties with the Department of Paleobiology, National Museum of Natural History.

Descriptive Entry

Jennie V. Emlong was interviewed by Clayton Edward Ray on June 20, 1980 to provide a full picture of her talented and multi-faceted son, who possessed the unique personality characteristics requisite to the really successful collector. The interview covers his family background, childhood, education, development of interests in collecting, relationships with paleontologists, major fossil finds, artistic activities, and personality.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Cetacea, Fossil
- Collectors and collecting
- Interviews
- Mammalogy
- Oral history
- Paleobiology
- Paleontology

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

Names:

- Emlong, Douglas R., 1942-1980
- Emlong, Jennie V., 1904-
- Kellogg, Remington, 1892-1969
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Paleobiology
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Mammals
- Ray, Clayton Edward, interviewer

Container Listing

Interview

Interview

Interview 1: June 20, 1980

Interview

Transcript, pp. 1-52, of audio recording, 2.0 hours.

Interview

Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours

Note:

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