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Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title: Oral history interviews with Phillip S. Hughes
Identifier: Record Unit 9525
Date: 1985
Extent: 7 audiotapes (reference copies).
Creator: Hughes, Phillip S., interviewee
Language: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation
Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9525, Oral history interviews with Phillip S. Hughes

Historical Note

Phillip "Sam" Hughes (1917-2004), government administrator, received his bachelor's degree in sociology in 1938 from the University of Washington in Seattle. He then began a career in public administration working in sociological research and statistics for the State of Washington. His career was interrupted by service in the U.S. Army and Navy from 1943 to 1946. After the war, he worked for Boeing Aircraft Company for a short span in 1946 and then joined the staff of the Veterans Administration in Seattle, again utilizing his sociological and statistical background. In 1949, he moved to the Bureau of the Budget (BOB) in Washington, D.C. He served in a variety of positions in budget analysis and legislative clearance there until his retirement in 1969 as Deputy Director.

Hughes began a second career in the private sector as Acting President of the National Institute of Public Affairs in 1969. In 1971-1972, he was Senior Fellow in charge of the public management studies project of the Brookings Institution. He then returned to government service in 1972 as Director of the newly established Office of Federal Elections of the General Accounting Office (GAO) during the Watergate investigation, until December 1973, when he was appointed Assistant Comptroller General of the United States. Upon his retirement from the GAO in 1977, he served as a management consultant for the Development and Resource Corporation. He was also appointed management consultant to the Smithsonian Institution (SI) to prepare the 1977 Report of the Audits and Review Committee of the SI Board of Regents.

Hughes again returned to public service as Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Institutional Relations of the Department of Energy from October 1977 to September 1979. Following his resignation from the Energy Department, he served as Undersecretary of the Smithsonian Institution from February 1980 to June 1985.
Hughes also maintained a lifelong interest in conservation of natural resources, especially wilderness areas. Among the many conservation and preservation groups in which he was active were the Wilderness Society and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He also devoted much time to public administration professional organizations, especially as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Academy of Public Administration.

His many honors include the National Civil Service League Career Service Award, the Award for Exceptional Services of the Bureau of the Budget, and the Rockefeller Public Service Award.

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.

Phillip Samuel Hughes was interviewed for the Oral History Collection because of the important role he played in Smithsonian management and the breadth of perspective his position afforded.

Descriptive Entry

Hughes was interviewed by historian Pamela M. Henson on four occasions in May and June of 1985, just prior to his retirement from the Smithsonian. These interviews cover his education; interest in conservation and preservation; career with the State of Washington, Veterans Administrations, Bureau of the Budget, General Accounting Office, Department of Energy, and National Institute of Public Affairs; and focus especially on his work at the Smithsonian, as Consultant to the Board of Regents in 1977 and as Under Secretary from 1980 to 1985.

This collection is comprised of approximately 5 3/4 hours of analog audio recordings and 186 pages of transcript. In total, this collection includes 13 original 7" audiotape reels, 13 preservation digital audio .wav files, 6 reference copy audio cassette tapes, and 13 reference copy digital audio .mp3 files.

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
- Museum techniques
- Public administration
- Watergate Affair, 1972-1974

Types of Materials:
- Audiotapes
Interviews
Oral history

Names:
Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
Hughes, Phillip S., 1917-
National Academy of Public Administration
Ripley, S. Dillon (Sidney Dillon), 1913-2001
Smithsonian Institution. Board of Regents
Smithsonian Institution. Board of Regents. Audit and Review Committee
Smithsonian Institution. Office of the Under Secretary
United States. Bureau of the Budget
United States. Department of Energy
United States. General Accounting Office
United States. Veterans Administration
Wilderness Society (U.S.)

Geographic Names:
United States -- Politics and government -- 1969-1974
United States -- Politics and government -- 1974-1977

Preferred Titles:
Relations Between the Smithsonian and the Congress