



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Phillip S. Hughes Oral History Interviews, 1985

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Smithsonian Institution Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Phillip S. Hughes Oral History Interviews
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, Phillip S. Hughes Oral History Interviews

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.

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

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

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

Container Listing

Interviews

- Interviews **Interview 1: May 24, 1985**
- Interviews Covers his youth, education, and early career in the State of Washington, c. 1917-1972, including: family and childhood in Chicago, Illinois, and Sprague, Washington; education in sociology at the University of Washington in Seattle; sociological research and statistical work for the State of Washington, 1938-1943; military experience during World War II; post-war career at Boeing Aircraft Company and the Veterans Administration, 1946-1949; his decision in 1949 to pursue a career in government in Washington, D.C.; work in budget analysis and legislative clearance at the Bureau of the Budget, 1949-1969; appointment as Deputy Director of BOB in 1966; role in the Committee on the Reorganization of the Executive Branch of the Government; retirement from BOB in 1969; consulting work on government administration in Indonesia for Ford Foundation in 1970-1971; role as Senior Fellow in charge of public management studies at Brookings Institution in 1971-1972; appointment in 1972 as Director of Office of the Office of Federal Elections of the General Accounting Office.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-28, of audiotape recording, 1 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 00:59 hour
- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 5" two track reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Preservation Remasters: 2 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape and 2 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 2: May 29, 1985**
- Interviews Covers his career at the General Accounting Office and Department of Energy, consulting work in Iran, role as Consultant to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian in 1977 and subsequent appointment as under Secretary, c. 1972-1980, including: role as the first Director of the Office of Federal Elections, GAO, 1972-1973, including the Watergate investigation; work as Assistant Comptroller General, GAO, on establishment of Congressional Budget Office and Energy and Minerals Division, 1973-1977; consulting work in Iran in 1977 on public management and budget problems; appointment as Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Institutional Relations at the Department of Energy, 1977-1979; role as Consultant to the Smithsonian Board of Regents in 1977, producing report on relationship of SI to Congress; appointment as Under Secretary, SI, in 1980.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 29-88, of audiotape recording, 2 hours.

- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 01:53:06 hours
 Note: • Original Masters: 2 5" two track reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 • Preservation Remasters: 4 digital audio .wav files
 • Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes and 4 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 3: May 30, 1985**
- Interviews Covers his role as Undersecretary of SI, 1980-1985, including: his vision of the role of an Undersecretary; coordination of the budget and planning processes; role of the Secretary's executive committee; restructuring of the Assistant Secretaryships by the new Secretary, R. McC. Adams; management of research organizations; management of museums; planning for the Museum Support Center; sale of the Belmont Conference Center; development of the Quadrangle Building, including National Museum of African Art, Sackler Gallery and International Center; turnover in administrative personnel in the 1980s and transition to a new Secretary in 1983; reorganization of Division of Performing Arts; merger of Chesapeake Bay Center for Environmental Studies and Radiation Biology Laboratory into the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center; acquisition of the Old Post Office Building; plans to relocate the Garber Facility to Dulles Airport; renovation of the Arts and Industries Building; development of *SI World* television series.
- Interviews Transcripts, pp. 89-152, of audiotape recording, 2 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 01:53:07 hours
 Note: • Original Masters: 2 5" two track reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 • Preservation Remasters: 4 digital audio .wav files
 • Reference Copies: 4 cassette audiotapes and 4 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 4: June 5, 1985**
- Interviews Continues on his role as Undersecretary, 1980-1985, and discusses his interest in environmental conservation, including: transformation of the National Anthropological Film Archives into the Human Studies Film Archives and subsequent legal disputes with E. Richard Sorenson; development of Office Memorandum 808 on collections policy and work on the Institution-wide collections inventory; establishment of an Office of Information Resources Management; interest in environmental conservation, especially with the Wilderness Society and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club; his role in the creation of the North Cascades Park in the State of Washington; establishment of the National Academy of Public Administration to study the processes of governance and management.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 153-186, of audiotape recording, 2 hours.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 01:09:45 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" two track reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Preservation Remasters: 3 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes and 3 digital audio .mp3 files