Oral history interview with Nazaret Cherkezian, 1986

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives
Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1
Historical Note .................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 2
Descriptive Entry .............................................................................................................. 2
Names and Subjects ......................................................................................................... 2
Container Listing ............................................................................................................. 4
Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title: Oral history interview with Nazaret Cherkezian
Identifier: Record Unit 9541
Date: 1986
Extent: 2 audiotapes (reference copies).
Creator: Cherkezian, Nazaret, interviewee
Language: Language of Materials: English

Administrative Information

Prefered Citation
Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9541, Cherkezian, Nazaret, interviewee, Oral history interview with Nazaret Cherkezian

Historical Note

Nazaret "Chic" Cherkezian (1924-1996), was born in Queens, New York. He attended New York University (NYU) where he received a B.A. in Journalism and completed all course work for an M.B.A. in Economic History.

Cherkezian began his career as a journalist in 1946 as a staff member of the New York Herald Tribune. In 1949, he entered the public relations field as Associate Director and Senior Press Representative for the New York University Office of Information Services. While at NYU, he helped found the Office of Radio and Television, where he was Associate Director and Producer from 1954 to 1957. During these years he helped to create the successful Sunrise Semester educational television series.

In 1957, Cherkezian began producing the weekly television series Eye on New York for WCBS-TV. He left commercial television in 1959 to become Director of Public Information for National Educational Television (NET). He advanced to Executive Producer in 1965, a position which he held until 1972. He was awarded fellowships by The Ford Foundation and National Association of Educational Broadcasters to continue development in this field.

In 1957, Cherkezian began producing the weekly television series Eye on New York for WCBS-TV. He left commercial television in 1959 to become Director of Public Information for National Educational Television (NET). He advanced to Executive Producer in 1965, a position which he held until 1972. He was awarded fellowships by The Ford Foundation and National Association of Educational Broadcasters to continue development in this field.

Cherkezian came to Washington in 1973 to accept a post as Director of Programming for the National Public Affairs Center for Television (NPACT). His Smithsonian career began in 1974 when he became Telecommunications Coordinator for the Office of Public Affairs. Cherkezian was named Director of the Office of Telecommunications upon its creation in 1976, serving until his retirement in 1986. As Director of the Office of Telecommunications, Cherkezian was responsible for the Smithsonian's radio, television, and film productions. His many credits include A Sense of Discovery, Here at the Smithsonian, Yorktown, and Peace Be Still.
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.

Cherkezian was interviewed for the Oral History Collection because of his role as one of the pioneers of public television and his tenure as a Smithsonian administrator.

Descriptive Entry

Cherkezian was interviewed in December of 1986 by John Peterson for a University of Maryland oral history seminar project. The interview covers his education and career in public affairs and television at New York University; experiences as producer for WCBS-TV in New York; public relations and television production for public broadcasting at National Educational Television; coverage of Watergate and Washington politics for the National Public Affairs Center for Television; and career as Director of the Office of Telecommunications at the Smithsonian.

The collection consists of 1.5 hours of audiotape recordings which have been remastered digitally into 3 preservation digital audio .wav files and 3 reference digital audio .mp3 files, and c. 35 pages of transcript.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Radio programs
- Television -- Production and direction

Types of Materials:
- Audiotapes
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Transcripts

Names:
- Cherkezian, Nazaret
- National Educational Television
- National Public Affairs Center for Television
- New York University
- Office of Public Affairs. Telecommunications Coordinator
- Office of Telecommunications. Director
Container Listing

Box 1

Transcript of Interview

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 3 December 1986

Digital Content: William Grayson was Special Coordinator of the Smithsonian's Office of Telecommunications in 1976, and later became Senior Telecommunications Specialist from 1977 to until his death on April 15, 1980. [Image no. 89-14120]

Digital Content: Nazaret Cherkezian, 1924-1996, director of Office of Telecommunications (OTC) from 1976 until his retirement in 1986, stands beside equipment in Smithsonian Institution's OTC, 1984 [Image no. 84-9185-4A or 84-9185.04A]

Audio Recording of Interview

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 3 December 1986