



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Oral history interview with Robert K. Enders, 1976

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Smithsonian Institution Archives  
Washington, D.C.  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Robert K. Enders
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9562
<b>Date:</b>	1976
<b>Extent:</b>	2 audiotapes (reference tapes).
<b>Creator::</b>	Enders, Robert K. (Robert Kendall), 1899-1988 interviewee
<b>Language:</b>	Language of Materials: English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9562, Enders, Robert K. (Robert Kendall), 1899-1988 interviewee, Oral history interview with Robert K. Enders

### Use Restriction

Restricted. Contact reference staff for details.

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## Historical Note

Robert Kendall Enders (1899-1988) was born on September 22, 1899, in Essex, Iowa. After receiving his A.B. and Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Michigan in 1925 and 1927 respectively, he became an Assistant Professor of Biology at Union College. In 1928, he became an Assistant Professor at Missouri Valley College, and in 1932 was promoted to full Professor. In 1966, he also became Emeritus Professor of Zoology at Swarthmore College. He retired from Missouri Valley College in 1970.

Enders was encouraged by Harvard biologist Thomas Barbour to visit Barro Colorado Island (BCI). He applied for a National Research Council Fellowship for funding and in 1930 arrived on the island. In 1935 and 1937, he returned, and in 1941, he visited BCI again as a Research Fellow of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. While conducting his research in mammalogy on BCI, he observed the development of the research station. As a Professor, he continued his visits to Panama, bringing students to the Canal Zone Biological Area on working field trips.

The Canal Zone Biological Area (CZBA) was established in 1923 on Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal as a reserve for scientific study of the Tropics. Originally designed as a consortium of universities and government agencies by Thomas Barbour, William Morton Wheeler, James Zetek, and others, CZBA was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution in 1946 and in 1966 was renamed the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI).

## Introduction

The Oral History Project is part of the Smithsonian Institution Archives. The purpose of the project is to conduct and collect interviews with current and retired members of the Smithsonian staff who have made significant contributions, administrative and scholarly, to the Institution. The project's goal is to supplement the published record and manuscript collections in the Archives, focusing on the history of the Institution and contributions to the increase and diffusion of knowledge made by its scholars.

The Robert Kendall Enders interviews were recorded and donated to Smithsonian Institution Archives because of his experiences in Panama during the early development of the research station. Additional information about the Canal Zone Biological Area can be found in the Records Relating to the Canal Zone Biological Area, Office of the Secretary, 1912-1965, and the Canal Zone Biological Area Records, 1918-1964, also housed in the Smithsonian Archives. The Oral History Collection also contains several other sets of interviews on the history of the research station.

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## Descriptive Entry

The Robert K. Enders Interview was conducted by Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute research biologist, Neal G. Smith, on 13 April of 1976. He discusses his introduction to Barro Colorado Island; his subsequent research trips there; recollections of fellow scientists and staff on the island; comparisons between the island then and now; and suggestions on how to improve the island for research purposes. Box 1 consists of 2.0 hours of audiotape cassettes, 56 pages of transcript, and occupies 0.07 linear meters of shelf space. The interviews may not be cited, quoted, or reproduced without the permission of the heirs or assigns of Robert K. Enders.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Mammalogy
- Tropical biology

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Transcripts

Names:

- Barbour, Thomas, 1884-1946
- Barro Colorado Island. Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Canal Zone Biological Area. Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Chapman, Frank M. (Frank Michler), 1864-1945

Enders, Robert K. (Robert Kendall), 1899-1988  
Koford, Carl B.  
Smith, Neal Griffith, 1937- interviewer  
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Barro Colorado Island  
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Canal Zone Biological Area  
United States. Canal Zone Biological Area, Barro Colorado Island  
Zetek, James, 1886-1959

Geographic Names:

Panama

## Container Listing

Box 1

Transcript of Interview

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 13 April 1976

Audio Recordings of Interview

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 13 April 1976