



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Theodore H. Reed Oral
History Interviews, 1989-1994

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Theodore H. Reed Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9568
Date:	1989-1994
Extent:	5.38 cu. ft. processed holdings.
Creator::	Reed, Theodore H., interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9568, Theodore H. Reed Oral History Interviews

Historical Note

Theodore H. Reed (1922-), veterinarian and zoo administrator, received the D.V.M. in 1945 from the School of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State College. From 1946 to 1955, he practiced as a veterinarian in Oregon and Idaho. He gained experience with exotic animals while serving as a veterinarian to the Portland Zoological Park from 1951 to 1955. In 1955, Reed was appointed Veterinarian at the National Zoological Park (NZP). In 1956, he was named Acting Director after the retirement of William M. Mann, and in 1958, he advanced to Director. During his tenure, Reed oversaw a capital renovation of the NZP; development of the Conservation and Research Center (CRC) in Front Royal, Virginia, in 1974; a transition from display of exotic specimens to breeding of endangered species; and many advances in exotic animal care and medicine. Reed retired from administration in 1983 and from the NZP in 1984.

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.

Reed was interviewed for the Oral History Collection because of his distinguished veterinary and management career, contributions as a Smithsonian administrator, and long tenure as director of the

National Zoological Park. Additional information about Reed can be found in the Records of the National Zoological Park which are also housed in Smithsonian Archives.

Descriptive Entry

These interviews of Reed by Pamela M. Henson discuss his youth; education; veterinary practice; experiences at the Portland Zoo; and career at the NZP, including his tenure as Veterinarian and achievements as Director, especially renovation and modernization of facilities, development of the Cap-Chur Gun, acquisition of such animals as the Giant Pandas, Komodo dragon, and white tigers, development of research and educational programs, creation of an endangered species program and the CRC, participation in the Species Survival Program, his role in the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums and the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens; and reminiscences of such colleagues as William Mann, John Perry, and Leonard Carmichael. An additional interview of Reed by Pamela M. Henson, Historian, Smithsonian Institution Archives, and Caroline Winslow, Graphics Department, National Zoological Department was conducted in 1992. Reed was interviewed about the 1958 Safety Brochure that was created by the Zoo in response to the death a little girl by a lion at NZP. The collection consists of 13 interviews totaling 31.5 hours of audio recordings and 790 pages of transcript.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Cap-Chur Gun
- Conservation of natural resources
- Endangered species
- Giant panda
- Interviews
- Komodo dragon
- Oral history
- Records of meetings, organizations, and professional societies
- Tigers
- Veterinarians
- Zoo directors
- Zoos

Types of Materials:

- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Videotapes

Names:

- American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums
- Carmichael, Leonard, 1898-1973
- Conservation and Research Center (National Zoological Park)
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens
- Mann, William M., 1886-1960
- National Zoological Park (U.S.)

Perry, John
Portland Zoo
Reed, Theodore H.
Species Survival Program (NZP)
Winslow, Caroline, interviewer

Container Listing

Interviews

- Interviews **Interview 1: April 11, 1989**
- Interviews Covers his family background, youth and education, and early career as veterinarian, including: Childhood and family; death of father and brother; years in Philippines; courtship of Elizabeth Crandall; early career as a vet, including Oregon work at racetrack and Portland Zoo; birth of children; and application for NZP job and hiring by Secretary Leonard Carmichael.
[Digital Content: Theodore H. Reed, Secretary Leonard Carmichael and Assistant Secretary James C. Bradley at a meeting of the Anteater's Association, National Zoological Park, c. 1950s. \[Image no. 84-13887\]](#)
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-60, of audiotape recording, 2.5 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.5 hours
Note: • Original Masters: 5 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 • Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 2: April 12, 1989**
- Interviews Covers his early career at the NZP, including: Joining NZP staff in 1955; staff of NZP when Reed arrived; limited budget when Reed arrived; learning about exotic animals; split appropriations to NZP; and appointment as acting director of the NZP.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-48, of audiotape recording, 2.0 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours
Note: • Original Masters: 4 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 • Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 3: April 12, 1989**
- Interviews Continues discussion of his early years at the NZP, including: His role as acting director of NZP; role as liaison with community and founding of Friends of the National Zoo; lion tragedy; Reed's appointment as director; plans for improvement, especially safety aspects; salary increases for keepers; 1959 trip to Europe for a meeting of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens; and Reed's early animal acquisitions for NZP.

- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-30, of audiotape recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 3 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 4: April 14, 1989**
- Interviews Discusses his role as director, including: Cap-Chur gun development; animal health at NZP; Reed's inventory of hoofed stock in U.S.; difficulties in securing permits for animals; loss of animals due to health threats; end of large expeditions with developments in modern transportation and tranquilizers; Mary McCrane as first NZP woman sent on collecting trip by herself; food concessions at the Zoo and the role of FONZ in managing concessions; growth of FONZ into education; and Zoo Nights programs.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-44, of audiotape recording, 2.0 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 4 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 5: August 3, 1989**
- Interviews Covers his role as director, including: Reed's animal acquisitions, especially the okapis; age of animal collection when he took over; medical problems with animals; competition between zoos before the Species Survival Program; plans to acquire White tiger, trip to get Mohini, and breeding; and trip to France with prong horned antelopes.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-82, of audiotape recording, 3.0 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 3.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 6 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 6: August 17, 1989**
- Interviews Focuses on acquisitions for the animal collection, including: Acquisition of Komodo dragons and acquisition of bongos from Kenya.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-56, of audiotape recording, 2.5 hours.

- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 5 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 7: August 24, 1989**
- Interviews Focuses on the acquisition of the Giant Pandas, Ling Ling and Hsing Hsing from China in 1972.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-78, of audiotape recording, 3.0 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 3.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 6 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 8: September 14, 1989**
- Interviews Continues discussion of the Giant Pandas and his role as NZP director, including: Second trip to China; meeting group in Tokyo after Poland IUDZG meeting; birth and raising of hybrid bears at home; Horrible, the grizzly bear; raising ring tailed lemur and leopards; Cookie, the cockatoo; Mark Reed's anaconda and pet alligator; decision not to accept pets, especially after holidays; raising Mohini's cubs, Rewati and Sake; Moni's neurological problems; primates, especially the gorilla birth, Mrs. Louise Gallagher's role in raising chimps and gorilla; development of zoo nursery to care for animals onsite; incubation program for non-mammalian vertebrates; development of bird collection under Kerry Muller and Guy Greenwell; and role of Jack DePrato at Reptile House.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-76, of audiotape recording, 2.5 hours.
- Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 5 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes
- Interviews **Interview 9: October 13, 1989**
- Interviews Focuses on the development of the Conservation and Research Center (CRC) at Front Royal, Virginia, including: Interest of John Perry, John Eisenberg and Kerry Muller; acquisition of the land and Ted Rivinus's role in identifying it; development of facility; animal rights issues, including concerns about deer; development of research program with Ph.D. scientists; switch to animal breeding and conservation focus; golden lion tamarins and the Species Survival Program; raising pangolins; SSP procedures and changes

in philosophy; research on endangered species at CRC; success with red pandas; conference facilities at CRC; research staff of NZP and CRC; CRC not a holding pen for NZP; and Guam rail and other rare bird programs.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-88, of audiotape recording, 3.5 hours.

Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 3.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 7 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 4 cassette audiotapes

Interviews **Interview 10: June 16, 1994**

Interviews Focuses on the NZP Master Plan and construction, including: Efforts to increase funding for construction; NZP is viewed as a "zoological slum"; Friends of the National Zoo; Congressional support; decision to create a master plan; tunnel to divert Rock Creek by Interior Department; renovation of Bird House; relationships with museum scientists; John Eisenberg's role at NZP and field work in Ceylon; 1966 move of NZP budget from District of Columbia to SI budget; FONZ concessions; plans for hoof stock area; hospital and veterinary staff; and plans for a Multiclimature House that never materialized.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-54, of audiotape recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 3 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes

Interviews **Interview 11: June 23, 1994**

Interviews Continues discussion of the NZP Master Plan in the 1970s, including: Reed's tour of other zoos to plan NZP renovations; departure of Lear Grimmer; attempt to synthesize architectural style of NZP; Faulkner, Frye and Vanderpool plan; staffing problems at NZP; rhinoceros enclosure; panda enclosure; reestablishing the beaver pond; Mann Lion-Tiger exhibit; Elephant House renovations; Bird House plaza; creation of Graphic Arts Department; creation of Education Department; renovation of Small Mammal House; Great Ape House; and death of Elizabeth Reed from cancer.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-65, of audiotape recording, 2.0 hours.

Interviews Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 4 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotape

- Reference Copies: 2 cassette audiotapes

Interviews

Interview 12: July 12, 1994

Interviews

Covers his role as director, including: Max Kampelman's role at NZP; import/export of animals; disease issues; William Mann's NRA (Never Refuse Anything) policy; CRC at Front Royal; Pere David deer; relationship between architects and zoo staff; signage for exhibits; relationship between research and animal health and breeding; polar bears and bear line; education program; NZP budget; renovation of Reptile House; Monkey Island; Aquatic Vertebrate Exhibit; and donation for clock tower.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-109, of audiotape recording, 3.0 hours.

Interviews

Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 3.0 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 6 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes

Interviews

Interview 13: August 24, 1992

Interviews

Discusses the role of the graphics/signage program at the NZP, especially the 1958 Safety Brochure that was created by the Zoo in response to the death a little girl by a lion at NZP.

Interviews

No transcript of audiotape recording, 2.5 hours.

Interviews

Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 2.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 5 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference Copies: 3 cassette audiotapes