



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Oscar Dean Kidd Oral History Interviews, 1987, 1990

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Smithsonian Institution Archives  
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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>	Oscar Dean Kidd Oral History Interviews
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9574
<b>Date:</b>	1987, 1990
<b>Extent:</b>	3 audiotapes (Reference copies).
<b>Creator::</b>	Kidd, Oscar Dean, interviewee
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9574, Oscar Dean Kidd Oral History Interviews

### Use Restriction

Restricted. Contact [SIHistory@si.edu](mailto:SIHistory@si.edu) to request permission.

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## Historical Note

Oscar Dean Kidd (1907- ) was born in Jamaica and migrated to Panama in 1909. He grew up in the Panama Canal Zone, eventually settling down in Frijoles, the train station used by scientists visiting Barro Colorado Island (BCI). The BCI Research Station was created in 1923 as a preserve for the study of tropical biology. In 1946, this Canal Zone Biological Area (CZBA) was transferred to the Smithsonian and in 1966 was renamed the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI). As a motorboat operator, Kidd became acquainted with scientists visiting BCI, especially CZBA Director James Zetek.

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## 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.

Kidd was interviewed for the Smithsonian Institution Archives Oral History Collection because of his long tenure of service at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

## Descriptive Entry

This collection consists of a 1990 interview of Kidd by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives, and Patricia Escobar Paramo and Elizabeth Stockwell of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, that covers his youth, work as a chauffeur and motorboat operator, and reminiscences of Barro Colorado Island and the scientists working there. A second interview of Kidd by Mitchell Aide and Carolien Haverkate of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in 1987 was also donated to the collection. The collection consists of 2.5 hours of audiotape recordings and 27 pages of transcript.

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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:

- African Americans -- History
- Interviews
- Motorboats
- Oral history
- Scientists
- Tropical biology

### Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Transcripts

### Names:

- Aide, T. M. (Mitchell), interviewer
- Barro Colorado Island Research Station
- Escobar Paramo, Patricia, interviewer
- Haerkate, Carolien, interviewer
- Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
- Kidd, Oscar Dean
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Barro Colorado Island
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Canal Zone Biological Area
- Stockwell, Elizabeth, interviewer
- United States. Canal Zone Biological Area, Barro Colorado Island
- Zetek, James, 1886-1959

### Geographic Names:

- Jamaica
- Panama

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## Container Listing

### Interviews

Interviews

#### **Interview 1: June 17, 1990**

Interviews

Interview of Kidd by Henson, Paramo, and Stockwell at his home in Frijoles, Panama, across Gatun Lake from Barro Colorado Island, covers his youth in Panama, work as a chauffeur and motorboat operator transporting scientists to and from Panama City and across the lake to Barro Colorado Island, and reminiscences of Barro Colorado Island and the scientists working there, especially long-time director James Zetek; c. 1909-1990.

[Digital Content: Oscar Dean Kidd and Pamela Henson in Frijoles, Panama, June 1990. \[Image no. SIA2011-2368\]](#)

[Digital Content: Oscar Dean Kidd with Elizabeth Stockwell \(left\) and Patricia Escobar Paramo in Frijoles, Panama, June 1990. \[Image no. SIA2011-2369\]](#)

[Digital Content: Oscar Dean Kidd in Frijoles, Panama, June 1990. \[Image no. SIA2011-2370\]](#)

[Digital Content: Oscar Dean Kidd in Frijoles, Panama, June 1990. \[Image no. SIA2011-2371\]](#)

[Digital Content: Oscar Dean Kidd in Frijoles, Panama, June 1990. \[Image no. SIA2011-2372\]](#)

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-27, 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 2: December 17, 1987**

Interviews

Interview of Kidd by STRI staff Mitchell Aide and Carolien Haverkate also covers his long relationship with the scientists on Barro Colorado Island; c. 1920-1987.

Interviews

Transcript, none, of audiotape recording, 0.5 hour.

Interviews

Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 0.5 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 cassette audiotape
  - Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape