



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Oral history interview with William W. Moss, III, 1993

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu |
| Title: | Oral history interview with William W. Moss, III |
| Identifier: | Record Unit 9575 |
| Date: | 1993 |
| Extent: | 3 audiotapes. (Reference copies). 1 videotape. (Reference copy). |
| Creator:: | Moss, William W., 1935-, interviewee |
| Language: | English |

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9575, Moss, William W., 1935-, interviewee, Oral history interview with William W. Moss, III

Use Restriction

Restricted.

Historical Note

William W. Moss III (1935-2007) received his B.A. from Haverford College in 1957. Moss began his federal service in the United States Navy in 1958. During nearly five years of active duty, he spent a year studying Chinese at the Army Language School in Monterey, California. From 1963 to 1964, he undertook graduate work in Chinese and public law and government at Columbia University, and was awarded the M.A. in 1965. He worked as an Intelligence Research Analyst in foreign language at the National Security Agency from 1964 through 1969. In 1969, he left to accept a position at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts, as an Oral History Interviewer, and in 1970, became Chief of the Oral History Program. Moss became Senior Archivist for national security and foreign affairs materials at the Library in 1972 and Chief Archivist in 1975. In 1983, Moss came to the Smithsonian as Archivist of the Institution and Director of the Smithsonian Institution Archives. During his ten years at the Archives, he participated in the establishment of the Council of Information and Education Directors (CIED) and served as its head for two years. He also presided over the formation of the Smithsonian Institution Archives and Special Collections Council and served as chairman for three years. Moss retired in 1993 to accept a position teaching in the International Programs Office at the Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, China, and was named the first Archivist Emeritus.

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.

Moss was interviewed for the Smithsonian Institution Archives Oral History Collection because of his service as director of Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Descriptive Entry

This collection consists of an audiotaped interview of Moss by University of Maryland student Keith Winsell conducted in 1986, and a 1993 videotaped interview of Moss by Marc Pachter, Acting Assistant Secretary for External Affairs, that covers his early life and education; naval career; graduate studies; work at the National Security Agency; career at the Kennedy Library and the Smithsonian Institution Archives, including interest in history at the Smithsonian, the space problem at the Archives, formation of CIED, and future directions for the Institution; oral history and archival practices; and interest in China and Chinese archives. The collection consists of 1.0 hour of audiotape recording, which has been remastered digitally into 2 .wav files and 2 .mp3 files, and 2.0 hours of videotape recording. No transcript is available.

This interview may not be cited, quoted, or reproduced without the permission of the heirs or assigns of William W. Moss.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Archives
- Archives -- China
- Archives -- Collection management
- Archivists
- History
- Museum archives

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Transcripts
- Videotapes

Names:

- Army Language School (U.S.)

Columbia University
Council of Information and Education Directors
Foreign Affairs University (Beijing, China)
Haverford College
John F. Kennedy Library
Moss, William W., 1935-
Pachter, Marc, interviewer
Smithsonian Institution Archives and Special Collections Council
Smithsonian Institution. Archives
United States. National Security Agency
United States. Navy
Winsell, Keith, interviewer

Container Listing

Box 1

Audio and Video Recordings of Interviews

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 21 November 1986

- Note:
- Total Recording Time: 1.0 hour
 - Original Masters: 1 5" reel-to-reel audiotape
 - Preservation Masters: 2 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape and 2 digital audio .mp3 files

Box 1 of 1

Interview 2: 13 August 1993

- Note:
- Total Recording Time: 2.0 hours
 - Original Masters: 4 Betacam videotape cassettes
 - Reference Copies: 2 VHS videotape cassettes