Oral history interviews with
Charles Blitzer, 1985-1986

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Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title: Oral history interviews with Charles Blitzer
Identifier: Record Unit 9604
Date: 1985-1986
Extent: 10 audiotapes (reference copies).
Creator: Blitzer, Charles, interviewee
Language: Language of Materials: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation
Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9604, Blitzer, Charles, interviewee, Oral history interviews with Charles Blitzer

Historical Note

Charles Blitzer (1927-1999), an academic administrator, received the bachelors from Williams College in 1947, and the Ph.D. in government from Harvard University in 1952. He served as an instructor and assistant professor of political science at Yale University from 1950 to 1960, and as executive associate, American Council of Learned Societies from 1960 to 1965, before joining the staff of the Smithsonian in 1965. Blitzer was director of the Office of Education and Training at the Smithsonian from 1965 to 1968 and Assistant Secretary for History and Art from 1968 to 1983. He served as director of the National Humanities Center from 1983 to 1988 and director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars from 1988 to 1997.

Introduction

The Oral History Program is part of the Smithsonian Institution Archives. The purpose of the program is to conduct 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 Charles Blitzer interviews were conducted as part of the Smithsonian Institution Archives Oral History Program because of his role as a Smithsonian administrator from 1965 to 1983, especially as Assistant Secretary for History and Art.
Descriptive Entry

The Charles Blitzer Interviews were conducted during four sessions in 1985 and 1986 by Smithsonian Archives Historian Pamela M. Henson. This collection consists of four interview sessions, totaling approximately 9 hours of recordings, 272 pages of transcript, and occupies 0.5 cubic feet of shelf space. There are three generations of recordings for each session: original audiotapes, preservation digital .wav files, and reference audiocassette tapes and .mp3 audio files. In total, this collection is comprised of 10 original 5" reel-to-reel audiotapes, 10 reference copy audio cassette tapes, 18 digital .wav files, and 18 digital .mp3 files. The original audiotapes and .wav files are reserved in preservation storage. Box 1 contains transcripts of the interviews and cassette and digital copies of the original recordings.

Additional documentation pertaining to Blitzer can be found in the Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for History and Art.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Management
- Museums -- Administration
- Museums -- Management

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

Names:
- American Council of Learned Societies
- Assistant Secretary for History and Art
- Blitzer, Charles
- Henson, Pamela M. interviewer
- Ripley, S. Dillon (Sidney Dillon), 1913-2001
- Smithsonian Institution. Office of Education and Training
- Yale University
Container Listing

Box 1

Transcripts of Interviews

Box 1 of 1  Interview 1: 20 August 1985
Box 1 of 1  Interview 2: 16 September 1985
Box 1 of 1  Interview 3: 27 January 1986
Box 1 of 1  Interview 4: 12 September 1986

Audio Recordings of Interviews

Box 1 of 1  Interview 1: 20 August 1985
Box 1 of 1  Interview 2: 16 September 1985
Box 1 of 1  Interview 3: 27 January 1986
Box 1 of 1  Interview 4: 12 September 1986