



Smithsonian Institution Archives

National Museum of Natural History 100th
Anniversary Oral History Interviews, 2009-2011

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
Contact us at osiaref@si.edu

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	National Museum of Natural History 100th Anniversary Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9622
Date:	2009-2011
Extent:	15 digital audio files; 42 digital video files
Creator::	National Museum of Natural History
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9622, National Museum of Natural History 100th Anniversary Oral History Interviews

Access Restriction

Some of these interviews are restricted. The Andre Bell, Roy S. Clarke, Jr., Kristofer M. Helgen, Storrs L. Olson, Paul W. Pohwat, Paul D. Rhymer, and Mary E. Rice interviews cannot be used without their permission prior to 2050. The Leon Dixon, Donald Davis, David L. Pawson, and Martha Rosen interview transcripts cannot be used without their permission. The George Venable recording cannot be used without permission. The Audrey Butler, Alan Cheetham, Chip Clark, Elizabeth Dietrich, Nathan Erwin, Frank Greenwell, Gary Hevel, David Hunt, James Krakker, and Rusty Russell interviews are unrestricted. Contact SIHistory@si.edu to request permission.

Historical Note

National Museum of Natural History interviewees include Andre R. Bell, Protection Services, NMNH; Audrey Butler, Food Services; Alan H. Cheetham, Curator of Paleobiology; R. "Chip" Clark, museum photographer; Roy S. Clarke, Jr., Curator of Meteorites; Donald Davis, Curator of Entomology; Elizabeth Dietrich, Supervisory Museum Specialist, Museum Support Center; Leon Dixon, Locksmith Foreman; Nathan Erwin, manager, Insect Zoo; Frank M. Greenwell, taxidermist; Kristofer M. Helgen, Curator of Mammals; Gary F. Hevel, Museum Specialist, Department of Entomology; David Hunt, Museum Specialist, Department of Anthropology; James J. Krakker, Museum Specialist, Department of Anthropology; Storrs L. Olson, Curator of Birds; David L. Pawson, Curator of Invertebrate Zoology; Paul W. Pohwat, Museum Specialist, Department of Mineral Sciences; Paul D. Rhymer, exhibits specialist; Mary E. Rice, director Emeritus, Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce; Martha Rosen, Natural History Branch Librarian for Smithsonian Institution Libraries; George F. "Rusty" Russell, Supervisory Museum Specialist, Department of Botany; and George Venable, scientific illustrator, Department of Entomology.

Interviewers included Inci Bowman, Mignon Davis, and Mark White from NMNH, Lauren Dare and Pamela M. Henson from Smithsonian Institution Archives, Emma Lang, John Minks, James Nelson, Cigdem Pakel, William Stapleton, and Bridget Sullivan from American University, and Courtney Shaw and Mary A. Thomas from Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) 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 reminiscences and interviews recorded by researchers or students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

As part of the celebration of the Centennial of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), oral history interviews were conducted with museum staff members from an array of professions and subject areas, by SIA Institutional History Division staff, American University students, and volunteers from 2009 to 2011. Interviewees were nominated by NMNH staff and the project was coordinated by Heather P. Ewing. Interviews were recorded in digital audio and digital video, and deposited in the Smithsonian Institution Archives Oral History Collection.

Descriptive Entry

These interviews discuss their careers at the NMNH, work with collections, research, scientific illustration, exhibits, taxidermy, museum security, interaction with the public and staff. The NMNH Centennial Interviews consist of c. 38.75 hours of interview with 21.25 hours of digital audio recordings, 17.5 hours of digital video recordings, and c. 500 pages of transcript.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Anniversaries
- Cafeterias
- Centennial celebrations, etc.
- Food service
- Interviews
- Museum curators -- Interviews
- Museum exhibits
- Museums -- Collection management
- Natural history museums
- Oral history
- Photography -- Scientific applications
- Scientific illustration
- Security guards

Taxidermists
Taxidermy

Types of Materials:

Compact discs
Digital images
Electronic records
Sound recordings
Transcripts
Video recordings

Names:

American University (Washington, D.C.)
Bell, Andre R.
Bowman, Inci Altug, 1939- , interviewer
Butler, Audrey
Cheetham, Alan H.
Clark, Chip, 1947-2010
Clarke, Roy S.
Dare, Lauren, interviewer
Davis, Donald R. (Donald Ray)
Dietrich, Elizabeth
Erwin, Nathan
Greenwell, Frank M.
Helgen, K. M. (Kristofer M.)
Henson, Pamela M., interviewer
Hevel, Gary F.
Hunt, David
Krakker, James J.
Lang, Emma, interviewer
Minks, John, interviewer
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.)
Nelson, James, interviewer
Olson, Storrs L.
Pakel, Cigdem, interviewer
Pawson, David L. (David Leo), 1938-
Powhat, Paul W.
Rhymer, Paul D.
Rice, Mary E.
Russell, G. F. (George F.)
Shaw, Courtney, interviewer
Smithsonian Institution. Office of Protection Services
Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce (Fort Pierce, Fla.)
Stapleton, William, interviewer
Sullivan, Bridget, interviewer
Thomas, Mary Augusta, interviewer
Venable, George L.
White, Mark, interviewer

Container Listing

Interviews

- Interviews **Interview 1: October 6, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of Frank M. Greenwell by Cigdem Pakel of American University discusses his career as a taxidermist and field collector for the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-90, of digital audio recording, 3.0 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 3.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 2: October 15, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of Gary F. Hevel by James Nelson of American University covers his career as a Museum Specialist in the Department of Entomology at the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-35, of digital audio recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 3: October 21, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of "Chip" Clark by John Minks of American University focuses on his career as a photographer for the NMNH, including field shoots, object and exhibit photography.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-26, of digital audio recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 3 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 3 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 4: October 22, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of George F. "Rusty" Russell by James Nelson of American University discusses his career as a Museum Specialist in the Department of Botany at the NMNH.

- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-24, of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 5: November 3, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of Nathan Erwin by William Stapleton of American University discusses his career as a entomologist, focusing on his role as manager of the NMNH Insect Zoo.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-30, of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 6: November 5, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of Paul D. Rhymer by Cigdem Pakel of American University covers his work as an exhibit specialist for the NMNH and his career as an artist.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-57, of digital audio recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 7: December 15, 2009**
- Interviews Interview of Andre R. Bell by Emma Lang of American University discusses his career as a Supervisory Security Officer in the Office of Protection Services, stationed in the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-29, of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 8: March 22, 2010**

- Interviews Interview of Mary E. Rice by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives focuses on her early career in invertebrate zoology and as a Curator at the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-45, of digital audio recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 9: March 22, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Mary E. Rice by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives provides an overview of her career, especially her work as founding director of the Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce.
[Digital Content: Aerial image of the Smithsonian Marine Station at Ft. Pierce, Florida, c. 1995. \[Image no. SIA2010-1064\]](#)
[Digital Content: Aerial image of the Smithsonian Marine Station at Ft. Pierce, Florida, c. 1995. \[Image no. SIA2010-1065\]](#)
[Digital Content: Dave Pawson, unidentified man, President of the Harbor Branch Foundation J. Seward Johnson Jr., Mary Rice, Secretary Adams, and Assistant Secretary of Science Robert Hoffmann in the Secretary's parlor on the occasion of discussions over Ft. Pierce land agreements, 1994. \[Image no. SIA2010-1061\]](#)
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-40, of digital video recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 10: March 23, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Mary E. Rice by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives discusses role at the Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce and research on sipunculan worms.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-56, of digital audio recording, 2.0 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 2.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital audio .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital audio .mp3 files
- Interviews **Interview 11: March 25, 2010**

- Interviews Interview of George Venable by volunteer Inci Bowman of the NMNH discusses his career as an artist and scientific illustrator at the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-57, of digital video recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 12: March 31, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Don Davis by volunteer Inci Bowman of the NMNH discusses his career as a Curator of Lepidoptera in the Department of Entomology at the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-70, of digital video recording, 2.0 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 2.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 13: April 6, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of David L. Pawson by volunteer Inci Bowman of the NMNH discusses his career as a Curator of Marine Invertebrates in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the NMNH.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-68, of digital video recording, 2.0 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 2.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 6 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 6 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 14: April 8, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of David L. Pawson by volunteer Inci Bowman of the NMNH discusses his career as a Curator of Marine Invertebrates in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the NMNH and his research on his predecessor, Austin Hobart Clark.
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-34, of digital video recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital video file

- Reference Copies: 1 digital video .wmv file

Interviews

Interview 15: May 14, 2010

Interviews

Interview of Audrey Butler by Mark White of NMNH covers her career with the NMNH cafeteria, interactions with the public and staff, and changes over time.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-70, of digital video recording, 1.0 hour.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files

Interviews

Interview 16: May 21, 2010

Interviews

Interview of Elizabeth Dietrich by Mark White of NMNH focuses on her role as a Museum Specialist and manager at the NMNH's Museum Support Center and her role in coordinating the move of collections from NMNH to MSC.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-70, of digital video recording, 2.0 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 2.0 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files

Interviews

Interview 17: May 27, 2010

Interviews

Interview of Chip Clark by intern Lauren Dare of Smithsonian Institution Archives complemented interview 3 with a video session in which he discussed his work as a photographer and reviewed many of his images.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-21, of digital video recording, 1.0 hours.

Interviews

Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 4 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 4 digital video .wmv files

Interviews

Interview 18: August 14, 2010

Interviews

Interview of Alan H. Cheetham by Courtney Shaw of Smithsonian Institution Libraries discusses his career as Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology in the Department of Paleobiology at the NMNH.

- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-35, of digital video recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 analog audio cassette
 - Reference Copies: 1 analog audio cassette
- Interviews **Interview 19: August 18, 2011**
- Interviews Reminiscences of Alan H. Cheetham were recorded by him and sent to SI Archives.
- Interviews Draft transcript available, of digital audio recording, 1.0 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 20: August 17, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Roy S. Clarke, Jr., by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives discusses his career as Curator of Meteorites in the Department of Mineral Sciences at the NMNH.
[Digital Content: Smithsonian meteorite scientists gathered around an Antarctic meteorite specimen: ALHA81013. The meteorite was found in Antarctica in 1981 by geochemist Robert Fudali. Left to Right: Eugene Jarosewich, a chemist, Mineral Sciences \(Meteorites\); Kurt Frederiksson, curator and geochemist; Robert F. Fudali, geochemist; Roy S. Clarke, curator; and Brian Mason, curator, c. 1981. \[Image no. SIA2011-0761\]](#)
[Digital Content: Roy Clarke, Department of Mineral Sciences, United States National Museum, now known as the National Museum of Natural History \(NMNH\), sits at the microbalance in the chemical laboratory on the third floor of the NMNH's main building, c. 1961-1962. \[Image nos. SIA2011-0762 and 481C\]](#)
[Digital Content: Image of Grace and Roy Clarke. Roy Clarke, a curator in the Department of Mineral Sciences, National Museum of Natural History stands with his wife Grace, and Charles Obermeier, NMNH electronic technician, at a Museum celebratory event, 1976. \[Image no. SIA2011-0763\]](#)
[Digital Content: Roy Clarke, curator, Department of Mineral Sciences, National Museum of Natural History, in the storage room looking at a iron meteorite with the aide of a magnifying glass. Photo by Dane A. Penland, 1989. \[Image nos. SIA2011-0764 and 89-21444\]](#)
[Digital Content: Roy S. Clarke and the Mundrabilla, Western Australian Meteorite, 1975. \[Image no. SIA2011-0765\]](#)
- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-21, of digital video recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 5 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 5 digital video .wmv files

Interviews **Interview 21: September 7, 2010**

Interviews Interview of Roy S. Clarke, Jr., by Pamela M. Henson of Smithsonian Institution Archives was conducted in the Meteorite Storage Room and focuses on significant meteorites in the Department of Mineral Sciences collection at the NMNH.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-25, of digital video recording, 1.0 hour.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file

Interviews **Interview 22: October 12, 2010**

Interviews Interview of David Hunt by Bridget Sullivan of American University discusses his career as a Museum Specialist in physical anthropology, focusing especially on forensic work, in the Department of Anthropology at the NMNH.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-40, of digital audio recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.25 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file

Interviews **Interview 23: November 22, 2010**

Interviews Interview of James J. Krakker by Bridget Sullivan of American University discusses his career as a Museum Specialist working with archeological collections in the Department of Anthropology at the NMNH.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-29, of digital audio recording, 1.25 hours.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 7 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 7 digital video .wmv files

Interviews **Interview 24: March 16, 2011**

Interviews Interview of Storrs L. Olson by Mary Augusta Thomas of Smithsonian Institution Library covers his career as a Curator of Birds in the Department of Zoology at the NMNH.

- Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-35, of digital video recording, 1.5 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 0.25 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital video file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital video .wmv file
- Interviews **Interview 25: June 29, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Paul W. Pohwat discusses his career as a Museum Specialist in the Department of Mineral Sciences at the NMNH.
- Interviews No transcript of digital video recording, 0.25 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 0.25 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 2 digital video files
 - Reference Copies: 2 digital video .wmv files
- Interviews **Interview 26: June 29, 2010**
- Interviews Interview of Kristofer M. Helgen discusses his career as a Curator of Mammals in the Department of Zoology at the NMNH.
- Interviews No transcript of digital video recording, 0.25 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hour
Note:
 - Original Masters: 4 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 4 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 27: July 19, 2011**
- Interviews Interview of Martha Rosen by Inci Bowman discusses her career as Natural History Branch Librarian for Smithsonian Institution Libraries.
[Digital Content: The front window of the Natural History Library in the National Museum of Natural History shows a photo of staff members Richard Greene, library technician, and Courtney Shaw dressed in butler and maid's clothes. The window reads "Service in a Grand Manner." Librarian Martha Rosen captioned the photo, "'Service in a Grand Manner' only at the Natural History Library." A visitor can be seen inside in the library. Curator Ray Gagne can be seen in the background. Photo by Martha Rosen, 2005. \[Image no. SIA2011-2245\]](#)
[Digital Content: The circulation desk at the Natural History Library in the National Museum of Natural History. Natural History Librarian Martha Rosen captioned the photo, "This was when the collection fit on the Circulation](#)

desk." The desk is filled with mechanical bug and animal toys collected by Martha Rosen. Photo by Chip Clark, c. 2000s. [Image no. SIA2011-2244]

- Interviews Draft transcript of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 00:57 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 28: July 28, 2011**
- Interviews Interview of Martha Rosen by Inci Bowman continues her reminiscences of her career as a librarian at the National Museum of Natural History.
- Interviews Draft transcript of digital audio recording, 1.1 hours.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1:08 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 29: September 27, 2011**
- Interviews Interview of Leon Dixon by Mark White covers his childhood in Washington, career in the military, and outside interests.
- Interviews Draft transcript of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1:07 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital audio .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Interviews **Interview 30: September 28, 2011**
- Interviews Interview of Leon Dixon by Mark White covers his childhood in Washington, career in the military, and outside interests.
- Interviews Draft transcript of digital audio recording, 1.0 hour.
- Interviews Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 1.0 hours
Note:
 - Original Masters: 1 digital video file
 - Reference Copies: 1 digital video .wmv file