



# Smithsonian

*Institution Archives*

## Sea-Level Canal Oral History Interviews, 2010-2012

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives  
Washington, D.C.  
Contact us at [osiaref@si.edu](mailto:osiaref@si.edu)

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Historical Note.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	3

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	Sea-Level Canal Oral History Interviews
<b>Date:</b>	2010-2012
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9626
<b>Creator::</b>	
<b>Extent:</b>	0.25 cu. ft. (1 half document box)
<b>Language:</b>	English

---

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9626, Sea-Level Canal Oral History Interviews

### Use Restriction

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

---

## Historical Note

Interviewers discussed STRI staff roles in preparing a report that was not supportive of building a sea-level canal because of potential environmental damage. Interviewees included Ira Rubinoff, director emeritus of STRI; Harilaos A. Lessios, STRI senior staff scientist in evolution, ecology, and marine biology; Stanley Heckadon-Moreno, STRI staff scientist emeritus in anthropology, sociology, and history of natural history; Egbert Giles Leigh, Jr., STRI staff scientist emeritus in evolution and ecology; Mark E. Torchin, STRI staff scientist in marine ecology, disease and parasite ecology; Hector M. Guzman, STRI staff scientist in marine biology; Rachel Collin, STRI staff scientist and director of the Bocas del Toro Research Station studying evolution and marine biology; and a recording of howler monkey sounds on Barro Colorado Island.

---

## 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.

Christine Keiner, Research Associate, Institutional History Division, Smithsonian Institution Archives, and Associate Professor of Science and Technology Studies at Rochester Institute of Technology, conducted oral history interviews in 2010 and 2012 about the Smithsonian's role in evaluating plans for a sea-level canal

in Meso-America in the 1970s, especially the contributions of staff at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) in Panama.

---

## Descriptive Entry

The Sea-Level Canal Interviews consist of nine recording sessions totaling 13:26:01 hours of interview and no transcripts are available.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Canals, Interoceanic
- Environmental responsibility
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Tropical biology

### Types of Materials:

- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Collin, Rachel
- Guzman, Hector M.
- Heckadon Moreno, Stanley
- Keiner, Christine, 1971-, interviewer
- Leigh, Egbert Giles
- Lessios, H. A. (Harilaos A.)
- Rubinoff, Ira
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Bocas del Toro Research Station
- Torchin, Mark E.

### Places:

- Panama Canal (Panama)

---

## Container Listing

Interviews	
Interviews	Interview 1: September 16, 2010
Interviews	Interview of Ira Rubinoff
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:24:34 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .wav file</li><li>• Reference Copy: 1 digital audio .mp3 file.</li></ul>
Interviews	Interview 2: August 3, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Harilaos A. Lessios
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:19:03 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file</li></ul>
Interviews	Interview 3: August 7, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Ira Rubinoff
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:41:49 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Masters: 2 digital audio stereo .mp3 files</li></ul>
Interviews	Interview 4: August 8, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Stanley Heckadon Moreno
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 03:34:51 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file</li></ul>
Interviews	Interview 5: August 10, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Egbert Giles Leigh, Jr.
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:42:58 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file</li></ul>
Interviews	Interview 6: August 14, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Mark E. Torchin
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 00:54:43 hours Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file</li></ul>
Interviews	Recording 7: August 21, 2012

Interviews	Recording of howler monkeys in the morning on Barro Colorado Island
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 00:02:11 hours Notes: • Original Masters: 2 digital audio stereo .mp3 files
Interviews	Interview 8: August 21, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Hector M. Guzman
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:06:05 hours Notes: • Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file
Interviews	Interview 9: August 22, 2012
Interviews	Interview of Rachel Collin
Interviews	Audio Recording of Interview: Total recording time: 01:45:47 hours Notes: • Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .mp3 file