



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Sammy M. Ray Oral History Interview, 2011

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.....	2
Descriptive Entry.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	4

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	Sammy M. Ray Oral History Interview
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 9628
<b>Date:</b>	2011
<b>Extent:</b>	0.25 cu. ft. (1 half document box)
<b>Creator::</b>	Ray, Sammy M. (Sammy Mehedy), 1919-2013 interviewee
<b>Language:</b>	English

---

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9628, Sammy M. Ray Oral History Interview

### Use Restriction

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

---

## Historical Note

Sammy M. Ray (1919-2013), professor of biology at Texas A & M University at Galveston, collected for the Smithsonian while serving in the military in the Pacific during World War II. Ray received the B.A. from Mississippi Delta Junior College. During World War II he served as a U.S. Navy Pharmacists' Mate 1st Class in the Pacific. After the war, he attended Louisiana State University, where he received his M.A. in biology in 1952. He received a Ph.D. in biology in 1954 from Rice University. His postgraduate career began with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a fishery research biologist, and he joined the Texas A & M staff in 1957 at the Research Foundation Laboratory on Grande Isle, Louisiana. He became an associate professor in 1963 in Oceanography and Wildlife and Fisheries Science and was named director of the marine laboratory at Galveston. He reached full professor in 1972 and was named head of the Department of Marine Sciences. He then held positions as dean of Texas A & M's Moody College of Marine Technology and interim president of Texas A & M University at Galveston.

In 2012, Smithsonian Institution Libraries presented an exhibit in the National Museum of Natural History, curated by historian Henson, titled *When Time and Duty Permit: Smithsonian Collectors during World War II* which featured the wartime contributions of Dr. Ray.

## 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.

Sammy Ray was interviewed for the Smithsonian Archives Oral History Collection because of his role as a collector for the Smithsonian Institution during World War II.

---

## Descriptive Entry

The Sammy Ray interview was recorded in 2011 at the Division of Birds, National Museum of Natural History, while Dr. Ray viewed the bird specimens he collected during World War II as well as correspondence and documentation, accompanied by Pamela M. Henson and Courtney G. Bellizzi of the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Claudia Angle and Craig A. Ludwig of NMNH. His wife, Charlotte Ray, son, Charles Ray, and daughter-in-law, Marcella Ray were also present.

This Ray collection is comprised of 1 interview session, totaling approximately 1.25 hours of recordings and a 29 page transcript.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Birds
- Collectors and collecting
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Ornithologists
- Ornithology
- Specimens
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Sound recordings
- Video recordings

Names:

- Angle, Claudia
- Dean, James
- Esposito, Courtney G.

Henson, Pamela M.  
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.)  
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Birds  
Ray, Charles  
Ray, Charlotte  
Ray, Marcella  
Ray, Sammy M. (Sammy Mehedy), 1919-  
Texas A & M University at Galveston  
United States. Navy

Geographic Names:

Pacific Ocean

## Container Listing

### Interviews

Interviews

#### **Interview 1: April 1, 2011**

Interviews

Interview of Ray covers his childhood; education prior to World War II; marriage to Charlotte Ray; influence of naturalists M. Gordon Vaiden, an amateur ornithologist in Rosedale, Mississippi, his mentor in ornithology, George Lowery at Louisiana State University, and M. L. Miles of Pittsburgh; introduction to Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and a noted ornithologist; correspondence with Dr. Wetmore during the war; and reminiscences of where and when he collected each wartime specimen that he donated; his teaching career at Texas A&M; and creation of the *Sea Camp* program, circa 1920s-2011.

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-29 of audio and video recording, 01:16:23 hours.

Interviews

Audio and Video Recordings of Interview: Total recording time: 01:16:23 hours

Note:

- Original Master: 1 digital audio stereo .wav file and 1 digital .mts video file
- Reference Copy: 1 digital audio .mp3 file and 1 digital Windows Media Video file.