



American University Library Special Collections

Finding Aid to the Owen Cylke papers

DATES: circa 1964-2000, undated

EXTENT: 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

COLLECTION CREATOR: Cylke, Owen (1938-)

ACCESS: This collection is open to the public upon request. Audiovisual materials may require additional processing before use. Please contact the archives for additional information.

COPYRIGHT: Please consult the archives for information about duplication or publishing of any materials from this collection.

LANGUAGE: Materials are in English.

PROVENANCE: This collection was donated to the American University Archives & Special Collections by Owen Cylke in February 2023 as part of the USAID Alumni Association (UAA) collections.

PREFERRED CITATION:

[Title or description of the item, date], box and folder information, Owen Cylke Papers, American University Archives and Special Collections, Washington, D.C. [Include URL of finding aid].

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed in August 2023 by Walter Toledo, student assistant. Finding aid created in March 2024 by Laura Bell.

RELATED MATERIALS:

- Related materials at AU Archives & Special Collections include other collections donated by members of the USAID Alumni Association (UAA).
- Additionally, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training provides access to their Oral History Collection with UAA members. [<https://adst.org/oral-history/>]

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Owen Cylke (1938-) earned his bachelor's degree in economics from Yale University in 1960 and his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Yale University in 1963. He joined the Peace Corps as a member of the organization's second group of volunteers that served in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Between 1963 and 1965 he was a member of "The African Lawyers Program," in which he taught land law and agricultural economics at Haile Selassie University. He returned to the United States in 1965 and briefly worked in New York City with American Express Company. In 1966 he joined the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington D.C.

Over the course of his career with USAID between 1966 and 1989, Cylke served in various capital development offices and economic assistance missions located in Washington, D.C., regions of Africa, Afghanistan, Egypt, and India. A significant portion of his career was spent working with development projects for regions of Africa. Cylke's first position was in the Africa Capital Development Office between 1966 and 1968 as a program officer. Between 1969 and 1987, Cylke held roles within the East African Regional Capital Development Office (EARCDO), in the Office of Central West African Affairs working with non-project loans, with the Office of East African Affairs and the Office of Eastern and Southern Africa Affairs within the Bureau for Africa A.I.D., and with the Near East Bureau. Notably between 1977 and 1987 he held several positions as Deputy Director and Director for U.S. Economic Assistance Missions to Afghanistan, Egypt, and India.

In his last position within USAID, Cylke returned to Washington, D.C. where he was the Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Food and Voluntary Assistance Bureau (FVA) between 1987 and 1989. He retired from USAID 1989, and has since held positions as a consultant, policy maker, and researcher of sustainability practices and environmental financial impacts for firms such as the Tata Energy Resources Institute and the World Wildlife Fund.

COLLECTION SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Owen Cylke papers (circa 1964-2000) document Cylke's tenure as a USAID employee between 1977 and 1987 spanning his early position as program officer in Africa to his later roles as Deputy Director and Director for U.S. Economic Assistance Missions to Afghanistan, Egypt, and India. The collection also documents Cylke's later roles as a policy consultant for environmental practices in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Some significant topics represented in the collection include U.S. development policy, foreign assistance, and economic development.

The collection includes textual materials, audiovisual materials, and one book. Documents include USAID strategy plans, on-ground impact reports on possible development venues, policy analysis working plans, mission assessment reports, research reports and publications, development framework plans, and memos and communications relating to USAID's efforts regarding industrialization and modernization missions. Some materials in the collection relate specifically to Cylke's time in USAID working with Southern Africa, Egypt, and India. A portion of the collection includes materials from Cylke's role as Deputy Director of the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership in the 1990s. Also present is a copy of the book, "Asia's Clean Revolution," to which Cylke contributed a preface. Additionally, the audiovisual materials in the

collection contain interviews conducted by Cylke with other USAID directors regarding the early history of the organization.

The collection provides insight into the early years and efforts of USAID in addition to the organization’s policies regarding foreign aid to developing countries in the “Global South” through economic assistance, capital planning missions, resources allocation, human expertise training, and policy influencing.

ARRANGEMENT:

Materials in this collection were organized in two series. Each is organized chronologically.

Series 1: Professional Files, 1977-2000

Series 2: Audiovisual Materials, circa 1964-1971, undated

COLLECTION ORGANIZATION:

Series 1: Professional Files, 1977-2000

Series 1 Scope and Content Note:

The Professional Files series (1977-2000) documents Owen Cylke’s work activities with USAID between 1977 and 1987 in addition to his activities post-retirement in positions such as Deputy Director of the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership between 1995 and 1999. Materials are textual and include reports, work plans and frameworks, strategies and program reviews. Also present is one book which includes a contribution from Cylke. This series is arranged chronologically.

Box	Folder	Folder Title	Dates
1	1	“A Framework for United States Assistance Programs in Southern Africa”	1977 March
1	2	Memos About Mission Implementation Problem in USAID / Egypt	1980 September - December
1	3	Country Development Cooperation Strategy, I, USAID-India	1984 July
1	4	Country Development Cooperation Strategy, II, USAID-India	1984 July
1	5	Middle-Income Strategy Cable	1987 March
1	6	US-AEP Strategic and Action Plans	1995 May
1	7	US-AEP Five Year Review	1997 June
1	8	“Greening of Industry Network – Asia Launch: Speeches and Papers” (event)	1998 July

1	9	US-Asia Environmental Partnership, The Policy Group Workplan	1999 June
1	10	“Asia’s Clean Revolution” (Book)	2000

Series 2: Audiovisual Materials, circa 1964-1971

Series 2 Scope and Content Note:

The Audiovisual Materials series (circa 1964-1971, undated) contains three VHS tapes and four CD-ROMs / DVD-ROMS. The optical disks appear to contain copies of the content on the VHS tapes. These items appear to document interviews between Cylke and senior employees of USAID and their discussions regarding the organization’s early history. Handwriting on some item labels is not legible.

Box	Item	Folder Title	Dates
2	1	Conversations on Development: Priscilla Boughton, Owen Cylke, Pit Warriar [1 VHS Tape]	Undated
2	2	Conversations on Development: Owen Cylke, David Thisrad, Peter Thormann, Part II? [1 VHS Tape]	undated
2	3	Conversation about Development II Part, Dr. John Lewis, Owen Cylke, Peter Thormann [1 VHS Tape]	undated
2	4	“Conv about development / Cylke, Boughton, Warriar” [1 CD/DVD]	Undated
2	5	“Conv about development, M3 / Cylke, Boughton” [1 CD/DVD]	Undated
2	6	“Conv about development / John Lewis II / Cylke, John Lewis” [1 CD/DVD]	1964-1971
2	7	“Conv about development? / Cylke, Thornman, Brut, re STT, ... [illegible]” [1 CD/DVD]	Undated