

Collection #
SC 3640; DVD 2496

**JOHN A. HERBST
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW AND TRANSCRIPT, 2018**

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Processed by

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November, 2020

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 Manuscript Folder; 1 audio DVD

COLLECTION DATES: 13 February 2018

PROVENANCE: John A. Herbst, October, 2020

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2020.0161

NOTES: This forms part of the Indiana Community Builders Oral History Project

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John A. Herbst was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1952, to John Ernest and Helen (Carlone) Herbst. He attended Paterson schools and graduated from Montclair State College in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in history, with a Social Studies certification for K–12. After three years of teaching history at Paterson Catholic Regional High School, Mr. Herbst decided to change professions, accepting a curator position at the Paterson Museum. In 1979, he took the position of director of education at the New Jersey Historical Society before becoming the executive director (and the only paid staff member at the time) of the American Labor Museum in Haledon, New Jersey, in 1983. He completed the museum leadership program at Bank Street College of Education, New York in 1985. From 1986 to 1997, he served as the executive director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh. In 1998, he accepted the president and CEO position at Conner Prairie in central Indiana, where he stayed until 2003, when a dispute over management of the living history museum's trust fund by its trustee, Earlham College, led to the museum's independence soon after. A year later he was named executive director and CEO of the Indiana State Museum, where he stayed until he accepted the position of president and CEO at the Indiana Historical Society in 2006. He remained at IHS until his retirement at the end of 2018. Throughout his career, he has published articles and presented several papers based on his experiences as a museum administrator. Mr. Herbst was previously married to Karen Vallone, with whom he has a son, John Herbst Jr. He currently resides in northern Michigan.

Sources:

Information in collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The following interview is one of a series devoted to collecting life stories from remarkable people whose involvement in Indiana business, politics, religion, education, and philanthropy continues to enhance the Indiana community.

Readers of this oral history interview should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word. Although the transcript has been lightly edited, IHS has diligently sought to preserve its informal, conversational style, as well as the integrity of the interview's content. While some attempt has been taken to explain through footnotes some of the facts given by the interviewee, IHS is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the interview's content or for the views expressed within.

This manuscript was transcribed from a digitally recorded interview conducted on February 13, 2018, in the office of John A. Herbst at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, by Wendy L. Adams, Indiana Historical Society's (IHS) director of oral history. Data Logistics Co. transcribed the interview in March 2018, and Ms. Adams lightly edited it. The interview, which includes the audio recording and the transcript, is housed at the William H. Smith Memorial Library, Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center, Indianapolis, Indiana.

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