



Abrams Planetarium Records UA.3.3.7

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University Archives and Historical Collections

Conrad Hall

943 Conrad Road, Room 101

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Summary Information

Repository:	University Archives and Historical Collections
Creator:	Michigan State University. Abrams Planetarium
Source - dnr:	Combs, William H.
Title:	Abrams Planetarium records
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Historical Note

Since its opening in 1964, Abrams Planetarium has been a marvel of scientific and astronomical innovation. Talbert "Ted" Abrams, a local leader in the field of aerial photography, and his wife Leota donated funds to Michigan State University, "to build a center of space science education," that has since taught thousands of students.

The building, designed by Ralph Calder Associates of Detroit, features a 60 foot copper dome surrounded by a brick building, which houses three sections: an Exhibit Hall, Blacklight Gallery, and Sky Theater. Each part has been renovated since the original construction, to reflect improvements in technology and scientific knowledge. The planetarium features 3,500 stars, 18 colored stars, rainbows, auroras, meteors, sunrises, eclipses, phases of the moon, and can simulate rotations of the earth and moon.

Over the years, Abrams Planetarium has been under the administration of University Services (1963-1967), the Provost (1967-1968), Continuing Education Service (1968-1975), Academic Services (1975-1980), and the College of Natural Science, Department of Physics and Astronomy (1980-present).

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Scope and Contents

The records of the Abrams Planetarium include proposals for its construction and operation, brochures from its dedication ceremony, and correspondence. Show scripts for programs on Stonehenge, UFOs, the moon, and a variety of other topics are included in the collection, along with other educational materials. Additionally, there are weekly schedules and publicity for the planetarium shows. The Slides series contains thousands of 35 mm slides, which were used for the planetariums shows. The collection also features planning materials, lectures, and photographs from the Conference of American Planetarium Educators (CAPE) held at MSU in October 1970. NASA astronaut Alan Bean and Nobel Prize winning chemist Harold Urey were featured speakers at CAPE.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

University Archives and Historical Collections

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Controlled Access Headings

- Astronomy, Ancient
- Astronomy -- Study and teaching
- Indian astronomy -- North America
- Annual reports
- Brochures
- Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)
- Conference papers and proceedings
- Letters (correspondence)
- Minutes (Records)
- Photographs
- Publications
- Slides
- Sound recordings
- Bean, Alan, 1932-2018
- Chamberlain, Von Del
- Urey, Harold Clayton, 1893-1981
- Michigan State University. Abrams Planetarium
- United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Combs, William H.

Collection Inventory

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Proposals for construction and operation of a planetarium on campus, 1960, 1962	box 334	folder 1

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Correspondence of University Services Dean William Combs

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"Adventures along the Spectrum" script, educational materials (see also: Slides), circa 1985	box 5026	folder 1
"All Systems Go" (See also: Slides), circa 1983	box 5030	folder 15
"The Archive Project", undated	box 334	folder 7
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"Astrology and the Zodiac Program Guide", September 10-October 31, 1971	box 5024	folder 13
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"A Comet called Halley" (see also: Slides), 1984	box 5025	folder 9
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"Cratus", 1999	box 5038	folder 19
"Daughter of the Stars" script, slide list, and correspondence, 1994	box 5070	folder 12
"Dawn of Astronomy" (See also: Slides), undated	box 5031	folder 3
"Destination: Mars", 1971	box 334	folder 21
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"Discovering the Moon", 1965	box 334	folder 22
"A Do-it-Yourself Solar System", 1980	box 334	folder 23
"A Do-it-Yourself Solar System" (See also: Slides), 1985	box 5030	folder 4
"Does Anybody Really Know What Time it Is?", 1974	box 334	folder 24
"Does Anybody Really Know what Time it Is?" (See also: Slides), undated	box 5032	folder 1
"Easter and the Calendar", 1967	box 334	folder 25
"Exploring" (See also: Slides), undated	box 5029	folder 15
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"Fire in the Sky", 1970	box 5041	folder 48
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"The Flight of Voyager I", undated	box 5029	folder 9
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David Batch

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