

Guide to the Records of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress, 1949 AC.0172

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Summary Information

Repository	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections
Creator	Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress (1949 : Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
Title	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress records
Date	1949, 1999
Extent	2.5 cubic feet (7 manuscript boxes, 1 half manuscript box)
Location	Materials are stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use.
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The inauguration of James R. Killian as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's tenth president on April 2, 1949, was preceded by the two-day "Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress" on March 31 and April 1. The collection contains thirty-seven 7 1/2 ips 7-inch reel-to-reel audio tapes of the three general assemblies and six panel discussions held during the 1949 midcentury celebrations; tapes of the inauguration ceremonies; 1949 video footage of the convocation; and a microfilm copy of a scrapbook on the convocation. The collection contains materials compiled by John E. Burchard for his book <i>Mid-Century: The Social Implications of Scientific Progress</i>, including texts of the panel presentations. The collection also includes video recordings created in 1999 as part of an exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the convocation.</p>

Citation

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress Records, AC 172, box X. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Historical note

The inauguration of James R. Killian as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's tenth president on April 2, 1949, was preceded by the two-day "Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress" on March 31 and April 1. The idea for the convocation originated in the wish of the MIT Corporation to examine the role MIT was to play in the post-war era, after the Institute had become a leader in government scientific research during World War II. The convocation and inauguration were the occasion of a gathering to listen to Winston Churchill, Harold E. Stassen, and prominent scholars who examined the role of science and technology in addresses that included the following themes: The State of Science; The Twentieth Century; Men against Nature; Men against Men; Science, Materialism and the Human Spirit; The Role of the Individual in a World of Institutions; The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education; The State, Industry, and the University; The Store of the Future; and The Obligations and Ideals of the Institute of Technology.

Large numbers of MIT alumni were invited as guests and since almost 18,000 persons attended, Churchill's speech was given in Boston Garden with television signals sent back to the MIT campus. Convocation program events were held in Rockwell Cage on the MIT campus. Representatives from institutions of higher learning and learned societies took part in the inauguration of President Killian on the third day of the convocation. Verbatim accounts of the convocation discussions were published in *Mid-Century: The Social Implications of Scientific Progress*, edited by John Ely Burchard (Cambridge, 1950).

Scope and Contents of the Collection

The collection is arranged into two series. Series I contains thirty-seven 7 1/2 ips 7-inch reel-to-reel audio tapes of the three general assemblies and six panel discussions held during the 1949 mid-century celebrations. The speakers at the assemblies were Julius A. Stratton, Sir Winston Churchill, and Harold E. Stassen. Panel members of "The Problem of World Production" were Vannevar Bush, Charles P. Kindleberger, W. Rupert Maclaurin, Frank W. Notestein, Fairfield Osborn, Robert P. Russell, and Sir Henry Tizard. Panel members of "Science, Materialism, and the Human Spirit" were Everett M. Baker, Julius S. Bixler, Percy W. Bridgman, Karl W. Deutsch, Jacques Maritain, and Walter T. Stace. Panel members of "Specialization in the 20th Century" were Sidney Hook, Frederic Lilge, Sir Richard Livingstone, Andrey A. Potter, Phillip J. Rubon, Thomas K. Sherwood, and Charles A. Thomas. Panel members of "The Problem of the Underdeveloped Area" were James M. Barker, Richard M. Bissell, Jr., William Malcolm, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Norman J. Padelford, and Nelson A. Rockefeller. Panel members of "The Role of the Individual in a World of Institutions" were Douglass V. Brown, Erwin D. Canham, Carlos Contreras, Ralph E. Flanders, Clinton S. Golden, and Merle A. Tuve. Panel members

of "The State, Industry and the University" were Laird Bell, Lee A. DuBridge, Bryn J. Hovde, Peter H. Odegard, John D. Russell, and Julius A. Stratton.

Also included are tapes of the inauguration of James R. Killian, April 2, 1949, and a microfilm copy of a scrapbook on the MIT Mid-Century Convocation with schedules of events and a map of the MIT campus; photographs; and newspaper clippings containing quotes, speech texts, and photographs.

Boxes 7 and 8 contain the texts of various convocation panel presentations, notes, the General Program bulletin, two issues of *MIT Development Program News* with articles covering the event, and correspondence. These materials were compiled by John E. Burchard for his book *Mid-Century: The Social Implications of Scientific Progress* (Cambridge, 1950). Also included in box 8 are four video recordings, one of which contains 1949 video footage of the convocation.

Series 2 includes the remaining three video recordings in box 8. The videos in Series 2 are retrospective and were created in 1999 as part of a collaborative exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the convocation. The exhibit, titled "On the Edge of the Future: The Mid-Century Convocation at MIT," was put together by the Institute Archives and Special Collections and the MIT Museum and featured historic photographs in addition to the video recordings. Two of the videos show an interview with Tom Toohey, who was president of the Class of 1949 and had the honor of sitting on stage during Winston Churchill's address. The other video is a documentary-style piece featuring Tom Toohey's recollections about Winston Churchill's participation in the convocation, in addition to convocation footage.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections

Revision Description

2013

Access note

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Condition of media needs to be reviewed. There may be restrictions on use.

Intellectual Property Rights

Access to collections in the Institute Archives and Special Collections is not authorization to publish. Separate written application for permission to publish must be made to the Institute Archives. Copyright of some items in this collection may be held by respective creators, not by the creating office.

Related Materials

Related Materials

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Office of the President, records of Karl T. Compton and James R. Killian (AC 4).

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Humanities and Social Science, Office of the Dean, records of John E. Burchard (AC 20).

James R. Killian papers (MC 423).

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress (1949 : Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Personal Name(s)

- Baker, Everett Moore, 1901-1950
- Barker, James M.
- Bell, Laird
- Bissell, Richard M. (Richard Mervin), 1909-
- Bixler, Julius Seelye, 1894-
- Bridgman, P. W. (Percy Williams), 1882-1961
- Brown, Douglass V. (Douglass Vincent), 1904-
- Bush, Vannevar, 1890-1974
- Canham, Edwin D.

- Churchill, Winston, Sir, 1874-1965
- Contreras, Carlos
- DuBridge, Lee A. (Lee Alvin), 1901-
- Flanders, Ralph E. (Ralph Edward), 1880-1970
- Golden, Clinton S. (Clinton Strong), 1888-1961
- Hook, Sidney, 1902-1989
- Hovde, Brynjolf Jakob, 1896-1954
- Killian, James Rhyne, 1904-1988
- Kindleberger, Charles Poor, 1910-2007
- Lilje, Frederic
- Livingstone, Richard Winn, Sir, 1880-1960
- Maclaurin, W. Rupert (William Rupert), 1907-1959
- Malcolm, William
- Maritain, Jacques, 1882-1973
- Mudaliar, Ramaswami, Sir
- Notestein, Frank W. (Frank Wallace), 1902-
- Odegard, Peter H., 1901-1966
- Osborn, Fairfield, 1887-1969
- Padelford, Norman Judson, 1903-
- Potter, A. A. (Andrey Abraham), b. 1882
- Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979
- Rubon, Phillip J.
- Russell, John Dale, 1895-
- Russell, Robert P. (Robert Price)
- Sherwood, Thomas Kilgore, 1903-1976
- Stace, W. T. (Walter Terence), 1886-
- Stassen, Harold Edward, 1907-2001
- Stratton, Julius Adams, 1901-1994
- Thomas, Charles Allen, 1900-1982
- Tizard, Henry Thomas, Sir, 1885-1959
- Toohey, J. Thomas
- Tuve, Merle Antony, 1901-1982

Subject(s)

- Convocations
- Events
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology--History

Bibliography

Mid-Century: The Social Implications of Scientific Progress, edited by John Ely Burchard. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1950.

The Education of a College President: A Memoir, by James R. Killian. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985.

Mid-Century Convocation Records

Collection Inventory

Series 1. Mid-Century Convocation Records 1949 March 31 and April 1-2

	Box	Reel
Mid-Century Convocation scrapbook (microfilm) 1949	8	2
First General Assembly 1949 March 31	1	1-3
Second General Assembly 1949 March 31	1	4-5
Panel, "The Problem of World Production" 1949 April 1	1	6
Panel, "The Problem of World Production" (continued) 1949 April 1	2	7-10
Panel, "Science, Materialism and the Human Spirit" 1949 April 1	2	11-13
Panel, "Science, Materialism and the Human Spirit" (continued) 1949 April 1	3	14
Panel, "The Role of the Individual in a World of Institutions" 1949 April 1	3	15-19
Panel, "Specialization in the 20th Century" 1949 April 1	3	20
Panel, "Specialization in the 20th Century" (continued) 1949 April 1	4	21-24
Panel, "The Problem of the Underdeveloped Area" 1949 April 1	4	25-27
Panel, "The Problem of the Underdeveloped Area" (continued) 1949 April 1	5	28-30
Panel, "The State, Industry, and the University" 1949 April 1	5	31-34
Panel, "The State, Industry, and the University" (continued) 1949 April 1	6	35
Third General Assembly 1949 April 1	6	36-37
Inauguration of James R. Killian 1949 April 2	6	38-41
		Box

Mid-Century Convocation Records

Mid-Century Convocation brochure, first edition; General Program Mid-Century Convocation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1949	7
Convocation invitations, tickets, information for guests 1949	7
John E. Burchard correspondence with Dr. Tate about speakers 1949	7
Brochure, "Biographical Notes on the Speakers" 1949	7
"Men Against Men, the Problem of the Underdeveloped Areas Panel," notes, James M. Barker	7
"Men Against Nature, the Problem of World Production Panel," text and notes, Henry T. Tizard 1949	7
"Men Against Men, the Problem of the Underdeveloped Area Panel," text and notes, Lord Hailey 1949	7
"Men Against Men, the Problem of the Underdeveloped Area Panel," text and notes, Nelson A. Rockefeller 1949	7
"Men Against Men, the Problem of the Underdeveloped Areas Panel," text and notes, Pierre Ryckmans 1949	7
"Science, Materialism, and the Human Spirit Panel," text and notes, Julius A. Bixler 1949	7
"Science, Materialism, and the Human Spirit Panel," text and notes, Percy W. Bridgman 1949	7
"Science, Materialism, and the Human Spirit Panel," text and notes, Walker T. Stace 1949	7
"Science, Materialism, and the Human Spirit Panel," text and notes, Jacques Maritain 1949	7
"The Individual in a World of Institutions Panel," text and notes, Erwin D. Canham 1949	7
"The Individual in a World of Institutions Panel," text and notes, Carlos Contreras 1949	7
"The Individual in a World of Institutions Panel," text and notes, Ralph E. Flanders 1949	7

Mid-Century Convocation Records

“The Individual in a World of Institutions Panel,” text and notes, Clinton S. Golden 1949	7
“The Individual in a World of Institutions Panel,” text and notes, Merle A. Tuve 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Sidney Hook 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Frederic Lilge 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Andrey A. Potter 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Phillip J. Rulon 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Thomas K. Sherwood 1949	7
“The Problem of Specialization in Twentieth Century Education Panel,” text and notes, Charles Allen Thomas 1949	7
“The Relations of the State and of Industry to the University Panel,” text and notes, Laird Bell 1949	7
“The Relations of the State and of Industry to the University Panel,” text and notes, Lee A. DuBridge 1949	7
“The Relations of the State and of Industry to the University Panel,” text and notes, Peter H. Odegard 1949	7
“The Relations of the State and of Industry to the University Panel,” text and notes, John D. Russell 1949	7
"The Relations of the State and of Industry to the University Panel," notes Julius A. Stratton	7

Box

Cassette

1999 Exhibit "On the Edge of the Future: The Mid-Century Convocation at MI..."

"Karl Taylor Compton and Winston Churchill, Mid-Century Convocation on the Social Implications of Scientific Progress" (VHS) 60 minutes 1949 April	8	1
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Series 2. 1999 Exhibit "On the Edge of the Future: The Mid-Century Convocation at MIT" Videocassettes 1999

	Box	Cassette
"Mid-Century Convocation Memories, Tom Toohey," interview with Tom Toohey about his memories of the Mid-Century Convocation (VHS) 28 minutes (tape 1 of 2) 1999 April 15	8	3
"Mid-Century Convocation Memories, Tom Toohey" (VHS) 15 minutes (tape 2 of 2) 1999 April 15	8	4
"Churchill at MIT, the Mid-Century Convocation" documentary interview with Tom Toohey about Churchill's participation in the Mid-Century Convocation. Includes Convocation footage (VHS) 1999 May 11	8	5