

**Guide to the Collection on the Celebration
of the Move of the Massachusetts Institute of
Technology from Boston to Cambridge, 1916
AC.0343**

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Summary Information

Repository	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections
Creator	Maclaurin, Richard C. (Richard Cockburn), 1870-1920
Creator	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Alumni Association
Creator	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dedication Reunion Committee
Creator	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Technology Pageant Committee
Creator	Technology Review (Cambridge, Mass.)
Title	Collection on the Celebration of the Move of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from Boston to Cambridge
Date	1916
Extent	0.6 cubic feet (1 manuscript box, 1 flat box, 14 items in enclosure, 1 oversize enclosure)
Language	English
Abstract	The Dedication Reunion Committee was formed to oversee the celebrations for the dedication of MIT's new Cambridge campus, which took place on June 12, 13, and 14, 1916. The committee was divided into over twenty subcommittees responsible for an elaborate set of festivities. Several subcommittees are represented in the collection, including the Undergraduate Reunion Committee and the Technology Pageant Committee, whose records form a major portion of the collection.

Citation

Collection on the Celebration of the Move of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from Boston to Cambridge, AC 343, box X. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Historical note

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Alumni Council appointed Charles A. Stone, class of 1888, as chairman of the Dedication Reunion Committee to oversee the celebrations for the dedication of MIT's new Cambridge campus, which took place on June 12, 13, and 14, 1916, a move from the original campus in Boston to the new campus in Cambridge.

President Richard C. Maclaurin named Edwin S. Webster, Ralph Adams Cram (faculty, Department of Architecture), C. Howard Walker, William T. Sedgwick, and others to a Technology Pageant Committee in January 1916. The Committee was charged to plan a suitable program for the dedication of the new MIT campus in Cambridge in June 1916. The completed program included a series of "masques" celebrating various subjects related to MIT history; also the construction of the *Bucentaur*, a ceremonial barge constructed to convey the charter (a facsimile) of the Institute from Boston to Cambridge across the Charles River.

The three-day reunion of MIT alumni and alumnae was described by MIT professor Robert E. Rogers as "the coming-of-age of Technology, the moment when the Institute consciously took her place among the great world universities." Almost 4,000 graduates of MIT, approximately half of the entire alumni body, attended the extravagant celebration to open the completely new Cambridge campus, a campus made possible after an anonymous donor gave MIT the money to purchase the land and construct the new buildings.

It was the organized opposition of MIT graduates which thwarted a proposed merger of MIT and Harvard a few years earlier at the turn of the century, so it was appropriate that the 1916 reunion, which also bid farewell to the Boston buildings that had been home to MIT for the previous fifty years, was organized and run by the alumni themselves along with faculty and undergraduates.

The Dedication Reunion Committee was divided into over twenty subcommittees responsible for an elaborate set of festivities. Reunion highlights were a "Farewell to Rogers," referring to the Rogers Building on the Boston campus; an open house and exhibition at the new Cambridge campus; a water fete on the Charles River; graduation day exercises of the class of 1916; and the "Day of the Classes" trip to Nantasket Beach for a parade of reunion classes. On the final day, the new Great Court (now Killian Court) of MIT was the setting for the Pageant and Masque of Power, a spectacle organized by Professor Ralph Cram of the Department of Architecture. This included the arrival of the *Bucentaur*, a ceremonial barge constructed to carry the Institute's seal across the Charles River from Boston to Cambridge. That evening the reunion ended with a banquet at Symphony Hall. Banquet attendees in Boston were connected by telephone with those present in thirty-four cities throughout the United States who were able to listen to the program and participate in the proceedings in a telephone roll call of each alumni club.

The publicity and souvenir subcommittee produced a special booklet that offers a glimpse of the extensive program of activities with intriguing descriptions such as "Flight by Farnum Fish in a Wright Biplane" and "Masque of Power."

Member names and subcommittees of the Dedication Reunion Committee are listed in *Technology Review*, volume 18, pages 585-587.

Scope and Contents of the Collection

This collection contains the administrative records of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Dedication Reunion Committee for the three-day celebration of the move of the campus from Boston to Cambridge in 1916. The Dedication Reunion Committee worked through numerous subcommittees, chaired by graduates of MIT. A number of subcommittees are represented in the collection.

The Technology Pageant Committee records include minutes of committee meetings, budgets, correspondence, memoranda, programs and schedules of events, lists of masque characters, costumes and properties, and masque scenarios.

These folders are a major portion of the records. The Undergraduate Reunion Committee is also well represented by records donated by Thomas D'Arcy Brophy, class of 1916, who was chairman of that subcommittee. The Alumni Association made a scrapbook of the three-day celebration, which is also included.

News clippings in the collection show the public interest and involvement in the Institute celebrations, especially those held outdoors along the Charles River location of the new Cambridge campus.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections Copyright 1979, 2005

Revision Description

2011, 2015

Access note

The collection is open for research.

Intellectual Property Rights

Access to collections in the Institute Archives is not authorization to publish. Separate application for permission to publish must be made to the Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries.

Conditions Governing Use

Several items are fragile and require special handling.

Location of Copies

A use copy of photographic plates in box 4 can be found in the Institute Archives and Special Collections reading room.

Related Materials

Related Materials

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, Records of the Office of the President, collection AC 13, including George Eastman correspondence in box 25; and lists with correspondence about naming buildings in the Great Court in box 12.

Related Materials

To learn more about the reunion, browse through the Souvenir Program, the July 1916 issue of *Technology Review*, or archival records of the Office of the President (AC 13) in the Institute Archives and Special Collections.

A copy of the Souvenir Program is on the web site of the Institute Archives: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/exhibits/pageant/>

Related exhibits:

Orville Wright at the reunion: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/exhibits/tunnel/wright.html>

Reunion telephone banquet at Symphony Hall, Boston: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/exhibits/telephone/>

MIT's two campuses, Boston and Cambridge: <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/exhibits/maps/>.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Bucentaur (Barge)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dedication Reunion Committee

Geographic Name(s)

- Cambridge (Mass.)--History.

Personal Name(s)

- Cram, Ralph Adams, 1862-1942
- Walker, Charles Howard, 1857-1936
- Webster, Edwin S., 1894-1964

Subject(s)

- Class reunions.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology--Alumni and alumnae.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology--History
- Move from Boston to Cambridge
- Pageants--Massachusetts--Cambridge.

Bibliography

Technology Review. July 1916 issue

The Technology Pageant and the Masque of Power, June 13, 1916. Printed for the Technology Reunion Committee.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Dedication Reunion Committee 1916	1	1
Dedication Reunion Committee correspondence 1916	1	2
Day of the Classes at Nantasket Committee Nantasket day program 13 June 1916	1	4
Publicity, Souvenir Program Committee souvenir program	1	3
Banquet Committee banquet program and invitation 14 June 1916	1	5
Technology Pageant Committee budget 1916	1	6
Technology Pageant Committee committee members, participants, invitation lists 1916	1	7
Technology Pageant Committee costumes and properties 1916	1	8
Technology Pageant Committee lighting scheme 1916	1	9
Technology Pageant Committee music 1916	1	10
Technology Pageant Committee program and schedules 1916	1	11

Technology Pageant Committee scenarios for masques 1916	1	12
Technology Pageant Committee memoranda and minutes 1916	1	13
Undergraduate Reunion Committee planning 1916 May and June	1	14
Undergraduate Reunion Committee program	1	15
Undergraduate Reunion Committee pageant information	1	16
News Service releases	1	17-18
News clippings 1916 June	1	19
Class of 1916 graduation exercises program 1916	1	20
Reunion memorabilia of Thomas D'Arcy Brophy 1916	1	21
Blueprints and drawings of the Decorations, Banners, Flags Committee by H. W. Gardner, chair, class of 1894	2	1-14
		Box
Alumni Association Reunion scrapbook		3
	Box	Oversize- folder
Prints of dedication celebration photographs from July 1916 issue of <i>Technology Review</i> 1916	4	