DESIGN LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER COLLECTION
Collection #: MS MSS 23
Location: DESIGN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Papers: c.1930s - 1970s
No. of Items: 4 boxes and 1 oversize item, c. 2.0 linear feet

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

R. Buckminster Fuller was born on July 12, 1895, in Milton, Massachusetts. He attended both Harvard and the United States Naval Academy. As a distinguished engineer, mathematician, inventor, designer, mechanic, writer, and philosopher, he became one of the most controversial personalities of the machine age. His creations included the Dymaxion House (1927), the Dymaxion Steel Igloo (1935), and a three wheeled automobile with rear engine (1940). He designed geodesic structures for the U.S. Armed Forces and Ford Motor Company. In the 1960s he designed the New York World's Fair Pavilion Dome and the U.S. Pavilion for Expo '67 in Montreal, Canada.

Author of numerous books, "Bucky" Fuller lectured at leading schools of architecture and design throughout the country, such as Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Michigan, and University of California. Lecture topics included his revolutionary new ideas regarding lightness and economy in construction and housing as a crucial world engineering problem, among others. His numerous honors included the Award of Merit from the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (1952), the Centennial Award from Michigan State University (1955), the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects (1960), and the Creative Achievement Award from Brandeis University (1964). R. Buckminster Fuller died in Los Angeles, California in 1983.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists mostly of photocopies of materials covering a wide range of Dr. Fuller's work. The collection spans from the 1930s to the 1970s, but the vast majority of material concentrates on the late 1960s, when Dr. Fuller was at the apex of his long and successful career. The four boxes of material are arranged in five series: 1) General Correspondence, 2) Manuscripts, 3) Printed Matter, 4) Lectures, and 5) Miscellany.
SERIES ONE consists of correspondence with colleagues and clients. Correspondents include John Lennon, Yoko Ono, the Minister of Tourism in India, politicians, and his longtime research associate, Constance Abernathy. SERIES TWO is of major importance in that it contains manuscripts of what would eventually be a large body of published books and articles. SERIES THREE is an extensive collection of printed matter accumulated by Constance Abernathy. It includes an original package of material relating to the World Exposition in Montreal in 1967, as well as articles on Dr. Fuller and his work published in a variety of periodicals. Also included in this series are two articles by Dr. Fuller published in Shelter magazine in 1932 which provide a basis for understanding some of his early influences and ideology. SERIES FOUR, Lectures, is perhaps the most important part of this collection in that it provides insight into Fuller's complex and innovative mind. Included in SERIES FIVE, Miscellany, is autobiographical information as well as poetry. Each item in this collection has an identification number which matches it to the master list of collection contents found in Folder 3 of the Miscellany series.

The collection was purchased from book dealer F.A. Bernett of Boston, Massachusetts in December 1997.

DESCRIPTION

BOX ONE

SERIES ONE       GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

    FOLDER 1  General Correspondence, 1967-1970

SERIES TWO       MANUSCRIPTS

    FOLDER 1  "Change in Curriculum Intended to Prepare the Individual to Take the Design Initiative in Economic, Scientific, and Industrial Technology Matters," c. 1966

    FOLDER 2  "How Little I Know," October 1966

    FOLDER 3  "Seventeen Pages for Seventeen Men," c. 1967

    FOLDER 4  "The Bear Island Story," June 1967

    FOLDER 5  "Age of the Dome," January/February 1968

    FOLDER 6  "Architecture, the Present Scene," March 12, 1968

FOLDER 9  "Design Philosophy," January 1969
FOLDER 10 "Wealth," January 1969
FOLDER 11 "Chapter 6 Science and Technology," April 1969
FOLDER 12 "Ever Evolving Reality," May 1969
FOLDER 13 "An Introduction to Edward Higbee," October 1969
FOLDER 14 "Charles Fort Introduction," October 1969
FOLDER 15 "Architecture, the Present Scene," n.d.
FOLDER 18 "Southern Illinois University," n.d.
FOLDER 19 "Utopia or Oblivion," n.d.

SERIES THREE   PRINTED MATTER
FOLDER 1 Misc. Printed Matter, 1944-69
FOLDER 2 Misc. Printed Matter (includes biographical info), 1945-70

BOX TWO

SERIES THREE   PRINTED MATTER
FOLDER 4 Printed Matter (Shelter), 1932
FOLDER 5 Printed Matter, 1969 (?)
FOLDER 6 Printed Matter (3 copies of 50 Years of the Design Science Revolution and the World Game), 1969
FOLDER 7 Printed Matter, 1967 Expo (includes photos)
SERIES FOUR LECTURES

FOLDER 1 Lectures (includes "The Changing Role of Man in The Universe" and "Conserving the Assets of Spaceship Earth"), 1970

BOX THREE

SERIES FOUR LECTURES

FOLDER 2 Lectures (includes "The Universal Designer and The Future Environment of Man" and "Higbee"), 1965-67

FOLDER 3 Lectures (includes "An Operating Manual For Spaceship Earth"), 1967

FOLDER 4 Lectures (includes "The City, The Good Life, and Education"), 1967

FOLDER 5 Lectures (includes "Nehru Memorial Lecture"), 1969

FOLDER 6 Lectures, 1965

BOX FOUR

SERIES FOUR LECTURES

FOLDER 7 Lectures (includes "World Man" and "Vision 65"), 1965-66

FOLDER 8 Lectures (includes "Systems"), 1967-68

SERIES FIVE MISCELLANY

FOLDER 1 Biographical Material & Poetry, 1966-69

FOLDER 2 Misc. Geodesic Domes, etc. (includes photos), 1920s-69

FOLDER 3 Misc. (includes shipping list of collection contents), 1956-1960s

ENVELOPE 1 (OVERSIZE)

"R. Buckminster Fuller Thinks Out Loud" Society of Typographic Arts, 1967 (33 LP record album)

Finding aid by Brent C. Harris, February 3, 1998

Updated by Harold Housley, November 3, 2015