

Hansen Planetarium Historical Records

Finding Aids

Compiled by K. Krattley, Project Archivist

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Introduction

The Hansen Planetarium Historical Records Collection covers the years 1955 to 2001, with the bulk of the material from 1965 to the middle 1990s. This collection contains approximately 95 cubic feet, including 24 cubic feet of boxes of director's correspondence and miscellaneous public relations materials previously accessioned at the Records Center, but not included in the processing project. In addition, other administrative records of the Hansen Planetarium can be found at the Records Center.

The records contained in the Hansen Planetarium Historical Records Collection were originally stored at the Hansen Planetarium. The records were gathered and sent by courier from the Hansen Planetarium to the processing center by Planetarium staff, starting in January 2002. All records were transferred to the processing center by 12/23/03, with the bulk of the records arriving in 2002 and early 2003. The processing center was located at the Salt Lake County Records Center. The records that arrived at the Records Center were surveyed, appraised, and processed by K. Krattley, who was hired as the project archivist. The project archivist worked from May 2003 to December 2004, under the direction of the Salt Lake County Records Manager, Terry Ellis.

The records are open for research under the conditions of the Salt Lake County Archives access policy. Some records are protected by copyright. For guidance regarding obtaining copies of these records, see the Record Use Agreement.

History of the Hansen Planetarium

The building that the Hansen Planetarium eventually came to occupy was constructed in 1905 as the Salt Lake City Library, on land donated by John Q. Packard. Mr. Packard also paid to construct the building, with the provision that the building always house a library. In 1964, Gail Plummer, President of the Salt Lake City Library Board, was finally able to push through the construction of a new City Library building, as the library had outgrown its current building. When the City Library moved to its new location on 200 East 500 South, it would leave the historic building vacant. Mr. Plummer had the idea to put a planetarium in the old library building.

Concerned about the fate of the old library building, Mrs. George T. Hansen called Mr. Plummer in March 1964 and asked what his plans were for the building. When Mr. Plummer told her about his idea, Mrs. Hansen called back with a donation of \$400,000 to remodel the building and buy a star projector. The donation was officially accepted by the Salt Lake City Library Board on March 31, 1964.

The Planetarium opened on November 26, 1965, as the "Mr. and Mrs. George T. Hansen Planetarium, Space Science Library and Museum."

The Salt Lake City Commission made the library board responsible for the Planetarium and authorized periodic increases in the mill levy in part to help the Library Board maintain the Planetarium. In 1978, the Planetarium became a division of Salt Lake County.

Two other groups involved in governing or fund-raising for the Planetarium include the Hansen Planetarium Advisory Board and the Hansen Planetarium Foundation. The Hansen Planetarium Advisory Board, created in May 1978 by Salt Lake County Ordinance Number 626, was a governing board of the Planetarium. It was a Board of Directors consisting of (7) members. The Hansen Planetarium Foundation, which existed from 1979 – 1984, was a not-for-profit corporation to raise funds for the Planetarium.

In 1997, under an Interlocal Agency agreement between Salt Lake County and the University of Utah, the Planetarium joined with the Utah Museum of Natural History. The Planetarium and the Museum consolidated some of their management responsibilities, and integrated some of their functions. The Planetarium later separated from the University of Utah (approximately 2000/2001).

The first director of the Hansen Planetarium, Mark Littmann, was hired in 1965. He maintained the position of Director (except for a 6 month leave of absence in 1968, during which Jon Sticklin was Acting Director) until his resignation in 1983. The Planetarium was guided by interim directors until the hiring of Von Del Chamberlain, the second Director. Sarah George was Director of the Utah Museum of Natural History and the Planetarium's third Director. Seth Jarvis is the fourth Director.

The historic building that housed the Hansen Planetarium was placed on the Utah State Register of Historic Buildings in 1972, and on the National Register of Historic Buildings in 1979. The building always remained City property, but was leased by the Planetarium for an annual rent of one dollar. In 1978, the requirement that the building always house a library (which John Q. Packard placed upon the building) was removed.

In 2004, the Hansen Planetarium moved to a new building on 110 South 400 West, and entered a new era as the Clark Planetarium.

Scope and Contents of the Records

The Hansen Planetarium Historical Records Collection contains multiple formats, including textual files (correspondence, brochures, booklets), video and audiocassette tapes, photographs, slides, negatives, transparencies, posters, postcards, and calendars.

There are some gaps in the records, including limited documentation of the Publications Program. In addition, some records were not found for the period of

the Planetarium's partnership with the University of Utah/Utah Museum of Natural History.

Some notable persons' correspondence/autographs are represented in this collection. Specifically, correspondence between the Planetarium and Arthur C. Clarke, documentation of the Planetarium's collaboration with Professor Stephen Hawking on the "Fate of the Universe" star show and several lectures delivered by the Professor, a photograph autographed by Wernher von Braun, and a certificate of appreciation from the National Commission on Space presented to the Planetarium with autographs of Neil Armstrong and Chuck Yeager.

Because original order and original series were respected during the processing of this collection, some related records are found in multiple series. The finding aid for each series describes any related records.

The records in this collection are arranged in subgroups, the subgroup representing the program within the Planetarium that created the records. In several cases ("History" and "Star Shows" subgroups) the project archivist created the subgroup to assist with maintaining a coherent arrangement of the collection. Within the subgroups, records are arranged in series by type of record or subject, usually in some order of priority.

An individual finding aid was created for each series. Researchers can refer to these finding aids for detailed information regarding the description and arrangement of the records.

Subgroups and Series

The Hansen Planetarium Historical Records were arranged into subgroups by the project archivist during the processing of the collection. The series represent the groupings of files created by the Planetarium staff, unless noted otherwise. The subgroups are:

- I. Administration
- II. History
- III. Education
- IV. Public Relations
- V. Publications
- VI. Star Shows

- I. Administration, 1964 – 2000

- 1. Hansen Planetarium Advisory Board Minutes, 1983 – 2000
- 2. Hansen Planetarium Planning Minutes (Audiocassettes)
- 3. Utah Science Center Task Force Minutes
- 4. Future Planning
- 5. Hansen Planetarium Foundation
- 6. Resolutions, Proclamations, Recognitions
- 7. General Administration, 1965 – 2000 (Bulk: 1981 – 1997)
- 8. Mark Littmann Employment Files
- 9. Director Mark Littmann's Files, 1977 – 1983
- 10. Director's Correspondence, Mark Littmann, 1965 – 1987
- 11. Director's Correspondence, Von Del Chamberlain, 1980 – 1993

- II. History, 1905 – 2000

- 1. Miscellaneous History Files
- 2. Gail Plummer Files
- 3. Scrapbooks
- 4. Newspaper and Magazine Clipping Collection
- 5. Photograph Collection

III. Education, 1964 – 1998

1. Exhibits
2. Exhibit Development
3. Lectures, Special Events, Projects
4. School Programs

IV. Public Relations

1. Promotional Material
2. Public Relations & Development Material
3. Administration & Events Records
4. Exhibit Materials

V. Publications

1. Administration
2. Promotional Material
3. Postcards
4. Slides
5. Transparencies
6. Calendars
7. Posters

VI. Star Shows

1. Administration
2. Show Scripts
3. Artwork