Guide to the Darwin Centennial Celebration Records 1959

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Descriptive Summary

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Abstract The Darwin Centennial Celebration, held at the University of Chicago, Nov. 24-28, 1959, commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of The Origin of the Species. The celebration featured panel discussions, a musical about Darwin’s life and work, a conference for high school biology teachers, and the Institute on Science and Technology which examined the relation of evolution to theology. Sol Tax served as chairman of the Centennial Committee. Contains correspondence, invitations, biographical material on celebration participants, publicity, press releases, clippings, photographs, and sound recordings of panel discussions and Centennial proceedings.

Acknowledgments

Information on Use

Access No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Darwin Centennial Celebration. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note

The Darwin Centennial Celebration, commemorating the publication by Charles Darwin of the Origin of the Species, was held at the University of Chicago from November 24 through November 28, 1959. The Celebration began with a Darwin Day program on November 24, the date of the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of The Origin of the Species, and featured a lecture by Sir Charles Darwin, grandson of Charles Darwin. On November 26 a special Convocation of the University was held in honor of the Celebration. The principal speaker at the convocation was Sir Julian Huxley. In his address, "The Evolutionary Vision," he
proposed that religion, being subject to the laws of evolution, was fast becoming obsolete and would eventually evolve itself out of existence. The evening of the Convocation a performance was given of "Time will Tell," a musical about Darwin’s life and work.

The heart of the celebration was a series of five panel discussions, involving about fifty well-known scholars from around the world. These panel discussions covered various facets of evolutionary theory and the influence of evolution on the modern world. Panel I was concerned with the origin of life; Panel II took up the evolution of life; Panel III inquired into the role of man as an organism; Panel IV considered the evolution of the mind; and Panel V discussed social and cultural evolution. The scholars participating in the panel discussions produced papers several months in advance of the conference that were read and criticized by the other scholars taking part in the Celebration. These papers formed the basis for the five panel discussions. The discussions were spontaneous, however, with no papers read.

Also included in the Celebration were a National Conference for High School Biology Teachers, an Institute for High School Teachers of Biology, which examined the problems of teaching evolutionary theory in our public schools, and an Institute on Science and Theology, which examined the relation of science, and more specifically evolution, to theology.

The papers written by the participants previous to the panel discussions were compiled in a three volume set Evolution after Darwin, edited by Sol Tax and Charles Callendar, which was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1960. In addition to Evolution after Darwin, products of the Centennial Celebration included a film, "The University of Chicago Darwin Centennial Celebration," produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, a segment of a television show, "At Random," in which Sir Julian Huxley, Sir Charles Darwin, Adlai Stevenson, and Harlow Shapley participated, and various interviews with the participants, especially with Sir Julian Huxley, whose views resulted in much public controversy, and consequently much publicity for the conference.

The Celebration was the idea of Sol Tax, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, who served as the chairman of the Centennial Committee. The University of Chicago, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research joined in sponsoring the Centennial Celebration.

Scope Note
The collection contains correspondence, invitations, biographical material on celebration participants, publicity, press releases, clippings, photographs, and sound recordings of panel discussions and Centennial proceedings.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:
http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Subject Headings
• Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882.
• Darwin Centennial Celebration (1959 : University of Chicago)
• Evolution.
• Evolution -- Religious aspects.
• Evolution (Biology)
• Photographs.

INVENTORY

Box 1
Folder 1
Prospectus
Box 1
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Preparations (non-academic) for the conference
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Preparations (non-academic) for the conference
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Progress reports; work in progress
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Folder 14
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Folder 15
"Time Will Tell"

Box 1
Folder 16
"Time Will Tell"

Box 2
Folder 1
"Time Will Tell"

Box 2
Folder 2
"Time Will Tell"

Box 2
Folder 3
Anthropology Department Seminar concerning evolution

Box 2
Folder 4
Official Centennial forms

Box 2
Folder 5
General correspondence (A-G)

Box 2
Folder 6
General correspondence (H-Z)

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Folder 7
Correspondence with the University Administration

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Folder 8
Correspondence concerning the Convocation

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Folder 9
Correspondence concerning the Convocation

Box 2
Folder 10
Invitations to the Convocation, replies to the invitations

Box 2
Folder 11
Invitations to the Convocation, replies to the invitations

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Folder 10
Panel I

Box 6
Folder 11
Panel II

Box 6
Folder 12
Panel III

Box 6
Folder 13
Panel IV

Box 6
Folder 14
Panel V

Box 6
Folder 15
Invitations to participate, declined

Box 6
Folder 16
Mailings to participants

Box 6
Folder 17
Lists of participants

Box 7
Folder 1
Programs, printed materials used at the conference

Box 7
Folder 2
Using Modern Knowledge to Teach Evolution in High School

Box 7
Folder 3
Proceedings- The University of Chicago Darwin Centennial Celebration

Box 7
Folder 4
Proceedings- The University of Chicago Darwin Centennial Celebration

Box 8
Folder 1
Publicity correspondence

Box 8
Folder 2
Publicity correspondence

Box 8
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Press releases

Box 8
Folder 4
Television, radio publicity

Box 8
Folder 5
Press releases, the Office of Public Relations

Box 8
Folder 6
Press releases, the Office of Public Relations

Box 8
Folder 7
Press releases, the Office of Public Relations

Box 8
Folder 8
Documentation, film and recording

Box 8
Folder 9
Clippings

Box 8
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Clippings

Box 8
Folder 11
Clippings

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Clippings

Box 8
Folder 13
Photographs (portraits for press use, pictures taken at the Centennial)
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Folder 1
  General comments, thank-you letters
Box 9
Folder 2
  Correspondence from fundamentalists, crackpots, fanatics, etc
Box 9
Folder 3
  Correspondence from fundamentalists, crackpots, fanatics, etc
Box 9
Folder 4
  US Information Service
Box 9
Folder 5
  The Encyclopedia Britannica film on the Centennial- "The University of Chicago Darwin Centennial Celebration"
Box 9
Folder 6
  "At Random" (television show)
Box 9
Folder 7
  Materials concerning Evolution after Darwin
Box 9
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  Materials concerning Evolution after Darwin
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  Materials concerning Evolution after Darwin
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Folder 11
  Reviews of Evolution after Darwin
Box 10
Folder 11
  Tapes of Centennial proceedings
Box 11
  Tape 1 Introduction to Centennial, Lawrence Kimpton, Chancellor of the University
Box 11
  Tapes 2-3 Sir Charles Darwin’s address
Box 11
  Tapes 4-5 LSB Leakey’s address
Box 11
  Tapes 6-8 Proceedings of the Institute on Science and Theology
Box 11
  Tape 9 Unidentified reel