
Finding Aid for the N.J. "Bud" Goldstone Collection on Simon Rodia's Towers, 1959-2002

Processed by Laurel McPhee, with assistance from Robert Whalley as part of the CFPRT project, 2005; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé and edited by Laurel McPhee and Amy Shung-Gee Wong.

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Descriptive Summary

Title: N.J. "Bud" Goldstone Collection on Simon Rodia's Towers

Date (inclusive): 1959-2002

Collection number: 1317

Creator: Goldstone, N. J.

Extent: 4 boxes (2 linear ft.)

Abstract: N.J. "Bud" Goldstone was a professional engineer and member of the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, Inc. In 1959, he designed and executed an engineering test that proved the Towers' structural safety. The bulk of the collection consists of Goldstone's detailed photographs and negatives of the Towers, documenting a restoration project completed between 1994 and 2002. The collection also includes the original 1959 structural integrity report and test plan, a set of microfiche from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and additional photographic materials.

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

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Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Purchase from N.J. "Bud" Goldstone, 2003.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], N.J. "Bud" Goldstone Collection on Simon Rodia's Towers (Collection 1317). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Biography

Simon Rodia's Towers were constructed between 1921 and 1955 in the Watts area of Los Angeles. Built single-handedly by Rodia, an Italian immigrant, the Towers consist of an elaborate walled enclosure containing seventeen sculptures of thin steel members covered with mortar. The sculptures' surfaces are decorated with a mosaic of tiles, glass shards and objects. Rodia deeded the property to a neighbor in 1955 when he left Los Angeles to live in the Northern California town of Martinez. After 1955, the towers were neglected and fell into disrepair. The City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety determined the Towers were a public safety hazard in 1957 and ordered their demolition. The Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, Inc. (CSRTW) was immediately formed in an attempt to save the Towers. After a demolition hearing, the City agreed to a lateral stress test, spearheaded by aerospace engineer N.J. "Bud" Goldstone, at the Committee's expense. On October 10, 1959, Goldstone executed a successful proof-load test, demonstrating the Towers' structural stability. Goldstone continued to serve as a member and an officer of CSRTW from 1960 to 1970, and worked to advance the issue of preserving and restoring the Towers through the 1990s. In 1975, the Committee, which had preserved the Towers independently for 16 years, gave the Towers and Art Center to the City of Los Angeles for operation and maintenance. In 1978, the Towers were deeded to the State of California. The State undertook an extensive restoration project, but in 1985, responsibility for the Towers was again assumed by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. Repair to damage caused in the 1994 Northridge earthquake was commenced in 1995 and completed in 2001. The Towers are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and are the location of cultural programs.

Scope and Content

The bulk of the collection consists of N.J. "Bud" Goldstone's detailed photographs and negatives of the Towers, documenting a restoration project completed between 1994 and 2002. The collection also includes the original 1959 structural integrity report and test plan; a set of microfiche from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, documenting their survey of the Towers before restoration; and a set of transparencies by Los Angeles photographer Mitzi Trumbo.

Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in the following series:

1. City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department microfiche, ca. 1995-2001.
2. Photographs by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone, ca. 1994-2002.

3. Miscellaneous, 1959-2000.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Goldstone, N.J.--Archives.

Aerospace engineers--California--Los Angeles--Archival resources.

Simon Rodia's Towers (Los Angeles, Calif.)--Archival resources.

Simon Rodia's Towers (Los Angeles, Calif.)--Photographs.

Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts.

Steel sculpture--California--Los Angeles--Archival resources.

Watts (Los Angeles, Calif.)--Buildings, structures, etc.

Architecture--Conservation and restoration--Archival resources.

Rodia, Simon, 1879-1965.

Related Material

[Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts Records](#) (Collection 1388). Available at Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

Items Removed from the Collection

A bibliography of printed works on Simon Rodia's Towers compiled by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone was removed from the collection, and added to the collection file. Available upon request at the Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

Series I: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Dept. microfiche, ca. 1988-2001.

Physical Description: 0.5 box.

Scope and Content Note

Microfiche transparencies documenting the restoration of Simon Rodia's Towers.

Box 1, Folder 1

Assorted views and details. no date.

Scope and Content Note

Microfiche: East Tower; Floor 0-1 to 0-13, and A Tower; Gazebo levels A, B, and C- with house and chimney; North Wall interior, BBQ, oven and canopy; South Wall interior levels A-C, with ship of Marco Polo and B Tower; South Wall outside levels A-C, and B Tower.

Box 1, Folder 2

Repairs. no date.

Scope and Content Note

Microfiche: Center Tower 01-82 repair, 83-137 repair, and 138-155 repair; East Tower 1 05-28 repair.

Box 1, Folder 3

Three tall towers. no date.

Scope and Content Note

Microfiche of the three tall towers: Levels A-X.

Series II: Photographs by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone, ca. 1994-2002.

Physical Description: 2.5 boxes.

Scope and Content Note

Photographs and negatives documenting Simon Rodia's Towers and the restoration project following the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. The photographs are arranged according to Goldstone's original index to the collection, which abscribed a unique number to each set of photographs.

Box 1, Folder 10

Index number 7. Spires and supports details. 1999 May.

Scope and Content Note

Set of 4x6 color photographs.

Box 1, Folder 11	Index number 8. Details. 1999 May. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 1, Folder 12	Index number 9. Details. 1999 September. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 1, Folder 13	Index number 10. Details. 2000 February. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with index print.
Box 1, Folder 14	Index number 11. Details. 2000 February. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with index print.
Box 1, Folder 15	Index number 12. Work on Watts Towers and Levis advertisement (view from 10 Santa Monica freeway). 1999 July. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs,with negatives.
Box 1, Folder 16	Index number 13. Wall detail. 1999 September. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 1, Folder 4	Goldstone Collection Index. no date. Scope and Content Note Doners Index Number Guide
Box 1, Folder 5	Index Number 1. Rainstorm effects on the South and North walls. 1997 November-December. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 1, Folder 6	Index Number 2. Watts Towers Amphitheater opening ceremonies. 1999 February-March. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 1, Folder 7	Index number 3. Overhead view, and details. 1999 May. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs. Three rolls of negatives.
Box 1, Folder 8	Index number 4. Supports details. 1995 December-1996 January. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 1, Folder 9	Index numbers 5-6. Supports details, wall, and plaque. 1998 October-November. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 2, Folder 1	Index number 14. Wall and tower details. 2001 October. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.

- Box 2, Folder 10 **Index number 23. Details and view from scaffold. 1997 January.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 11 **Index number 24. Details. 1996 December.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 12 **Index number 25. Details. 1996 December.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 13 **Index number 26. House reconstruction. 1994 November.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 14 **Index number 27. Repairs and details. 1995 August.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 15 **Index number 28. Details of tall towers. 1997 March.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 16 **Index number 29. Details. 1997 February.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 17 **Index number 30. Details. 1999 September.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 18 **Index number 31. Wall excavation. 1999 August.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 19 **Index number 32. Details and view from street. 2000 October.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 2 **Index number 15. Details. 1996 September.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 20 **Index number 33. East tower details. 1995 October-November.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 21 **Index number 34. Tower restorers. 1995 August.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.

- Box 2, Folder 22 **Index number 35. Top of East tower. 1995 July.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 23 **Index number 36. Wall details. 1994 August, 1995 June.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 24 **Index number 37. North wall boot ornament and South wall heart ornament. 1997 October.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 25 **Index number 38. Chimney and gazebo details. 1997 April.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 26 **Index number 39. Miscellaneous. 2000 February.**
Scope and Content Note
Negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 27 **Index number 40. Miscellaneous. no date.**
Scope and Content Note
Negatives.
- Box 2, Folder 28 **Index number 41. Hector Mines earthquake damage. 1999 October.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 3 **Index number 16. Details. 1996 January-February.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 4 **Index number 17. Details. 1995 August.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 5 **Index number 18. Tall tower, wall and ornament details. 1995 September.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 6 **Index number 19. Wall details. 1995 June.**
Scope and Content Note
Two 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 7 **Index number 20. Structural X-rays. 1995 October.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 2, Folder 8 **Index number 21. Signs and amphiteater details. 2002 March.**
Scope and Content Note
Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
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Box 2, Folder 9	Index number 22. North wall and East tower. 1994 October. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 1	Index number 42 and 43. Details. 1998 February. Scope and Content Note Negatives.
Box 3, Folder 10	Index number 53. Details. 1999 March. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 3, Folder 11	Index number 54. Details. 1999 March-April. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 3, Folder 12	Index number 55. Hector Mine earthquake damage. 1999 September-October. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs.
Box 3, Folder 13	Index number 56. Wall details; remains of Rodia's 1928 Hudson automobile. 1998 August. Scope and Content Note Excavation during construction of the Watts Towers amphitheater. Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 14	Index number 57. North Wall restoration. 1998 April. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 15	Index number 58. Wall and handprint. 1998 July-August. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 16	Index number 59. Wall, details, Coke bottles. 1998 April-May. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 17	Index number 60. Details. 1998 October. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 18	Index number 61. South wall; remains of 1928 Hudson automobile. 1998 September-October. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 19	Index number 62. Details. 1998 March. Scope and Content Note Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
Box 3, Folder 2	Index number 44. Gazebo. 1998 March. Scope and Content Note Negatives.

- Box 3, Folder 20 **Index number 63. Details. 1997 May-June.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 3, Folder 21 **Index number 64. Wall details. 1997 December.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 3, Folder 22 **Index number 65. Views of towers. 1998 December.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 3, Folder 23 **Index number 66. Tower details. 1999 November.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with index print.
- Box 3, Folder 3 **Index number 46. Tower joints and snow on Mount Baldy. 1999 January.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 3, Folder 4 **Index number 47. Miscellaneous. no date.**
Box 3, Folder 5 **Index number 48. Pipe joint with nails. 1998 June-July.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 3, Folder 6 **Index number 49. Pipe joint with nails. 1998 June-July.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 3, Folder 7 **Index number 50. Oven sculpture. 1998 March.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives.
- Box 3, Folder 8 **Index number 51. Details. 1999 November.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs, with negatives. With index print.
- Box 3, Folder 9 **Index number 52. Details. 1999 March.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Set of 4x6 color photographs.
- Box 4, Folder 1 **Unidentified negatives. no date.**
 Scope and Content Note
 6 unmarked rolls of negative film. Images are possibly duplicates of indexed images.

Series III: Miscellaneous, 1959-2000.

Physical Description: 1 box.

Scope and Content Note

Miscellaneous photographs, slides, printed materials, and technical documents relating to Simon Rodia's Towers. Includes the original 1959 structural integrity report and test plan, and a set of slide transparencies by Los Angeles photographer Mitzi Trumbo.

Box 4, Folder 10	B Tower conservation report. 1993. Scope and Content Note Photographs mounted on paper.
Box 4, Folder 11	Rodia House conservation report. 1993 October. Scope and Content Note One-page report and photo copies; four 4x5 transparencies of house chimney.
Box 4, Folder 12	Report by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone. "Historic photographs report". 1993 November. Scope and Content Note Four-page report discussing availability of historic photos of the Watts Towers site.
Box 4, Folder 13	Garden spire photographs. 1992 February. Scope and Content Note Color photographs of the Watts Towers' garden spire
Box 4, Folder 14	Miscellaneous photographs. ca. 1965-2000. Scope and Content Note Various color and b/w prints and negatives of the Watts Towers and related images, including four men at a Public Works hearing.
Box 4, Folder 15	Miscellaneous photographs--Slides. 1978-1992. Scope and Content Note 460 mounted 35mm color transparencies. Many of the photos are by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone (and include duplicates of images of in Series 2).
Box 4, Folder 16	Schematic and diagrams. 1987. Scope and Content Note Plan of the Watts Towers and diagram of patio cracks after the October 1987 earthquake.
Box 4, Folder 17	Mitzi Trumbo slides of Watts Towers. no date. Scope and Content Note 121 mounted 35mm color transparencies of various views of the Watts Towers.
Box 4, Folder 2	Planter box photographs. no date. Scope and Content Note Two 4x6 color photographs of a planter box built by S. Rodia.
Box 4, Folder 3	Mosaic photographs. 1995-1999. Scope and Content Note Color photographs of Watts Towers mosaic details, including negatives, and a letter to Bud Goldstone from Heather Smith, editor, Lark Books. 10/1999
Box 4, Folder 4	The Towers stills. no date. Scope and Content Note Three stills from "The Towers," a documentary film (1953). One color photograph of gas-fitters pliers used by S. Rodia.
Box 4, Folder 5	Report by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone. "Calculations of structural integrity of Simon Rodia's towers". 1959. Scope and Content Note Report and calculations on the structural integrity and safety of the Watts Towers by N.J. "Bud" Goldstone, Senior Structural Test Engineer.

- Box 4, Folder 6 **Structural test plan. 1963.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Document describing a plan for testing structural integrity of the Watts Towers; copy of article from *Experimental Mechanics* (January, 1963) describing the test.
- Box 4, Folder 7 **Structural test photographs. 1959.**
 Scope and Content Note
 B/W prints and negatives.
- Box 4, Folder 8 **Arloa Poquin photographs of Watts Towers. 1978 May.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Two b/w contact sheets with negatives. Photography by Arloa Poquin.
- Box 4, Folder 9 **North Wall conservation report. 1992-1994.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Partial copy of conservation report with photographs documenting earthquake damage to the Watts Towers' North Wall.