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## **Guide to the Emory L. Ellis Papers, 1925-1993**

Processed by Charlotte E. Erwin; machine-readable finding aid created by Brooke Dykman Dockter

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Date Completed:

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Brooke Dykman Dockter

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Emory L. Ellis Papers,

**Date (inclusive):** 1925-1993

**Creator:** Ellis, Emory L.

**Extent:** Linear feet: 1

**Repository:** California Institute of Technology. Archives.

Pasadena, California 91125

**Language:** English.

### Access

Collection is open for research.

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### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item, Box and file number], Emory L. Ellis Papers, Archives, California Institute of Technology.

### Biographical Sketch

Emory L. Ellis took the entrance exam to Caltech in 1924 and entered as a freshman in 1925. Born in Grayville, Illinois on October 29, 1906, he was living in San Diego at the time of his application to Caltech.

At Caltech Ellis became a chemistry major and received his B.S. in 1930. He was involved in a variety of undergraduate activities, including the Chem Club, Pharos Fraternity, and was the sophomore editor of the *California Tech*. He continued his studies at Caltech, receiving his M.S. in 1932 and his Ph.D. in 1934 in biochemistry.

Except for a brief stint working for the Food and Drug Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture from 1934 to 1935, Ellis remained at Caltech doing postdoctoral research until World War II. Working under a grant established by Mrs.

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Seeley W. Mudd for basic cancer research, he eventually chose viruses as a means to study carcinogenesis, specifically those viruses that attacked bacteria known as bacteriophage. Sometime in 1938, Ellis was joined by Max Delbrück, who had been seeking an organism for the study of the structure and function of the gene. After a year of collaboration, Ellis and Delbrück published their one groundbreaking paper, "The Growth of Bacteriophage" (*J. of Gen. Physiol.* 22 (1939)). Subsequently, Ellis was forced to leave his collaboration with Delbrück, due to the requirements of his fellowship.

After some work on a vitamin project in 1941, Ellis was recruited for the Caltech rocket project, sponsored by the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD), in which he played a key role. After 1945, he remained with the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS) at China Lake, holding progressively more responsible positions. After a period working in industry in 1954 through 1957, he joined the Institute for Defense Analysis in Washington, where he was first project leader and later senior liaison representative in London for the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group of the Defense Department.

In 1963, Ellis was invited back to Caltech by Lee DuBridge to become the Executive Director of the Office of Industrial Associates, a position he held for two years. He completed his professional career as a consultant to the China Lake Naval Weapons Center (formerly NOTS), retiring in 1969.

### **Scope of the Collection**

The Ellis Papers were donated by Dr. Ellis in 1994. They comprise two boxes of correspondence, manuscripts and technical notes on both bacteriophage and the Caltech vitamin plan, plus biographical material. They cover the time period of 1925 through 1993.

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## **SECTION I: CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Correspondence**

Box 1, Folder 1.1      **1930s**  
Folder 1.2            **1940s**  
Folder 1.3            **1950s-60s, undated**

## **SECTION II: CALTECH MATERIAL**

Box 1, Folder 1.4      **The Rate of Decomposition of Ethyl Hypochlorite (Master's Thesis) 1932**  
Folder 1.5            **The Free Energy of the Sulfhydryl-Disulfide Oxidation-Reduction System and its Physiological Significance (Ph.D. Thesis) 1934**  
**Bacteriophage research**  
Folder 1.6            **Notes and data**  
Folder 1.7            **Summaries and reports**  
Folder 1.8            **Delbrück Festschrift, "Phage and the Origins of Molecular Biology" 1966**  
Folder 1.9            **Caltech Vitamin Plan 1940**  
**Mouse tumor slides**

## **SECTION III: NAVAL ORDNANCE TEST STATION (NOTS)**

Box 2, Folder 2.1      **Speech at dedication of Lauritsen Laboratory, China Lake, 18 June 1976**  
Folder 2.2            **Dedication of Lauritsen Laboratory, China Lake, 18 June 1976 Newsclips, photo, program**  
Folder 2.3            **History of Naval Ordnance Test Station,**

## **SECTION IV: BIOGRAPHICAL**

Box 2, Folder 2.4      **Biographical miscellany**  
Folder 2.5            **Reprints, List of Publications 1933-1941**  
Folder 2.6            **Newsclips 1925-1970**  
Folder 2.7            **Photos**  
Folder 2.8            **SUPPLEMENT 1995**  
**Tapes, transcript and diskette of interview with Emory Ellis by William Summers, March 5, 1992.**