David Rittenhouse Inglis Papers, 1929-1980 (*Bulk:* 1965-1980)

12 boxes 5.75 linear ft.

Collection number: FS 033

Abstract:

David R. Inglis enjoyed a distinguished career in nuclear physics that ranged from theoretical work on the structure of the nucleus in the 1930s to the development of the atomic bomb in the 1940s and work on renewable energy in the 1960s and 1970s. A Professor of Physics at UMass from 1969-1975, Inglis was a founding member of the Federation of American Scientists and from the mid-1940s on, he dedicated himself to informing public policy on the dangers of nuclear technologies.

The Inglis Papers offer a perspective on the life and career of a theoretical physicist who grew from an early involvement in the Manhattan Project to becoming a committed critic of nuclear weaponry and nuclear power. Although the collection is relatively sparse in unpublished scientific work, it includes valuable correspondence relating to Inglis's efforts with the Federation of American Scientists and other organizations to influence public policy on issues relating to disarmament and nuclear power.

Special Collections and University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Biographical Note

Inglis at Argonne National Laboratory, ca.1953

A namesake and descendent of David Rittenhouse, one of early America's preeminent physical scientists, David R. Inglis enjoyed a career in nuclear physics that ranged from theoretical work on the structure of the nucleus in the 1930s to the development of the atomic bomb in the 1940s to the protracted struggle against nuclear weaponry and nuclear power. Born in Detroit, Michigan, on October 10, 1905, Inglis graduated from Amherst College (1928) before receiving his doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1931 for a dissertation on energy relations in complex spectra.

Like many ambitious young scientists of his generation, Inglis traveled abroad to strengthen his credentials. Well versed in current issues in the field from having attended the series of symposia on theoretical physics held in Ann Arbor, Inglis spent a year in Heidelberg, immersing himself in the rapidly developing field of quantum mechanics. When he returned to the States in 1933, however, he found himself in a state of academic vagabondage, passing through a succession of faculty positions at Ohio State (where he met and married Dorothy Kerr), Pittsburgh, and Princeton before landing at Johns Hopkins in 1938. There, he devoted himself to developing a program in experimental nuclear physics while conducting significant research on the nature of spin-orbit coupling in ^{7}Li. When later confirmed, this work is believed, as Hanna et al. (1997) report, to represent the first assignment of an excited nuclear level based on a microscopic quantum mechanical theory.

Inglis' tenure at Hopkins was interrupted by wartime service with the Ballistics Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Grounds (1943) and the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos Laboratory, N.M. (1943-1946). He returned to civilian life in 1946 and to his work on atomic structure and angular distribution studies, but the war was clearly a watershed in the development of his commitment to what he called public affairs. Having gained an insider's perspective on nuclear annihilation, he gradually turned against nuclear power. Joining the Argonne National Laboratory as a senior scientist in 1949, Inglis spent two decades in the development of peaceful uses for nuclear power, but more notably, he emerged as a prominent figure in the nuclear disarmament movement. As a founding member of the Federation of American Scientists and participant in the Pugwash conferences during the 1950s and 1960s, Inglis was an prominent voice for rationality in discussions of nuclear weaponry. As early as 1951, he called for the creation of a federal agency for arms control and disarmament (not established for another nine years later), and both in congress and before the public, he lobbied steadily for nuclear disarmament and for a partial nuclear test ban (approved in 1963), and against nuclear proliferation and the development of antiballistic missiles. A series of articles he published in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Saturday Review*, and the *New Republic* were influential in raising public awareness of the dire implications of radioactive fallout, the hydrogen bomb, and the complexities of international arms control.

After retiring from Argonne and joining the faculty at UMass Amherst in 1969, Inglis' activism expanded to include a concern with American energy policy. Calling attention to the critical problems of global dependence on fossil fuels and the dubious safety of nuclear reactors and long-term waste storage, Inglis became an advocate for alternative energy, particularly wind power, writing several books and chapters on nuclear and alternative energy. He felt a strong responsibility, as he wrote, for establishing a dialogue between scientists and the public as the best means of preserving democracy.

A highly prolific writer, Inglis contributed dozens of articles both in theoretical physics and public affairs over the course of his career, and was recipient of a number of honors and awards, including honorary degrees from Amherst College (1963) and the University of Illinois (1973), and the Leo Szilard Award for Physics in the Public Interest (1974) for his work on the social and strategic implications of nuclear energy. Inglis retired from UMass in 1975 and over the last several years of his life, continued occasionally to contribute to public debates. Inglis and his wife Betty (Dorothy) moved into the Applewood retirement community in September 1991. Betty died in 1993, followed by David died on December 3, 1995.

Scope and contents of the collection

The papers of David R. Inglis offer a perspective on the life and career of a theoretical physicist who grew from an early involvement in the Manhattan Project to becoming a committed critic of nuclear weaponry and nuclear power. Although the collection is relatively sparse in unpublished scientific work, it includes outstanding correspondence relating to Inglis's work with the Federation of American Scientists and other organizations, and his efforts to influence public policy on issues relating to nuclear power. The collection also includes the majority of Inglis' scientific publications and his published contributions on public affairs, as well as selected subject files, course notes, and lab notes. The later materials in the collection reflect Inglis's late-career work in alternative energy.

Betty and David Inglis, June 1992

Among the collection's highlights are copies of notes distributed at Los Alamos University in 1945-1946, including Teller and Konopinski on quantum mechanics and Schiff and Baroody on statistical mechanics; Inglis' notes from his work at Argonne National Laboratories; and a six part oral history conducted with Inglis in 1989, looking back at his career.

Information on Use

Terms of Access and Use

Restrictions on access:

The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation

Please use the following format when citing materials from this collection:

David Rittenhouse Inglis Papers (FS 033). Special Collections and University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

History of the Collection

Acquired from David R. Inglis, 1984, 1994.

Additional Information

Language

English.

Related Materials

The UMass Amherst Libraries own the following of Inglis' books:

- Inglis, David R., *Dynamic Principles of Mechanics* (Philadelphia:, 1949). **Call no.**: UB150315 (Depository)
- Inglis, David R., *Nuclear Energy: Its Physics and Social Challenges* (Reading, Mass.:, 1973). **Call no.**: QC792.I55 (ISEL)
- Inglis, David R., *To End the Arms Race: Seeking a Safer*

Contact Information

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Future (Ann Arbor:, 1986). **Call no.**: JX1974.7.I54 1986 (Du Bois)

- Inglis, David R., *Wind Power and Other Energy Options* (Ann Arbor:, 1978). **Call no.**: TK1541.I54 (ISEL)

Bibliography

Hanna, Stanley S., Dieter Kurath, and Gerald A. Peterson, "David Rittenhouse Inglis," *Physics Today* 50, 6 (1997): 109-110.

Series Descriptions

Series 1. Correspondence

1945-2003 | 1.25 linear ft.

Although the series contains few letters on purely scientific matters, Inglis's correspondence is a rich and valuable resource for study of the social and political turmoil afflicting the American nuclear physics community from the end of the Second World War to the early 1960s. With a distinctly liberal conscience, Inglis was deeply immersed in professional organizations responding to controversies over loyalty issues and security clearances during the early years of the Cold War, and beginning in the mid-1950s, he took a leading and -- at least for some co-workers at Argonne National Laboratory -- controversial role as an advocate for non-proliferation, disarmament, and a nuclear test ban.

Of particular note, Inglis's correspondence contains an interesting and important series of letters documenting Inglis's work with the Federation of American Scientists from 1946-1960, and less extensive correspondence relating to his activities with the World Association of World Federalists and the World Federation of Scientific Workers. Founded in 1945 by scientists from the Manhattan Project, the FAS regularly addressed key issues in American public policy, especially with regard to the potential dangers of nuclear weaponry and other scientific and technical advances. The series also contains interesting correspondence relating to Inglis's lobbying efforts for nuclear disarmament, including letters to and from public officials from President Dwight Eisenhower to Senators Everett Dirksen, Hubert Humphrey, and Paul Douglas, and the editorial boards of several newspapers and magazines.

Also worthy of note are letters and documents pertaining to the establishment of the Midwest Nuclear Theorists's Group and the Nuclear Theorists's Group at Argonne National Laboratory, and some correspondence relating to the possibility of siting nuclear reactors underground, including a fine letter from Edward Teller.

Series 2. Subject files

1929-1976 | 2.25 linear ft.

Materials associated with Inglis, primarily during his . Inglis' increasing interest in disarmament is reflected in SIPRI.

The series also includes correspondence from Inglis' publishers regarding his book *Nuclear Energy Its Physics and Social Challenge* (including some interesting reviewers' comments on the manuscript), from the editors at *Encyclopedia Britannica* regarding his entry on the atomic nucleus, and drafts and notes on several of his articles on disarmament and related topics. The materials relating to Inglis' involvement in two UMass Amherst initiatives -- the Global Survival Program (1972-1973) and the review committee for the Institute for Man and His Environment (1971-1974) -- offer some insight into faculty efforts during the early 1970s.

Finally, the series includes a useful series of spiral-bound research notes kept by Inglis during his period at the Argonne National Laboratory (1955-1968) and as a visiting scientist at CERN (1957-1959).

Series 3. Course Notes

1945-1965 | 0.5 linear ft.

Mimeograph and other copies of notes distributed for courses attended by Inglis on topics in nuclear physics. Of particular interest are notes from two courses taken at "Los Alamos University," formed by Hans Bethe and Enrico Fermi during the last days of the Manhattan Project: Teller and Konopinski's "Introduction to Quantum mechanics" and Schiff and Baroody's "Statistical Mechanics."

Series 4. Publications by Inglis (Reprints)

1929-1980 | 0.5 linear ft.

Reprints of technical and "public affairs" articles by Inglis from throughout his career. The articles, mostly reprints and offprints, are filed alphabetically by title.

Series 5. Audiovisual

1989 | 1.0 linear ft.

In 1989, Inglis agreed to take part in an extensive series of oral history interviews, discussing his perspective on the history of nuclear physics since the 1920s, with particular focus on the development of nuclear weaponry and nuclear power. The videotapes have been transcribed (see Ser. 1: Oral History) and edited.

The series also includes a dvd of Inglis lecturing to Allan R. Hoffman's undergraduate, non-major course at UMass on energy and arms control, where he discusses the Manhattan Project and the atomic bombing of Japan.

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Inglis, David R., Lecture to Allan Hoffman's class on the Manhattan Project and the atomic bombing of Japan	1972 May 1	DVD	Box 12:4

Scope and content:

Allan R. Hoffman, a young physics professor at UMass Amherst, invited Inglis to lecture to his undergraduate, non-major course on energy and arms control.

Provenance:

Gift of Allan R. Hoffman, 2007.

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- Argonne National Laboratories.
- Condon, Edward Uhler, 1902-1974.
- Federation of American Scientists.
- Los Alamos National Laboratory.
- Nuclear disarmament.
- Nuclear energy.
- Nuclear warfare.
- Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967.
- Physics--Massachusetts
- United States--History--1945-1953.
- United States--History--1953-1961.
- University of Massachusetts Amherst. Department of Physics.
- University of Massachusetts Amherst. Institute for Man and His Environment.
- World Association of World Federalists.
- World Federation of Scientific Workers.

Contributors

- Bohr, Aage.
- Inglis, David Rittenhouse, 1905- .
- Teller, Edward, 1908-2003.
- Wigner, Eugene Paul, 1902-1995.

Genre terms

- Lab notes.
- Oral histories.
- Photographs.