
Guide to the George Wells Beadle Papers, 1908-1984

Processed by Carol Finerman

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Archives

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Date Completed:

September 1992

Encoded by:

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Descriptive Summary

Title: George Wells Beadle Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1908-1984

Creator: Beadle, George Wells, 1903-1989

Extent: 15 linear feet

Repository: California Institute of Technology. Archives.

Pasadena, California 91125

Language: English.

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item, Box and file number], George Wells Beadle Papers, Archives, California Institute of Technology.

History of the Collection

The Papers of George Wells Beadle (b.1903-d.1989)

Papers, 1903-1983, of George Wells Beadle, Chairman of the Biology Division at the California Institute of Technology (1946-1961); President of the University of Chicago (1961-1968); recipient of numerous prestigious awards including the Nobel Prize in Physiology for his studies in genetics (1958); member of councils and boards both in government and the private sector; awarded honorary degrees from many universities, including Yale (1947), Oxford (1959), Brown (1964) and The University of Michigan (1969); includes letters; manuscripts; reports; biographical and genealogical material; photographs; awards; miscellaneous.

The George Beadle collection is a rich source of information about Beadle the scientist and Beadle the man; it also presents an important historical perspective on the scientific and political community during the 1940's and 1950's. However, as broad as this collection is, it should be used in conjunction with the Biology Division collection (1946-1957).

In 1972, when the Biology Division collection was first processed, it was discovered the collection also included personal papers of Beadle written prior to 1946. The archivist made the decision to separate only those Beadle papers from the general collection, to place them at the beginning of the collection, and to call them "The Papers of George Beadle." Beadle material added in 1982 and 1985 formed two more record groups.

This major reorganization undertaken in 1992 pulls the Beadle papers together and makes them more accessible by dividing them into ten sections rather than in the alphabetic arrangement imposed by the Biology Division. With this 1992 reorganization, the Beadle collection now consists of the documents called "The Papers of George Beadle" in the 1972 collection, the two record groups added in 1982 and 1985, and appropriate documents transferred from the Biology Division collection. Documents were considered appropriate for transfer if they dealt solely with the work of Beadle, rather than with the work of the Biology Division, but it was often difficult to make this distinction in the case of correspondence, especially if the writer was a member of the Biology Division. This correspondence was often a mixture of personal notes, research comments and Biology Division discussions. Eventually, the archivist selected correspondence with only certain colleagues, among them Alfred H. Sturtevant, Linus Pauling, Max Delbrück and Norman Horowitz.

The sections containing correspondence with professional societies, government organizations and publishers reveal how Beadle was sought after for his scientific skills, his managerial experience, and his ability to express himself clearly both in lectures and writing. His name and reputation added prestige to the boards on which he served.

Sections dealing with manuscripts contain, in some cases, not only the final version but also the first draft replete with drawings, and progressive rewrites.

Although the Research Section contains correspondence and documents dealing with Beadle's work, the correspondence yields pertinent information on the works of colleagues as well. Beadle often sent pages of a manuscript still in progress to colleagues and many sought his comments on their work.

The Reprints Section tells the story of the results of his years of research.

The Biographical Section contains personal items, recollections, and transcripts of interviews with Beadle; these present a comprehensive picture of the man and the scientist.

The Additional Material with information of his major awards, including the Nobel Prize, adds a crowning touch to the collection.

Papers generated by Beadle while President of the University of Chicago are in the archives of the University of Chicago.

Biography

George Wells Beadle 1903-1989

George Wells Beadle was born on the family farm in Wahoo, Nebraska on October 22, 1903 to Chauncey (Colman) Elmer Beadle and Hattie Albro. "Beets" (the childhood nickname was to remain throughout his life) was 4 1/2 when his mother died and he, his older brother and younger sister Ruth were raised by his father and a series of housekeepers. The early years on the farm gave Beadle a life-long love of gardening. In 1908, the forty acre farm was designated as a model by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Educated in local schools, Beadle was prepared to become a farmer after he graduated from high school, especially since his older brother had been killed in an accident a few years earlier. However, Bess McDonald, a science teacher, convinced Beadle to go on to the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture. Since tuition was free and he could work to earn expenses, Beadle overcame his father's objections and enrolled, fully intending to return to the farm after receiving his degree.

College opened up a whole new world of possibilities; after dabbling in several fields he was drawn to the study of genetics. A summer job for Professor Franklin Keim, classifying genetic traits in a wheat hybrid population, increased that interest. Other assignments followed, all focusing on genetic studies.

After graduating in 1926, Beadle spent a year studying with Keim to earn a Master of Science degree in 1927 and then went on to Cornell University for his doctorate. There, he became part of Rollins A. Emerson's team that included Barbara McClintock, George Sprague and Marcus Rhoades. During his stay at Cornell, Beadle published 14 papers dealing with genetic investigations on maize, including ten on the mechanics of synapsis and cytokinesis in "sticky chromosome" mutants. He also married Marion Hill, a graduate student in botany; their son was born in 1931.

He received his Ph.D. in 1931 and was awarded a National Research Council Fellowship. This allowed him to join the Biology Division of the California Institute of Technology. At first, Beadle continued at Caltech with his work on maize in conjunction with R. A. Emerson's son, Sterling. Soon, however, Beadle was caught up in the excitement of the *Drosophila* research being conducted by T. H. Morgan and his associates. Following in the tradition of collaborative research which had begun in Morgan's "Fly Room" at Columbia, Beadle joined in on two important studies with Emerson and A. H. Sturtevant on the problem of genetic recombination in fruit flies.

In January of 1934 Boris Ephrussi came to Caltech from Paris, where Beadle and Ephrussi not only became research colleagues but close friends. After Ephrussi's return to France in the fall of 1934, Beadle arranged to spend the first half of 1935 in Paris to work with Ephrussi on

an experimental method for doing developmental genetics in *Drosophila*. They conducted a number of experiments, picking out disks of embryological optical cells and injecting them into larvae, to find out whether chemicals in the body of the larva would affect the color of a transplanted eye. Using this tissue transplanting technique, Ephrussi and Beadle demonstrated that the *Drosophila* eye-color mutations vermilion and cinnabar are inactivations of genes controlling sequential steps in the synthesis of the brown component of eye pigment. Through these experiments, Beadle became convinced that the study of genetics needed to be approached through chemistry. The search for a method to accomplish this would occupy the next phase of Beadle's scientific career, and bring him his lasting scientific reputation.

Beadle left Caltech in 1937 to accept a position at Stanford. Due to his new found interest in connecting genetic and biochemical work, Beadle began working with a chemist, Edward L. Tatum. While listening to Tatum lecture one day in 1940, Beadle realized that their work might be made easier if they could identify mutant organisms to test their gene theory. For this they used *Neurospora*, a red bread mold. Through a series of experiments, Beadle and Tatum proved that genes transmit hereditary characteristics by controlling specific chemical reactions. This "one gene-one enzyme" hypothesis was Beadle's major contribution to fundamental genetics. For this work, Beadle shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1958 with Ed Tatum and Joshua Lederberg, Tatum's student.

In 1946 Beadle was invited back to Caltech to become head of the Division of Biology. He added a number of outstanding people, including Max Delbrück, Ray Owen, Robert Sinsheimer, Roger Sperry and Norman Horowitz to the talented group already in place. However, the demands of Beadle's administrative duties took their toll on his scientific work. Beadle proved to be an able administrator, admired by staff and students, and he continued to write and speak at major institutions. His research, however, was put on hold for the next 23 years. His personal life changed as well when he married Muriel Barnett, a writer, in 1953 after divorcing his first wife.

Beadle left Caltech in 1961 to become President of the University of Chicago; he held that post until 1968 when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 65. He remained in Chicago taking up again the study of the origin of Maize, the problem he had considered when a doctoral candidate at Cornell.

Several years later, Beadle moved back to California and continued his research, lectures and writing until the onset of Alzheimer's Disease brought a halt to his activities. Beadle died on June 9, 1989.

George Beadle can best be summed up in the words he wrote to describe R. A. Emerson in 1974. Beadle called Emerson cordial and enthusiastic, with a zest for life, a hard worker who could discuss his scientific work informally and share his knowledge. Beadle likewise was generous in sharing his knowledge with students and colleagues. Norman Horowitz best recalled Beadle the administrator, who presided over the Biology Division with enthusiasm, intelligence and good humor. He was a popular and much admired boss and colleague.

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Folder 25.5	The American Naturalist 1947, 1950
Folder 25.6	Amerika 1950-1951
Folder 25.7	Annual Reviews 1946-1948, 1952
Folder 25.8	Archives of Biochemistry and Biophysics 1954
Folder 25.9	Avery, George S. (Survey of Biological Progress) 1946-1949
Folder 25.10	Botanical Review 1949-1950
Folder 25.11	Committee on Inter-American Scientific Publication 1946
Folder 25.12	Cook, Robert 1949-1950
Folder 25.13	Darlington, Cyril (Heredity) 1946
Folder 25.14	De Bruyn, Peter (University of Chicago) 1952
	Freeman, W. H. and Company
	1946-1947
Folder 25.15	1948
Folder 25.16	1949-June 1950
Folder 25.17	1950
Folder 25.18	Fruton, Joseph (Treatise on General Biochemistry) 1947, 1950-1951
Folder 25.19	Genetics (The Publication) 1947-1953
Box 26, Folder 26.1	Heredity (Dr. Carl Hubbs) 1947
Folder 26.2	Harris, Boyd (MacMillan Company) 1949
Folder 26.3	MacMillan Company 1949-1950, 1954
Folder 26.4	Quarrie Corporation 1946
Folder 26.5	Saunders, W. B. Company 1945-1948, 1950-1951
Folder 26.6	Scientific American 1947-1951; 1953-1954
Folder 26.7	The Scientific Monthly 1946-1948
Folder 26.8	Spoehr, Herman Augustus (Biography) 1954-1955
Folder 26.9	Springer-Verlag 1949
Folder 26.10	"Viruses" 1950
Folder 26.11	Wiley, John and Sons 1947, 1950, 1953-1954
Folder 26.12	Yale University Press 1947, 1949
Folder 26.13	Reviews n.d.; 1943-1945
Folder 26.14	

Section V: Manuscripts--Correspondence and Manuscripts

Box 27	Stanford 1940's
Folder 27.1	"The Need for Integration in the Biological Sciences"
	"The Integration of Genetics with the other Biological Sciences"
Folder 27.2	"The Genetic Control of Biochemical Reactions"
	"The Gene and Biochemistry"
	"Genes and the Chemistry of the Organism"
	"What is Biochemical Genetics?"
	"Genes, Vitamins and Nutrition"
	"Genes and Biochemistry"
Folder 27.3	"Some Recent Advances in Chemical Genetics", August 27, 1946
Folder 27.4	"Genes and Biological Enigmas" 1947
Folder 27.5	"Neurospora V. The Life Cycle of Neurospora Crassa" c. 1946
Folder 27.6	"Nucleic Acid" 1947
Folder 27.7	"Nutritional Aspects of the Science of Inheritance" c. 1946-1947
Folder 27.8	"Physiological Aspects of Genetics" c. 1946-1947
	Bell Telephone Laboratories
Folder 27.9	1952-[December] 1954
Folder 27.10	December 1954-July 1955
Folder 27.11	August 1955-September 1956
Folder 27.12	September 1956-May 1957
Folder 27.13	Genetics Book and Genetics Book Errata

Folder 27.14 **Neurospora Book**
 Folder 27.15 **Miscellaneous**
 "Rollins Adams Emerson"
 "Heterosis"

Section VI: Speaking Engagements--Correspondence and Manuscripts

Box 28 **1. Arranged by Title**

Folder 28.1 **Chemical Genetics 1951**
 Folder 28.2 **Chico State College 1951-1952**
 Folder 28.3 **Dupont 1950-1954**
 Folder 28.4 **Dyer Lecture 1951**
 Folder 28.5 **Fullerton Junior College 1949**
 Folder 28.6 **Johnson, John (Newport Harbor Union High School) 1948**
 Folder 28.7 **Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1953**
 Folder 28.8 **Mills College 1950-1952**
 Folder 28.9 **National Science Teachers Association 1951, 1954**
 Folder 29.10 **Northwestern University 1947-1948**
 Folder 28.11 **Pacific Dermatologic Association 1951**
 Pasadena Business and Professional Women's Club 1947
 Folder 28.12 **Phi Delta Epsilon Fraternity 1948**
 Folder 28.13 **Princeton University Bicentennial 1946-1947**
 Folder 28.14 **Riverside College 1948**
 Folder 28.15 **Crescitelli, Frederick (University of California) 1947-1949**
 Folder 28.16 **University of Chicago 1949**
 Folder 28.17 **Nieuwland, Julius (University of Notre Dame) 1954**
 Folder 28.18 **State College of Washington 1952**
 Folder 28.19 **Wayne University 1948**
 Folder 28.20 **Yale University 1946-1948**

Box 29 **2. Arranged by Year**

Folder 29.1 **1952-1953**
 Folder 29.2 **1953-1954**
 Folder 29.3 **1954-1955**
 Folder 29.4 **1955**
 Folder 29.5 **1955-1956**
 Folder 29.6 **1955-1956**
 Folder 29.7 **1955-1956**
 Folder 29.8 **1956-1957**

Box 30 **3. Manuscripts only**

Folder 30.1 **AIBS Lecture; Michigan State College, September 6, 1955**
 "What is a Gene?" (abstract)

Folder 30.2 **American Academy of Allergy, February 5, 1957**
 "The Genetic Basis of Biological Specificity"

Folder 30.3 **American Cancer Society, September 12, 1955**
 "Pigment Cells and the Cancer Problem" November 1, 1956
 "Men, Minds and Money for Cancer Research"

Folder 30.4 **American Philosophical Society, Penrose Lecture**
 "The Gene", April 18, 1946

Folder 30.5 **"Chemical Genetics" 1951**
 Folder 30.6 **Talk on the origin of corn (Notes) n.d.**
 Folder 30.7 **Talks about corn 1970's**
 Folder 30.8 **Institute of International Relations, July 2, 1955**
 "Science, Truth and Survival"

Folder 30.9 **Japan Lectures, September 1956**
 "What is a Gene?"
 "Some Recent Advances in Neurospora Genetics"
 "Gene Structure and Gene Function"

Folder 30.10 **Johns Hopkins, June 1956**

	"The Role of the Nucleus in Heredity"
Folder 30.11	National Research Council, 1951
	"Some Recent Advances in Chemical Genetics"
Folder 30.12	Pharmaceutical Association, February 17, 1957
	"Chemical Genetics and Radiation Effects"
Folder 30.13	Salt Lake City Public Lectures, July 1956
	"Man's Place in Nature"
	"The Biology of Man, Past, Present and Future"
Folder 30.14	Sigma Xi Lecture, Stanford, May 24, 1957
	"The Molecular Code We Live By"
Folder 30.15	Sigma Xi Lecture, University of Oregon, May 1956
Folder 30.16	Silliman Lectures, 1946
	"Genes and Biological Enigmas"
Box 31, Folder 31.1	"The Uniqueness of Man", December 27, 1956
Folder 31.2	U.S. Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory, October 14, 1955
	"The Structure and Function of the Gene"
Folder 31.3	University of Wyoming, July 1955
	"Nature of the Gene"
Folder 31.4	YMCA Luncheon Forum, May 8, 1957
	"Radiation Hazards to Our Heredity"
	"The Genetic Effects of High Energy Radiation on Man" (abstract)
	"Genes and the Nature of Living Systems" (abstract)
	"What is a Gene?" (abstract)
	"The Gene" (abstract)
	"Chemical Genetics and Radiation Effects" (abstract)
	Miscellaneous Talks
Folder 31.5	1950's
	"The Genetic Effects of High Energy Radiation on Man" (Medical Research Association)
	"Symposium on Genetic Recombination" (Biology Division of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory)
	"Memorandum on Fallout"
Folder 31.6	1954-1955
	"The Security System and Science"
	"Gene Structure and Gene Action"
	"Biology at Caltech"
Folder 31.7	1954-1955
	"The Geneticist Traces the Possibilities for the Origin of Life"
	"Portrait of a Scientist"
	"Science and Security", February 22, 1955
	"The Fifth Amendment Today"
	"The Biochemistry of Genetics"
	"Science and Security", YMCA, November 3, 1954
	"So This Is Caltech", Parents Day, October 23, 1954
Folder 31.8	1955
	"Long Range Effects of Atomic Radiation", (abstract)
	"The Gene: Carrier of Heredity, Controller of Function and Agent of Evolution"
	Lecture dedicated to the memory of Lewis J. Stadler
	"Genes, Viruses and the Nature of Life"
Folder 31.9	n.d.
	"Recollections of a Biologist"
	"The Role of Foundations in the Development of Modern Biology"
	"How We Inherit"
	TAPE: Audio cassette tape dated 2/28/60 in tape collection.

Section VII: Research--Correspondence and Documents

Box 32, Folder 32.1	Agricultural Research Administration 1942-1943 (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
Folder 32.2	American Type Culture Collection 1946-1953

Folder 32.3	Biological Warfare n.d.
Folder 32.4	Bronk, Detlev 1947, 1954
Folder 32.5	Brucine Papers 1948, 1950
Folder 32.6	Brucine Pedigrees
Folder 32.7	Brucine Tests
Folder 32.8	Carragar 1943
Folder 32.9	C. U. Mailing List/Corn Summary n.d.
Folder 32.10	The Cellular Chemistry of Amino Acids 1946-1947
Folder 32.11	Genetic Charts n.d.
Folder 32.12	Crocker, Bruce 1946-1947
Folder 32.13	Dalton, Clark 1949-1950
Folder 32.14	Dunn, M. S. 1946, 1948, 1952
Folder 32.15	Heterocaryosis n.d.
Folder 32.16	Inositollness 1944
Folder 32.17	Neurospora (Bibliography, Cultures, etc.)
Folder 32.18	Neurospora (Data on Mutants, Source of New Strains) 1943
Folder 32.19	Neurospora (Nomenclature) January-May 1952
Folder 32.20	Neurospora (Nomenclature) September 1952-January 1953
Folder 32.21	Nutrition Foundation 1942-1945
Folder 32.22	Office of Scientific Research & Development (OSRD-X) 1945
Box 33	Penicillin
Folder 33.1	1944, 1947-1948
Folder 33.2	List of Mutants n.d.
Folder 33.3	Cultures 1944
Folder 33.4	Inventory 1944-1946
Folder 33.5	Research Progress Report n.d
Folder 33.6	#169 Recent 1944
Folder 33.7	OSRD #169 1944
Folder 33.8	OSRD 1942
Folder 33.9	OSRD 1944
Folder 33.10	OPRD 1945
Folder 33.11	Radiation 1956
Folder 33.12	Radiation, Letters and Manuscripts
Box 34 , Folder 34.1	Research Corporation 1941-1945
Folder 34.2	Scherbak, H. 1947
Folder 34.3	Segall, Gabriel 1946-1947
Folder 34.4	Sharp & Dohme 1943-1944
Folder 34.5	Sproston, Thomas 1950
Folder 34.6	Tomato Experiment 1945
Folder 34.7	Tomato Genetics Coop. Report 1951-1953
Folder 34.8	U.S. Army Contract c. 1942
Folder 34.9	X-ray Data, Taylor, Thomas, Brown, M.A. Thesis 1938, 1941
Folder 34.10-11	Catalogs, Instruments, etc.

Section VIII: Administration and Teaching

Box 34, Folder 34.12	Stanford: Budget and Appointments 1942-1943
Folder 34.13	Stanford: Applications for Positions 1945
Folder 34.14	Genetic Class/Biology 108
Folder 34.15	Genetic 169 Lecture
Folder 34.16	Biology 107 Exams
Folder 34.17	Advanced Genetics
Folder 34.18	Experiments in Genetics n.d.
Folder 34.19	List of M.A. and Ph.D. theses, 1939-1947

Section IX: Reprints

Box 35, Folder 35.1	Bibliography: Speeches; Articles; Published Works
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Folder 35.2	1930-1939
Folder 35.3	1940-1949
Folder 35.4	1950-1959
Folder 35.5	1960-1969
Folder 35.6	1970-1981
Folder 35.7	Biochemical Aspects of Genetics 1950
Folder 35.8	Chemical Genetics n.d.
Folder 35.9	On A. H. Sturtevant and B. O. Dodge n.d.
Folder 35.10-11	Miscellaneous
Folder 35.12	Reprints Requested 1947-1949
Folder 35.13	Reprints sent 1944-1945

Section X: Biographical--Correspondence and Documents

Box 36,	Miscellaneous
Folder 36.1-2	
Folder 36.3	Letter to Beadle from his mother 1908
Folder 36.4	"The Uncommon Farmer" by Ruth Beadle (G.W.B.'s sister) n.d.
Folder 36.5	University of Nebraska Recollections 1975
Folder 36.6	Letters on Beadle's 80th birthday 1983
Folder 36.7	Articles about Beadle, including autobiographical Genealogy
Folder 36.8	File I
Folder 36.9	File II
Folder 36.10	File III
Folder 36.11	File IV
Folder 36.12	Material on Mountain Climbing 1952-1953
	Scope and Content Note
	(Includes Robert Marshall letter, 1930's; note from Muriel Beadle, film canister, 1988.)
Folder 36.13	Miscellaneous articles
Folder 36.14	Awards and Honors
	R. E. Dyer Lectureship 1951
	American Horticultural Society 1960
	Neurospora Newsletter # 20 1973
	Proctor Prize 1981
Folder 36.15	"Biomechanical Genetics: Some Recollections" n.d.
	"Recollections of a Geneticist", 1981
Folder 36.16	Interviews 1966, 1976, 1978
Folder 36.17	Articles re: Scientific Luminaries 1980-1981
Box 37, Folder 37.1	Photographs
Folder 37.2	Photographs (corn)
Folder 37.3	Neurospora Slides, Drawn and hand painted by Beadle. 1946
Folder 37.4-37.6	Diplomas from the University of Nebraska
	B.S. degree 1926
	M.S. degree 1927
	Sc.D. degree 1944
Folder 37.7	Guest Book 1958
	Additional Material
Box 38	"Maize for Biological Research", William F. Sheridan, editor. Introduction written by Beadle on Rollins Adams Emerson
	Photograph Album: "The Busy Years of George Wells Beadle At The California Institute of Technology, 1931-1961," including picture key prepared by Muriel Beadle
Box Oversize Box	Nobel Prize 1958
	Lasker Award 1950
	Emil Christian Hansen Prize 1953

National Research Fellow of Biological Sciences of the National Research Council