

# **Finding Aid for Director's Office: Electronic Computer Project files DO.ECP**

**Finding aid prepared by Erica Mosner**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center
<b>Title</b>	Director's Office: Electronic Computer Project files
<b>Date</b>	1946-1969
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 linear feet (2 document boxes)
<b>Language</b>	English

### Preferred Citation note

The suggested citation for the material is "[item], Director's Office:Electronic Computer Project files, Box [box number], From the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, USA."

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## Biographical/Historical note

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In 1933, John von Neumann became a Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in the School of Mathematics. By the mid-1940s, Prof. von Neumann began concentrating on computing work and he was trying to raise support and secure space for building an "electronic computing machine." Prof. von Neumann had to obtain permission from IAS to build something on premises because its commitment had been, and still is, firmly planted in the theoretical. Also, monetary support for the Electronic Computer Project (ECP) had to be found. While RCA Corporation was very involved in the beginning stages of the ECP, they did not contribute financially. International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) was involved in other aspects, though like RCA, was not financially supportive. While IAS certainly funded some of the Project with several monetary donations, staff and housing for the Computer, government agencies such as the U.S. Atomic Energy Committee (AEC), United States Office of Naval Research (ONR), and various branches of the United States Army, provided the majority of financial support for the Project.

The Project was undertaken as a part of the School of Mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study. It was begun on the IAS campus in 1945 and in January 1952 culminated with the completion of a machine. The Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC) machine built at the Moore School of Electrical Engineering at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia was a precursor to the Institute Computer, as was the Electronic Discrete Variable Arithmetic Computer (EDVAC). Prof. von Neumann contributed much to the design of EDVAC. Herman H. Goldstine, one of the Engineers on the team that constructed the ENIAC, eventually came to the Institute to help Prof. von Neumann. Some of the principal Engineers on the Project were Julian Bigelow, Gerald Estrin, Willis Ware, James Pomerene, Sung Yuen Wong, Norman Phillips, Ralph Slutz and Hans J. Maehly.

Arthur Burks, Goldstine and von Neumann drafted the first version of "Preliminary Discussion of the Logical Design of an Electronic Computing Instrument" in June 1946 and multiple subsequent reports were written, many of which are represented here in the collection. While the Institute machine was not formally dedicated until 1952, calculations had been taking place on it since the summer of 1951. The computer was fully functional until 1960, though it was primarily used by Princeton University towards the end, and was eventually deposited in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History where it remains today.

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## Scope and Contents note

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Director's Office: Electronic Computer Project files consist of administrative papers on topics including funding, personnel, and a range of subjects.

## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center

### **Conditions Governing Access note**

Director's Office: Electronic Computer Project files are open for research without restriction.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

This collection is distinct from the Electronic Computer Project records, which consist of correspondence, memos, reports, patents, contracts, operational guides, blueprints, punch cards, wiring drawings and diagrams that pertain to the ECP, computer science and some of the engineers on the project. There are logbooks of meteorological studies performed using the Institute Computer and other logbooks that contain memory notes, engineering and general arithmetic logs for the Computer.

Also of note is the ECP (West Building Storage) records. There are also samples of punch key cards in the last couple of boxes of this collection that were not likely in the library.

Finally, folders for scholars associated with the ECP are located in the School of Natural Sciences records.

## Collection Inventory

**Electronic Computer Project 1946-1969 and undated 2.0 document boxes**

### Controlled Access Headings

#### Corporate Name(s)

- United States. Army. Ordnance Dept..
- United States. Office of Naval Research.

#### Personal Name(s)

- Bargmann, Sonja
- Crane, Hewitt D.
- Estrin, Gerald
- Goldstine, Herman Heine, 1913-
- Maehly, Hans J.
- Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 1904-1967
- Panagos, Peter
- Phillips, Norman A.
- Pomerene, James H.
- Tuckerman, Bryant, 1915-2002
- Von Neumann, John, 1903-1957
- Ware, Willis H.
- Wong, Sung Yuen

**Box**

**Folder**

## Electronic Computer Project

Building 1949, 1957	1	1
Index (materials in vault, 1967) 1967, 1969	1	2
Memos from von Neumann to Oppenheimer re:ECP 1948-1953	1	3
Personnel, A-K 1948-1956	1	4
<p>Bruce Gilchrist: photo (signed headshot, 2.75" x 2.25") attached to "Application for a United States Government Smith-Mundt Grant..." 1952</p> <p><b>Controlled Access Headings</b></p> <p><b>Personal Name(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gilchrist, Bruce, 1930-</li> </ul>		
Personnel, L-Z 1947-1969	1	5
<p><b>Controlled Access Headings</b></p> <p><b>Personal Name(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selberg, Hedvig</li> </ul>		
Press releases 1950-1963	1	6

## Electronic Computer Project

Invitation from Princeton University to attend "the dedication of the James Forrestal Research Center," May 17, 1952. With copy of letter from J.R. Oppenheimer to Lewis Strauss, IAS Board of Trustees. 1952		
Termination of projects 1954-1963	1	7
Institute Computer disposition inquiries, transfer to Princeton University, and Tuckerman/Babylonian clay tablets 1956-1966	1	8
Three photographs of clay tablets from the British Museum.		
Short-term personnel 1949-1955	1	9
Contracts-Ballistic Research Laboratories 1954-1955	1	10
Contracts: Nonr-1358(00) (U.S. Office of Naval Research) 1955, 1958, and undated	1	11
Contracts: Nonr-1358(01) (U.S. Office of Naval Research) 1955, 1957, 1958	1	12
Contracts: Nonr-1358(02)/(n-6-ori-139)/(Task Order I and Task Order II) (U.S. Office of Naval Research) 1947-1957	1	13
List of ECP personnel under following titles: Director (this includes both von Neumann and Charney), Meteorologists, Consultants, Coders, and Service meteorologists. P. following t.p. of Progress Report for 1954-1955. 1954-1955		

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Contracts: N-onr-1358(03)-(06)/(N7onr*388 Task Order I; N7onr-38801) (U.S. Office of Naval Research) 1947-1960 and undated	2	1
Contracts: small contracts 1954-1962 and undated	2	2
<b>Controlled Access Headings</b>		
<b>Personal Name(s)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montgomery, Deane, 1909-1992</li> <li>• Morse, Marston, 1892-1977</li> <li>• Selberg, Atle</li> </ul>		
Contracts: Atomic Energy Commission 1948, 1953, and undated	2	3
Contracts: Philadelphia Ordnance District 1949-1959	2	4
Contracts: DA-36-034-ORD-1646 (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1954-1957	2	5
Contracts: Final Report on Contract No. DA-36-034-ORD-1646, Part One (Engineering) (U.S. Army. Ordnance Department) 1956	2	6
Contracts: Final Report on Contract No. DA-36-034-ORD-1646, Part Two (Computer Use) (U.S. Army. Ordnance Department) 1957	2	7
Contracts: DA-36-034-ORD-1330-RD (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1953-1955 and undated	2	8

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Contracts: DA-36-034-ORD-19 (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1950-1953	2	9
Contracts: DA-36-034-ORD-1023 (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1952-1954	2	10
Contracts: DA-36-034-ORD-1023-RD (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1953	2	11
Contracts: W-36-034-ORD-7481 (Philadelphia Ordnance District) 1947-1950	2	12
Contracts: N7onr-379 Task Order I 1947-1948	2	13

**Controlled Access Headings****Personal Name(s)**

- Morse, Marston, 1892-1977

Contracts: N7onr-379 Task Order II (U.S. Office of Naval Research) 1947-1948	2	14
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**Controlled Access Headings****Personal Name(s)**

- Morse, Marston, 1892-1977
- Siegel, Carl Ludwig, 1896-

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- Weyl, Hermann, 1885-1955

Contracts: Office of Ordnance Research, U.S. Army 1956-1958	2	15
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ECP: miscellaneous 1946-1960	2	16
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Minutes of Joint Services Liaison Committee for the IAS Computing Laboratory held 15 July 1955 at Princeton, New Jersey. (Includes cover letter and attachments) 1955

Revised program for A Study Group on the General Circulation of the Atmosphere, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J., Oct. 26-28, 1955. 1955

Clipping with photos (exterior of ECP Building; Pomerene and Fred Smartt with Institute Computer):  
Electronic Brain Can Outsmart Genius, But It Can't Keep Cool. Princeton Packet, Aug. 4, 19???. 19??

Memo re. Agreement Concerning Inventions 1955

Two letters re. Patent Disclosure for Static Magnetic Memories submitted to the Institute by Dr. Ralph Slutz and Richard L. Snyder, Jr. 1953

**Controlled Access Headings****Personal Name(s)**

- Slutz, Ralph Jeffery, 1917-
- Snyder, Richard Lee, Jr., 1911-1996

## Electronic Computer Project

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Long telegram to J.R. Oppenheimer at Los Alamos from Katherine Russell re. ECP funding (by U.S. Army?) 1946