

Ellis, Bill papers

Bill Ellis papers
1970

Title Statement

Ellis, Bill papersGuide to the Bill Ellis papers MSS 16883

Author: Eric Willersdorf, Student Accessioning Archivist Assistant

Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
P.O. Box 400110
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4110
URL: <https://small.library.virginia.edu/>

27 March 2025

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Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16883

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1747

Unit Date

1970

Mixed Materials [X031674512]

BW 59 (box)

Container

001 (folder)

Language

English

source

Ellis, Bill, 1950-

Extent

.03 Cubic Feet 1 letter folder

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was a gift from Bill Ellis to the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, December 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16883, Bill Ellis papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical Description

Bill Ellis was a student at the University of Virginia from 1968 to 1972. Ellis graduated from the College of Arts & Sciences in 1972. He received his master's and Ph.D in English in Folklore from Ohio State University in 1978. He became a Professor of English at Pennsylvania State University. Ellis is renowned for his research on folklore and is particularly noted for applying traditional folklore concepts to internet-based discourse, which has been groundbreaking in the field. Ellis's writing on rumor-panics and folklore is widely published. His areas of expertise include Japanese Popular Culture (Manga/Anime) Nathaniel Hawthorne, Contemporary (or "Urban") Legends, New Religious Movements, Folklore and Internet/Intranet/Web Technology, and Contemporary Folklore. His works have appeared in publications such as *Western Folklore* and the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*. Ellis was presented with the 2023 American Folklore Society Lifetime Achievement Award for his publications and teaching at Pennsylvania State University.

Content Description

This collection contains the papers of Bill Ellis related to the the May Day protests of 1970 at the University of Virginia. Ellis participated in these events as a student, and the collection contains material created and collected during this time. The papers comprise of four computer-generated banners, a bulletin, posters, and a summary report by the Virginia Strike Committee. The report details the events when State and Local Police confronted protesters on the U.Va. campus and Rugby Road, arresting many students for unlawful assembly on May 8 -9, 1970. The computer-generated banners read "It is the hand of Wynd," Rake Wenga Strike," and "I'd Prefer not to." "It is the hand of Wynd" is printed against a repeated pattern of "punt punt punt." Wynd is a reference to the Tolkien "wyrd (meaning "fate" in Anglo-Saxon), "Punt" referred to doing something enjoyable. The banner likely encouraged people to take a break from mid-term exams. The second reads "RAKE WENGA STRIKE" against a repeating background of "raw*ton*this*tæ*" etc. etc. Both of those reflect a concern for administrative actions against profanity as students with signs that included profanity were arrested for public obscenity. The slogan was thus coded and would have been understood as meaning "F--K AGNEW-STRIKE" with the Vice President's name written backward. The final slogan, "I'd Prefer not to," was printed against a repeating background of "Bartleby* died*for*your*sins...strike*strike*strike, " a literary reference to Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener*.

Keywords

Student activism

Vietnam War, 1961-1975 -- Protest movements -- United States

Student life

Ellis, Bill, 1950-