

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

DAVID P. HOLVECK

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Sally Smith Hughes, Lara Marks, Leo Slater, and Ted Everson

at

Radnor, Pennsylvania and Malvern, Pennsylvania

on

2 February 1999 and 14 July and 20 October 2006

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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DAVID P. HOLVECK

1945 Born in Trenton, New Jersey on July 2

Education

1968 B.S., Education, West Chester University

Professional Experience

1971-1974 Abbott Laboratories
Sales Representative, Radio Pharmaceutical Division

1974-1979 Corning Glass Works
Sales Supervisor, Medical Products Division

1979-1983 General Electric Company
Manager of Digital X-Ray Program, Medical Systems Division
1983 Marketing Manager of Vascular/Digital X-Ray Business, Medical Systems Division

1983-1992 Centocor
Executive Vice President and President of Diagnostics Division
1992-1999 President and Chief Executive Officer
1994-1999 Member, Board of Directors

1999-2003 Johnson and Johnson
Company Group Chairman
2003-present President, Johnson and Johnson Development Corporation

Honors

1997 Man of the Year, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, Greater New York Chapter

ABSTRACT

David P. Holveck begins the interview with a discussion about growing up in the Philadelphia area. He reveals that as a young adult he studied to become a physical therapist before spending three years in the Navy. Holveck's first job was at Blood Plasma and Components, selling blood components to local hospitals. Within a year he took a sales position at Abbott Laboratories. In 1975 Holveck left Abbott Laboratories to run Corning Glass Works' immunoassay franchise. He explains the technology behind Corning's immunoassay kits, then transitions into his move to General Electric in 1978, where he was hired to help form their computerized tomography (CT) business. Holveck describes the evolution of X-ray technology, and the major players in the early business. He then shares the origins of Centocor, founded by Ted Allen, Michael Wall, Hilary Koprowski, and Hubert Schoemaker, and his early collaboration with them. He left GE to head Centocor's marketing department, and later ran the diagnostics business. Holveck discusses the aftermath of Centocor's flagship drug, Centoxin, failing to earn FDA approval, and his promotion to CEO of the company in the midst of this crisis. He then describes the development of ReoPro and Remicade, and how their success led to Centocor's acquisition by Johnson and Johnson. Holveck notes his promotion to head of Johnson and Johnson's Development Corporation and his impending retirement. He reflects on the Philadelphia-area biotech industry, and the industry at large. Holveck concludes the interview by talking about his wife and children.

INTERVIEWERS

Sally Smith Hughes graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1963 with a B.A. in zoology. She received her M.A. in anatomy from the University of California, San Francisco in 1966. In 1972, she earned her Ph.D. in the history of science and medicine from the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, University of London. She is presently an Academic Specialist in History of Science in the Regional Oral History Office at The Bancroft Library. She has conducted close to 150 archival quality oral histories for the Program in Bioscience and Biotechnology Studies, which she also directs. She is the author of *The Virus: A History of the Concept* (1977) and "Making Dollars out of DNA: The First Major Patent in Biotechnology and the Commercialization of Molecular Biology, 1974-1980" in *Isis* (2001).

Lara Marks was educated at Sussex University and Oxford University, where she earned a doctorate in the history of medicine. Marks has held full-time research and teaching posts at Queen Mary College, London University; London School of Hygiene; and Tropical Medicine and Imperial College, London. She currently holds a visiting post at Cambridge University, and she is a senior research partner for Silico Research Limited, an independent organization that studies the life sciences industry. Marks's publications include *Sexual Chemistry: An International History of the Contraceptive Pill* (2001) and "Assessing the Risk and Safety of the Pill: Maternal Mortality and the Pill," a chapter in *Risk and Safety in Medical Innovation* (2006).

Leo Slater is currently a DeWitt Stetten, Jr., Memorial Fellow in the History of Biomedical Sciences and Technology at the Office of NIH History, National Institutes of Health. He received his Ph.D. degree in History from Princeton University and has published on the history of organic chemistry and pharmaceutical research. Other interests include the history of infectious disease. Current projects are a book on the history of the U.S. antimalarial research project during World War II and work on the history of malaria research at NIAID and its predecessors.

Ted Everson is the director of clinical communications at Vital Issues in Medicine (VIM), a medical education company. He earned a Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science and technology from the University of Toronto and an M.S. in medical genetics from the University of British Columbia. During his tenure at CHF he founded the biotechnology program, which included focused scholarship on industry development. He is the author of *The Gene: A Historical Perspective* (2007), "Genetic Engineering Methods" in *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Technology* (2004), and "Genetics and Molecular Biology" in *History of the Exact Sciences and Mathematics* (2002).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Childhood and Early Career	1
Growing up in the Philadelphia area. Attending Malvern Preparatory School. Interest in the life sciences. Studying physical therapy at West Chester University. Service during the Vietnam War. Early marriage and first child. First marketing and sales job with Blood Plasma and Components. Transferring to Abbott Laboratories. Radioimmunoassay technologies. Taking over the immunoassay business for Corning Glass Works. Immophase technology. The free T-4 test. Leaving Corning for General Electric's CT business.	
Centocor's Origins	6
Monoclonal antibodies. Introductions to Ted Allen, Michael Wall, Hilary Koprowski, and Hubert Schoemaker. The 17-A antibody. The hepatitis testing kit. The 19-9 antibody. Centocor's early business plan. Working with Centocor while at G.E. Being asked to head Centocor's marketing department. Moving back to Philadelphia from Wisconsin. Early impressions of Centocor. Contrast between Centocor and Hybritech's missions. Running the diagnostics business. Dividing Centocor into a diagnostics and a therapeutic company.	
The Centoxin Era	13
Hiring James Wavle as co-CEO. R&D partnerships. Hiring Liz Tallett to head the pharmaceutical branch of Centocor. Expansion of infrastructure and employees. Company dynamics. Centoxin. Clinical trials. Lawsuit with XOMA. Alternate products (17-1A and ReoPro). Issues with the FDA.	
The Centocor Comeback	22
Taking over as CEO. Centocor's fundraising activities. Partnership with Eli Lilly. ReoPro. 17-1A (Panorex). Remicade. Sale to Johnson and Johnson.	
Johnson and Johnson and The Biotech Industry	40
Running J&J's Development Corporation. Anticipating retirement in 2007. Philadelphia-area biotech development. Geographic assistance in biotech development. Regulatory issues. The Ben Franklin Partnership.	
Personal Life	44
Holveck's wife, Patricia Ann. Daughters Lisa Marie and Jennifer Christine, and their children.	
Index	46

INDEX

1

15-3 (for breast cancer), 10
17-1A (for colorectal cancer), 7, 14, 21, 29,
30, 31, 33
19-9 (for pancreatic cancer), 7

7

72-4 (for colorectal cancer), 10

A

Abbott Laboratories, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
[AIDS], 25
Allen, Ted, 6, 7, 9
Anderson, Richard, 39
Australian Antigen (for hepatitis), 2

B

Bayer Corporation, 34
Ben Franklin Partnership, 43
Berger, Harvey, 19
Blood Plasma and Components, 2
Burroughs Wellcome, 30, 33

C

CA-125 (for ovarian cancer), 10
Caruso, Dominic, 31, 39
Cary, Cindy, 38
Centocor, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,
16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32,
33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44
Centoxin, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28,
29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 43
Cephalon, 41
Coller, Barry, 27, 28
computerized tomography [CT], 4
Cordis Corporation, 39
Corning Incorporated, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11
Crohn's disease, 34, 35, 36

E

Eli Lilly and Company, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26,
27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 40, 44
EMI-CT scanner, 5, 6
Evans-Freke, Stephen, 14

F

Feldmann, Marc, 34, 35
Flow Laboratories, 7
Food and Drug Administration [FDA], 19
Fujirebio Diagnostics, 13

G

General Electric Company, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10,
19, 41
GlaxoSmithKline, 30

H

HA-1A (for sepsis), 18
Haber, Edgar, 14
Hale, David, 13
Hoffmann-LaRoche and Company, 6, 11
Holveck, David P.
father, 1
parents, 10
Holveck, Jennifer Christine, 45
Holveck, Lisa Marie, 45
Holveck, Patricia, 45
Hybritech, 12, 13, 40, 44

I

Immophase, 3, 4

J

Johnson & Johnson, 6, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39,
40, 41, 44, 45

K

Köhler, Georges, 6
Koprowski, Hilary, 6, 7, 14, 30, 31

M

Maini, Ravinder, 34, 35
Malvern Preparatory School, 1
Massachusetts General Hospital, 7, 11
Matracaria, Ronald, 32, 33
Milstein, César, 6
Milwaukee, 5

N

New York University, 34, 35

O

Ohio Nuclear, 6

P

PaineWebber, 14, 15, 16, 17
Panorex, 30, 31, 37
Papadopolous, Stelios, 14, 16, 17
parathyroid hormone [PTH], 4
Parke-Davis, 13, 16, 17
Pfizer Incorporated, 6
PhRMA [Pharmaceutical Research and
Manufacturers of America], 38

R

Remicade, 33, 35, 36, 37
ReoPro, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,
31, 32, 33, 36, 37
Ridge, Pennsylvania Governor Tom, 44
Riethmüller, Gert, 30
Robb, Walter, 9

S

Schoemaker, Hubert, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16,
17, 21, 22, 23, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
Schuler, Jack, 3

Schwartz-Mann, 2
Scodari, Joseph, 39
sepsis, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 34
Siemens Corporation, 6
St. Jude Medical, 32, 33

T

Tallett, Liz, 16, 17, 18, 22
Taurel, Sidney, 32, 38
Tech 21 program, 44
Technicare, 6
Tetteroo, Pedro, 27
Toray Industries, 13
Toshiba Corporation, 6
tumor necrosis factor [TNF], 34, 35

V

van Deventer, Sander, 35, 36
Vietnam War, 1
Vilcek, Jan, 34, 35
Vincent, James, 3

W

Wall, Michael, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17,
22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
Warner-Lambert, 16
Wavle, James, 3, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22,
36
Weisman, Harlan, 25, 28, 29, 30, 39
Weldon, William, 40
West Chester University, 1
Wilson, Robert, 38, 39, 40
Woody, James, 33, 34
Wulfing, Paul, 39

X

XOMA, Ltd., 21

Z

Zurawski, Vincent, 7