



# Newsletter

## Office of NIH History

*NIH History Lives Here*

Fall/Winter 2003



Dr. Elias Zerhouni, NIH Director, posed with his new NIH History Day t-shirt in September

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The Office of NIH History is made up of the Historical Research Unit and the Stetten Museum. It is a component of the Office of Communications and Public Liaison, Office of the Director, NIH. Contact us at: Office of NIH History, Building 31, Room 5B38, MSC 2092, NIH, Bethesda, MD, 20892 Phone: (301) 496-6610, Fax: (301) 402-1434, web site: [www.nih.gov/od/museum](http://www.nih.gov/od/museum), email: [history@nih.gov](mailto:history@nih.gov)

## New Stetten Museum Exhibits

### “The Stadtman Way: A Tale of Two Biochemists at NIH”

**Save the date: January 22, 2004**

The Office of NIH History is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibit in honor of Drs. Thressa and Earl Stadtman, distinguished biochemists who have worked at the National Institutes of Health since 1950. The exhibit, entitled “The Stadtman Way: A Tale of Two Biochemists at NIH,” was curated by Associate NIH Historian Buhm Soon Park, and will be displayed in the lobby area outside the Lipsett Amphitheater in the Clinical Center (Building 10).

The exhibit will highlight not only the Stadtmans’ achievements in science but also their important contributions in mentoring a generation of scientists. The “Stadtman way” refers to the extraordinarily high standard of rigor they set in biochemical research and to their generous sharing of credit in publications with more junior scientists. The “Stadtman way” helped to create a congenial atmosphere in their productive laboratory.

The opening event will be held in the Lipsett Amphitheater on January 22, 2004, at 2:30 p.m. The program will include a lecture by Dr. Arthur Kornberg, a 1959 Nobel Laureate and Professor Emeritus at Stanford University.



Thressa and Earl Stadtman, shown here at their graduation, received their Ph.D.s from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1949. Unable to find jobs at the same university because of anti-nepotism rules in academia, they both came to work at the Heart Institute (NHLBI) at NIH in 1950.

## A Thin Blue Line: The History of the Pregnancy Test Kit

A new web presentation entitled “A Thin Blue Line: The History of the Pregnancy Test Kit” will go online in December 2003 to mark the 25th anniversary of the widespread introduction of the home pregnancy test (1978-2003). The exhibit will be found at the website of the Office of NIH History at [history.nih.gov](http://history.nih.gov) (click on “exhibits and galleries”).

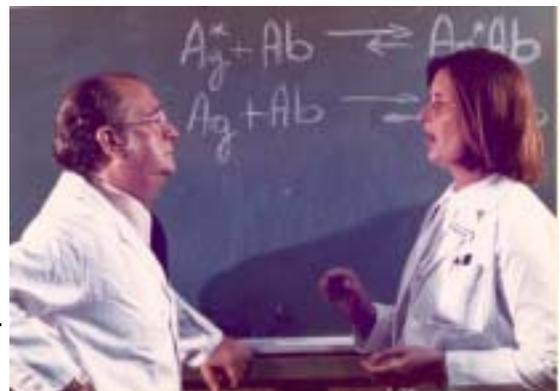
Pregnancy tests are as universal as pregnancy, but only relatively recently has a sensitive, accurate, and quick test been available nationwide for individual women to use in the privacy of their homes. This web exhibit is the first of its kind to explore the history of one of the most popular home healthcare products in America.

Research leading to the introduction of the home pregnancy test was conducted at the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at NIH in the early 1970s. Included on the website will be excerpts from interviews with two of the scientists involved in that research, Drs. Judith Vaitukaitis and Glenn Braunstein. The web exhibit also features a historical timeline of pregnancy testing, and scientific explanations of what the “pregnancy hormone” does and how the test works. Illustrated throughout with photographs of the researchers, advertisements for pregnancy tests from the 1970s and 1980s, and images of the earliest pregnancy test kits, the web site also explores the cultural relevance of the pregnancy tests through television shows and advertisements of the past few decades.

A highlight of the website will be the opportunity for visitors to help write the history of the home pregnancy test. Missing from historical accounts are the voices of the millions of women who have taken this test in the past few decades. In an exciting collaboration with the Exploring and Collecting History Online (ECHO) project at the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, “A Thin Blue Line” will offer visitors the chance to answer (anonymously) some basic questions about their own experiences with the pregnancy tests. Survey answers will be available on the site and will become part of the exhibit.

For more information, please contact Associate Historian & Curator Sarah Leavitt at [leavitts@od.nih.gov](mailto:leavitts@od.nih.gov).

*What we did back in the early '70s was really novel. I mean, we just blitzed the field very fast. It took a lot of hard work by a lot of people, but it was actually fun. And it was interesting.*  
--Judith Vaitukaitis, M.D., remembering her days at NICHD in the early 1970s. Shown at right are Vaitukaitis and her NICHD colleague Griff Ross, c. 1971.



## The Past in the Present: A New Display in Building 1

Michele Lyons, Curator

As part of the ongoing “Building 1 Heritage Project” seeking to bring NIH’s rich history to life in its main administration building, the Stetten Museum will be opening a small exhibit at the end of this year. Titled “The Past in the Present: Objects from NIH History,” the display will include six objects from different time periods, exhibited in the third floor hallway leading to the Building 1 Cafeteria. We also plan to exhibit a large object, yet to be determined, in the first floor main lobby.

Dr. Joseph Goldberger’s diary, the first object collected by the Stetten Museum more than two decades ago, will be featured in the display. Goldberger conducted a long-term epidemiological investigation while studying the cause of the disease pellagra. During his 1915 investigations in Southern orphanages, insane asylums, and prisons, he kept careful records of his observations and concerns in this small diary. He eventually proved that pellagra was not (as previously thought) an infectious disease, but rather a condition caused by poor nutrition leading to deficiency of the B-vitamin niacin. This diary is a unique record of the journeys and observations of this important scientist.

A very different kind of memento of scientific investigation will also be displayed: a keychain and a locket in which are encased *Dermacentor andersoni* ticks, the arthropod vector that carries Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF). The keychain, and probably the locket as well, belonged to Dr. Ralph R. Parker, an early director of the NIH’s Rocky Mountain Laboratory (RML) in Hamilton, Montana. A Montana entomologist, Parker helped develop a vaccine against the disease in 1924 in collaboration with Dr. R. R. Spencer, a Bethesda-based NIH physician. Parker stayed on to direct vaccine production at the RML until his death from heart disease in 1949. The investigation into RMSF, undertaken before modern laboratory safety procedures and equipment, resulted in the deaths of five researchers at the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. These items serve as reminders of the cost of such efforts.

One of the Museum’s most well-known collections consists of 30 different heart valves, the oldest one dating from the 1950s. Some of the valves are currently being used for case studies in college courses on biomedical engineering, ethics, and legal issues. The valve that will be displayed in Building 1 is called the Braunwald-Morrow mitral prosthesis. On March 11, 1960, at the NIH, Dr. Nina Starr Braunwald performed the first successful surgery for mitral heart valve replacement. She had designed the valve in collaboration with Dr. Andrew Morrow. It is a polyurethane cup reinforced with Dacron with a slit in the middle through which the blood flowed. Teflon “chordae tendineae,” or strings, sewn on by Morrow’s assistant Joan Fuller, were brought through the ventricular muscle and secured outside the heart. Braunwald’s patient, a 44-year old woman, recovered from the operation but died four months later of an arrhythmia.

Also to be displayed are items from the Wilton Earle glassware collection. From the late 1930s through the early 1960s, Dr. Wilton R. Earle invented several large-scale, long-term tissue culture methods at NIH which are now used in many areas of medical research. These included developing massive fluid suspension cultures for large-scale investigations and discovering new techniques for growing cells on glass surfaces. His laboratory also developed quantitative methods for analyzing tissue cultures, performed the first cloning of single cells, and invented a unique cine-micrographic instrument to study a population of cells. Earle was also a pioneer in demonstrating that carcinogenesis occurs *in vitro*. Only a few samples of the glassware used in his busy laboratory will be on display in this exhibit, including stemware used for culture medium renewal and different designs of tissue culture vessels.

The final laboratory tool to be on display in the exhibit is rather unusual—an abacus used for many years by Dr. Wallace P. Rowe. Rowe was the first to isolate an adenovirus from patients and he helped to clarify that virus' role in respiratory disease. He also described the epidemiology and clinical characteristics of these infections. Many of his research contributions had important mathematical aspects. For example, Rowe conducted quantitative dose response studies that provided evidence for the occurrence of genetic hybrids between viruses. Rowe used the abacus to make rapid calculations for data analysis even after hand calculators were readily available.

Perhaps the most unusual artifact in this exhibit is the Green River Whiskey advertising fob. In fact, Green River Whiskey was “The Official Whiskey of the U.S. Marine Hospital Service,” the precursor of the NIH. In an era with few effective medicines, whiskey was used on board U.S. Marine Hospital Service ships and in hospitals as a “medicinal” as early as the 1890s. Technically, alcohol was not allowed aboard, so the ship's captain kept the whiskey under lock and key. The advertising fob would have been kept on the bottle as an identifier, or used as a watch fob or other decorative trinket. Green River Whiskey was produced by the J.W. McCulloch Distillers in Owensboro, Kentucky.

The Stetten Museum plans to rotate objects in the exhibit in Building 1, so visit often to learn more about NIH history and view the variety of artifacts in our collection.

## A Successful Inaugural NIH History Day

Brooke Fox, Archivist

Despite the best efforts of Hurricane Isabel, which closed down the government for two days, the first annual NIH History Day went forward as planned on Monday, September 22. Hosted by the Office of NIH History, the day featured various activities highlighting the history of NIH and was a resounding success.

A highlight of the day was a series of special tours: an opportunity for NIH staff to go behind the scenes into the Stetten Museum storage area in Building 13. As with most museums, the vast majority of our collection is in storage, and many instruments and artifacts have never been displayed because of insufficient exhibit space and funds. For this special event, curator Michele Lyons prepared signs to lead visitors through the labyrinth of Building 13, opened the doors, placed identifying labels on some of the more interesting objects, and operated the special space-saver shelving so that visitors could get face-to-face with 1950s scientific instruments, gifts to various NIH Directors, and glassware.

One of the most popular collections for the NIH staff who came on the tours was a series of tick paintings by Tom Moore done at the Rocky Mountain Laboratory in the 1930s. These sparked a discussion about early NIH investigation techniques and the ravages of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, the disease spread by some of the ticks portrayed in the paintings.

Over the lunch hour, Office of NIH History staff hosted collection stations in Buildings 10, 31, and 45. A collection of old syringes and needles from NCI was the largest donation of the day. We also received a set of notebooks from Dr. Cyrus Creveling. A special thank-you to all of our History Day donors, and remember: we accept artifacts, papers, and photographs year round!

The History Day Lecture was preceded by remarks from Dr. Elias Zerhouni, NIH Director. Dr. Zerhouni spoke of the importance of history to the most significant institutions in any society and encouraged the audience to become more aware of NIH's rich history. He noted that Hurricane Isabel had flooded his garage, and several boxes of scientific papers and imprints along with it, leading Office of NIH History Director Victoria Harden to send out a plea to the audience--give us your papers before they get lost or damaged!

Dr. Alan Kraut, professor of history at American University took the podium to deliver a lecture about Dr. Joseph Goldberger, a Hygienic Laboratory scientist in the early twentieth century. Dr. Goldberger, through a series of daring experiments and many years of painstaking research, demonstrated that pellagra was a dietary deficiency disease. Goldberger was a commissioned officer with the PHS and spent his career searching for the causes and cures of infectious diseases. Dr. Kraut's new book, *Goldberger's War: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader*, came out earlier this year.

We look forward to seeing you at NIH History Day 2004!

## NIH History Day Surveys

Are you part of an NIH “family” in which more than one family member has worked here? Do you have special memories from your career as an NIH intramural scientist that you would like to share with us? As part of our NIH History Day initiative, we are continuing to collect this kind of information on our web site at [history.nih.gov/NIH\\_HistoryDay](http://history.nih.gov/NIH_HistoryDay).

Here are some excerpts from the surveys we have received so far:

*Parking wasn't a problem in 1963. I knew many of the workers by name. Now, it's too crowded.*

*In the late fifties you knew everyone doing basic research. Now, with the growth of the NIH and the increasing specialization of science, one is fortunate to know a small fraction of the research community.*

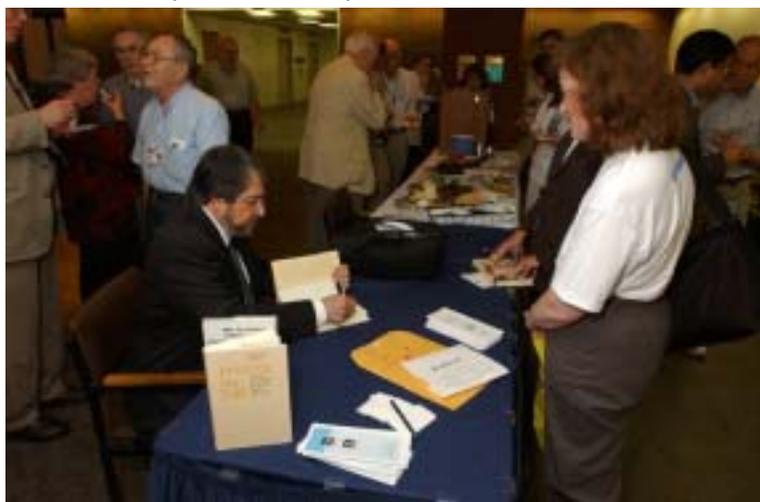
*You could arrive at work at 9 am and find a parking space in front of or near the building where you worked.*

*We prepared plasmid DNAs by double banding in CsCl, which took two days of centrifugation and another day of dialysis instead of the 30 minutes it now takes using kits. Animal rooms were down the hall from the labs, resulting in smelly hallways sometimes, but giving everyone the chance to go there and play with the mice. Lab doors and building doors were never locked, and yet we had less crime than now.*

*I plan to work here until I retire.*

*No matter where I am, NIH is more than a place of employment. NIH always has and always will be my home.*

Alan Kraut gave a lecture on Joseph Goldberger at the First Annual NIH History Day. After the event, he signed copies of his book, *Goldberger's War: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader*.



## NIMH/NINDB in the 1950s, Historical Volume

On April 11, 2003, the Office of NIH History, the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke sponsored a symposium entitled, "NIMH and NINDB Intramural Research in the 1950s." The purpose of the symposium was to open the door for historical research on how the basic and clinical investigations programs at both institutes emerged and changed over the first decade of their existence. The Office of NIH History wanted to gather first-hand recollections about the broad scientific ideas and debates of the time, the organizational structures that existed at NIH and that supported or hindered research, the collaborations that took place with members of other labs and/or academic and governmental counterparts, and what caused lines of research to shift from one direction to another. Over 120 scientists from the 1950s were invited to participate in the symposium.

Ingrid Farreras in the Office of NIH History is currently working on a historical volume adapted from this symposium. In an attempt to generate a substantial body of documentation for the work at NIMH and NINDB during this decade, we need NIMH and NINDS scientists from that time period to donate personal historical photographs and slides, correspondence, unpublished documents, laboratory notebooks, artifacts, memos, vitae, telephone directories, scientific directories, etc. to add to our collection. (Of course, the Office of NIH History is eager for donations of this sort at any time from any intramural scientist or the laboratory/branch of any Institute!)



More than 100 scientists gathered at the April symposium, including (from L to R) Mortimer Mishkin (NIMH Lab of Psychology), Allan Mirsky (NIMH Lab of Psychology), Theodore Zahn (NIMH Lab of Psychology), Eugene Streicher (NIMH Lab of Psychology), Irwin Feinberg (NIMH Lab of Clinical Science), Louis Sokoloff (NIMH Lab of Clinical Science), Virgil "Ben" Carlson (NIMH Lab of Psychology), James Birren (NIMH Lab of Psychology)

## **In Memoriam: Jane Sybil Klein Lazarow Stetten (1919-2003)**

Victoria A. Harden, Director

Jane Lazarow Stetten, widow of Dr. DeWitt Stetten, Jr., the founder of the Stetten Museum, died on August 6, 2003, as a result of complications from leukemia.

Born Jane Sybil Klein in 1919 in Chicago, Jane received her B.S. in Physiology in 1939 from the University of Chicago and an M.S. in Library Science in 1969 from the University of Minnesota. Barred from pursuing a career as a physician by the social conventions of the day, from 1939 to 1944 she worked as a biochemist. Later she became a technical writer and editor in the fields of experimental diabetes and cytochemistry, and from 1975 to 1984, she was an information systems research analyst in the Minnesota Department of Health. On December 15, 1940 she married Arnold Lazarow, a scientist and department chair at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine. They had two sons. Dr. Lazarow developed a micrometric gasometer that is now in the collection of the Stetten Museum. Dr. Lazarow died in 1975.

On August 5, 1984, Jane married DeWitt “Hans” Stetten and joined him in 1986 in cutting the ribbon that opened the first exhibit of the Stetten Museum, “Windows into NIH History,” which was prepared for the NIH centennial year observance. When Hans died in 1990, Jane joined the Museum Advisory Board and effectively became its moral center. She supported the Board’s decision to create a “living memorial” to Hans—a fellowship named after him that would encourage research in the history of NIH. Thus was born the DeWitt Stetten, Jr., Memorial Fellowship in the History of Biomedical Sciences and Technology. To date, the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum has hosted nine Stetten Fellows. Jane got to know the Fellows and followed their research and presentations closely. Her last visit to my office before she became too ill to attend meetings was for a meeting of the Stetten Fellowship review committee, and even after she could not come in person, she participated via conference call in selecting the Fellows. Jane was committed to this program to the point that when our private-sector funding for the fellowship was halted, she organized a cruise with a continuing education firm to raise the needed money. The profit from that effort made possible the Stetten Fellowship until the NIH Scientific Directors took over the funding of it directly.

Jane may have been a tiny and soft-spoken woman, but she had the determination of steel, and her actions benefited not only the individual Fellows but also the NIH, by making possible the wonderful historical work that the Fellows have produced. We will all miss her greatly.

Jane Stetten attended the opening of the Stetten Museum’s “Revolution in Progress” exhibit at the NIH Clinical Center in 1997.



## George W. McCoy's Daughter Interviewed

On 29 July 2003, Drs. Victoria Harden and Caroline Hannaway of the Office of NIH History had the pleasure of conducting an oral history interview with Mrs. Edith McCoy Chappellear, the daughter of George W. McCoy, who was the fourth director of the National Institutes of Health from 1915 to 1937, at her home in Chevy Chase. Mrs. Chappellear's niece, Mrs. Mary Lou Graff, also assisted with the interview and brought family memorabilia for Drs. Harden and Hannaway to view.



Mrs. Chappellear was able to offer insights into Dr. McCoy's career both before he became Director of the Hygienic Laboratory and after he moved to Washington, D.C. in 1915. In his early career, George McCoy was an expert on plague and headed the Plague Laboratory of the Public Health Service in San Francisco during the early twentieth-century outbreak. Mrs. Chappellear was born in that city in 1911. The family then moved to the leper colony on Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands when McCoy was appointed the PHS physician in charge and Mrs. Chappellear had some early childhood memories of life on the island. Her father's scientific interest in leprosy was life long and in his retirement he moved to Louisiana to continue his investigations into the disease.

In her oral history, Mrs. Chappellear gave a vivid picture of the world of the Hygienic Laboratory at its 25<sup>th</sup> and E Street, NW, location and of the doctors who worked there. The scientific and social lives of all those who worked at the "red brick building on the hill" were very much intertwined. Many lived in close proximity in houses in Woodley Park. There was also interaction with the families of two Surgeons General, Rupert Blue and Hugh Cumming. The Laboratory itself was modestly equipped—microscopes were important pieces of apparatus—and the scientists worked in small and cramped rooms. The laboratory animals were kept in a smelly basement. But to some extent these close quarters facilitated interaction on the research that was being conducted. The scientists also had a journal club to keep abreast of the medical literature. Mrs. Chappellear described how she became aware that her father was an internationally known figure when she travelled to Europe with him in the late 1920s and saw the respect with which he was received by scientific and medical groups and societies.

Mrs. Chappellear herself became a social worker and part of her career was spent at a new institute to control syphilis at the University of Pennsylvania. She married in 1940 and her husband, John Chappellear, was a Foreign Service Officer. Her brother, George, became a physician like his father.

The Office of NIH History is grateful to have this new information on the life and work of George McCoy and thanks Mrs. Chappellear for her kind assistance.

## Comings and Goings

### Introducing Sara Shostak, the 2003-2004 Stetten Fellow

This year's DeWitt Stetten, Jr., Memorial Fellow in the History of Biomedical Sciences and Technology comes to NIH from the University of California, San Francisco, where she received her Ph.D. in sociology earlier this year. The first Stetten Fellow to work with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), Dr. Shostak will study the history of transgenic models of carcinogenesis, and the translation of transgenic models for applications in environmental health testing, risk assessment, and regulation. She will be working with Dr. Mary Wolfe of the NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program on this project.

In the early 1990s, researchers in the Laboratory of Environmental Carcinogenesis and Mutagenesis (LECM) at NIEHS began to investigate the potential of transgenic mice as a tool for studying the effects of environmental carcinogens. The two transgenic mouse models at the center of NIEHS research have been the Tg.Ac model (*v-Ha-ras* transgene) and the p53 model (p53 +/-heterozygous). Such transgenic mice contain genetic alterations that predispose them to develop tumors, however, the genetic alteration is insufficient to cause tumor formation on its own. Over the past decade, scientists at NIEHS have developed transgenic models as a new tool for exploring mechanisms of toxicity and carcinogenicity. Working with scientists at the National Toxicology Program (NTP), NIEHS scientists have also led efforts to assess the capacities of transgenic models to serve as bioassays in carcinogenicity testing and risk assessment and thereby to contribute to the regulatory process.

Dr. Shostak plans to conduct oral history interviews with scientists as part of her research. She is particularly interested in talking with the scientists who developed models of carcinogenesis and the transgenic mouse models, and with those who worked on collaborations with other NIH institutes and with the regulatory agencies (FDA and EPA). She will be traveling to North Carolina, home of NIEHS, to talk with these scientists and to review notes and records from LECM, conference proceedings, and meeting minutes and summaries from important groups and committees.

### PHS Historian to Retire

John Parascandola, PHS historian, has announced his retirement on 30 January 2004. Dr. Parascandola has been an ex-officio member of the Advisory Board of the Office of NIH History and the DeWitt Stetten, Jr., Museum since its inception and has contributed in innumerable ways to the development of the Office. He has collaborated on symposia and publications, assisted in fellowship selections, and advised on archival and photograph collection and exhibit development. We owe him a vote of thanks for all his contributions. We wish him well in his new post-retirement endeavors but are also pleased that he will remain available to offer his very considerable expertise on future Office projects.