

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

JOHN D. BALDESCHWIELER

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

David C. Brock and Arthur Daemmrich

at

Chemical Heritage Foundation
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

on

13 June 2003

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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JOHN D. BALDESCHWIELER

1933 Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey on 14 November

Education

1956 B.S., chemical engineering, Cornell University
1959 Ph.D., physical chemistry, University of California, Berkeley

Professional Experience

1959-1960 1st Lieutenant, United States Army

Harvard University
1960 Chemistry Lecturer
1960-1962 Chemistry Instructor
1962-1965 Assistant Professor

Stanford University
1965-1967 Associate Professor
1967-1971 Professor

1971-1973 Deputy Director, Office of Science and Technology, Washington DC

1972-1976 Coordinator, Program in Chemical Catalysis, U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commission on Science and Technology

1978-1984 Chairman, Science and Technology Panel, Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China

1981-1993 Chairman, Board of Directors, Vestar Inc.

1988-1995 Director, Cryopharm Inc.

1993-1995 Director, Combion Inc.

1993-1999 Director, NeXstar Pharmaceuticals Inc.

1998-1999 Director, Epic Therapeutics Inc.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 1998-2002 | Director, Drug Royalty Inc. |
| 1998-2002 | Director, GeneSoft Inc. |
| 1999-present | Managing Member, The Athenaeum Fund |
| 2000-present | Director, Pasadena Entrectec |
| | California Institute of Technology |
| 1973-1978 | Chairman, Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering |
| 1977-1979 | Principal Investigator, California Institute of Technology Institutional Energy Program |
| 1973-1999 | Professor |
| 1996-1999 | J. Stanley Johnson Professor |
| 1999-present | Professor Emeritus |

Honors

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1962-1965 | Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship |
| 1967 | Award in Pure Chemistry, American Chemical Society |
| 1968 | Fresenius Award of Phi Lambda Upsilon |
| 1970 | National Academy of Sciences |
| 1972 | American Academy of Arts and Sciences |
| 1979 | American Philosophical Society |
| 1989 | Richard C. Tolman Medal, American Chemical Society |
| 1990 | William H. Nichols Medal, American Chemical Society |
| 2000 | National Medal of Science |
| 2001 | Award for Creative Invention, American Chemical Society |
| 2002 | Othmer Gold Medal, Chemical Heritage Foundation |

ABSTRACT

John D. Baldeschwieler begins the interview with a discussion of his family and childhood interests. He was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on 14 November 1933. He attended a public school in Cranford, New Jersey, before moving on to college at Cornell University, where he majored in chemical engineering. Baldeschwieler found the chemical engineering program challenging, but despite the 80 percent dropout rate for the program, he graduated at the top of his class. Afterwards, he attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley, receiving his PhD in physical chemistry in 1959. Baldeschwieler had been in the ROTC program at Cornell University, but his service in the Army was deferred after he graduated because of an abundance of officers in the Army at that time; however, he was in the Army Reserves while he attended Berkeley. It was while at Berkeley that Baldeschwieler was introduced to infrared spectroscopy. Having served in the military, Baldeschwieler was hired as a chemistry lecturer and instructor at Harvard University. He became an assistant professor in 1962, and remained at the University until 1965, when he moved to Stanford University. Though he had been working in the field of nuclear-magnetic resonance at Cornell, Baldeschwieler decided to change his focus to ion-cyclotron resonance when he moved to Stanford. He became a full professor at Stanford in 1967, and remained with the University until 1971. From 1971 to 1984, Baldeschwieler worked in various important government positions, including the deputy director position for the Office of Science and Technology, and the coordinator position for the Chemical Catalysis Program in the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commission on Science and Technology. Baldeschwieler began his relationship with Caltech during that time period as well. In 1973, he became chairman of Caltech's Chemistry and Chemical Engineering Division, and a full professor at the Institute. In 1981, Baldeschwieler undertook his first commercial endeavor with the creation of Vestar, Inc. Thus began his work on a string of entrepreneurial ventures, which has included Combion, Inc., Epic Therapeutics, Inc., GeneSoft, Inc., and many others. In 1999 and 2000, Baldeschwieler was responsible in part for the creation of the Athenaeum Fund and Pasadena Entrectec; two organizations established to fund and support young entrepreneurs from Caltech. Baldeschwieler concludes the interview with his thoughts on entrepreneurship and his experiences in the business world.

INTERVIEWERS

David C. Brock is Program Manager for Educational and Historical Services at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department, Program in the History of Science at Princeton University. In 1995, Mr. Brock received his M.A. in the History of Science from Princeton University and in 1992 he earned a M.Sc. in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge from the University of Edinburgh.

Arthur Daemrich is a policy analyst at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia. He holds a Ph.D. in Science and Technology Studies from Cornell University and has published on biotechnology policy and politics, the sociology of medicine, and pharmaceutical drug regulation. In his research, he brings long-range perspectives to bear on

the analysis of globalization, risk, health, and environmental policy. Daemmrich has held fellowships from the Social Science Research Council/Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Childhood and Education
Father's and mother's origins. Childhood interest in science and mechanics. Attending Cornell University. Father's role in World War II. Interest in War research. Nuclear research at Los Alamos National Research Laboratory. Attending the University of California at Berkeley. Sputnik's influence on academic research. Infrared spectrometry at Berkeley. Ph.D. thesis work.
- 12 The Army and Harvard University
Working in the Ballistic Research lab at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. Joining the Harvard University faculty. Elias J. Corey. Receiving NIH funding for his double-resonance experiment. Robert B. Woodward. Ways to obtain NSF and NIH funding. William G. McMillan. Attending the seminars for young researchers.
- 19 Experiences at Stanford University
Moving to Stanford. Fourier transform NMR and pulse-NMR experiments. Deciding that NMR had reached its limits. Performing cyclotron experiments at Stanford. Getting a contract from NASA. Teaching at Harvard. Reasons for his interest in ICR. ICR within the context of mass spectrometry. The Omegatron. Collaborative work with Varian Associates, Inc. Jay Henis. Industrial consulting for Monsanto. Working with Merck. Working with Carl Djerassi.
- 29 Military Science during the Vietnam War
Assessing American tactics in Vietnam. The people sniffer. Tunnel detection with ground-penetrating radar. Working on PSAC. Working with the U.S. Navy Riverine Forces. The Hamlet Pacification Index. Reflections on the Vietnam War's results.
- 33 Working in the U.S. Government
Lee A. DuBridge. The usefulness of PSAC. Working under various U.S. presidents. The creation of the NEPA and the EPA. The politics of supersonic transport. Working on national security committees. Experimenting with radioisotopes at Stanford. Science in the Nixon administration. The "Berlin Wall." Working for NIH. The War on Cancer and the expansion of the National Cancer Institute. Work with China and the USSR.
- 45 Caltech Research and Commercial Ventures
T. Y. Shen. Work with liposomes. Building an angular-correlation instrument. Implanting tumors in mice for liposome tests. The creation of Vestar, Inc. H. S. Tsien's funding of Vestar. E. M. Warburg Pincus & Company. The downside of working with venture capitalists. Cancer imaging. Jill Alder's anti-fungal work.

NeXstar, Inc. QuanScan, Inc. Affymetrix, Inc. Vestink and DNA chips. Combion, Inc. Pasadena Entrectec and UCSD CONNECT for new entrepreneurs. Working as an advisor on various government committees. The Science and Technology Board.

60 Conclusion

The differing structures of advisory boards. The U.S. government's apathy towards foreign-oil dependence. Why advisory committees succeed or fail. Gulf War Syndrome. How QuanScan was formed. The Cryopharm Corporation and freeze-drying blood. The story of Combion. The Drug Royalty Company. GeneSoft, Inc. Working with the venture capital community. Language Weaver, Inc. The significance of the Department of Homeland Security. The anti-terrorism panel. Winning the ACS Award.

77 Notes

78 Index

INDEX

A

Abbott Laboratories, Inc., 68
Aberdeen Proving Ground, 12-13
 Ballistic Research Lab, 13
Abraham, Spencer, 62
Adler, Jill P., 52
Advanced Technology Ventures, 50
Affymax, Inc., 54
Affymetrix Company, 54, 69
Agilent Technologies, Inc., 66
Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., 27
American Chemical Society Award, 75
American Council of Learned Societies, 44
American Synthetic Rubber Research Program, 3
Ammonia [NH₃], 30
Ammonium chloride [NH₄Cl], 30
Amphotericin-B, 52, *See* Liposomes
Analytical chemistry, 1, 7
Anderson, Weston, 19
Angular-correlation instrument, 46
Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty [ABM], 37
Antibodies, 47
Argon [Ar], 9
 Cryogenic matrix isolation, 9
Assistant Secretary for Science and Technology, 73
Athenaeum Fund, 57, 71
Atomic force microscope [AFM], 64
 Atomic force microscopy, 75
Avery Dennison Company, 56
Avery, R. Stanton [Stan], 56

B

B. B. Bioventures L. P., 69
Baird, Eldon, 69
Baldeschwieler, John D.
 father, 1-2, 5, 10, 12, 29
 grand uncle, 1
 grandfather, 1
 grandmother, 1
 mother, 1
 sister, 2
 wife [Marlene], 21, 72

Baxter Healthcare, Inc., 65, 69
Bayway, New Jersey, 4, 6
Beauchamp, Jesse L., 26, 58, 74
Becker, Edwin D., 9
Bell Labs, 41
Berkeley, University of California at, 6-8, 10-11, 14, 39
“Berlin Wall”, 41
Biochemistry, 63
Biological warfare, 60, 70
Biotechnology [biotech], 48, 67-69
 patents, 67
Bloch, Felix, 15, 24
Bloembergen, Nicolaas, 24
Blood-products industry, 65
Boeing Company, 36
Boron hydrides, 26
Boulder, Colorado, 52
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy [BSE], 53
 See Also Mad Cow disease
Brandon, Manitoba, 1
Branscomb, Lewis [Lew], 74
Brauman, John I., 21, 26, 45
Bruker, 27
Brooklyn College, 1
Brown, Harold D., 43, 45, 50
Bush, George H. W., Sr., 58
Bush, George W., Jr., 58

C

California Institute of Technology [Caltech], 33, 40, 43, 45, 48-53, 55-57, 64, 67, 69-70, 74
 Industrial Relations Center, 56
 Office of Science and Technology, 33, 36, 38
 Office of Technology Transfer, 56
 patent office, 56
California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, 52
Callahan, Richard [Dick], 51
Cancer, 36, 43, 47, 52
 carcinogens, 42
 prostate cancer, 51, 68
 research, 43
Carter, James E. [Jimmy], 50
 administration, 50
Cell, 12, 26, 45, 70
Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 60
 Science and Technology Board, 60

Chemical catalysis, 44
Chemical warfare, 60
City of Hope National Medical Center, 47, 51
 Nuclear Imaging Facility, 47
Clinton, William J. [Bill], 58
 administration, 61
Cloud chamber, 29-30
COBE Cardiovascular, Inc., 65-66
Cold War, 19
Combat fatigue, 62
Combion, Inc., 55-56, 64, 66
Commercial-air-transport study, 36
Committee for Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China [CSCPRC], 44
Concorde, 37
Condensation-nucleus detector, 29-30
Cooper Union, 1
Corey, Elias J., 15, 22
Cornell University, 2-8, 11, 21, 26
 chemical engineering program, 3, 5
Counter terrorism-technologies, 58
 aircraft hardening, 59
 gas-phase-explosives detection, 59
 thermal-neutron analysis, 58
Cranford, New Jersey, 1
Crossley, Roger J., 51-52
Crowe, John, 64
 freeze-dried microorganisms, 64
 wife [Lois], 64
Cryopharm Corporation, 64-66
Cultural Revolution, 44-45
Cyclotron, 20-21, 25-27
Cyclotron resonance, 45

D

David, Edward E., 41
Davis, University of California at [UC Davis], 64
Democratic administration, 61
Density matrix, 21, 24
Deoxyribonucleic acid [DNA], 54-55, 65, 67, 69-70
 bases, 55
 DNA chips, 54-55, 66
 replication, 69
 sequence databases, 66
 transcription, 69
 viral, 65

Department of Defense [DOD], 13, 18
Department of Energy [DOE], 3, 60-61
 Secretary of Energy, 60
Depleted uranium. See Gulf War Syndrome
Dervan, Peter, B., 69-70
Deutsch, John M., 60
Dextrans, 49
Diekman, John, 28
Digital computer, 13
Digital Instruments, Inc., 54
Djerassi, Carl, 28
Domestic Council, 40-42
Dot-com bubble, 70
Doty, Paul M., 38
Double-resonance experiments, 15, 21
 double-resonance measurements, 21
Drug Royalty, Inc., 67-68
DuBridge, Lee A., 33, 38, 41, 49

E

E I. DuPont de Nemours & Company, 3
E. M. Warburg Pincus & Company, 50-53, 63, 65
Ehrlichman, John D., 37, 40-41
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 19
Electromagnetic radiation, 9, 24
Electronics, 2, 22, 26, 64
Electron-spin resonance, 15
Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1
Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 35
Epic Therapeutics, Inc., 68-69
Erector Set, 1
Ernst, Richard R., 19
Ethanol, 62
Exxon-Mobil Corporation, 1

F

Federal Aviation Administration [FAA], 58
Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 49
Federal Council on Science and Technology [FCST], 34
FedEx Corporation [Federal Express], 52
Ferrocyanide [$C_{18}Fe_7N_{18}$], 4
Flory, Paul J., 3, 5-7, 21
Fluid mechanics, 49
Folkman, Judah, 50
Food and Drug Administration [FDA], 70

Ford, Gerald R., 41
Freedom of Information Act, 36
Freeman, Ray, 19

G

Gamble, Ronald, 45, 49, 51, 55, 66
Garwin, Richard L. [Dick], 36-37
Gas-phase acidities, 26
Gas-phase separations, 27
 fiber membranes, 27
Genentech, Inc., 48
General Electric Company [GE], 15
GeneSoft, Inc., 69, 70
Gilead Sciences Company, 53
GlaxoSmithKline, 51, 70
Glycolipids, 46
Goodrich, Ray, 64-65
Gore Commission, 58-59
Great Depression, 1, 12
Greenhouse gases, 62
Gulf War, 63, 65
 Gulf War Syndrome, 62-63
“Gunslingers”, 41
Gutowsky, Herbert S., 15

H

Hahn, Erwin L., 10, 20
Haldeman, H. R., 37, 40-41
Hamlet Evaluation System [HES], 32
Hamlet Pacification Index [HPI], 32
Hammond, George S., 43
Harvard University, 13-16, 18-24, 36, 38, 60
 department of chemistry, 14-16
 Harvard Square, 22
 Harvard Yard, 22
 NMR Research Program, 22
Helix-coil transition, 39
Henis, Jay, 27, 50
Herschback, Dudley R., 24
Hewlett-Packard Development Company [HP], 55, 72
High-energy particle accelerators, 61
Hirschman, Ralph F., 45
Hoffman, Ronald, 23
Hornig, Donald F. [Don], 31, 33
Human Genome Project, 61

Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV], 65, 69
Hydrochloric acid [HCl], 30

I

Illinois, University of, 15, 24
Imported-petroleum dependence, 3, 61
Incyte Genomics, Inc., 66-67
Indium [In], 45
 isotope of, 45
Infrared spectroscopy, 6, 23
 spectra, 9
 spectrophotometer, 6
Initial public offerings market [IPO], 71
Inkjet system, 55, 64, 66-67, 75
Inorganic chemistry, 15
Intellectual property, 56, 58
International Business Machines Corporation [IBM], 54
International Nickel Company [INCO Ltd.], 1
Investigational New Drug Application [IND], 51-52
Ion cyclotron resonance [ICR], 21, 24-28, 38, 46, 75
 double resonance, 26
 Fourier transform, 26
Ions, 25
 collision frequency, 25
 molecular, 26
 resonant motion, 25
Iran hostage crisis, 50

J

Jackson, Henry M. [Scoop], 36
Johnson, William S. [Bill], 21, 29

K

Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1
Kennedy, John F., 31
 administration, 17, 19, 74
Killian, James R., Jr., 33
Kissinger, Henry A., 33, 35, 38, 41, 44
Kistiakowski, George B., 16, 19, 23, 32-33
Korean War, 5, 13
Kosowicz, Nancy, 51

L

Langer, Robert S., 46, 68
Language Weaver, Inc., 71-72
Lasers, 24, 74
 laser fusion, 61
 laser-ion optical microscopy, 74
Lasker, Mary W., 43
Lauterbur, Paul, 20
Lederle Machine Company, 51
Leuprolide, 68
Limited Liability Company [LLC]. *See* Athanaeum Fund
Liposomes, 40, 45-53, 55, 64-65
 freeze dried, 64
 hydrophilic heads, 45
 hydrophobic tails, 45
 in liquid suspension, 64
 targeted-delivery system, 47
Los Alamos National Laboratory, 4, 7, 10, 12
Los Angeles, University of California at [UCLA], 19
Loucks, Vernon R., Jr., 69
Lyophilization, 64-65
 of blood, 65

M

Mad Cow disease, 53
Magnetic double resonance, 17
Magnetic sector-mass experiment, 25
Magruder, William H., 37
Maki, August H. [Gus], 15
Manhattan Project, 3, 19, 34
Mass spectrometry, 24-26, 28, 74
Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT], 7, 20, 34, 45-46, 60, 68
 Radiation Laboratory [Rad Lab], 19, 34
McCarthy, E. Joseph, 48-49
McConnell, Harden, 21, 39, 55
McLafferty, Fred W., 26
McMillan, William G. [Bill], 19, 34
McNamara, Robert S., 32
Mekong River, 31
Mellon Institute, 21
Merck and Company, Inc., 28, 45, 69
 subsidiaries
 Baltimore AirCoil, 28
 Calgon Carbon Corporation, 28
 CP Kelco US, 28

Metabolic pathway, 40
Microwave spectroscopy, 9
Minh, Ho Chi, 33
Model 21 spectrometer [Perkin-Elmer Corporation], 9
Molecules, 5, 23-25, 39-40, 45-47, 52, 69, 70, 75
 as surface receptors, 47
 biological, 28
 florescence, 39
 gamma-ray work, 45
 macromolecules, 39
 rotational-correlation times of, 39
 molecular-beam experiments, 24
 molecular spectroscopy, 9
 riboflavin, 66
 rotation, 9, 39
 vibrating, 5, 9
Monsanto Company, 27, 50
Moore's law, 19
Multiple-resonance experiment, 22

N

National Academy of Sciences [NAS], 44, 60
 Committee on Commercial Aviation, 60
 Committee on Science and Technology for Countering Terrorism, 72
National Aeronautical and Space Administration [NASA], 22
National Cancer Institute, 41, 43
National Environmental Protection Act [NEPA], 35
National Institutes of Health [NIH], 41-43, 60
 Cancer Institute, 41
 grants, 17, 21
 Institute of General Medical Sciences, 17
 Study Section System, 17
National Science Foundation [NSF], 18, 41
 fellowship, 7, 10
National security, 3, 36
National Security Council, 41
Neureiter, Norman P., 42
New drug application [NDA], 70
New York-Stonybrook State University, 20
Newark, New Jersey, 3
NeXagen, Inc., 52
NeXstar Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 52-53
Nitric acid [HNO₃], 4
Nixon, Richard M., 35-38, 42
 administration, 35, 40-41

Nobel Prize, 17, 19, 24
Nuclear magnetic resonance [NMR], 10, 15-17, 19-21, 24-25, 39, 46, 75
 Fourier transform NMR, 19, 27
 human-diagnostic imaging NMR, 20
 pulse NMR, 20
 spectrometer, 10, 16
Nuclear medicine, 40
Nuclear reactor, 4
 nuclear decay, 39
 nuclear energy, 4, 62
Nuclear spectroscopy, 6
Nuclear weapons, 19

O

Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], 35
Office of Management and Budget [OMB], 18, 40- 41
Office of Science and Technology [OST], 40-43
Office of Technology Assessment [OTA], 41
Ogg, Richard Andrew, Jr., 7
Ohio State University, 5
Oil fires. *See* Gulf War Syndrome
Omeatron, 25
Organometallic materials, 26
Oscillator, 25

P

Pacific Nanotechnology, Inc., 54
Pagnatta, Frank, 37
Pan Am 109 disaster, 58-59
Particle counter. *See* Cloud chamber
Pasadena Entretec Corporation, 57
Pauling, Linus, 8
People sniffer, 29-30
 helicopter-mounted version, 30
Perkin-Elmer Corporation, 9, 64
 See Also Model 21 spectrophotometer
Perturbation theory, 21
Perturbed-angular-correlation spectroscopy, 38-39, 45
Pfizer, Kenneth S., 8
Pharmaceutical industry, 28
Phospholipid vesicles. *See* Liposomes
Photochemistry, 54
Photoreceptors, 65-66
Physical chemistry, 7, 23, 46
Physical Review Journal, 24

Piette, Larry, 7, 10
Pimentel, George, 6, 8-10, 14
Polyamide, 69
Pound, Robert V., 15
Powell, Colin L., 33
President's Scientific Advisory Panel [PSAC], 31-37
 Ground Warfare Panel, 31
Princeton University, 31
Project "Paperclip", 2
Proteins, 25
 cofactors, 69
 glycoproteins, 46
 membrane proteins, 45
Proton NMR spectra, 10
Purcell, Edward M., 15

Q

QuanScan, Inc., 54, 63-64
Quantum mechanics, 9, 16, 23-24, 66

R

Radar, 31
Radioactive car experiments, 6
Radio-frequency spectroscopy, 24
Radioisotopes, 6, 39, 45, 51
 gamma-ray emissions, 39
 nuclear decay, 39
Rare-earth-metals chemistry, 44
Reagan, Ronald W., 50, 58
Red blood cells, 64-65
Republican administration, 61
Research Systems, Inc., 22
Reserve Officer Training Corps [ROTC], 5, 8, 32
 ordinance officer, 5
Rhodes, Fred H. [Dusty], 5
Ribonucleic acid [RNA], 65
 viral, 65
 Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV], 65
Rochow, Eugene G. [Gene], 15
Rockefeller, John D.
 descendants of, 49
Romney, George W., 32
Rutter, William [Bill], 69

S

Saccharide chemistry, 64
San Diego, University of California at [UC-San Diego], 69
San Diego, University of California at [UCSD], 57
 UCSD CONNECT, 57
Sarett, Lewis H. [Lew], 28
Scanning-tunneling microscope [STM], 63-64
 optical microscope innovation, 64
 scanning-tunneling microscopy, 53-54, 63, 75
Schaeffer, Jake, 27
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman, 33
Science Applications, Inc., 51
Science Office, 41
Scintillation counter, 6
Scolnick, Edward M., 69
Scripps Research Institute, 69
Seaborg, Glenn, 8
Secretary of Defense. *See* Brown, Harold D.
Senate Armed Services Committee, 36
September 11th terrorist attacks, 65, 72
Shell shock, 62
Shen, Tsung Ying, 45, 47
Short-wave radio, 2
Silicone chemistry, 15
Singer, David, 69
Singer, Maxine, 69
Slichter, Charles P. [Charley], 24
Sloan Foundation, 19
 fellowship, 19
Social Sciences Council, 44
Southern California, University of [USC], 71
Space capsule. *See* National Aeronautical and Space Administration [NASA]
Sport Utility Vehicles [SUV], 62
Sputnik, 8, 15
Standard Oil Company, 1-3
 of New Jersey, 6
Stanford University, 7, 10, 15, 19-21, 27-29, 32, 36, 38-39, 45, 54-55, 57, 69
Statistical mechanics, 23-24
Stealth Jet, 50
Stever, H. Guyford [Guy], 41
Stryer, Lubert, 38-39, 54
Supersonic Transport [SST], 36-37
Syntex Corporation, 29
Synthetic chemistry, 7, 17
Synthetic fuels, 2-3

T

Tagamet [cimetidine], 51
Takeda, Inc., 68
Taube, Henry, 21
The Civil War, 62
The Nature of the Chemical Bond, 9
Theriac, Thomas P. [Tom], 55, 66-67
Thermal diffusion, 7
 "forgotten effect", 7
Thermal Instrument Company, 54, 64
Thermodynamics, 7
 gas-phase, 26
 laws of, 70
Three legs of chemistry, 23
Topometrics Corporation, 54
Trehalose, 64
Triple-canopy jungle. See Vietnam War
Tsien, Hsue-Shen, 48-49
Tularick, Inc., 69
Tumors, 47-52
 delivery system, 49
 vascularity, 49-50
Tylenol
 cyanide in, 73

U

United States Navy Riverine forces, 31
United States Army, 8, 11-16, 29, 70
 Chemical Corps, 12, 30
 Ordnance Corps, 12
 Reserves, 8, 13
 Scientific Advisory Panel, 19, 29
United States Congress, 19, 37, 41, 62
United States Defense Department, 50
United States Department of Homeland Security, 72
United States House of Representatives, 36
United States Senate, 36
United States State Department, 42

V

Van der Graaf generator, 13
Van Tamelan, Eugene E., 21
Varian Associates, Inc., 10, 19, 21, 26-27
Venrock Fund, 49

Vest, Charles M. [Chuck], 60
Vestar, Inc., 48-50, 52, 55, 64
 Vestink, 55
Vietnam War, 29-33
 antiaircraft defenses, 30
 counter-battery fire, 32
 herbicides, 31
 North Vietnamese Army [NVA], 30
 Tet Offensive [1968], 31
 Tunnel detection, 31
 Vietcong, 30-31
Viral-decontamination technology, 65
Vogelstein, John, 50
Volpicelli, Richard J. [Dick], 22
Von Karman, Theodore, 48

W

Walkowitz, Ted, 48-50
Wall Street, 52
War on Cancer, 43
Washington D.C., 16-17, 19, 32, 34, 36, 40
Washington Post, 42
Watergate [scandal], 41-42
Waugh, John S., 20
Wayland, Harold, 49
Weapons of mass destruction, 60
West, Paul E., 54, 63
Westheimer, Frank H., 17
White blood cells, 47, 65
White House, the, 19, 34, 37, 40-43
Whitesides, George M., 60
Wiesner, Jerome B., 31
Williams, Larry, 47
Wilson, E. Bright, Jr., 14, 16, 23
Wisconsin, University of, 7
Wobschall, Darold C., 25
Woodward, Robert B. [Bob], 16-17, 22
World War II, 2, 5, 19, 29
 German submarines, 29
 radar research, 9
World Wide Web [internet], 58

X

Xerox Corporation, 55

Z
Zeugmatography, 20