

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

**ROBERT ROBSON**

Transcript of Interviews  
Conducted by

David C. Brock and Christophe Lécuyer

at

Le Grand, California

on

17 November and 16 December 2005

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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This oral history is part of a series supported by grants from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. This series is an important resource for the history of semiconductor electronics, documenting the life and career of Gordon E. Moore, including his experiences and those of others in Shockley Semiconductor, Fairchild Semiconductor, Intel, as well as contexts beyond the semiconductor industry.

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## **ROBERT ROBSON**

1935 Born in Bowman, North Dakota on 11 May

### Education

1955 B.S., Industrial Engineering, South Dakota State University  
1959 Industrial Engineering, San Jose State, California

### Professional Experience

1957-1958 Farnsworth Electronics Incorporated  
Foreman

1958-1962 Fairchild Semiconductor Corporation  
Production Superintendent

1962-1968 Amelco Corporations (Teledyne)  
Manufacturing Manager

1968-1970 Intersil Corporation  
Vice President of Manufacturing

1970-1972 Microma Corporation  
Chairman and President

## ABSTRACT

**Robert Robson** begins the interview with a discussion about growing up in South Dakota. He discusses his education, his involvement with the Army, and his early interest in electronics. He also details his move to California and his involvement with the electronics industry. He describes his employment at Farnsworth Electronics Incorporated and Fairchild Semiconductor Corporation. He describes his interaction with Robert Noyce, Gordon Moore, Andrew Grove, and several other prominent industry leaders. At Fairchild, Robson became production superintendent of the Special Products Group. He left Fairchild after working there for four years. Robson continues the interview by describing his relationship with the semiconductor industry, along with his employment at Amelco, Teledyne, Intersil, and Microma. Robson was manufacturing manager at Amelco, and went on to found Microma, where they worked on the digital watch at its beginning. After two years, Robson sold Microma to Intel and bought a thousand-acre ranch where he and his wife, Sharleen, farm nuts. Finally, he discusses his friendship with Gordon and Betty Moore, describing fishing and hunting trips they took together.

## INTERVIEWERS

**David C. Brock** is a senior research fellow with the Center for Contemporary History and Policy of the Chemical Heritage Foundation. As an historian of science and technology, he specializes in oral history, the history of instrumentation, and the history of semiconductor science, technology, and industry. Brock has studied the philosophy, sociology, and history of science at Brown University, the University of Edinburgh, and Princeton University (respectively and chronologically). His most recent publication is *Understanding Moore's Law: Four Decades of Innovation* (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Press), 2006, which he edited and to which he contributed.

**Christophe Lécuyer** is a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, and he received a doctorate in history from Stanford University. He was a fellow of the Dibner Institute for the History of Science and Technology and has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and the University of Virginia. Prior to becoming a senior research fellow at CHF, Lécuyer was the program manager of the electronic materials department. He has published widely on the history of electronics, engineering education, and medical and scientific instruments and is the author of *Making Silicon Valley: Innovation and the Growth of High Tech, 1930-1970* (2005).

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