SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL ISSUE

ames Histo-Logic®

A Promotional Bulletin for Histotechnology Edited by Brent Riley June, 1987

Dr. J.B. McCormick "Whittling" His Way Into History

Dr. McCormick is President and Chief Executive Officer of Swedish Covenant Hospital, a 325-bed community hospital on Chicago's northwest side. He is also chairman of Pelam, Inc., a Chicago company serving industry through computerized health evaluation systems.

He earned his B.S. degree at the University of Notre Dame and his M.D. degree at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. He served his internship and residency in pathology at Augustana Hospital in Chicago. Dr. McCormick is a board-certified pathologist and a certified member of the American College of Physician Executives.

A recognized expert in health evaluations, laboratory technology, and computer applications in medicine, Dr. McCormick has combined many interests during his professional years. As long-time director of the Department of Laboratory Medicine at Swedish Covenant Hospital, he has implemented practical innovations and improved methods to his own facility and to laboratories throughout the world.

Dr. McCormick serves as a research consultant for Miles Laboratories, Inc. and as a consultant in science and laboratory design, Hospital San Raffaele, Milan, Italy. He is also a member of the Science Advisory Council at the University of Notre Dame.

A distinguished humanitarian, Dr. McCormick has served since 1968 as a vice president to the Paul Carlson Medical Program, which provides rural health and nutrition programs in northeastern Zaire (Africa). The program was initiated by Paul Carlson, a martyred missionary. Dr. McCormick has traveled to the mission field to work and provide short-term assistance.

Editor's Note: While the name of Dr. James B. McCormick is well-known in the histoiogy field, many may not know how deeply involved he has been in the advances and improvements in histology over the past 30 years. This series of two special articles present a fascinating overview of the man responsible for many of the innovative changes that made the histologists' job safer and easier.

Dr. McCormick, as we shall see, is a man looking to the future but retaining a wonderful sense of history. We hope you will enjoy these articles about a fascinating member of the histology community.

Dr. McCormick's scientific and professional society memberships include the American Association for Medical Systems Informatics, the American Academy of Medical Directors, the American College of Hospital Administrators, the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, the College of American Pathologists, the International Health Evaluation Association, and the American and Illinois State Medical Associations.

Dr. McCormick lives with his wife, Suzanne, and their children, Jeremy, 9, and Amanda, 8, in Lincolnwood, Illinois. The family also maintains a home in northern Italy.

It is appropriate that one of the most prestigious awards in the histotechnology profession is named for a man who has contributed more to the profession than perhaps any other. To fully appreciate the significance of winning the J.B. McCormick,

M.D. Award is to know and understand the man who lends it his name.

The contributions made by Dr. James B. McCormick go well beyond medical science. First and foremost, Dr. McCormick is a physician and a family man. He is also an inventor, an entrepreneur, a philanthropist, a historian, an executive, an educator, an administrator, an author, and much more. His professional life is as diverse as the world itself.

One of his 40 patents is for an ingenious device that makes it easier to light a candle in a pumpkin without being burned.

In all his complexity, however, he is devoted to one simple goal – to improve the quality of life by simplifying the tasks that must be performed in life. Dr. McCormick is a storehouse of solutions, and he thrives on problems. "Every problem is an opportunity to apply an orderly thought process to solve the problem," he explained. When someone tells him they are having difficulty making a slide in the laboratory, he immediately sets his mind to work finding a solution. It doesn't matter whether the problem is universal, or unique to that individual. And it doesn't matter whether or not the solution is marketable and profitable. Dr. McCormick is motivated simply by the fact that a need exists.

Most of his inventiveness has been focused on pathology or histotechnology, but he is more than willing to tackle problems in any area. For example, his inventions include a patrol boy's belt with a pulsating light. And one of his 40 patents is for an ingenious device that makes it easier for a child, or anyone else, to light a candle in a pumpkin without being burned.

"Inventing is a state of mind," he said. "The thought process is critical." Dr. McCormick calls it "whittling." "Whittling is the manipulation of materials to convert an abstract thought into a real object," he explained. In fact, wherever he travels in the world, Dr. McCormick carries a pen knife, a roll of nylon filament tape, and a tube of epoxy glue. When he has an idea, he finds some structural material, such as a plastic or styrene cup, and begins "whittling."

"It allows me to fulfill my need to visualize, three-dimensionally, the solution to a problem," he explained. "Some of my best ideas have been sketched on the paper place mat in a hotel dining room."

"If you can convert an abstract thought to reality by whittling," he continued, "you can then demonstrate it to someone else and prove a point."

"Whittling" is what has made Dr. McCormick the father of histotechnology instrumentation and supplies. As a premed student at the University of Notre Dame, he took a course in animal micrology. "It seemed to fit a niche in my inner being," he said. While taking the course he saw a need for prepared educational slides, so he founded the Histoslide Company in 1947. "It gave me a tremendous education in all of the fields in which I was brash enough to want to be a provider," he explained.

Dr. McCormick then became interested in anatomical models, and once again, he saw a need for improvement. Anatomical models were too easily damaged because they were constructed of papier-mâché or plaster. By researching alternative materials, Dr. McCormick discovered that the doll-making industry used better materials in making dolls than the educational supply industry used in making anatomical models. So he began studying how to make dolls. After visiting factories and consulting with design engineers, he decided that the best way to make anatomical models was to mold them out of polyvinyl-chloride.

But the problem wasn't solved yet. The tooling for the doll-making industry was very complex and expensive. It was fine for high volume doll production, but simply wasn't practical for a product that was not mass produced. Although still in medical school, Dr. McCormick studied evenings and weekends in an aluminum foundry to learn how to cast aluminum forms that he could use to mold the polyvinyl-chloride figures. With the knowledge he gained, Dr. McCormick developed a new method of tooling that fit the cost efficiency requirements of smaller quantities. His first patent was issued for his design of an anatomical mannequin with interchangeable reproductive organs. The mannequin was nicknamed "Christine."

Wherever he travels in the world, he carries a pen knife, a roll of nylon filament tape, and a tube of epoxy glue.

Eventually, the company's product line expanded to include frogs, flowers, root tips and a host of other models used for teaching biology. All were made from polyvinyl-chloride and virtually indestructible.

Dr. McCormick's inventiveness and problem solving ability were only beginning to show their full potential. As he advanced into medical science and pathology, he encountered all the problems that histotechnologists had preparing slides for

pathological specimen examination. He saw endless possibilities to improve the preparation of slides.

Dr. McCormick began researching materials and methods, pouring over more than a century of technique and science. It soon became obvious that the basic methods used to prepare slides had not changed in more than 125 years. While the methods were appropriate for the 19th century, increasing volume and escalating labor costs made them very inefficient for the 20th.

The inspiration for his first line of Lab-Tek supplies came from a set of plastic building blocks at Woolworth's.

Once again he started by searching for the right material, and once again the solution was plastics. The inspiration for his first line of Lab-Tek supplies came while he was shopping at a Woolworth's store. There, he saw a set of toy building blocks made of plastic. Dr. McCormick began "whittling" and discovered that these various sized plastic building blocks could be used to mold paraffin. He realized that for a few pennies each he could manufacture plastic molds that were disposable.

Dr. McCormick actually used the toy building blocks to manufacture the prototype that would demonstrate his concept of an embedding ring. Soon he added a complete line of plastic molds and embedding rings to his Histoslide Company product line.

Realizing that schools which taught biology were not interested in histotechnology products, he sold the successful Histoslide Company in 1957, and founded a new company called Lab-Tek. This new company concentrated on histotechnology product lines.

By this time, Dr. McCormick was in residency at Augustana Hospital in Chicago. Although his company, and its line of products, was expanding rapidly, he managed to balance the demands of both his profession and his business.

Next, he designed disposable petrie dishes and developed the ethylene oxide gas sterilization process for them. By 1962, his company was booming. He added cytology products as well as other product lines, and was granted patents on many of them.

Then Dr. McCormick saw a need to expand into another major area of histotechnology – instrumentation. He began designing and perfecting microtomes, cryostats, slide stainers, embedding centers and other instruments used in histology. Today, many of his designs are still an integral part of the present TISSUE-TEK® instrument line.

Dr. McCormick has a special drive and talent for acquiring the information necessary to solve a problem. When he was searching for alternative refrigeration methods for the TISSUE-TEK® Cryostat, there was nothing available in the package size he wanted. "I wanted a compact and portable refrigeration source – something about two inches square," he said. "The only thing I could find was an ice cube."

His determination took him to Canada where he studied cold junctions that generate cold electrically from a thermocoupled junction. With this knowledge, he designed a miniature refrigeration system that was used in an early TISSUE-TEK® Cryostat.

Geographically, Dr. McCormick has no bounds. He is known for going wherever is necessary to create the knowledge resources he needs to solve a problem. Usually his quest takes him to a university where basic research is being conducted in his specific area of interest. He then spends as long as necessary studying and learning the technology so he can apply it to his specific problem.

In 1965, Dr. McCormick sold Lab-Tek Company to Miles Laboratories, Inc. However, he continues to provide valuable input and ideas as a research consultant for Miles. He is currently working with Ames on the development of new generations of technology within the discipline of histology. He was recently issued three patents representing a potentially new generation of TISSUE-TEK® instruments. His innovative contributions to the world's histology community remain unsurpassed.

Dr. McCormick's unique approach to problem solving in histology will surely lead to products you will enjoy using in future years. In part two of the article, we will learn more about his work as an author, historian and educator.

National Society for Histotechnology Convention

October 11-16, 1987
Seattle, Washington

For information call:

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(301) 577-4907

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For more information, contact your Ames representative or Ames Division, Miles Laboratories, Inc., P.O. Box 70, Elkhart, Indiana 46515.

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The NHS Symposium/Convention: How to Relax and Enjoy It

Striking the proper balance between business and pleasure at a professional symposium is not an easy task. Of course the primary reason we go to a symposium is to enhance our skills and knowledge, and find out what is new in our profession. But symposiums are typically held in cities that offer plenty of activities and attractions – both day and night. So the temptations are great. The Symposium/Convention of the National Society for Histotechnology to be held October 11-16 in Seattle is no exception.

Like anything else, the key to a beneficial and enjoyable symposium is to plan ahead. The first step is to study the symposium program thoroughly to decide which workshops you should attend. The program includes a brief description of each of the 41 workshops. Remember that some workshops limit the number of participants, so it is important to make your decision and get your reservations in as early as possible.

Full- and half-day workshops will be held during the first three days of the symposium/convention. CEU credit will be given for all the workshops, which cover everything from the basics of histology, to specific techniques, to laboratory management topics. The workshops are structured for three different levels of experience. Keep in mind that the advanced workshops are designed for those who already have extensive backgrounds in the topic to be covered.

Scientific and veterinary sessions will be held Wednesday through Friday covering a number of current topics. These sessions use a lecture format and are open to everyone attending the symposium.

There are plenty of activities planned for the evenings of the convention as well. Scientific exhibits will open Tuesday evening and continue for the remainder of the convention. These exhibits are sponsored by manufacturing companies who display the latest in laboratory equipment and supplies. Special hospitality functions are also scheduled each evening. In addition, NSH committee meetings are held throughout the week and are also open to everyone.

The annual awards banquet is scheduled for the evening of October 15. A number of awards will be presented, including the prestigious J.B. McCormick M.D. Award, the Histotechnologist Of The Year Award, the Golden Forceps Award, and the new Diamond Cover Award.

Be sure to leave yourself some time to relax and see Seattle. You know the old saying, "all work and no play..." If you can get to Seattle a day or two before the symposium begins, or stay a day or two after it closes, there is plenty to see and do. The local NSH chapter is sponsoring a tour of the city on the afternoon of October 10. Reservations must be made in advance. See the latest issue of *NSH In Action* for reservation information.

Because most of you will have very limited time to see the sights, get to know Seattle and what it has to offer *before* you go. If you have never been to Seattle, you might want to talk to friends who have. Find out which attractions are really worthwhile and which are overrated.

You may have heard it rains a lot in Seattle. But actually, it ranks 44th among major U.S. cities in amount of annual rainfall, behind Atlanta, Houston, Boston, New York and Washington, D.C.

Most people would be surprised to learn that Seattle was chosen by Rand McNally as the number one vacation destination in the United States. Perhaps Seattle's best-known attraction is the Space Needle, built for the very successful Seattle World's Fair in 1962. Another popular attraction is an underground tour of old Seattle. Museums abound in Seattle, including the Klondike Gold Rush Museum,

the Museum of Sea & Ships, the Museum of Flight, Museum of History and Industry, the Nordic Heritage Museum, and several art museums.

If you're into mountain scenery and have a full day to explore, take a drive through the magnificent mountain ranges surrounding the city. Mt. Rainier National Park is about three hours from Seattle, and well worth the drive. Even if your time is limited, a 30 minute drive will put you in a wilderness of mountain peaks and evergreens.

There is something for everyone in Seattle, and whatever you choose to do, you probably won't be disappointed. For more information about what to do in Seattle, write to the Seattle-King County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 666 Stewart St., Seattle, WA 98101.

More than eight hundred are expected to attend this year's symposium/convention. You do not have to be an NSH member to attend. The theme will be "Histotechnology Evergrowing." This theme, combined with a logo which is a graphic representation of evergreens and mountains, symbolizes the continued growth of the NSH, as well as the state of Washington and the city of Seattle.

For more information about the NSH Symposium/Convention see the March issue of the *Journal of Histotechnology*. You can also write NSH Headquarters, 5900 Princess Garden Parkway, Suite 805, Lanham, Maryland 20706. Or call (301) 577-4907.

NSH Telephone Conference Schedule

NSH Office
5900 Princess Garden Pkwy., #805
Lanham, MD 20706
(301) 577-4907

September 18
Laboratory Math for the Histologic Technician

Teleconference Network of Texas

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive
San Antonio, TX 78284-7978
(512) 691-7291

July 10
Theory and Practice of Immunocytochemistry, Part 1

August 7
Theory and Practice of Immunocytochemistry, Part 2

Questions and Answers

Do you have questions about Ames histology products? Perhaps you'll find the answers in this column. Q & A will be a regular feature in promotional issues, and the topics covered represent those questions frequently asked of the Ames customer service representatives. We invite you to read Q & A regularly. You might find the answer to a question that's been on your mind.

Q

How can I prevent sectioning problems with my ACCU-EDGE® Disposable Blade Holders?

A

1. Keep the blade holder free of debris and rust. Debris or rust between the blade fixing plate and the blade holder may cause the knife to become loose or vibrate during sectioning.

2. Depending on the type of knife holder, do not excessively tighten the blade fixing knob or blade fixing screws. Keep the blade fixing knob or screws snug but do not overtighten. Excessive tightening may cause damage that can lead to difficulty in sectioning.

3. Maintain the blade holder as recommended in the product insert. Proper maintenance will protect the blade holder and will help reduce the wear on the internal components. For ACCU-EDGE® Blade System, Product Code 4687, use the ACCU-EDGE® Maintenance Kit, Product Code 4673.

4. Use care when handling the blade holder body. Rough handling may cause misalignment or damage to the finish. A nick or dent in the blade holder body could cause vibration or looseness of the blade. This may produce serious sectioning problems.

5. If the blade holder will not be used for an extended period of time, coat it lightly with oil and place it in the storage box.

Following the above suggestions may reduce future sectioning problems. If you experience other difficulties with your ACCU-EDGE® Blade Holders, contact Ames Cellular Diagnostics Customer Service at 1-800-323-6063.

New Immunohistology Primary Antibodies from Ames

Since the mailing of our new TISSUE-TEK® Immunohistology Product and Ordering Guide in March, Ames has released seven new primary antisera and two improved Desmin antibodies.

The new Desmin monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies exhibit strong staining on routine formalin fixed, paraffin embedding tissue. Both products exhibit excellent specificity with no detectable cross reactivity to other intermediate filaments.

All other new TISSUE-TEK® antibodies may be used on formalin fixed tissue except for the melanoma monoclonal. This antibody is recommended for use on fresh frozen tissue sections or fresh unfixed cell smears.

All antibodies are titered and tested for their ability to detect the target antigen in human tissue. Species cross reactivity is not checked. All antibodies are ready-to-use and supplied in six ml. quantities in a dropper bottle.

Ames has also introduced an improved DAB Substrate Pack (8002). It features DAB in a convenient easy-to-use tablet form. The Pack contains 10 10-milligram tablets. Each tablet will yield 20 ml. of working solution. The Pack also contains buffer concentrate and hydrogen peroxide.

Antibody	Form*	Ames Code #	AmS/P Code #	List Price
Actin (Muscle and Fibroblast)	M	8847	57912-44	$125.00
DAB Substrate Pack		8002	57915-2	42.00
Desmin	M	8851	57912-45	185.00
Desmin	P	8523	57910-22	105.00
Factor VIII	M	8812	57912-12	95.00
IgG	M	8821	57912-22	66.00
Hepatitis B Surface Antigen	M	8816	57912-17	105.00
Melanoma Associated Antigen	M	8828	57912-29	290.00
Testosterone	P	8575	57910-69	89.00
VIP	P	8583	57910-75	89.00

*P = Polyclonal Rabbit Antiserum
M = Monoclonal Mouse Antibody

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All products are for research or investigation use only.

New Accu-Edge™ products in anatomical pathology

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See your Ames representative for further details.

Ames Customer Service and Communications Department:

Help When You Need It

When a histotechnologist in a southeastern hospital kept getting an error code on his TISSUE-TEK® V.I.P.™ Tissue Processor, he tried everything he could to solve the problem. He began feeling uneasy when nothing seemed to work. He reread the operating manual and studied the trouble-shooting guide, but his anxiety grew when he still couldn't find a solution. Work was piling up and a critical instrument was out of commission. "What now?" he thought.

The answer was just a phone call away. He dialed the toll free number for Ames Customer Service and Communications Department, and began to feel relieved immediately when Max Abernathy, a customer services supervisor, answered the call. The histotechnologist's problem wasn't a simple one, but as an experienced problem solver Abernathy knew exactly where to begin. He asked a few questions and talked the caller through a series of steps. The phone conversation lasted eleven minutes and when the histotechnologist hung up, his V.I.P.™ was operating again.

It happens to all of us at one time or another. We run into a question or problem that we just can't seem to resolve. And as anyone who subscribes to Murphy's Law knows, the probability that a problem will occur increases directly with the amount of work to be done. That's why the Ames Customer Service and Communications Department exists.

The department has histology products and instruments on hand so they can work through problems with the caller.

This was a typical problem for Max Abernathy and the other customer service reps at Ames. The variety of questions and problems they can handle attests to the vast knowledge and experience shared by the department. "We're here to help the customer in any way we can," explains Ed Snoke, Manager of Customer Services and one of the histology specialists.

The department, located in Mishawaka, Indiana, includes six people who specialize in the more than 300 histology products marketed by Ames. They come from diverse backgrounds in biology, histology, and electronics. But as a team, there are few questions they can't answer. "We complement each other very well," said Snoke.

Most questions can be answered immediately by the service reps. The department is well equipped with books, manuals, diagrams and other reference material. They also have histology products and instruments on hand so they can work through problems with the caller.

Some people call in to exchange ideas. "We get a lot of good tips from customers," said Jeff Jamison, a customer service rep.

The department encourages customers to use the 800 number when they have a problem they can't solve, a question they can't answer, or are simply curious about something. No question is too simple, or too complicated for the department to handle. "Foremost in our minds is that the customer's time is very valuable," Snoke said. "And when he has a problem, we have to help him solve it fast."

Most questions can be answered by the customer service reps immediately. If not, they have plenty of resources throughout the company to get an answer quickly. If a rep needs to call you back, they can usually do it before the end of the day. If the problem turns out to be an equipment malfunction that cannot be solved over the telephone, you may be asked to send the equipment to the Ames Instrument Service Center. If that isn't practical, an Instrument Service Engineer may be sent to make the necessary repairs.

"Every day is different," Snoke said, referring to the types of calls that come in. "Most of our calls come from histotechnologists. But we also get calls from pathologists, biomedical engineers or technicians, and Ames and American Scientific Products sales reps. We even get calls from other departments here at Ames."

The questions and problems also vary. Some callers simply need to know part numbers for ordering. Still others have instrument programming or operation problems they can't solve. Some even call with questions about sales promotions in the Marketing Department. And some just want to exchange ideas. "We get a lot of good tips from customers who call in," said Jeff Jamison, another customer service rep.

When new developments occur in histology products or techniques, questions in that area will always increase as customers learn to use the new instruments or techniques. Recent new developments in tissue staining procedures, for example, have brought a number of calls from immunohistology labs.

Customer service reps are scheduled according to the number of incoming calls at any given time. If no one is available when a call comes in, the caller may be put on hold. "If there are no reps available within five minutes, an operator will come back on the line to take a message. The first available rep will then return the call," said Snoke.

Customer service reps must have appropriate backgrounds before they join the department, and they are thoroughly trained before they are allowed to handle calls. In addition to textbook study, they undergo product training from the Ames Service and Repair Department, and the technical support engineers who prepare technical manuals for histology instruments. They also spend time getting hands-on experience in a lab, and enroll in the Ames V.I.P.™ school – first as a participant, then again as a presenter. Special classes are held to develop listening and communications skills, and finally, trainees spend several days monitoring calls received by other customer service reps before they can accept calls themselves.

Training is an ongoing activity for the Customer Service and Communications Department. Regular meetings are held to discuss new products, current issues or problems.

To make the department readily available during the time calls are most likely to come in from across the country, the histology phone lines are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. If you ever have a problem, question, or suggestion, don't hesitate to call Ames Customer Service and Communications Department at 1-800-323-6063.

A call to the histology section of Customer Service and Communications Department will put you in touch with one of these people:

JEFF JAMISON has been a histotechnologist for more than 18 years. He began his career with the Corporate Research Department at Miles and has stayed with the company ever since. When a tough question comes in about a technique, he usually has the answer. "I've been there and I know what kind of problems they run into," Jamison said. "I also know what it's like *not* to be able to get answers. But Ames customers *do* have an opportunity to get answers through this department."

MICHELE ZWICKL has been in the customer service department at Ames for almost four years. She holds a degree in biology from Indiana University. Her fascination with biology led to an interest in histology, and Ames. According to her colleagues, she has a remarkable talent for putting customers at ease and solving their problems. "I like the customer interaction," she said. "And I particularly enjoy being able to help the customer."

LARRY DODD has a strong background in both electronics and biology. He spent eight years working in electronics – including a stint in the armed services – before earning a degree from Western Michigan University. He has been with Miles for about 10 years. The combination of biology and electronics made him an ideal candidate for customer service. His understanding of instrumentation gives him an edge in helping customers solve problems.

STEVE SALLEE can probably take apart any Ames histology instrument and reassemble it blindfolded. Before coming to customer service, he was an instrument service engineer with Ames for seven years. He holds a degree in engineering technology from the University of Hartford, and worked in the computer industry before coming to Ames. Sallee said he gets "a tremendous feeling of accomplishment when he helps a customer identify and resolve a problem."

MAX ABERNATHY worked in a clinical laboratory for 12 years before coming to Ames as a sales representative in 1968. In 1972, he became a research scientist in Ames Technical Services Department. He has also worked in the Growth and Development, Technical Training, International Technical Services, and Corporate Public Relations Departments at Ames. He has a medical laboratory technology degree from Gradwohl School of Medical Laboratory Technique. His diverse background has enabled him to see customer problems from many different perspectives.

ED SNOKE heads the customer service team for histology products. He has been with Ames for 15 years and has worked in the Research and Development, Technical Services, and Marketing Departments. He has bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry from Clarkson University, and an MBA from Indiana University. Snoke spends most of his time managing the team, but he still handles an occasional call. "I'm proud to say that nobody in this department considers their job to be routine," he said. "I really believe they all have a genuine concern for the customer."

National Society for Histotechnology

Application for Membership

(Open to Any Person with an Interest in Histotechnology)

Please remit to:
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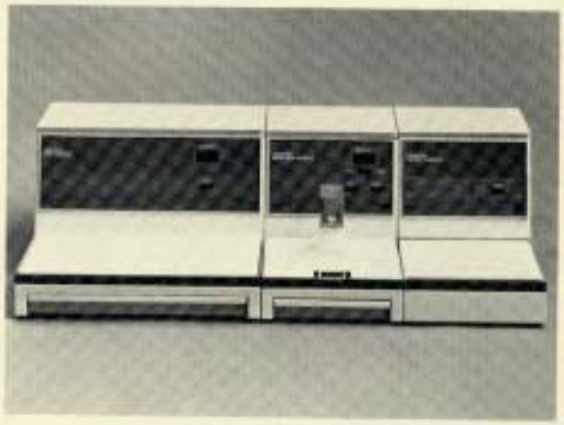

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