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The National Foundation wanted the HeLa cell project to conform to protocols they had developed, and thought that such conformity could be achieved best by a university having personnel and an organization with experience in research and development projects. Dr. H. M. Weaver, Director of Research for the National Foundation, was acquainted with the Tuskegee Institute and especially with the Carver Research Foundation at Tuskegee Institute. For many years Basil O'Connor, founder and chief administrator of the National Foundation, was chairman of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee Institute. His frequent visits to Tuskegee acquainted him with the Institute's staff and facilities. The selection of Tuskegee to do the HeLa project may have been influenced by O'Connor's confidence in the quality of effort and cooperation available at Tuskegee. At any rate, in October 1952 Weaver discussed the need for a central HeLa production laboratory with Russell W. Brown, Director of the Carver Research Foundation. Subsequently, it was agreed that the project would be awarded to Tuskegee Institute, to be supported by a grant from the National Foundation. Brown was to act as principal investigator with James H. M. Henderson as assistant. Weaver arranged for Brown to spend three months and Henderson six weeks studying cell and tissue culture methods at the University of Minnesota under the supervision of Jerome T. Syverton and William F. Scherer.¹²

12. In conceiving this historical report of the HeLa project we decided to invite Dr. William F. Scherer to collaborate in the authorship because of the extensive and vital role he had in the work to be reported. In a letter dated 16 January 1981 he stated: "I certainly would be honored to co-author an article with you as you described in your letter. I think it certainly would be appropriate at this time." We were successful in locating many of the essential records of the project among the inactive files preserved by the Carver Research Foundation at Tuskegee Institute. This information was reinforced by personal recollections and by reference to pertinent literature. Scherer participated in preparation of the manuscript by letters, telephone conversations, and conferences in Tuskegee and New York. He visited Tuskegee on 26-27 June 1981 when the outline and sequence of data presentation were organized. A complete draft was reviewed in detail when Brown visited Scherer in New York in November 1981. Unfortunately, Dr. Scherer died suddenly on Wednesday, 12 May 1982. He was a member of a distinguished group of scientists whose research and teaching have been the foundation for present advancements in animal cell culture and applications to the study of human and animal viral diseases and the nature of viruses.

In a letter from Scherer dated the day of his death concerning items that had not been discussed adequately in preparation of the manuscript, and forwarded by Dr. Robert V. Dickerman, Department of Microbiology, Cornell University Medical College (who wrote that Bill Scherer dictated and corrected a rough draft of this letter before his untimely death), Scherer stated: "I was selected to participate in the HeLa project because Jerry Syverton and I were the ones who did the poliovirus work with HeLa cells. Then I'm sure I was chosen because Jerry was chairman of the department and extremely busy with other duties at Minnesota.

"The work began at Minnesota with HeLa cells because I knew George Gev through taking

well as the intermittent interruption of production and shipping schedules.

By September 1953, we had six technicians at Tuskegee, including the laboratory supervisor. Shortly thereafter, the staff was increased to ten full-time cell culture technicians plus the supervisor, and additional full-time laboratory helpers and shipping clerks plus part-time student helpers. At one time during full scale production thirty-five people were working on the HeLa project.

In February 1954 the laboratory achieved the projected level of production: it was then possible to supply the requirements of the many laboratories participating in the polio vaccine evaluation program. From 1 April through 30 September 1954, approximately 133,000 tube cultures and 1,800 bottle cultures of HeLa cells were sent from Tuskegee to laboratories in twenty-three cities located in all sections of the United States.¹⁵ When the Salk vaccine evaluation was started, some of the laboratories involved had become proficient in the preparation of primary cultures from Rhesus monkey tissues as the shortage of Rhesus monkeys was not as acute as had been anticipated. Nevertheless, many laboratories were glad to obtain HeLa cultures and the number requesting HeLa cells increased. By 30 June 1955 we had shipped approximately 600,000 cultures.

In retrospect, although it may have been fortuitous that we at Tuskegee Institute became involved in a program that has had such momentous development in more recent decades, we are quietly proud of the role of the Tuskegee Institute in the fight against poliomyelitis.

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15. W. F. Scherer and R. W. Brown, "Transportation of human cells *in vitro*," *Proc. Soc. Exp. Biol. Med.*, 92: 82-84, 1956.