American Association for the Advancement of Science

SCIENCE

12 May 1989 Vol. 244 Pages 621–744



Pelleting RNA?

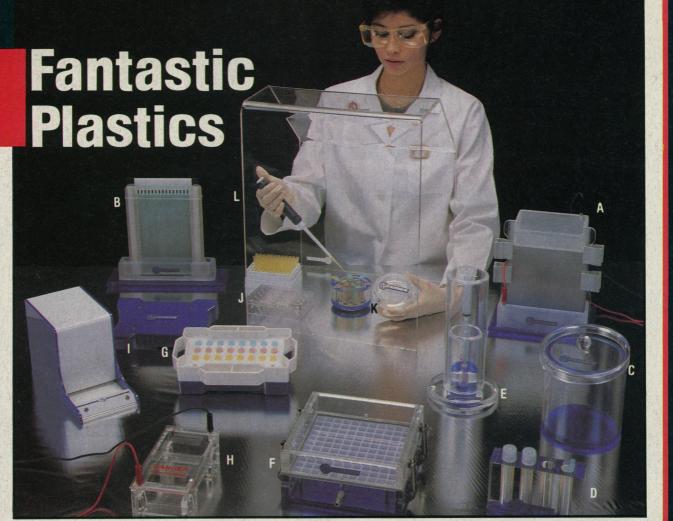
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SCIENCE is published weekly on Friday, except the last week in December, and with an extra issue in February by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Second-class postage (publication No. 484460) paid at Washington, DC, and at an additional entry. Now combined with **The** Scientific Monthly® Copyright © 1989 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The title SCI-ENCE is a registered trademark of the AAAS. Domestic individual membership and subscription (51 issues): \$75. Domestic institutional subscription (51 issues): \$120. Foreign postage extra: Canada \$46, other (surface mail) \$46, air mail via Amsterdam \$85. First class, airmail, school-year, and student rates on request. **Single copy sales**: Current issue, \$3.50; back issues, \$5.00; Biotechnology issue, \$6.00 (for postage and handling, add per copy \$0.50 U.S., \$1.00 all foreign); Guide to Biotechnology Products and Instruments, \$18 (for postage and handling add per copy \$0.50 U.S., \$1.50 Canada, \$2.00 other foreign). Bulk rates on request. **Change of address**: allow 6 weeks, giving old and new addresses and 11-digit account number. Authorization to photocopy material for internal or personal use under clrcumstances not falling within the fair use provisions of the Copyright Act is granted by AAAS to libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) Transactional Reporting Service, provided that the base fee of \$1 per copy plus \$0.10 per page is paid directly to CCC, 21 Congress Street, Salem, Massachusetts 01970. The identification code for *Science* is 10d8-8075/83 \$1 + .10. **Postmaster**: Send Form 3579 to *Science*, P.O. Box 1722, Riverton, NJ 08077. *Science* is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in several specialized indexes. The American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1844 and incorporated in 1874. Its objects are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among

are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to foster scientific freedom and responsibility, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress.



COVER Color-enhanced tissue section from a human ovarian epithelial carcinoma. The tumor cells contain >fivefold amplification of the HER-2/neu proto-oncogene. The section is immunostained with antibody to the HER-2/neu protein. The typical cystic nature of the tumor can be seen, and there is intense membrane staining (brown color) of the tumor cells lining the cystic structures. Stromal cells and nonmalignant elements are unstained, indicating the absence of the protein ($\times 100$). See page 707. [Photograph by D. J. Slamon, Department of Medicine, UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA 90024, and M. F. Press, Department of Pathology, University of Southern California School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA 90033]

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Health Care Through Discovery and Innovation

Cretaceous currents

HAT were ocean circulation patterns like during the mid-Cretaceous (100 million years ago)? The tropical Pacific was flowing westward. The Tethys Ocean (the seaway that separated North America and Eurasia in the north from Africa, South America, and India in the south) was also thought-based on laboratory experiments and biogeographic studiesto have a dominant west-flowing surface current. However, recent numerical simulations of the mid-Cretaceous Tethys Ocean circulation favor eastward flow along the northern margin of the ocean (page 684). The simulations took into account Cretaceous atmospheric conditions at the sea surface, the shape and size of Tethys, the positions and shapes of the continents, sea level, and other factors. Barron and Peterson discuss how differences in these parameters may be at the root of the discrepancies between the simulations and the earlier reconstructions. The results of the simulations bear directly on interpretations of marine organism dispersal by Tethys currents after the breakup of the supercontinent Pangea some 200 million years ago.

Honey bee sounds

worker honey bee performs a dance to communicate to her nestmates where food is located; which of the dancer's signals are processed by the nestmates is now becoming clear. The dancer produces sounds by vibrating her wings, and the vibrations cause air particles near her abdomen to oscillate; other honey bees detect the oscillating air particles and respond by lowering their wings and raising their antennae (page 686). The responding bees do not react to the weak pressure oscillations that are also components of the traveling sound waves. Bees could learn to detect artificial airborne sounds and could distinguish between sounds at different frequencies. Towne and Kirchner speculate that the Johnston's organs on flagella of the bees' antennae detect the

This Week in Science

air-particle oscillations. These organs are most sensitive to sounds at the frequency (265 Hz) of the sounds that accompany the dance; these organs may process information about where the dancer is and where the food she has found is located.

Corn and culture

AIZE played an important part in prehistoric Peruvian cul-Ltures. Charred kernels of maize recovered from settlements dating from A.D. 450 to 1500 in the upper Mantaro Valley of the Andes provide a record of sequential steps in regional maize evolution and give some insights into local cultural and political developments (page 690). Johannessen and Hastorf studied kernels from six contiguous time periods and noted several trends-a general increase in kernel size, several changes in kernel shape, changes in the number of rows to an ear (inferred from the physical characteristics of the kernels), and an increase in the number of maize varieties. The gradual evolution of the maize has cultural significance. For example, the large-kerneled variety that was common by A.D. 1000 resembles maize that had suddenly come into use in coastal regions centuries earlier; the coastal maize had been attributed to the influence of the Waris (whose expansion occurred from A.D. 550 to 850), and it therefore appears unlikely that the Waris were influential in the upper Mantaro Valley. The large-kerneled maize was a local and not an Inca innovation: it and tools for growing, processing, and eating it were well established in this valley long before Inca time.

Prognostic tool for breast and ovarian cancers

URING 1989, there are likely to be close to 162,000 new cases of breast and ovarian cancer; these two types of cancer account for about one-third of all the cancers in women. Of the several prognosticators for long-term survival in breast cancer, the best are whether there has been amplification of the HER-2/neu protooncogene (a normal gene that is amplified in some tumors and may be associated with tumor development) and whether lymph nodes are involved; amplification of HER-2/neu also has now been shown to be an indicator of clinical outcome in ovarian cancer (page 707). Slamon et al. found in a large study that in 25 to 30% of breast and ovarian cancers there are multiple copies of this proto-oncogene. The consequences of amplification are overexpression of RNA and protein (cover); each of these indicators was assessed. Because follow-up studies show that the amount of amplification is predictive of the patient's long-term survival, HER-2/neu is an obvious target both for diagnostic tests and for therapies for both of these malignancies.

$\gamma\delta$ T cells

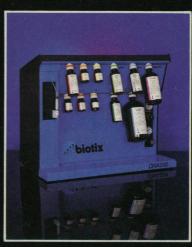
function has been found for a subpopulation of cells of the im-L mune system for which no function was previously known. The $\gamma\delta$ T cells appear to provide a rapid first-line defense in the immune response against the bacteria that cause tuberculosis (page 713). Studies by Janis et al. show that $\gamma\delta$ T cells are responsive to mycobacteria both in vivo and in vitro. After mice had been immunized with mycobacteria, the number of $\gamma\delta$ -bearing cells in lymph nodes expanded 20- to 25fold. The $\gamma\delta$ cells participated in the primary immune response but were less active than other T cells ($\alpha\beta$ T cells) in the secondary responses that ensued after subsequent immunizations. These differences in responsiveness suggest that after $\gamma\delta$ T cells participate in the primary response to mycobacterial antigens (perhaps specifically to those antigens that are shared by many microorganisms) a switch may occur to turn on $\alpha\beta$ cells, which then mediate secondary responses to the same antigens. The $\gamma\delta$ T cells and the corresponding $\alpha\beta$ T cells recognize mycobacterial antigens in association with different cell surface structures. The two subpopulations appear to represent distinct T cell lineages.

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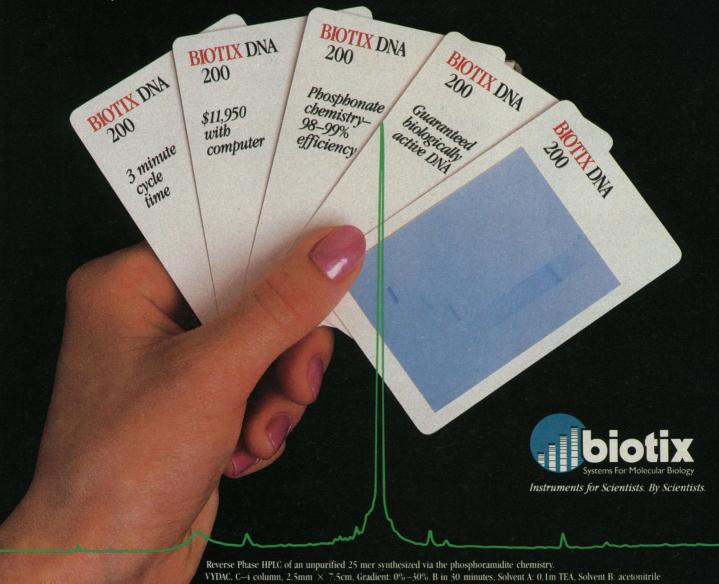
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Science

12 MAY 1989 VOLUME 244 NUMBER 4905

Oil Spills

The Alaskan oil spill has become the most studied and managed event of its kind. Some 30 teams from various state and federal agencies have, as their goal, assessment of damage accruing from it. Each morning at Valdez there have been briefing sessions attended by 60 to 70 scientists. The cleanup is being managed by a committee that includes representatives from about 12 state and federal agencies.

Thus far the sequence of events following the spill has been governed by local factors such as wind, temperature, ocean currents, geology, and the composition of the Prudhoe Bay crude oil. Nevertheless events have been following a pattern similar to those observed in spills of crude oil elsewhere.

Crude oils differ, but in general they contain hundreds, even thousands, of different compounds. Some are straight-chain hydrocarbons with carbon numbers ranging from 4 or 5 to 35 or more. Other hydrocarbons have branched chains with a wide range of carbon numbers. Aromatic compounds such as benzene, toluene, and polynuclear hydrocarbons are substantially present. Other constituents include waxes and complex, high molecular weight asphaltenes. All of these substances and more are present in Prudhoe Bay crude oil. When ingested, most of the compounds are nontoxic. Notable exceptions are some of the aromatic compounds, including benzene and toluene.

After a crude oil is spilled in a marine environment, many processes follow. A typical crude has a density of about 0.85, more or less, and this factor combined with winds, wave action, and currents leads to spreading, which is particularly rapid during the first 24 hours. During that period most of the components having boiling points below 200°C volatilize. As a result some of the toxic chemicals such as benzene are removed. The composition of the floating mixture is further changed immediately and later by photooxidation, biodegradation, dispersion, and dissolution. About a day after the spill, depending on temperature and wave action, an emulsification of oil and sea water occurs, leading to formation of a highly viscous material that contains about 70% water. This material is very sticky, and it adheres to almost all objects that it encounters, including birds and sea otters. There has been one report of a minor fish kill in Prince William Sound. Observations at other oil spills indicate that dispersed oil is not toxic to zooplankton when ingested. It is eliminated in the feces. In general, oil chemicals are not concentrated in the food chain.

In Prince William Sound local factors have affected the movement and behavior of the spill. Part of the time, the sea is relatively calm, but often it is roiled by winds that create waves 20 feet high and more. The amplitude of the tide is about 15 feet. The Alaska Current enters the Sound on the east and exits on the west. This flow has protected some of the Sound from major contamination and has carried part of the spill out of the Sound. As a result of various physical, biological, and chemical processes, the inventory of oil in Prince William Sound (originally 10 million gallons) dropped about 70% during the first 4 weeks after the spill. The U.S. Forest Service, one agency active at the site, quotes an Exxon estimate as follows: evaporated, 35%; recovered, 17%; burned, 8%; biodegraded, 5%; dispersed, 5%. The total in the form of oil slicks on Prince William Sound amounted to 10% of the original spill; that on the shoreline, 18%. A large fleet of vessels was mopping up the slicks, and in good weather was capturing about 120,000 gallons a day. Previous experience has shown that once the slicks become thin (some micrometers) they are fairly rapidly destroyed by photooxidation and microbial action. However, the tarry oil on 300 miles of shoreline will only slowly be removed by wave action and by a workforce of about 4000.

Insofar as part of the oil leaves Prince William Sound and affects other portions of the Alaska coastline, Exxon will have additional problems. However, due to the cleanup, the flushing action of the Alaska Current, and the fact that some of Prince William Sound has escaped major contamination, it is likely that in a few years or less, the fauna of the Sound will be substantially restored. But television viewers will not soon forget heartrending scenes of oiled birds and sick otters .--- PHILIP H. ABELSON

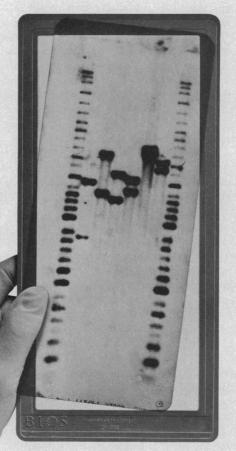
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BIOS Population Blot prepared using BIOS TIMEFRAME™ equipment showing DNA variability among unrelated humans as detected by hybrid-ization to a VNTR probe, pYNH24. Samples were electrophoresed (0.8% agarose gel, 640 Vhr) and prepared according to BIOS protocols. The blot was probed and strin, washed twice prior to this bubbid probed and strip-washed twice prior to this hybrid-ization. Autoradiography: 2 days. -70°C. Outside lanes contain DNA sizing markers with fragment sizes between 0.4 and 12 kb. Remaining 6 lanes contain 4 µg of Taql digested human DNA from six unrelated individuals. Note unique hybridization patterns. The pYNH24 probe detects at least 30 alleles with fragment sizes ranging between 15 kb and 7.0 kb (Nakamura et al., 1987. *Science* 235:1616).



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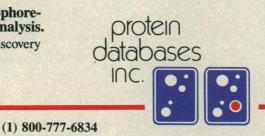
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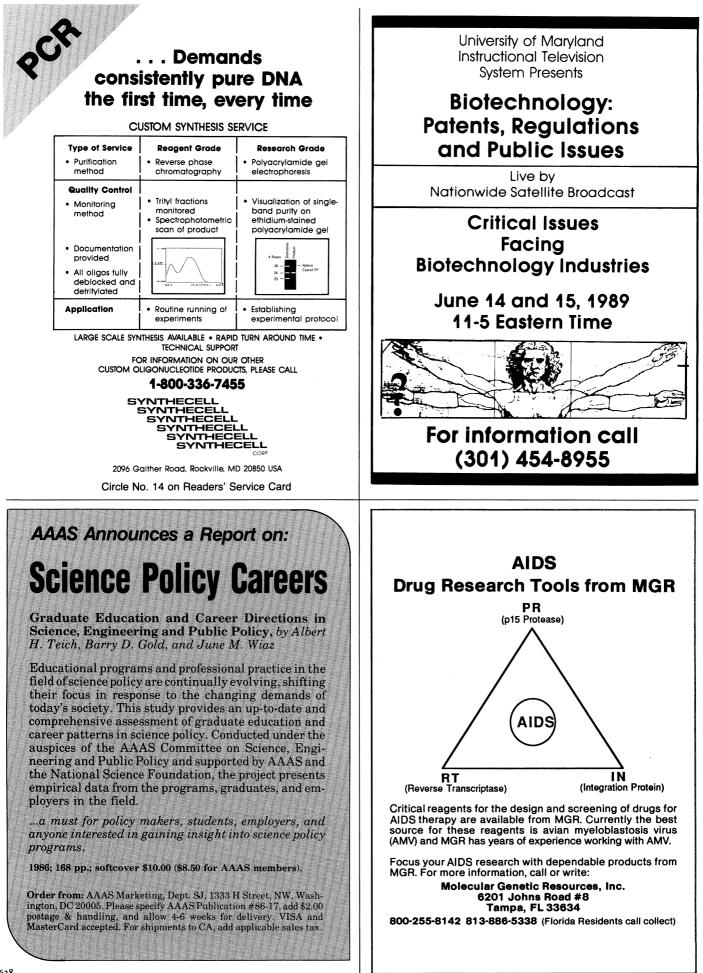
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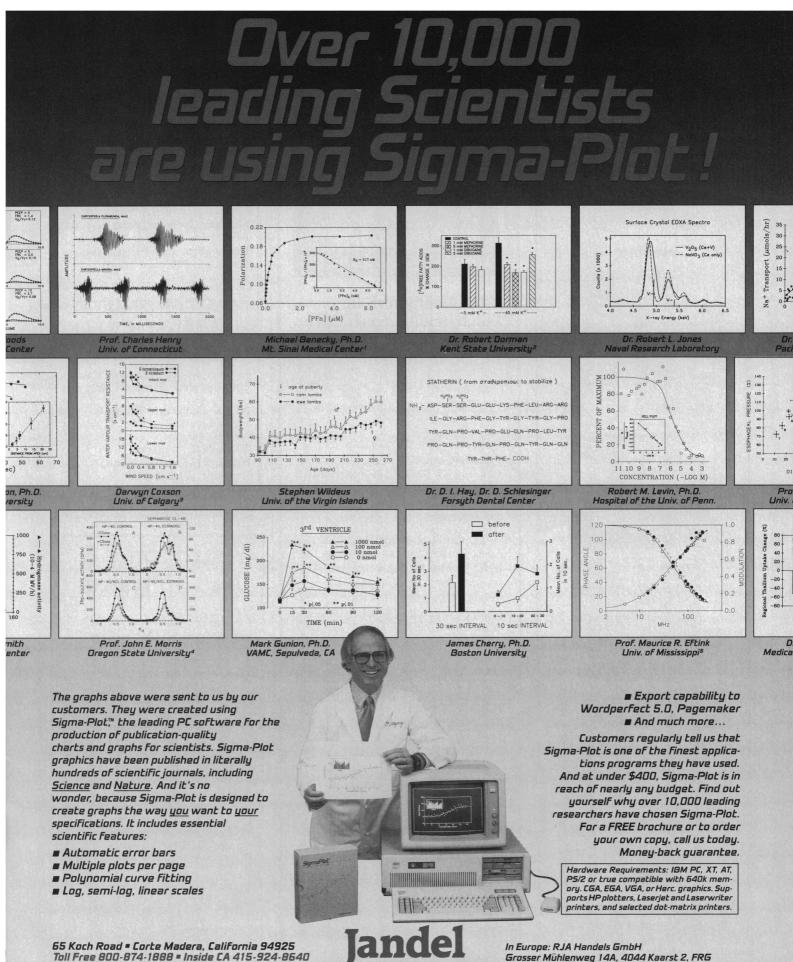
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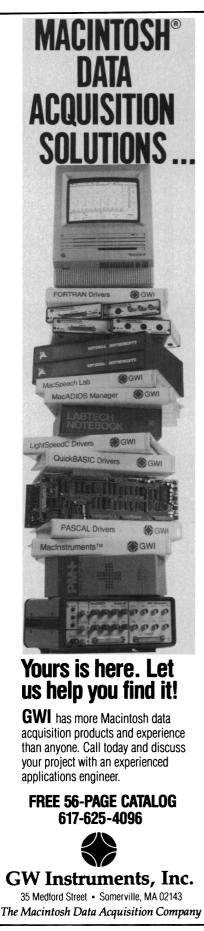
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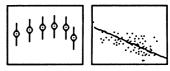
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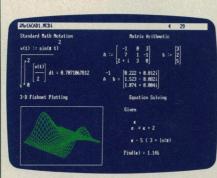
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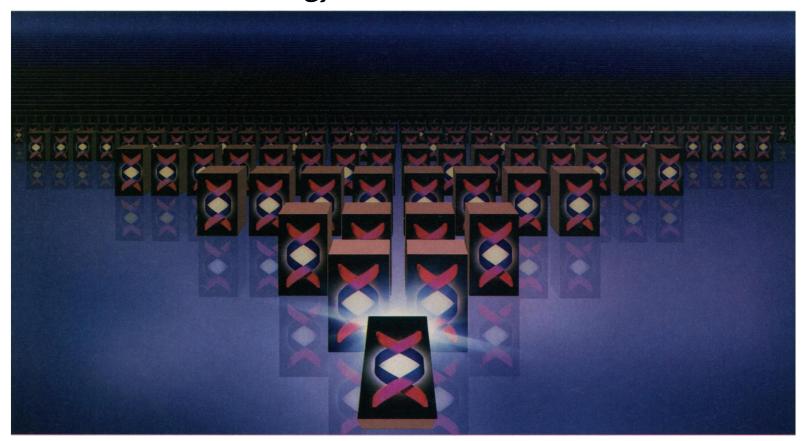
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Cambridge Research Biochemicals Inc., Suite 202, 10 East Merrick Road, Valley Stream, New York 11580 USA. Tel: (516) 825-1322 Toll Free Tel: (800) 327-0125 Fax: (516) 825-1519 influence, and he was a devoted teacher. Eminent biochemists grew up in his department. In addition to those already mentioned, the most notable were J. B. Sumner, who later was the first to crystallize an enzyme, urease, and Cyrus Fiske, who, with his gifted collaborator Yellapragada Subbarow, discovered phosphocreatine and adenosine triphosphate; the latter was discovered independently by Karl Lohmann in Germany, who has generally, but unfairly, received most of the credit.

In addition to the main text Meites has provided, in 60 pages of small print, a detailed study of the chemistry of Folin's analytical methods and procedures. Most readers will skip this, but it is there for those who have occasion to use it. The most serious deficiency in the book is the lack of an index, which is badly needed to trace the various characters who appear and reappear.

This book provides a helpful complement to the recent biography of Walter B. Cannon (to 1917) by Saul Benison, Clifford Barger, and Ellin Wolfe (Harvard University Press, 1987). Cannon and Folin worked closely together for a quarter century, in the teaching of first-year medical students, in matters of educational policy, and occasionally in research. It is good that we now have studies of both of them.

JOHN T. EDSALL Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138

The Technological Past

Nuts and Bolts of the Past. A History of American Technology, 1776–1860. DAVID FREEMAN HAWKE. Harper and Row, New York, 1988. xii, 308 pp., illus. \$18.95.

Historians of technology have reason to rejoice that there is an apparently broad and deep popular interest in their subject. The subject is intrinsically interesting, and there is a growing realization that it may even have important potential public benefits: that technology assessment should include a historical dimension and that "technological literacy" might be better served by a course in the history of technology than yet another in mathematics or "how things work."

There is as yet, however, only a corporal's guard of professionally trained historians of

technology, and most of them have not ventured into the problematic waters of addressing the public on their subject. The public's interest in the field therefore is met, if at all, by popularizers who, at their worst, treat the hardware as a black box and perpetuate and elaborate myths about the personalities and institutions that are the other parts of the technological enterprise.

David Hawke's Nuts and Bolts of the Past is the latest in this sorry genre. The 262 pages of text are divided into 42 subsections, one treating "the founding fathers," another the sewing machine, yet another the Franklin Institute. Each chapter is typically based on one or two scholarly articles (perhaps a book in some cases) salted with some popular works of a previous generation and a smattering of published contemporary sources. The book represents no attempt at original research.

Nor does it offer new insights. Despite his clear dependence upon a few excellent recent studies, Hawke takes from them details rather than interpretations. The analytical contribution of the book is that some leading American technologists were "dirty fingernail people" and others were "song-anddance men," that is, some inventors were

