**Interview with Leo E. Baldwin, CPS Worker 309**

**regarding his CPS service at The University of Rochester School of Medicine, Rochester, NY during 1945\***

**CPS Unit No. 115, *subunit 21,* located at Strong Memorial Hospital/University of Rochester** in Rochester, New York, subjected CPS men to experiments studying *physiology* in response to changes in nutrition*.* The unit was under the oversight of the American Friends Service Committee. (See also **CPS Unit No. 115, *subunit 14.****)*

In early 2012, CPS man Leo Baldwin shared his recollections as a participant in the dynamic effects of food on the body. He participated from May through September 1945 in the Office of Scientific Research and Development experiment to assess the biological value of different proteins for body functioning.

“This experiment began with sixteen recruits. Half of the men could not stay on the diet, so their participation ended. The purpose was to study the impact of protein deficiency on the body and was funded by the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD).

The purpose of the experiment and the reason it was funded was to anticipate the nutrition needs in Europe and other parts of the world. In war torn areas in Europe, people were starving, even eating cats and dogs. Under the Marshall Plan, the government sponsored research to create products to address protein deficiency.

The protein deficiency study tested dried protein rich food sources (peanut, soybean, wheat, etc.). Those could get to starving people quickly after the war. Findings from this experiment, along with other starvation experiments, led to one of the first products to be used in Europe. This particular experiment sought to isolate sources of protein to identify those to which the men responded best.

A regular diet includes about 35 sources of proteins, but only seven were found to rebuild the body. Amino acids were used to isolate the source in a beaker. One beaker might use corn as the source, as an example. If the source worked well with the volunteers, then the researches could keep it.

Each day we were presented with three meals. At a 7:00 am breakfast, we would sit down to a clean place and several beakers. One beaker contained sugar; another vegetable oil; another held a particular protein source; another arrowroot starch; another, a particular amino acid. At breakfast we also had a tablespoon of shredded carrots.

We could choose how to take in the substances. Some mixed them into a little patty on the plate and ate them. Others would drink directly from the beakers. At the noon lunch, a similar procedure occurred, but three raisins were added. At the 6:00 pm dinner, two tablespoons of shredded carrots were added. None of the food was cooked and was flavored with anise.

Each man could select what he would like for a beverage, and I opted for a coke. That was the only liquid I could take, so I had four cokes a day.

In some cases, men had not finished earlier meals. To remain in the experiment, each of us had to consume all the food for the day no later than 9 pm.

When the evidence indicated that volunteers were starved for amino acids, then the research team would begin to test a particular protein from seven different amino acids. When one would drink the beaker contents, it burned all the way down.

One of the volunteers developed cancer in the lymph nodes and died within three to four months after the conclusion of the experiment. One man suffered from mercury poisoning, so was losing his hair.

Each day the men exercised, regularly playing nine holes of golf. In bad weather, they played four rounds of handball.”

At the same time of the experiment, Leo reported that he worked in the hospital as an attendant. He also worked with mice and rats in the lab.

He specifically remembers that the COs were told they should not expect to lose weight, however everyone lost some. Leo lost a greater per cent than most of the volunteers.

“At the end of the experiment, the researchers interviewed the men, asking them what kinds of food they would like now that they could break the diet. After listening to the men, the staff put on a banquet with all of the foods the men had craved—potatoes in several forms, roast beef, gravy, and vegetables. The men had a wonderful social time, but they could not tolerate the food. The technicians ate most of the food. From this, those conducting the study could draw implications for how to distribute food products to those who had been starving.”

Leo reported that the men did not receive any dietary counseling for transition at the end of the experiment. “Each of us had to figure out how to transition back to a regular diet.” Leo and another married fellow relied on the help and support of their wives to get them through this experience.

Leo then recalled a *memorable incident* related to his wife Constance Baldwin’s work in the Rochester community.

“While at Rochester, Constance Baldwin organized and managed the first inter-racial pre-school nursery. The organization hired a diverse staff and enrolled children from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. One teacher, a young black woman was preparing to marry. Connie offered the loan of her wedding dress to the young woman, who was living with her parents. Connie and Leo took the wedding dress to her home so that she could try it on for size. Her father was a minister. When she came out in the dress, she walked through the living room to show all that it appeared to fit. All of a sudden, they heard commotion outside. They looked out to see several white guys gesturing in a threatening manner. The young woman’s father, a Baptist minister and community leader, immediately recognized the potentially explosive situation, as the young men thought that Leo was the potential groom. He and Leo stepped out onto the porch to the chorus of ‘nigger-lover’ to explain the situation. The minister directly addressed the hoodlums who recognized the minister’s stature in the community, and the crisis was averted.”

\*As reported to Rosalind E. Andreas in telephone conversations on January 31, 2012, updated on February 22, March 14 and then reviewed and edited by Mr. Baldwin on March 28, 2012.