

January 27, 1940

Dr. C. M. Hillenbrand
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Dear Doctor Hillenbrand:

Thanks very much for your letter of January 19th with its information about the containers for the collection of various samples which you have on hand. In as much as you have had these for some time, I should consider it desirable for you to return them all to me. If then you will let me know just what containers you would like to have on hand for the future, I will send them along to you and you will then be sure that they will be in proper condition to use if and when the time comes.

With reference to Dr. Gradwohl in St. Louis, I am glad to say that I know him not personally but in a professional way, and I consider him a very competent man. As to the use of "thick drop" smears for the study of stippling of the erythrocytes, however, I should say that his method has several faults. It is hardly possible in any thick drop smear to have any accurate idea of the number of erythrocytes which have been examined. It is quite true that if such a smear is made properly, it is easier to see quickly whether or not stippling is present to any considerable degree. However this is not enough and the time has long since passed when one could say with reference to a blood smear that it merely contains or does not contain a considerable number of stippled erythrocytes. Dependence upon stippling as evidence of lead absorption is questionable enough at best, and unless the method has some quantitative significance, it is almost, if not quite useless in the hygienic control of plant exposure. The method which you are using is very much more precise and very much more useful. This situation, therefore, is merely an example of a man who knows a great deal about the entire field of clinical microscopy, but is not sufficiently acquainted with certain of the minute details. Actually the men who are experienced in industrial practice are much more likely to be competent in this field than is the general laboratory diagnostician, since the latter sees very few cases of lead poisoning and usually is not as familiar as he should be with some of the problems of a hygienic or medica-legal nature which arise from industry.