

Immediately following the isolation of microgram amounts of plutonium, this scale of experimentation became extremely useful especially in the examination of chemical reactions. Conservation of the material was of utmost importance because we needed much information and had so little with which to work.

This milligram-to-submicrogram experimentation substantially reduced the time required to achieve our goal.

**GLENN T. SEABORG** Mike's remarks also reminded me of the curiosity that people had as they joined the project. I used to have the new man, the neophyte, come into my office, and then I had the pleasure of explaining to him that we were working on a new element and watching his consternation and almost unbelievable surprise. In fact, I would often ask them what they thought we were working on, and sometimes the answer would be, "Well, I don't know, but at least I'm sure that it's one of the 92 elements."

I'm going to call on Louie Werner next, and that reminds me of the size of the room in which this work was carried on. This was in Room 405 of the Jones Laboratory, and this is a room 6 feet wide and 10 feet long. I have taken pleasure on a number of occasions when I describe this work to point out that one of the ultramicrochemists who worked in this room was 6 feet 7 inches tall—that's Louie Werner.

**LOUIS B. WERNER** Everything didn't go smoothly by any means. The most serious problem occurred when I was in the microchemical laboratory and heard a violent clatter in the main part of Jones Laboratory. I went to investigate and found that the centrifuge in which I had placed the world's supply of plutonium had come apart, and the solution of plutonium was dripping down through greasy motor bearings onto the floor of the laboratory. That was a black day. Fortunately, by sopping it up with towels and sponges and digesting them, we were able to recover almost all the plutonium. As it turned out, this experience came in quite handy for purifying the first batches of reactor-produced product, which the chemical engineers turned out at Clinton Laboratories in Oak Ridge, and which seemed to contain a little of almost everything the Jones Lab material had picked up.

Once the pure product was isolated, everyone naturally wanted to see what it looked like. However, there wasn't much to see, and there was some skepticism as to whether there was anything there at all. Rather than tie up the tiny plutonium supply for exhibition, we thought we might engage in a harmless deception, and make up a somewhat more impressive solution of simulated plutonium from green