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In the Spring of 1898 the New York State legislature appropriated $10,000 for the purpose of “equipping and maintaining a laboratory to be devoted to the study of the cases, mortality rate and treatment of cancer” (New York State Assembly Documents, 2: 32, 1898). The New York State Pathological Laboratory of the University of Buffalo, opened the same year, was thus founded and became one of the earliest cancer research facilities organized under government auspices.

Roswell Park (1852–1914), Professor of Surgery at the University of Buffalo, was appointed first Director. In 1901 the laboratory was relocated in a separate building known as the Gratwick Research Laboratory in honor of its principal benefactor, Mrs. William H. Gratwick of North Tonawanda, New York. The following year, the Gratwick Laboratory became affiliated with the New York State Department of Health, and in 1911 a fully official status was granted by a legislative act that created the New York State Institute for the Study of Malignant Diseases. In 1946 this enlarged complex was designated the Roswell Park Memorial Institute, commemorating its founder and organizer.

The Institute now occupies an extensive site, comprising a clinical center with adjoining units for experimental research in central Buffalo. A biologic station at Springville, New York, was established in 1913. Research at the Roswell Park Memorial Institute traverses a full spectrum of laboratory and clinical problems: cancer epidemiology and statistics, the action of chemotherapeutic agents, chemical carcinogenesis, the role of viruses in tumor formation, cancer biology, and other approaches. It is one of the larger clinical and research facilities for cancer in the world. A detailed history is available in: E. A. Mirand, History of Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Niagara Frontier (Autumn, 1961), published by the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.

We are indebted to Dr. James T. Grace, Jr., present Director of Roswell Park Memorial Institute, for furnishing the cover illustrations: a photograph taken from a portrait of Roswell Park and an aerial view of the Institute as it appears today.