

Drama and Discovery – The Story of Histoplasmosis

T.M. Daniel & G.L. Baum
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This book details the discovery of histoplasmosis as a disease, its causative agent and the studies to determine its geographic distribution, epidemiology, serology and treatment. It is written in a very chatty, informal style and is mainly aimed at readers with little knowledge of mycology.

The book begins by describing the work of Samuel Darling, his first description of histoplasmosis and the causative agent, thought initially to be a parasite. The work of William DeMonbreun in defining the dimorphism and growth characteristics of *Histoplasma* is discussed in the next chapter. Contributions by Chester Emmons in culturing the organism from soil and by Jan Schwarz in defining the granulomas associated with the disease are also covered. Subsequent chapters cover the development of skin tests and serological tests for diagnosing histoplasmosis. An interesting chapter describes the outbreaks of histoplasmosis that occurred and how eminent scientists and clinicians, including Libero Ajello, Ernest Chick, Chester Emmons and Leo Kaufman, helped to piece together the epidemiology. The final chapter looks at the different drugs used to treat histoplasmosis, from the advent of amphotericin B in the 50's, through ketoconazole and itraconazole in the 80's and 90's, to more recent experience with the lipid formulation of amphotericin.

The book has some interesting anecdotes, which reflects the personal involvement of the authors with this area of mycology. Although there is significant scientific content in the book, it largely concentrates on the people behind the discoveries and their lives and careers. An interesting and informative read.