

A Guide to the Boris Theodore Sokoloff  
Faculty Papers,  
1912, 1922-1979

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***Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida***

## Biographical/Historical Sketch

Dr. Boris Theodore Sokoloff was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1889. He graduated in 1913 from the University of St. Petersburg and received his M.D. from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Medical School, Petrograd in 1917. In 1926 he earned a Sc.D. at Charles University in Prague. He served as a Captain in the Russian Army Medical Corps, 1917-1918 on the southwestern front and was decorated with the Order of St. Vladimir.

Prior to leaving Russia, Dr. Sokoloff served as Head of the Department of Experimental Medicine at the Institute of Science, Lesgaft University. He was a Fellow at the University of Brussels, Belgium and subsequently at the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

Dr. Sokoloff was a passionate believer in democracy. Prior to the end of the Russian Monarchy, he was active in the Social-Revolutionary Party. He spent six months in solitary confinement at the age of sixteen. Later, at the time of the (Alexander) Kerensky regime, he was elected by the army on the southwestern front as a member of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, which was then dispersed by Vladimir Lenin. He was arrested by the communists and spent more than four months at the Boutykri prison before being freed at the pleading of Nicholas Morosoff, President of Lesgaft University, who had begged Lenin to "save the life of a promising young scientist."

In 1929, he came to the United States at the invitation of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. He worked at the Crocker Institute at Columbia University from 1930-1931. From 1931-1935 worked for the Department of Pathology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and in 1936 he returned to Columbia as a Research Fellow, where he remained until 1942. He also worked at Harlem City Hospital.

In 1947, he moved to Florida, where he became Director of the Cancer Research Institute at Florida Southern College in Lakeland. His move was prompted by his interest in citrus bio-flavonoids (Vitamin-P). He was a pioneer in the work of bio-flavonoids and ascorbic acid in capillary fragility, radiation injury, and viral infections. He conducted a long-term study on the effects with aging cardiac patients and large doses of ascorbic acid on blood fat metabolism in addition to its effects on atherosclerosis and the aging process. Under a NASA grant, Dr. Sokoloff investigated high altitude malaise and related it to the concentrations of blood serotonin and serum ascorbic acid, as well as blood serotonin concentration both in normal and abnormal conditions such as hypercholesterolemia, cancer, and various cardiac conditions.

Dr. Sokoloff's overwhelming passion was in the field of cancer research. He strongly believed that the cure for cancer would be achieved by non-toxic agents, and he continued his research until his death. He felt that there was clear evidence, as he wrote, "that non-toxic agents do exist and that they may be in the field of fungi." While studying over 600 fungi from the Florida Everglades, he discovered two such antibiotics which were then submitted to the NCI for testing. It was found that they were completely non-toxic, even if used over a long period of time, and they were shown to have strong anticancer activity.

Dr. Sokoloff was a member of the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Chemical Society, the New York Academy of Sciences, the American Society of Biological Editors, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Society of Medicine, and the Royal Society of Arts and Letters. Over the course of his career, he published over eighty scientific research papers on a wide variety of subjects.

In addition to Dr. Sokoloff's scientific work, he was also a noted author of over thirty books on a wide variety of subjects. He was married to Alice Hunt Sokoloff, and he had two sons and three grandchildren. He died in 1979.

"In Memoriam," reprinted from *Growth*, Vol. XLIII, 1979

### **Scope and Content Note**

The materials in this collection concern the subject's professional career as a scientist from the 1920s through the 1970s. Newspaper articles and correspondence highlight his professional achievements as well as his responsibilities as head of the A.P. Cooke Memorial Cancer Laboratory, the Citrus Research Laboratory, and the Southern Bio-Research Institute, all located at Florida Southern College. Additionally, this collection contains academic journal articles and papers published by the subject, as well as articles that cited his work.

Dr. Sokoloff was a strong proponent of democracy and often wrote about the dangers of communism. Some of these writings can be found within the newspaper articles in this collection.

### **Arrangement**

The materials in this collection have been arranged alphabetically by format and then by date.

### **Access Restrictions**

This collection is open and available on campus for researchers.

### **Permission to Publish**

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