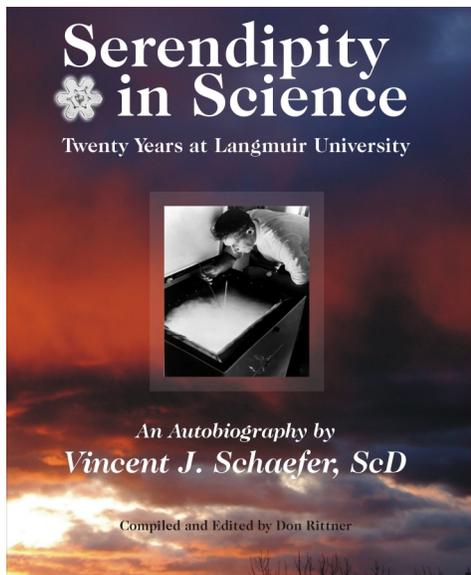


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Serendipity in Science: Twenty Years at Langmuir University
An Autobiography by Vincent J. Schaefer, ScD

Compiled and Edited by Don Rittner

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Book Summary: When Vincent Schaefer (1906-1993) had to leave high school in 1922 at the age of 16 to help support his family, little did he know that he was about to embark upon one of the most astounding careers in the world of science. Beginning as an apprentice instrument maker at the legendary General Electric Research Laboratory, Vince was soon called upon by Nobel Prize-winning chemist Dr. Irving Langmuir to be his laboratory assistant. Thus began a 20-year collaboration that led to Vince earning eighteen patents, hundreds of publications, and three honorary doctoral degrees. His independent research, aided by the process of "serendipity," led to his invention of cloud seeding, preservation of ice crystals, advanced television tubes, and other instruments and techniques that advanced several fields of scientific inquiry. When he left the GE Labs in the 1950s, he became Director of Research for the Munitap Foundation, and later was a co-founder and Director of the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center at the University at Albany (New York).

A naturalist and avid hiker since his youth, Vince was instrumental in studying, conserving and establishing many of upstate New York's natural preserves and trails, and was the visionary who originally conceived of the Long Path, a hiking trail running from New York City to his beloved Adirondack Mountains. He was the founder of both the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and the Schenectady Wintersports Club, where he established the nation's first Ski Patrol, and made Gore Mountain into a skiing destination. His natural curiosity as a boy led him into archaeological and historical field research later in life, where he focused on such subjects as the old Erie Canal and the preservation of Dutch Barns across the state.

Serendipity in Science, written in Vincent Schaefer's easy-going, readable style, and filled with personal and historical photos, is complemented by a chapter of stories and memories composed by friends, family and former professional colleagues. His important memoir begins with the words, "I have led an interesting life!" An interesting life indeed!

About the Editor: Don Rittner is an American historian, archeologist, environmental activist, educator, and author living in New York's Capital District. He has published more than 30 books, more than a thousand articles, publisher of three magazines and scientific journals, and a former columnist for the *Troy Record* newspaper. He currently writes a history blog for the *Albany Times Union*.

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