

Over the past 60 years, DNA has risen from being an obscure molecule with presumed accessory or structural functions inside the nucleus to the icon of modern bioscience. Having just completed his education as a physician, Miescher moved to Tübingen to work in the laboratory of biochemist Hoppe-Seyler, his aim being to elucidate the building blocks of life. He further examined the properties and composition of this enigmatic substance and showed that it fundamentally differed from proteins. Within 10 years of their experiments, Watson and Crick deciphered its structure and yet another decade on the genetic code was cracked.