FIELD RESEARCH for this book started on a winter morning in February 1996 when Thomas Heinrich, kindly instruct-ed by Nurse Beth, tried to put a diaper (newborn size) on his son Fritz at George Washington University Hospital in Washington, DC. Meanwhile, by happenstance, Bob Batchelor was busy at The History Factory in Chantilly, Virginia, researching and writing the history of Kimberly-Clark, one of the world’s largest makers of disposable diapers and other hygiene products.

Bob’s earlier research had taken him to the original K-C archives in Neenah, Wisconsin, and a dingy warehouse outside Philadelphia, after the discovery of the presumably “lost” Scott Paper archives. Holding one of the first Kleenex boxes and seeing early prototypes of various products that have now become everyday household items, Bob realized how such items had launched consumer culture’s tight hold over the nation. Sometimes the products were stumbled upon accidentally—like Kleenex and Scott Towels—but an individual or group always seized upon the development, marketing, and advertising efforts that made them successful. In this respect, Kimberly-Clark has been a pioneer and created the path other companies would follow.

Several years later, Thomas and Bob approached Kimberly-Clark, which had commissioned Bob’s above-referenced study and writing of their history, with a proposal to write an independent scholarly study of K-C’s corporate structure, research and development initiatives, and marketing strategy. Continuing the company’s longstanding
commitment to learning more about its own history, senior vice president Tina Barry kindly agreed to grant Thomas and Bob access to Kimberly-Clark’s magnificent corporate archives. The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to her, Dave Dixon, and many other Kimberly-Clark managers and employees.

The Kimberly-Clark Archives, ably catalogued and maintained by The History Factory’s archival team, is one of the world’s largest and most complete collections of a major consumer company’s manuscripts, photographs, and material artifacts. Archivists Alexandra Brisen, Cheryl Chouiniere, Suzanne Gould, and Jacqueline Reid provided invaluable research support, patiently processing many requests for material and bringing to attention unique nuggets of information that the authors would have otherwise missed. Bruce Weindruch, the founder and CEO of The History Factory, provided critical guidance and support. His work toward preserving America’s corporate heritage has been visionary.

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to Harry Finley, whose online “Museum of Menstruation and Women’s Health” (www.mum.org) is a treasure trove of information.

Bob and Thomas had the great fortune to work with two of the nation’s finest business historians, Mansel G. Blackford and K. Austin Kerr, the editors of the Historical Perspectives on Business Enterprise Series of The Ohio State University Press. The manuscript also benefited from the guidance of Malcolm Litchfield, Director of The Ohio State University Press. Last but not least, the authors would like to thank Maggie Diehl, the superb editor who put the baby to bed safely.

Any mistakes or omissions are, of course, the authors.

I have profited from the scholarly advice of my friends and colleagues at Baruch College, especially Jed Abrahamian, Carol Berkin, Stanley Buder, Myrna Chase, T. J. Desch-Obi, Vince Digirolamo, Bert Hansen, Veena Oldenburg, Kathy Pence, Alfonso Quiroz, Murray Rubenstein, Tansen Sen, and Randy Trumbach. Jessica Gonzales, the very best clerical administrator anyone could wish for, did more than she will ever know to keep things on an even keel. Cynthia Whittaker deserves special thanks for her steadfast support, enthusiasm, and unwavering friendship and for gently nudging the project along. Robert Friedman’s generosity, which enabled Baruch’s Department of
History to establish the Friedman Chair of American History and many other invaluable programs, was crucial during the project’s final stages. Early manuscript drafts were ably reviewed and critiqued by Zeb Clark, Iva Morton, and many other students in the course “History of American Business Enterprise.” Special thanks go to those who apprenticed me to the historian’s craft, especially Mary Frances Berry, Rudolf Boch, Thomas Childers, Holger Dähne, Mike Frisch, Mike Katz, Jürgen Kocka, Reinhardt Koselleck, Walter Licht, Philip Scranton, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler.

Many thanks to my family and friends, especially Siglinde, Gottfried Christel, Irene, Michael, Ulli, Anne, Jonas, Moritz, Lara, and Nora Heinrich; Marianne, Herrman, Heike, and Maren Toewe; Frano, Nevenka, Philip, Genevieve, Mary, and Sue Rados; John and Rose Petrinec; Annie and Wade Baker; Rose Beiler; John and Laurel Delaney; Stefanie Haake; Eva and Sven Heitsch; Markus Mohr; George and Martine Ives; Marc and Caroline Jehan; Jeff-Kerr Ritchie; Johnny, Gigi, Leyla, and Sabine McCalla; Donna Rilling; Duane and Karen Schrempp; and Cornelia Vismann.

Lorie has always been there with her love, laughter, and understanding. Luka, who is the kindest and wittiest son a father could wish for, never ceases to make his Papa proud. Fritz survived the field research all in one piece and has become a great student and athlete. Little Felix makes the world a better place with his beautiful smile.

_Thomas Heinrich_
_New York City, 2004_

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Working with Thomas on this book has been a great experience. He is a superb collaborator and, over the years, has been a true friend and inspiration. Our shared passion for business and labor history runs through this study of Kimberly-Clark.

Foremost, I would like to thank my parents Linda and Jon Bowen and my brother, Bill Coyle, for their support and encouragement. Without their love, this book would not have been possible. Special thanks also go to Peggy, Tom, and Megan Wilbert. My grandmother, Annabell Bergbigler, has always been an inspiration. I would also like to thank my in-laws, Jerry and Nancy Roda, David and Ann Roda, and John Roda. In addition, thanks go to Barb Woody and Jim and Annie Balzer. They have all been supportive and kind over the years.
I am constantly inspired by a group of historians who taught me how to think: Sidney R. Snyder, James A. Kehl, Richard H. Immerman, and Lawrence S. Kaplan. Their work has shown me what it means to be a scholar and a writer. A special note of thanks goes to my agent, Erin Reel, who is a wonderful friend.

I would also like to acknowledge my friends Chuck Waldron and Anne Beirne; Chris and Chrissy Burch and the girls; Kevin and Liz Mershimer and family; Jason and Emily Pettigrew; Maria Thomas; Gene and Tina Roach; Jack and Sue Burch; Bob Osmond and Marina Ecklund and family; Dennis and Susan Jarecke and family; Mike Menser and family; Jane and Tim Goodman and family; Peter Magnani and family; Pam Boughton; Rodd Aubrey; Jessica and Jason Schroeder and family; Leslie McCray and family; and all my friends at Readerville. These people have given more than they know.

My deepest gratitude goes to my wife Katherine. She endured the long research trips away and endless hours of writing when the original manuscript was produced, and she has remained a constant source of inspiration. Words can’t fully describe my appreciation for her love and support. She makes me a better person.

Bob Batchelor
San Francisco, 2004