



JOHN C. BAILAR, JR.

Transcript of an Interview  
Conducted by

Theodore L. Brown

at

University of Illinois, Urbana

on

28 May & 17 June 1987

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

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## JOHN C. BAILAR, JR.

1904 Born in Golden, Colorado, on 27 May

### Education

1924 B.A., chemistry, University of Colorado  
1925 M.A., chemistry, University of Colorado  
1928 Ph.D., organic chemistry, University of Michigan

### Professional Experience

1924-1925 Chemistry fellow, University of Colorado  
1926-1928 Assistant in chemistry, University of Michigan

#### University of Illinois

1928-1930 Instructor in chemistry  
1930-1935 Associate in chemistry  
1935-1939 Assistant professor  
1939-1943 Associate professor  
1943-1972 Professor  
1972- Professor Emeritus  
1937-1951 Secretary of the Chemistry Department  
1941-1967 Head of Division of Inorganic Chemistry

### Honors

1946 Foster Lecturer, University of Buffalo  
1957 Clark Lecturer, University of West Virginia  
1959 Noyes Lecturer, Phi Lambda Upsilon, University of Illinois  
1959 Hon. Sc.D., University of Colorado  
1959 Hon. Sc.D., University of Buffalo  
1959 President, American Chemical Society  
1960 Smith Lecturer, Oklahoma State University  
1961 Award in Chemical Education, American Chemical Society  
1962 Kuebler Award, Alpha Chi Sigma  
1962 Merck Lecturer, Bucknell University  
1963-1964 Member, President's Advisory Committee  
1963-1971 Treasurer, International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry  
1964 Priestly Medal, American Chemical Society

- 1965 Dwyer Medal, Chemical Society of New South Wales  
1966 Werner Memorial Lecturer, Zürich  
1966 Werner Gold Medal, Swiss Chemical Society  
1968 Dwyer Memorial Lecturer, Chemical Society of New South Wales  
1968 Welch Foundation Lecturer  
1968 American Cyanamid Lecturer, University of Connecticut  
1968 Award for the Teaching of Chemistry, Manufacturing Chemists Association  
1970-1971 National Lecturer, Sigma Xi  
1972 Award for Distinguished Service in the Advancement of Inorganic  
Chemistry, American Chemical Society  
1973 Hon. Sc.D., Lehigh University  
1974 Honorary Fellow, Indian Chemical Society  
1976 Honorary Member, Illinois State Academy of Science  
1978 Heyrovsky Medal, Czechoslovakian Academy of Science  
1982 Hon. Doctor of Humane Letters, Monmouth College  
1983 Spicer memorial lecturer, Georgia Institute of Technology  
1983 Ferst Award, Sigma Xi

## ABSTRACT

The interviews entail a discussion of John Bailar, Jr.'s scientific life, beginning with a description of his family background. His parents had a great influence on Bailar's early education; growing up, he often helped his father with his chemical research. This experience peaked Bailar's interest in pursuing chemistry at the University of Colorado, where he received a B.A. in 1924, followed by an M.A. in 1925. Bailar continued his education, earning a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the University of Michigan in 1928. He then took a position teaching general chemistry at the University of Illinois. While there, he changed his emphasis to inorganic chemistry, conducting research on isomerism and molecular rearrangements, and later on coordination compounds. By the early 1930s, Bailar had become a member of the graduate faculty, supervising the research of several graduate students. Throughout his career, he was heavily involved with the ACS; in 1959, he was elected president. The interviews end with Bailar's recollections of some of his most successful students, and his reflections on graduate education.

## INTERVIEWER

Theodore L. Brown holds the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry. Since 1956, he has been a member of the faculty of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he is now Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus. He served the University in various capacities, including as Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate College during 1980-1986, as Founding Director of the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology during 1987-1993, and as Interim Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs during 1993. He is currently a member of the American Chemical Society Governing Board for Publishing as well as of the Board of Directors of the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation.

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## NOTES

1. J. C. Bailar and R. W. Auten, "The Stereochemistry of Complex Inorganic Compounds. I. The Walden Inversion as Exhibited by Diethylenediaminocobaltic Compounds," *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, 56 (1934): 774-776.
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3. A. T. and D. S. Tarbell, *Roger Adams: Scientist and Statesman* (Washington, D.C.: American Chemical Society, 1981).
4. C. E. Wymore and J. C. Bailar, "Uncommon Coordinating Agents. I. P,P,P,'P'-Tetraethylethylenediphosphine," *Journal of Inorganic and Nuclear Chemistry*, 14 (1960): 42-54.