

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ARNOLD FRANKEL

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Arnold Thackray

at

New York, New York

on

13 March and 27 March 1998

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

Arnold Frankel

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION
Oral History Program
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ARNOLD FRANKEL

1922 Born in New York, New York on 17 March

Education

1942 B.Ch.E., chemical engineering, City College
1949 M.Ch.E., chemical engineering, Polytechnic University
1943-1945 Graduate courses, University of Pennsylvania

Professional Experience

1942-1943 Operating engineer, U.S. Rubber Company
1943-1947 Research & Development, Publicker Industries
1947-1997 Co-founder, Chairman, Aceto Chemical Company, Inc.

Honors

1980 Human Relations Award, American Jewish Committee

ABSTRACT

Arnold Frankel begins the first interview with a discussion of his family background. His father emigrated from Poland to New York in 1907. Though he was a sign painter, he believed in the importance of education. Frankel spent most of his childhood in the Bronx; because of the Depression, the family moved frequently, but remained in the same area. Frankel attended City College, enrolling in the chemical engineering curriculum and receiving his B.S. in 1942. While at City College, he met Seymour Mann, who later became his business partner. After graduation, Frankel accepted a position with the U.S. Rubber Company, working at a TNT plant. Soon thereafter, he moved to Publicker Industries, where he did pilot plant work. He also encouraged Mann to join Publicker. Frankel and Mann began to discuss forming their own business, and planned to manufacture 2,4-D and antifreeze. Though they later discarded that idea, they did form Aceto Chemical, Inc., and exported a variety of chemicals. Frankel is joined in the second interview by his wife, Miriam Frankel, and they discuss the difficulties of beginning a business and a family at the same time.

INTERVIEWER

Arnold Thackray is president of the Chemical Heritage Foundation. Educated in England, he was a fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. He served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania for more than a quarter of a century. There, he was the founding chairman of the Department of History and Sociology of Science, where he is the Joseph Priestley Professor Emeritus. In 1983, he received the Dexter Award from the American Chemical Society for outstanding contributions to the history of chemistry. His publications include *Gentlemen of Science* and *Chemistry in America*.

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1. A. Frankel, "The Story of Aceto Chemical, Inc." (Paper delivered at the 181st American Chemical Society National Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 1 April 1981). See Appendix D.

A. Frankel, "The Birth and Growth of a Specialty Chemicals Company: A History of Aceto Corporation" (Paper presented at the Chemical Marketing Research Association National Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, 4 May 1987). See Appendix E.
2. A. Frankel, "AF Speech for May 15, 1997 50th Anniversary and Retirement Party" (Speech delivered at Aceto's fiftieth anniversary and Mr. Frankel's retirement party). See Chemical Heritage Foundation Oral History Research File #0167.

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