Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by
James J. Bohning
at
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
on
2 November 1994
(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Vladimir Kazielski

(Date) May 1, 1998

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Vladimir Haensel, interview by James J. Bohning at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2 November 1994 (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Foundation, Oral History Transcript # 0115).
VLADIMIR HAENSEL

1914 Born in Freiburg, Germany on 1 September

Education

1935 B.S., general engineering, Northwestern University
1937 M.S., chemical engineering, MIT
1942 Ph.D., chemistry, Northwestern University

Professional Experience

1937 Chemical Engineer, Universal Oil Products Company (UOP)
1939 Research Assistant, Ipatieff High Pressure Laboratory
1942-1945 Chemical Engineer, UOP
1945 Inspector, German synthetic oil plants, Technical Oil Mission for the Petroleum Administration of War

Universal Oil Products Company
1945 Coordinator, Cracking Research Division
1951 Director of Refining Research
1960 Director of Process Research
1964-1972 Vice President, Director of Research
1972-1979 Vice President, Science and Technology
1980- Professor of Chemical Engineering, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Honors

1944 Chicago Junior Chamber of Commerce Award
1952 Precision Scientific Company Award in Petroleum Chemistry
1957 Professional Progress Award, American Institute of Chemical Engineers
1965 Modern Pioneers in Creative Industry Award, National Association of Manufacturers
1967 Chemical Pioneer Award, American Institute of Chemists
1967 Perkin Medal
1971 Member, National Academy of Sciences
1973 National Medal of Science
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award/Recognition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Member, National Academy of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Eugene J. Houdry Award in Applied Catalysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Chancellor’s Medal, University of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>National Academy of Sciences Award for Chemistry in Service to Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Henry J. Albert Award, International Precious Metal Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Chancellor’s Outstanding Teacher Award, University of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Charles Stark Draper Prize, National Academy of Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Vladimir Haensel begins this interview by discussing his family life. Haensel, though born in Germany, spent parts of his childhood in Russia, Austria, and Germany. He attended a German gymnasium, where he had only a few science courses. However, family friends encouraged his burgeoning interest in chemistry. When his father was offered a faculty position at Northwestern University, Haensel’s family moved to the United States. Haensel studied engineering at Northwestern, receiving his B.S. in 1935. He earned a scholarship for graduate school at MIT, where he studied polymerization under Edwin R. Gilliland. With the help of a family friend, Vladimir Ipatieff, Haensel was offered a summer position at Universal Oil Products (UOP). After earning his M.S. in chemical engineering in 1937, Haensel took a permanent position at UOP, and helped Ipatieff to set up a high-pressure laboratory (funded by UOP) at Northwestern. During this time, Haensel also earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from Northwestern, writing a thesis on the decomposition of cyclohexane. In the 1940s and 1950s, Haensel moved into research management. He was also integral in UOP’s development of the Platforming process. Haensel concludes this interview with a discussion of the importance of instinct in research, the future of research and development, and his thoughts on winning the Perkin Medal.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning is Professor of Chemistry Emeritus at Wilkes University, where he was a faculty member from 1959 to 1990. He served there as chemistry department chair from 1970 to 1986 and environmental science department chair from 1987 to 1990. He was chair of the American Chemical Society’s Division of the History of Chemistry in 1986, received the Division’s outstanding paper award in 1989, and presented more than twenty-five papers before the Division at national meetings of the Society. He has been on the advisory committee of the Society’s National Historic Chemical Landmarks committee since its inception in 1992. He developed the oral history program of the Chemical Heritage Foundation beginning in 1985, and was the Foundation’s Director of Oral History from 1990 to 1995. He currently writes for the American Chemical Society News Service.
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NOTES


11. “The corporate history of UOP has been nearly 16 years in the making. It was begun by Charles Remsberg in 1978.... Unfortunately, the manuscript was never published.” See Note 10, p. xii.

13. Chemical Engineering Department Symposium honoring Professor Vladimir Haensel at the University of Massachusetts, 3 October, 1995; for complete program see Chemical Heritage Foundation oral history research file #0115.


15. See Note 9b, p. 148ff.

16. For a copy of these lecture notes, see Chemical Heritage Foundation oral history research file #0115.

17. See Note 9, p. 152.


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