

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

N. BRUCE HANNAY

Transcript of an Interview  
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

Seattle, Washington

on

28 December 1995

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This oral history is one in a series initiated by the Chemical Heritage Foundation, on behalf of The Electrochemical Society. The series documents the personal perspective of key actors in The Electrochemical Society and records the human dimensions of the growth of the Society during the twentieth century.

This project is made possible through the generosity of The Electrochemical Society.

Hannay, N. Bruce  
0137B-ELS

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Oral History Program

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Joan A. Hannay  
Joan A. Hannay, widow of N. Bruce Hannay

(Date)

October 4, 1996

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## N. BRUCE HANNAY

1921 Born in Mt. Vernon, Washington, on 9 February  
1996 Died in Bremerton, Washington, on 2 June

### Education

1942 B.A., Swarthmore College  
1943 M.A., physical chemistry, Princeton University  
1944 Ph.D., physical chemistry, Princeton University

### Professional Experience

Bell Telephone Laboratories  
1942-1960 Research Chemist  
1960-1967 Chemical Director  
1967-1973 Executive Director, Research, Material Science and Engineering  
1973-1982 Vice President, Research and Patents

### Honors

1978 Honorary Ph.D., Tel Aviv University  
1979 Honorary D.Sc., Swarthmore College  
1981 Honorary D.Sc., Polytechnic Institute of New York  
1976 Acheson Medal, Electrochemical Society  
1983 Perkin Medal, Society of Chemical Industry

## ABSTRACT

The interview begins with N. Bruce Hannay discussing the origins of his interest in electrochemistry and his awareness of The Electrochemical Society as an ideal organization for discussions and publications on topics related to solid state chemistry. The interview continues as Hannay recalls Bell Labs' support for his early activities in The ECS, which included organizing meetings and suggesting speakers, particularly within the Electronics Division. Hannay emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between the Society and Bell Labs, where he served as Vice President for Research during his ECS presidency. Hannay helped to further the Society's interest in solid state and corrosion work while he had responsibility for electrochemistry at Bell Labs. Throughout the interview, he comments on positive aspects of the Society's internal operations; its relations with other scientific organizations and companies, including the American Chemical Society, GE, and Bell Labs; and the influence of colleagues such as R.M. Burns and Charles Tobias. He also describes the Society's strong responsiveness to its members' needs, its influence on his professional development during the middle of his career, and his views of the future of both The ECS and electrochemistry in general.

## 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

1. Robert M. Burns with Ernest G. Enck, eds. *A History of The Electrochemical Society, 1902-1976*. (Pennington: The Electrochemical Society, Inc., 1977).
2. James J. Bohning, *Chemical Heritage Foundation Oral History Project, The Electrochemical Society Project, Interview Agenda—Society Presidents*. See Chemical Heritage Foundation Oral History Research File # 137B.
3. Charles W. Tobias, interview by James J. Bohning in Orinda, California, 15 May 1995 (Philadelphia: Chemical Heritage Foundation, Oral History Transcript #0146).



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