Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by
Jeffrey L. Meikle
in
Lake Worth, Florida
on
15 and 16 May 1987
BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

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GORDON M. KLINE

1903 Born in Trenton, New Jersey on 9 February

Education

1925 A.B., chemistry, Colgate University
1926 M.S., chemistry, George Washington University
1934 Ph.D., chemistry, University of Maryland

Professional Experience

1926-1927 Research Chemist, New York State Department of Health
1928-1929 Research Chemist, Picatinny Arsenal, War Department

National Bureau of Standards

1929-1935 Research Chemist
1935-1951 Chief, Organic Plastics Section
1951 Chief, Organic and Fibrous Materials Division
1951-1963 Chief, Division of Polymers
1964-1969 Consultant

1936- Editorial Director, Modern Plastics
1936-1960 Editorial Director and Consultant, Modern Plastics Encyclopedia

ASTM Committee D-20 on Plastics

1937- Member
1948-1952 Chairman
1941-1954 Chairman, Federal Specifications Plastics Technical Committee
International Standards Organization
Technical Committee 61 Plastics

1951- Member
1951-1958 Chairman
International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Section on Plastics and Polymers

1951-1967 Member
1959-1963 Vice-Chairman
1963-1967 Chairman
Macromolecular Division

1967-1975 Member
1976-1987 Observer

Honors

1952 Honor Award, Washington Section, American Institute of Chemists
1953 Exceptional Service Gold Medal, Department of Commerce
1954 Award of Merit, American Society for Testing and Materials
1965 Rosa Award, National Bureau of Standards
1973 Charter Member, Plastics Hall of Fame
1986  Award of Excellence, ASTM Committee D-20
Gordon M. Kline begins by discussing his work at the National Bureau of Standards during the 1930s, where he focussed on applications of organic resins to aviation. This is followed by a general discussion of his work as head of the Bureau's Organic Plastics Section and as Technical Editor of Modern Plastics. A lengthy section of the interview is devoted to Kline's experiences in Germany in 1945, investigating German plastics laboratories, plants and processes. The next major portion of the interview treats his experiences as an administrator of the Division of Polymers at the National Bureau of Standards and his role in setting national and international standards of testing for synthetic polymer products. The interview concludes with a brief discussion of his education at Colgate University and at the University of Maryland.

Jeffrey L. Meikle holds an A.B. and an A.M. in American Civilization from Brown University and a Ph.D. in American Civilization from the University of Texas at Austin. He is Associate Professor of American Studies and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Meikle is the author of Twentieth Century Limited. Industrial Design in America, 1925-1939, published in 1979 and is currently writing a cultural history of plastics in the United States.
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10. The full version of the Nobel lecture by G. Natta, "From Stereospecific Polymerization to the Assymmetric Auto-Catalytic Synthesis of Macromolecules," may be found in Science, 147 (1965): 261-


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