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GORDON M. KLINE

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Jeffrey L. Meikle

in

Lake Worth, Florida

on

15 and 16 May 1987

Gordon Kline
JK
3/15/96

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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- Technical Editor, 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

ABSTRACT

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.

INTERVIEWER

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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Moisture absorption in gelatin-based coating on Navy dirigibles. Airplane fabric dopes. Improvement of service properties of transparent plastics glazing sheets by multiaxial stretching. Resin-bonded plywood in aircraft applications.
- 5 Activities outside NBS
Early Gordon Conferences. Role as Technical Editor of Modern Plastics. Formation of ASTM Plastics Committee.
- 11 Wartime activities
Growth of NBS Plastics Section during WWII. Developments in plastics and polymer interests in the American Chemical Society. Performance standards. Wartime liaison with the British. Experiences as a technical investigator in Germany during 1945.
- 24 Post-war career
Publication of the German plastics reports and of Natta's Nobel Award address in Modern Plastics. Development of International Standards for plastics. IUPAC activities, especially on plastics terminology. Publication of The Analytical Chemistry of Polymers. Preservation of State documents and Hungarian relics. Image problems with plastics. Appreciation of NBS polymer studies. Plastics Hall of Fame.
- 44 The early years
Family background. High school and undergraduate education. Employment in Health Laboratories, State of New York, and at Picatinny Arsenal. Transfer to NBS. Part-time Ph.D. studies at University of Maryland.
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NOTES

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