

CENTER FOR HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

IZAAK M. KOLTHOFF

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

George D. Tselos

at the

University of Minnesota

on

15 March 1984

Isaac M.
Koltzoff

JH 3/15/84

History of Chemistry Oral History Project

I have been interviewed on tape on March 15, 1984 by Dr. George Tselos of the Center for History of Chemistry. It is my understanding that this tape recording will be transcribed within two months and that I will have the opportunity to review and correct the resulting transcript before it is made available for research by the Center. At that time I will also have the opportunity to request restrictions on access to the interview, if I so desire.

However, if I should die or become incapacitated before I have reviewed and returned the transcript, I agree that the contents of the interview and the resulting transcript will become the property of the Center for History of Chemistry to be used for educational and scholarly purposes.

Interviewee

Date

Isaac M. Koltzoff
3/16 1984

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IZAACK M. KOLTHOFF

1894 Born in Almelo, Netherlands, 11 February

Education

1915 Diploma, Pharmaceutical Institute, State
University of Utrecht

1918 Ph.D., Chemistry, State University of Utrecht

Professional Experience

1917-1927 Conservator, Pharmaceutical Institute, State
University of Utrecht

1924-1927 Lecturer in Applied Electrochemistry, State
University of Utrecht

1927-1962 Professor and Head of the Division of Analytical
Chemistry, University of Minnesota

1962- Emeritus Professor of Analytical Chemistry,
University of Minnesota

Honors

1949 Nichols Medal, American Chemical Society

1950 Fisher Award

1960 Minnesota Award, American Chemical Society

1964 Charles Medal, Charles University, Prague

1964 Willard Gibbs Medal, American Chemical Society

1964 Polarographic Medal, British Polarographic Society

1967 Kolthoff Gold Medal, Academy of Pharmaceutical
Science

1981 Olin-Palladium Medal, Electrochemical Society

ABSTRACT: In this interview Professor Izaak Kolthoff begins with his early life in Holland, and discusses his family and education. Kolthoff continues with the factors influencing his decision to become an analytical chemist, and describes the early state of analytical chemistry compared to other branches of chemistry. The interview then focuses on accusations of Communist sympathies, and the effects of the McCarthy era on Kolthoff's career. Kolthoff concludes with a brief discussion of his work on crystal surfaces, the relocation of European scientists during the 1930s, and his participation in synthetic rubber research during World War II.

INTERVIEWER: George D. Tselos holds a B.A. in biology from Carleton College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of Minnesota. As a specialist in archival administration, he held a position with the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University before joining the Center for History of Chemistry as Assistant Director for Archives.

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