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LEO MANDELKERN

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

James J. Bohning

at

Florida State University

on

28 April 1986

Leo
Mandelkern
JH
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LEO MANDELKERN

1922 Born in New York City on 23 February

Education

1942 A.B., chemistry, Cornell University
1949 Ph.D., chemistry, Cornell University

Professional Experience

1949-1952 Research Associate, Cornell University
1952-1962 Physical Chemist, National Bureau of Standards
Florida State University
1962- Professor of Chemistry
1970-1974 Associate Director, Institute of Molecular
Biophysics

Awards

1957 Medal Award for Meritorious Service, United States
Department of Commerce, National Bureau of
Standards
1958 Arthur S. Fleming Award, Washington DC Junior
Chamber of Commerce
1975 Witco Award in Polymer Chemistry, American Chemical
Society
1984 Florida Award, American Chemical Society, Lakeland,
Florida
1984 Mettler Award, North American Thermal Analysis
Society

ABSTRACT

In this interview Professor Leo Mandelkern begins with his early years in New York City and his undergraduate education at Cornell University. This is followed by his service as a meteorologist during World War II. In the central portion of the interview Mandelkern describes his graduate education at Cornell, including his association with J. G. Kirkwood, Franklin Long, and Paul Flory. Particular emphasis is given to his postdoctoral work with Flory, and collaborative work with Harold Scheraga. The details of Mandelkern's career at the National Bureau of Standards include Bureau operations and management in the 1950s. The interview continues with more recent work at Florida State, including students and postdocs, and concludes with comments on methods of solving scientific controversies, especially as it relates to his role in the problem of the folded chain.

INTERVIEWER

James J. Bohning holds the B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry. He has been a member of the chemistry faculty at Wilkes College since 1959, and served as department chairman for sixteen years. He has been associated with the development and management of the oral history program at the Beckman Center since 1985, and in 1986 was the Chair of the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society.

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