

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

CHARLES PRICE

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Leon Gortler

at

The University of Pennsylvania

on

26 April 1979

Charles C.

Price

JH
3/15/96

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CHARLES C. PRICE

1913 Born in Passaic, New Jersey, 13 July

Education

1934 B.A., chemistry, Swarthmore College
1935 M.A., chemistry, Harvard University
1936 Ph.D., chemistry, Harvard University

Employment

1936-1946 Assistant Professor to associate professor,
Department of Chemistry, University of Illinois
1945 Visiting Lecturer, Polytechnic Institute of
Brooklyn
1946-1954 Professor and Chairman of Department of
Chemistry, University of Notre Dame
1947-1951 Member of Subcommittee on Plastics, National
Research Council
1951-1955 Member of Committee on Mathematics, Physics,
and Engineering Science
Department of Chemistry, University of
Pennsylvania
1954-1966 Blanchard Professor and Chairman
1966-1978 University Professor
1978- Emeritus professor of chemistry

Honors

1946 ACS Award in Pure Chemistry, American Chemical
Society

ABSTRACT: During the course of this interview Charles Price discusses his life and career as a chemist. Initially, he recalls his childhood, early education, and undergraduate life at Swarthmore College. Price then speaks about his teachers and colleagues at Harvard University where he did graduate work. Considerations about his work at the University of Illinois, his first faculty appointment, and research for the National Defense Research Committee during the war, follow. Price explains why he assumed the chairmanship of the department of chemistry at the University of Notre Dame and why he convened the first Conference on Organic Reaction Mechanisms, a landmark in the development of physical organic chemistry. Price elucidates his research at Notre Dame and then at the University of Pennsylvania where, as chairman, he helped to rebuild the department of chemistry. The interview concludes with Price discussing his more recent chemical research, the current state of physical organic chemistry, his family, and his political and sporting activities.

INTERVIEWER: Leon Gortler is a chemist with an interest in history. Born in 1935, he attended the University of Chicago and then received his doctoral degree from Harvard. After doing postdoctoral work at Berkeley for a year, he began teaching at Brooklyn College in 1963. Ten years later, he became professor of chemistry. He has since coauthored two textbooks about organic chemistry. Both his historical and scientific research focus upon physical organic chemistry.

NOTE: The following table correlates the tapes of the Price interview with the pages of the transcript.

Tape 1, side 1.....pp.	1-10
side 2.....pp.	10-19
Tape 2, side 1.....pp.	19-28
side 2.....pp.	28-37
Tape 3, side 1.....pp.	37-45
side 2.....pp.	45-54
Tape 4, side 1.....pp.	54-60

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Childhood and Early Influences
Parents, grandmother, and siblings. Influence of Jerry Creighton and Louis Fieser. An entrepreneurial father and a Quaker tradition. The George School, science courses, and sports.
- 6 Undergraduate Education
The honors program at Swarthmore. Other chemistry students. Edward H. Cox. Mathematics, history and philosophy of science. "Ducky" Holmes and Brand Blanchard.
- 11 Graduate Study at Harvard University
Becoming a chemist. Coursework with Kohler. Research with Fieser on reaction mechanisms. Kistiakowsky. The impact of Huckel's work. Electrostatic versus resonance effects. Colleagues and ambience at Harvard.
- 18 Work at the University of Illinois
A post-doc with Roger Adams. Teaching organic chemistry. Speed Marvel. Academic salaries. Early research problems. Polymerization.
- 22 The Emergence of Physical Organic Chemistry
The conference at Notre Dame on organic mechanisms. The impact of Hammett's book. Resonance factors. Paul Bartlett. World War II and the unification of physical organic chemistry.
- 27 Wartime Research
Electrophilic substitution and resonance effects. Water decontamination and the behavior of mustards. Paul Bartlett, Saul Winstein, and other colleagues. Antimalarials and Roy Roberts.
- 34 From Illinois to Notre Dame
Teaching at Illinois. The Notre Dame appointment. Colleagues at Illinois and Notre Dame. Bob Woodward.
- 40 Recent Research
Mustards and chemotherapy. DNA alkylation. RNA synthesis and evolution.
- 45 The Practice of Physical Organic Chemistry
A changing discipline. Some unsolved problems. Biochemical and solid state applications. Rubber research and polypropylene oxides. Building a department at Notre Dame. Chemistry at Penn.

- 52 Political Ventures
United World Federalists. Running for political
office. Disarmament sentiments.
- 56 Personal and Professional Perspectives
Wife and children. Sally Price, champion sailor.
Reminiscences of colleagues.

INDEX

Adams, Roger	11, 18-20, 25, 26, 30, 33, 39
addition reactions	13, 14, 46
<u>Advances in Physical Organic Chemistry</u>	23
Alexander, Elliot R.	36
alkylation	20, 21, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45
alpha, beta-unsaturated ketones	13
American Chemical Society (ACS)	40, 43, 44, 51, 52
<u>American Men of Science</u>	20
"Analysis of the Mustard Using Thiosulphate"	25
<u>Anatomy of Peace, The</u>	52
anchimeric assistance	25, 29
antimalarials	28, 30, 31, 32, 37, 41, 43
antimetabolites	41
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency	53
aromatic substitution	27
Atlas Chemical Co.	1
Austin College	32
Bartlett, Paul D.	2, 8, 13, 14, 22, 23, 26, 29, 30, 39, 59
Baxter, Gregory P.	17
Beilstein, Friedrich	7
Benchmark Papers in Organic Chemistry	45
biochemistry	40, 45, 47
Blanchard, Brand	10
Boekelheide, Virgil C.	37
Boston Lacrosse Club	18
Bound Brook, New Jersey	5
Bradsher, Charles K.	16
Brearly, David	8
Brod, John S.	8
Brown, Herbert C.	35, 36
Bruson, Herman A.	38, 39
Bryn Mawr College	17
Bucks County, Pennsylvania	5
Bullitt, Orville, Jr.	30
Burton, Milton	35
Burwell, Robert L.	33
Buswell, Arthur M.	30, 31
Calvin, Melvin	59
cancer research	17, 29, 41
carbon-carbon double bonds	15, 24, 36, 48
carbonium ion	25, 28
catalysis	21, 33, 47
chain transfer process	49
<u>Chemical Abstracts</u>	7

<u>Chemical and Engineering News</u>	52
(C & E News)	
<u>Chemical Reviews</u>	15, 24, 27
chemical warfare agents	26, 28, 31, 38
<u>Chemistry of Natural Products Related to</u>	
<u>Phenanthrene</u>	12
cis-trans isomerizations	20
Columbia University	36, 37
Committee on Chemistry and Public Affairs	51
Conant, James B.	2, 7, 14, 59
Conner, Ralph A.	19, 50
consulting	22
Coolidge, Calvin	4
Cope, Arthur C.	36, 37
Council for a Liveable World	55
Cousins, Norman	54
Cox, Edward H.	9
Creighton, Henry J.	1, 2, 6, 9, 11
<u>Current Biography</u>	54
dairy farming business	3-4
Darvon	31
degradation	31
Department of Chemistry and Public	
Affairs, American Chemical Society	44, 51
Depression	2
Dewar, Michael J.	36
disarmament	52-55
DNA	42-43, 45
Doty, Paul M.	35
Dow Chemical Co.	49
Dresden, Arnold	10
Duke University	16
Du Pont de Nemours & Co., E. I.	8, 16, 37
electrochemistry	1
electrophilic substitutions	14, 27
electrostatic effects	15, 16, 28, 36, 37, 42, 43
Eliel, Ernest L.	35
Elizabeth, New Jersey	3
eutectic mixtures	21
evolution	9, 43, 45
Eyring, Henry	24
Farley, Sarah Shoemaker	1, 4, 5
Federation of American Scientists	54, 55
Federation of Atomic Scientists	54
Fieser, Louis F.	2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18,
Flory, Paul J.	22
Forbes, George S.	17
Foster, William C.	53
free radicals	14, 28
Friedel-Crafts method	7, 20, 21

Fuson, Reynold C. (Bob)	19, 28, 33, 38, 50
General Complete Disarmament (GCD)	55
General Tire & Rubber Co.	49
George School, The	1, 5-7
German chemistry	14, 15, 32
Gordon Conference	38
Grignard reaction	7
Hammett, Louis P.	16, 23, 34, 59
Hammett's sigma-rho	24
Hammond Postulate	36
Hart, Leon	34
Harvard University	2, 6-8, 11, 12, 18, 23, 35, 39
Hauser, Charles R.	59
Heilbron, Ian	27
Hercules Chemical Co., Inc.	22
hexylresorcinol	9
Hirschfelder, Joseph	17
history of science	9-10
Holmes, Jesse (Ducky)	10
Huckel, Erich A.	15
Huckel, Walter	15
Illinois State Prison	41
Illinois Water Treatment Center	30
Illinois, University of	11, 18, 19, 20, 30, 33-37, 39, 40, 50
imonium ions	29
inductive effects	15
Ingold, Sir Christopher, K.	14, 27
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	51
International Critical Tables of Numerical Data, Physics, Chemistry and Technology	8
"Joint Statement of Agreed Principles for Disarmament Negotiations"	53
Jones, Ralph, Jr. (Buck)	41
Judd, Walter H.	52
Kell, Robert W.	21
Kennedy, John F.	53
kinetics	21, 22
Kistiakowsky, George K. (Kisty)	8, 12, 14
Kohler, Elmer P.	2, 11-13, 17
League of Nations	52
Leonard, Nelson J.	30
Lewis catalysts	33, 49
Little, Arthur D., Inc.	17

Lothrop, Warren C.	17
Mark, Herman F.	49
Martin, Elmore L.	16
Marvel, Carl S. (Speed)	20, 21, 25, 26, 28, 30, 39, 40
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	12, 39, 40
McCloy, John J.	53
mechanisms, chemical	14, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 30, 33, 36, 38-39, 46, 47, 49
Merck & Co., Inc.	32
methylcholanthrene	17
Michael reaction	13
Missouri, University of	34
mustards	28, 29, 41, 42
naphthalene	20
National Academy of Sciences	16
National Aniline and Chemical Co.	32
National Defense Research Committee (NDRC)	26, 30, 50
National Research Council	11, 48
National Science Foundation (NSF)	47
Natta, Giulio	47, 49
natural products chemistry	12
Navy (United States)	52
Newman, Melvin S.	17
New Brunswick, New Jersey	3, 5
<u>New York Times</u>	26
Nieuwland, Father Julius A.	34
nitrogen mustards	25, 31, 41, 42
Nobel Prize	40
norbornene	46
Northwestern University	37
Notre Dame Conference on Organic Mechanisms	22-23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32, 38
Notre Dame, University of	4, 22, 23, 25, 29, 34, 35, 38, 48-50, 57
nucleic acids	40
O'Neill, Gerard K.	56
organic chemistry	2, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 31, 38, 45, 46, 60
<u>Organic Reactions</u>	22
<u>Organic Syntheses</u>	22
oxidation-reduction potentials	13

pacifism	37, 38
Panama Canal	3
Passaic, New Jersey	3
Pauling, Linus C.	37, 59
Pennsylvania, University of	4, 6, 41, 50
periodate oxidation	20
peroxide	22
Phi Beta Kappa Science Book Award Committee	55
philosophy of science	9-10
photochemistry	17
physical chemistry	2, 7, 9, 13, 24
physical organic chemistry	9, 18, 22-24, 25-27, 31, 33, 40, 45-47, 59-60
Pi complexes	36, 43
Pittsburgh, University of	34
Pohland, Albert	31
politics	51-55
polymeric ether	48
polymers	21, 22, 26, 41, 48, 49
polypropylene oxide	48, 49
Price, Charles, children of	57-58
Price, Charles, parents of	3, 4, 5, 6
Price Engineering Co., T. W.	3
Price, Mary E.	6, 7, 56-57
Price, Sally	58
Princeton University	2, 9, 56
Procter & Gamble Co.	8
<u>Progress in Physical Organic Chemistry</u>	23
proteins	40, 43, 45
Q/e factors	24
Quakers (Society of Friends)	4, 5, 37-38
quinones	13
radiation chemistry	35
rearmament	32
resonance theory	15, 16, 24, 27, 28, 37
Reves, Emery	52
RNA	44
Roberts, John D. (Jack)	23, 35, 59
Roberts, Royston M.	32
Robertson, John M.	27
Rohm & Haas Co.	38, 50, 51
rubber, synthetic	48-49
Russians	53
<u>Saturday Review</u>	53
Schiff base	31
Scripps Institution of Oceanography	57
Seligman, Arnold M.	17
Sherman, Texas	32

Shriner, Ralph L.	19, 33
Skell, Philip S.	46
Smith Hall, E. F.	51
Snyder, Harold H.	19, 30, 35, 39, 50
South Bend, Indiana	53
Spiegelman, Solomon	44
Stauffer, Charles H.	8
stereochemistry	28, 33
Strongheart Kennels	4
structures, chemical	13, 37, 38, 42, 48-49
styrene, emulsion polymerization of	26
sulphur mustards	25, 28, 29
Summit, New Jersey	3
Swain, Norman	5
Swarthmore College	1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 36, 55, 57
Swarthmore High School	5
synthesis, chemical	2, 3, 13, 26, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40, 46,
synthesis of life	43, 44, 45
Taft, Robert W. (Dick)	23
Tarbell, Dean S. (Stan)	7, 8, 14, 16, 18, 59
<u>Theoretical Organic Chemistry</u>	15
thermodynamics	12, 14, 60
thiobenzene grant	43
thiosulfate	25, 28, 42
Tishler, Max	17
Trozzolo, Anthony M.	23
Union Carbide Corp.	48
United Nations	53
United World Federalists	4, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56
Van der Waals interaction	48
Walling, Cheves T.	24, 25, 59
wartime programs	28-32, 38, 41
Westheimer, Frank H.	37, 59
Wheland, George W.	37, 60
Winstein, Saul	15, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 35, 37, 59
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution	57
Woodward, Robert B.	23, 38, 39, 40
Woolworth Building	3
Worcester State College	8
World Affairs, U. S. Council for	54
world government	53

Yale University	2, 8
Young, William G.	22, 26, 28, 30 59
Ziegler catalysis	47, 49, 50
Zorin-McCloy agreement	54, 55
Zorin, Valerian A.	53