

THE BECKMAN CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

FRANCIS O. RICE

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

John A. Heitmann

at

South Bend, Indiana, and Mishawaka, Indiana

on

4 and 5 January 1984

Francis O.
Rice

JH
3/15/96

CENTER FOR HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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FRANCIS O. RICE

1890 Born in Liverpool, England, 20 May

Education

1911 B.Sc., chemistry, University of Liverpool
1912 M.Sc., chemistry, University of Liverpool
1916 D.Sc., chemistry, University of Liverpool

Employment

1919 1851 Exhibition Fellow, Princeton University
Chemistry Department, New York University
1919-1920 Instructor
1920-1924 Assistant Professor
Chemistry Department, Johns Hopkins University
1924-1926 Associate
1926-1938 Associate Professor
1938-1959 Professor and Head of Department, Chemistry
Department, Catholic University of America
1959-1962 Professor and Chairman of Department, Chemistry
Department, Georgetown University
1962-1968 Visiting Research Professor and Principal
Research Scientist, University of Notre Dame
1968 Principal Research Scientist, Institute for
Cooperative Research, Johns Hopkins University
1968- Director, Research Chemistry Lab, Johns Hopkins
University

ABSTRACT: Francis O. Rice discusses his life and career in this interview. He begins by mentioning his early days in England, his studies at Princeton, and his teaching at New York University. The interview elucidates Rice's teaching, research, and administrative activities at the Johns Hopkins university and the Catholic University of America. Of central concern is Rice's theory of free radicals. Mrs. Katherine Rice contributes to the interview by discussing her husband's professional activities and remembering several of his closest colleagues. The interview concludes with an appraisal of the place of science in Catholic universities and an explanation of the Laidler-ADX controversy of the mid-1950s.

INTERVIEWER: John A. Heitmann holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Davidson College and a master's degree in history from Clemson University. From 1974 to 1979 he worked as a chemist in the metallurgical industry. He then studied at the Johns Hopkins University under Owen Hannaway and received his doctorate in the history of science in 1983.

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