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The general manager of Cyanamid's agricultural division has seen his firm's products for the farm grow from three basic fertilizers into the whole range of chemicals for agriculture



Frank S. Washburn

Born Somers, N. Y., 1895. Studied agriculture at Cornell. Officer, USN, World War I. American Cyanamid Co., fertilizer salesman, 1918-24; sales mgr., fertilizer div., 1918-38; ass't. director, fertilizer sales, 1938-39; director, fertilizer sales, 1939-47; director, agricultural chemicals division 1947-58; gen'l mgr., agricultural div. 1958 to date. Director, American Cyanamid Co. President, Cyanamid of Canada, Ltd. and Cyanamid de Mexico, S. A.

LAST DECEMBER, Frank S. Washburn became a 40-year man at American Cyanamid. Passing that milestone is a rare occurrence today among corporation executives—not many can brag of a “steady job” like that. But Washburn, general manager of Cyanamid's agricultural division, took it all for granted—this was his life, this was the natural course of events for him.

It's one thing to get a job by being the boss's son—Frank S. Washburn, Sr., founded the company in 1907—but it's quite another to make of that job a full success and a personal joy. This the younger Washburn did, and his retirement next year will signal the end of Cyanamid's personal link with its early years.

The American Cyanamid Co. was founded in 1907, when the elder Washburn acquired North American rights to a German process for synthesizing calcium cyanamide. The compound had first been made as an intermediate in the production of calcium cyanate, used in gold-recovery processes. It was soon found to be valuable as a nitrogen fertilizer.

The Young Chemical Industry

Cyanamid's first plant was built at Niagara Falls, Ontario. That area, the heart of the lusty young electrochemical industry, provided adequate power for the electric-arc furnaces which fused lime and coke into calcium carbide. This in turn “fixed” nitrogen in an arc retort to form calcium cyanamide.

When young Washburn joined the firm in 1918, after naval service in the first World War, two more basic fertilizer products were being produced: Ammo-Phos—made by steaming ammonia out of cyanamide and combin-

ing it with phosphoric acid to give ammonium phosphate—and phosphate rock. Today the corporation makes over 6000 products, and its agricultural line under Washburn's guidance has grown to include antibiotics, insecticides, animal-feed supplements, veterinary drugs, animal biologicals, defoliant, herbicides, fungicides, and fumigants.

After six years of sales work—a priceless apprenticeship, he feels—Washburn first became sales manager for the fertilizer division, then assistant director of fertilizer sales in 1938 and director the following year. Elected a director of the company in 1946, he was named president of North American Cyanamid, Limited (the Canadian subsidiary now known as Cyanamid of Canada, Limited) in 1951, and president of Cyanamid de Mexico, S. A. a year later.

The Senior Washburn

Tall, white-thatched, with a rugged build betokening his love of the outdoors, Washburn still is somewhat awed by his father's activities. Calling his father “the most daring and adventurous man I've ever known,” Washburn explains that his dad organized no less than 24 different businesses during his turbulent lifetime. Of these, “18 were successful, two broke even, and four didn't make the grade”—still a most respectable batting average.

Born in Somers, N. Y. in 1895, Washburn says the most impressive of his early experiences were his years in the saddle, out West. Enrolled at an Arizona ranch school in the early nineteen-hundreds, the teen-ager learned ranching from the ground up, literally. But he soon learned to stay on the school's fiery mustangs, advancing fast in the cowpunching arts: bronco-

busting, steer-roping, riding in round-ups and rodeos, hitching and handling six-team wagons, and even acting in the movies—he once appeared in an old horse opera with the Roy Rogers of his day, “Bronco Billy” Anderson. Also he got into horse-breeding and sold one of his best, the famous Diablo, to Teddy Roosevelt.

With the Atlantic Fleet

Later he entered Cornell to study agriculture. Caught up in the excitement of the war, Washburn enlisted, becoming a line officer on Atlantic Fleet duty. Upon his return to civilian life he made two eventful decisions. First he became a fledgling salesman for Cyanamid—a struggling young firm run by eight executives: a president (his father), a vice president, a treasurer, a sales manager, and four salesmen. Next he became a fledgling husband. Both decisions were eminently wise, gratifying, and productive.

Looking forward to his retirement in 1960, Washburn sees a chance to extend his week-end gardening to a full-time hobby. And high on the agenda for the next few years are plans for a novel four-unit “dream house” on Maryland's famous eastern shore. There with Mrs. Washburn, daughter Evalyn, and his books—about the sea, and about the Old West—Washburn expects to find retirement as enjoyable as work.