

Society of 9 now numbers 4,000

In nearly 75 years, the American Oil Chemists' Society has grown from nine founders in 1909 to more than 4,000 members.

This growth did not happen rapidly. In fact, it was not until the 1940s that membership figures climbed above 500.

The original constitution of the Society of Cotton Products Analysts provided for two types of members—active and honorary. Membership was open to anyone with at least five years of chemical training who was actively involved in chemical work with cotton products or allied industries. The vice president was designated to head the society's Membership Committee.

At first, there was no effort to recruit new members. G. G. Fox, chairman of the Membership Committee for 1914-1915, told the 1915 annual meeting, "We haven't done any campaigning or soliciting for members because we feel that our progress would be measured by our accomplishments and we believe if there are any members who are interested in this sort of proceedings they will be with us before long."

At the 1916 convention, members approved associate memberships for large companies connected with the industry. "These are contributing memberships and permit their holders to show their interest in the work we are doing in a substantial manner," G. Worthen Agee wrote.

Agee later reported that as of July 1917, there were 85 regular members, two honorary members and seven associate members.

Although the focus initially was on cottonseed product analysis, members soon agreed to include the study of methods for all vegetable and animal oils and fats. The group changed its name in 1920 to the American Oil Chemists' Society. The new constitution provided an additional membership group, that of active-referee. AOCS membership was open to anyone in chemical work relating to fats, oils, waxes and allied interests. Five years' chemical training still was required.

Membership rolls in February 1922 showed representation from 32 states, as well as four members in Canada, one in China, one in England, one in Honduras and one in India.

The year 1929 marked the 20th anniversary of AOCS. There were nearly 300 members involved with all types of fats, oils and their products, from mayonnaise and salad oil to

stearic acid and candles.

But W. H. Irwin said in his 1931 president's address that the expansion in scope had not increased membership as much as had been hoped by some. Irwin said this probably was because there had been no concerted effort to increase membership. "There are hundreds of chemists engaged in oil, fat and soap work who are not members of our organization. I believe that many of them would willingly join if they were invited to do so by a member of the society," Irwin said.

A slow growth rate continued during the Depression, but membership began to increase soon after.

In 1943, the society had 681 members, including an all-time record of 132 new members, nearly twice the growth during any previous year. In 1944, that record was broken, with 150 new members by the start of the annual meeting.

Membership in May 1944, included people from previously unrepresented groups and industries. The following shows an approximate distribution of members at that time according to their employment:

Field of Activity	Number of Members
Unclassified	134
Soap Companies	105
Packing Companies	86
Government Laboratories	80
Oil Producers	78
Industry Suppliers	72
Commercial Laboratories	64
Shortening and Margarine Manufacturers	61
Educational Institutions	27
Drying Oil Producers	16
Fatty Acid Producers	15
Vitamin Oil Producers	8
Food Research	7
Pharmaceutical	6
Food Products	6
Laboratory Supply	5
Petroleum Group	5
Natural Wax Group	3
Paper	2
Fisheries	2

According to R. R. King, first vice president in 1944, "Technologists representing the drying oil, vitamin oils, pharmaceutical, natural wax and certain other industries and specialized fields are seeking membership in the American Oil Chemists' Society in considerable numbers. Many of the applications being currently received are from individuals in these new groups, and it is gratifying

to note the interest these new groups are exhibiting in the activities of the society.”

The 1000th member was added to the membership rolls in April 1945. He was Milton A. Glaser, then chief chemist and director of research of the Standard Varnish Works in Chicago, Illinois. His special fields were industrial finishes, alkyd resins and synthetic vehicles such as oils, varnishes and resins. He was a member until 1970.

Such growth brought changes for the society. Klare S. Markley, in his 1945 president's address, said, "In five years the growth of the society has equalled that which occurred over the previous 30 years. It is obvious that the impact of this increased membership would necessitate changes in the administrative and fiscal organization and functions of the society. Methods and procedures which were adequate for the conduct of its affairs when it comprised three or four hundred members obviously cannot serve satisfactorily or efficiently now that it has grown to more than a thousand members.

"When the society was small, much of its business was of necessity carried on voluntarily by its members who served with pride and pleasure in many and varied capacities. As the membership has increased, the volume of work has grown to the point where it cannot be accomplished in this manner and it has become necessary to employ administrative and clerical assistance on a full-time basis. . . . The effect of the increased membership has probably been greatest in the office of Secretary-Treasurer, in fact, so great that it is no longer possible to transact the essential business of this office as a part-time activity. It became obvious about two years ago that the establishment of a national headquarters with a full-time staff was essential to the continued and efficient conduct of the business of the society and recommendations were made by various Governing Boards to this effect."

The result, Markley explained, was a national office in Room 1414 of the Pure Oil Building, 35 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, and the creation of the position of executive secretary. Lucy R. Hawkins was appointed the first acting executive secretary.

Robert R. King, in his 1946 president's address, also cited changes caused by growth. King pointed out that the society grew from 20 charter members in 1910 to 300 members after 25 years, then doubled to 600 members between 1934 and 1942 and doubled once again, to nearly 1,200, by 1946.

"We are getting big fast and are having some growing pains," King said, adding, "Any organized and active body doubling its membership in four years and quadrupling it in 12 years, following a rather static membership in its original 25 years, is bound to have problems and challenges. Doubling and quadrupling our membership has not

just doubled and quadrupled the complexity of our activity. This multiplication factor is probably much greater than two or four."

Membership was growing and participation on committees was strong. S. O. Sorensen, in his 1947 president's address, pointed out that there were 26 active committees and 17 subcommittees, on which 331 people served during his term. This represented approximately one out of every four members in the society.

The international scope of the society, meanwhile, was also expanding. In December 1946, *Oil & Soap* reported that Mario A. Lagomarsino, industrial chemist for Compania Bao S.A., Montevideo, Uruguay, had visited the *Oil & Soap* office on December 5 to take out a three-year subscription and to obtain several back issues. Lagomarsino told the staff his company had the only file of *Oil & Soap* in Uruguay. He is still an AOCS member.

Meanwhile, the society's headquarters reported the need to translate an increasing number of French and Spanish letters.

The November 1947 Journal reported that 35 states, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Canada, Mexico and 30 other countries were represented in the membership of AOCS.

By 1948, AOCS officials were considering academia as a possible source of new members. That was the year AOCS held its first short course at the University of Illinois campus in Urbana, Illinois.

An article in the August 1948 journal pointed out, "The war clearly demonstrated the vital economic importance of fats. It was felt that to ensure the necessary technical men for the future, more college members should be secured. More active interest by members of the college faculties or wider distribution of the journal to college libraries should reflect itself in more interest of future students in the various phases of the fat industry. It was surprising to see how many of the colleges, universities, technical schools, especially in the areas producing large amounts of domestic fat had no faculty members (in AOCS) and many did not take the journal. In contacting the faculties of many of the colleges not represented, nearly 50 sample copies of the February journal were sent where the journal was not received by members or library."

In mid-July 1951, the society passed the 2000th member mark. The 2000th member was George W. Moser, a consultant with Hardesty Industries in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He specialized in oils, fats, fatty acids and enzymology. Moser was born in Owingen, Germany, and came to the United States in 1912.

The journal in 1954 published a commentary on membership by editor A. R. Baldwin.

During 1957, the society expanded its membership categories to include junior memberships for students. Three people joined AOCs that year under this classification, open to matriculated students carrying at least six credit hours in a field leading to a career in fats and oils. The other existing categories were active, individual associate and corporation associate membership. Active membership, then as now, is open to anyone actually engaged in scientific or technological work relating to fats, oils, waxes, compounds or allied associated products with at least five years' academic training or its equivalent (two years of actual working experience equivalent to one year of academic training). Persons not qualified for active membership but engaged in the manufacture, distribution or sale of oils, fats, waxes, their constituents or compounds or allied associated products, or machinery, supplies, instruments or other equipment used by the industry are qualified to become individual associates, as are those interested in the development of the chemistry or technology of this industry. The corporate associate membership is open to corporations or firms engaged in the manufacture, distribution or sale of oils, fats, waxes or allied or associated products or machinery and supplies used by the industry. Active members can hold office and vote, whereas individual associate, corporation associate and junior members cannot.

In the late 1950s, efforts were renewed to recruit more members from academic institutions. Prompting this in part was the publication of the new *Journal of Lipid Research*. One member wrote to the membership committee to say, "I feel that the new journal would not have then formed if the sponsors had not been of the opinion that the Oil Chemists' journal is a 'trade' journal. This has arisen from the fact that there are compara-

tively few academic people in the Oil Chemists' Society and almost none in the governing and administrative offices."

It wasn't long before AOCs moved to fill this gap by launching a second journal, *Lipids*, aimed at biochemists. The first issue of *Lipids* was published in January 1966.

In 1972, the Governing Board announced additional steps to encourage members to recruit others. Their plan was to institute the President's Club and Honor Roll, which have been continued each year. The President's Club consists of members who recruit at least one new member for that year. Their names are published in *JAOCs* in a cumulative club roster for the year. The President's Honor Roll is open to members recruiting at least three new members in a given year.

AOCs now has more than 4,000 members. About two-thirds of the members are working in the United States, the others are in more than 70 nations around the globe. Overseas membership has grown at a more rapid rate since 1976 when AOCs began a series of World Conferences.

When the 75th annual meeting opens in Dallas later this year, more than 1,500 persons may be attending—equivalent to approximately one-third of the total membership. That possibly is an attendance that was never even dreamed of by nine cottonseed product analysts who met in Memphis' Jockey Club during the spring of 1909.

POSTSCRIPT—On Feb. 18, 1947, the Memphis Jockey Club, site of AOCs' birth, was torn down. According to a March 1947 *JAOCs* account, the Memphis landmark was erected in the 1880s when the Fairgrounds was a race track. In its basement was the club barroom where the founding group of chemists and analysts met in 1909.

When past presidents gather, it's time for . . .

"It seems to us that our society is especially rich in personal friendships. One has only to observe the warmth of the personal greetings as the members gather together from far and wide at New Orleans and Chicago, and the intimate groups that spontaneously exchange confidences and cast aside all care and restraint on the golf course or at the bowling alleys. It's a real society of genuine good fellows, without sham or pretense."

Alan Lee Porter, editor, *Oil & Soap*, January 1933

meets for dinner during each annual meeting, is a fraternal nonorganization whose warmth and fellowship are shrouded in a secrecy that is rarely pierced.

"The Freedom of Information Act does not apply to the past presidents' association," George Cavanagh (1969 AOCs President) sternly warns those who inquire about the group.

There are a few facts Cavanagh and other past presidents will confirm.

The association is purely social, is open to past presidents only, and has no officers. Spouses of

AOCs' Association of Past Presidents, which