

Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Oil Chemists' Society

IT WILL NEVER BE KNOWN what accident, or what guiding star, caused nine comparatively young men, four of them under 30 years of age, to gather together on the steps of an old fair-ground building in Memphis, Tenn., in May 1909. They were attending the 13th annual meeting of the old Interstate Cotton Crushers' Association.

History teaches us that many of the creative movements that have influenced the lives of men for worthwhile things were activated by loneliness and a desire for the companionship of kindred souls. The organization of our Society was no exception. Professionally these nine men were lonely. Chemistry, especially oil and fat chemistry, was in its infancy. So, when the suggestion was made that they form an organization to meet each year, it was like finding new friends and a new interest in life.



T. C. Law

Note the first and second of the aims and purposes of the early constitution and by-laws, in which fraternal and friendly relations are strongly emphasized:

first: to unite fraternally and professionally all chemists and technologists in good standing interested in the promotion of the chemistry and technology of fats, oils, waxes, and allied products;

second: to cultivate and promote friendly relations and interchange of constructive suggestions among the members of the Society and to bring about a reasonable standardization of equipment, materials, and methods in chemical and technological practice.

Five of these founders were doubtless in need of a broader knowledge of chemistry and a better understanding of its practical application. The other four were older and more experienced. To their everlasting credit may it be said that each of them gave graciously of his time and talents to establish foundation stones for the younger men to build upon.

It is with a sense of pardonable pride that the surviving member of the founders can point to the record of the nine in helping to establish firmly one of the most useful scientific groups on earth. Seven of the nine later became president of the Society. Six served on the Chemists' Committee of the N.C.P.A., two for more than 40 years. The history of the working committees again indicates that these nine men measured up to their responsibility and truly kept the faith.

HOWEVER the credit for the marvelous growth of this Society is by no means confined to these founders or to the 20 charter members. Eleven of these were added at Little Rock the next year so the entire charter membership amounted to 20. Compare, if you will, the A.O.C.S. with any other scientific or technical group of your knowledge, and there will not be found one where services are rendered more cheerfully, or efficiently, or more unselfishly than in this organization. This has been true for 50 years. Each leader and each administration have handed down to successors a better society than they received one year before.

It is only fair to state that the nine founders or the 20 charter members had no conception of the type of technical society they were introducing. When we look back over these years, we can quote a wise man of old who said: "It is because today seeks wisdom from yesterday that it can transmit wisdom to tomorrow." He might well have added that it is only as the administration of today seeks guidance and inspiration from that of yesterday that it can afford to offer guidance and inspiration to the future. Thus, when we build monuments, erect memorial buildings, and celebrate distinctive anniversaries, we are saying to the mighty dead:

From the eternal highway of the sky, look down upon us, who seek to carry the torch you kindled long ago. Lighten our darkness, guide our stumbling feet, fire our fainting hearts, strengthen our trembling hands, that we may serve well our generation and cast benevolent and beneficent shadows down the dim vistas of unknown days.

LET US consider the basic work of this institution, which has almost annually added research committees in which most of the work has been done. Literally hundreds of chemists and technicians have worked on these committees, and through their efforts the Society has been able to develop a complete manual on methods of analysis that is used the world over today in settling trade disputes and in furthering sales of fats and oil. In addition, from a simple beginning when a section was obtained in a trade magazine, the Society has established its own magazine, averaging monthly nearly one hundred pages of valuable, informative, and highly technical scientific literature.

One of the most outstanding accomplishments of the Society has been the attainment of near perfection in the use of analytical methods through a series of check samples, sent out either weekly or monthly and covering the products of the oil and fat materials dealt in by the industry.

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Apathetic about vitamin A?

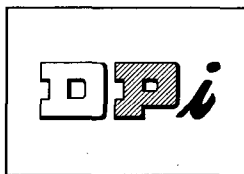
That's understandable. Now and then something new comes along (like our new moisture-stable *Myvax*[®] *Dry Vitamin A Palmitate*), but in general vitamin A buying in today's high-quality market is a pretty routine matter. Once in a while, however, the routine may foul up. Then it becomes very important that the vitamin A producer be *agile*.

A new-found friend of ours in the margarine business had this proved to him recently. Looked at his inventory sheets and noticed that for lack of vitamin A a shut-down was imminent. His regular source was terribly sorry to hear that.

Whereupon he hung up and tried our number. In practically a trice, he had the correct amount, form, and potency of *our* vitamin A in his plant. And it was in cans custom-filled to his specifications.

Naturally, we don't relish crisis. We try to be ready for it, all the same. Most of our customers want to keep their plants running without vast quantities of vitamin A sitting in the warehouse.

We tranquilize them with fast shipments of liquid *Myvax Vitamin A Palmitate* and *Acetate* (delivered in custom-packed cans as *Myvapack*[®] *Vitamin A*). Also, of course, the high-potency *Myvax Dry Vitamin A Palmitate* (with vitamin D if desired). Let the anxieties be ours. For information and prices, write *Distillation Products Industries*, Rochester 3, N. Y. Sales offices: New York and Chicago • W. M. Gillies, Inc., West Coast • Charles Albert Smith Limited, Montreal and Toronto.



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It is probably not safe to assume that the figures would necessarily be as small as that now, but at least those figures may provide some idea of the degree of magnitude involved. (We understand incidentally that the charitable agencies involved have been requesting that food fats be made available to them for distribution abroad and have indicated that the potential "market" for these free items is pretty large.)

In addition to the above authority, the U.S.D.A. may also make purchases of edible oils and their products for free distribution through domestic agencies for use in the school lunch program, hospitals, institutions for needy persons, etc. Whether or not these domestic donations would be very big is unknown, but the important thing about them is that they probably, to a large extent, merely replace normal commercial distribution anyway, without any marked over-all increase in consumption as a result.

In view of the above the figure of 500 million lbs. of oil suggested in the recent reports seems a little ambitious, but a figure well below that could be significant. If a purchase program is eventually entered into, it will be important to differentiate between that quantity which is donated abroad and that which is donated domestically, attaching more importance to the former than the latter.

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A.O.C.S. Commentary

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The devotion of the chemists and members and the willingness with which they have worked without pay or hope of reward can be attributed to an abiding interest in, and a sincere devotion for, our chosen profession. The contribution of the numbers of trained analysts and chemists cannot be measured in material values. In the years to come this magnificent illustration of devotion to a technical principle, and the basic research work which has accompanied it, will be rated of untold value.

Again let us not forget that ours is a friendly institution and that the companionship and the understanding attitude of the individual members one for the other have had much to do with its success. Truly we have bound together two great factions that are so often regarded as far apart. In this Society the scientific and the spiritual are united as well in our relationship to each other. It was founded that way. May it ever be so! May the inspiration of the yester-years and of today offer guidance and inspiration to the tomorrows! That is my hope and prayer for this Golden Anniversary.

THOMAS C. LAW
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