

Remembering the 1930 Cincinnati Meeting of the ACS

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Since the turn of the century, the City and University of Cincinnati have played host to five national meetings of the American Chemical Society, beginning with the 49th Spring Meeting (6-10 April) in 1914 and continuing through the 80th Fall Meeting (8-12 September) in 1930, the 99th Spring Meeting (8-12 April) in 1940, the 127th Spring Meeting (29 March-7 April) in 1955, and the 143rd Winter Intersession Meeting (13-18 January) in 1963. Attendance at the meetings reflected the progressive growth of the Society, with 658 chemists attending in 1914, 1668 in 1930, 3514 in 1940, 5496 in 1955 and only 1174 in 1963 (1). The disappointing figure for 1963 was a consequence of the meeting being part of a short-lived experiment with holding three, rather than two, national meetings per year; as well as the combination of Cincinnati's winter weather and the fact that several of the larger divisions did not participate in the meeting. Indeed, by the 1960's the growth of the ACS had outstripped the hotel and conference facilities of Cincinnati, and the city is not scheduled to host another national meeting for the remainder of this century.

Of these occasions, the 1930 meeting was in certain respects special for the City, the local Section and the University, since the President of the ACS for that year was William McPherson (1864-1951) of Ohio State and the traditional rivalry between Cincinnati and Columbus virtually guaranteed that the local arrangements committee would go out of its way to ensure the success of the meeting.

Publicity began with the 10 May issue of the "News Edition" of *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* (the forerunner of *Chemical and Engineering News*) which carried a short article on the history of the Cincinnati Section of the ACS, complete with portraits of Thomas H. Norton (first Chair of the Cincinnati Section and Head of the UC Chemistry Department from 1883-1900), Alfred Springer (local industrial chemist, owner of Alex. Fries and Broth., and cofounder of the original 1880 Cincinnati Chemical Society), John Uri Lloyd (owner of Lloyd Brothers Pharmaceutical Company and member of the original chemical society), and Ernst Twitchell (part owner of Emery Candle and



One of several editorial cartoons which appeared in local newspapers during the ACS convention. This specimen, by Claude Schafer of the *Cincinnati Times Star* was entitled "The New Seven League Boots."

Soap and inventor of the Twitchell process for glycerin). Indeed, in recognition of their nearly half century of service to the Section, Lloyd and Springer were appointed as honorary chairs for the meeting, though the real work of organizing the local arrangements was done by A. S. Richardson of the Procter and Gamble Company (2).

This introductory article was quickly followed by one in the 10 June issue on the "Educational Facilities of the Cincinnati District," which featured short descriptions of the chemistry departments at the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, the Ohio Mechanics Institute, Miami University, Clifton College, Mt. St. Joseph College, Western College for Women,

and the University of Dayton (3). On 20 June the preliminary program appeared (4), followed by an article on the chemical industries of Cincinnati in the 20 July issue (5), an article on things to see in Cincinnati in the 10 August issue (6) and the final program in the 20 August issue (7).

Though the headquarters for the meeting were located in the Hotel Gibson, the meeting itself was held on the UC campus. Perusal of the final program shows that only two members of the UC Chemistry Department presented papers, Harry Shipley Fry giving two on Tuesday afternoon before the Division of Organic Chemistry ("Observations on the Cannizzaro Reaction." with J. W. Price, and "The Action of Hydrogen Peroxide on Simple Carbon Compounds," with J. H. Payne) and Wayland Burgess giving one before the Division of Physical and Inorganic Chemistry the same afternoon ("A Study of the Reducing Action of Sodium on Manganous Iodide in Liquid Ammonia," with E. H. Smoker).

A final summary of the meeting appeared in the 20 September issue, which gave an excellent and often witty overview of the event and is worth reproducing in full since it clearly shows that, size excepted, very little about national ACS meetings has changed in the last 60 years (8):

Business may have been in the dumps, but the 1668 chemists, chemical engineers, executives, and what have you, who descended on Cincinnati the week of September 8 for the eightieth meeting of the American Chemical Society were far from a gloomy lot. They attended the nineteen divisional meetings, or at least some of them did, with the usual thirst for information and a chance to criticize their colleagues' papers. They swarmed in the customary buzzing clusters around the doors of the buildings, exchanging private opinions and prejudices. They blithely overpaid taxi drivers until the latter practically forgot which were the one-way streets. Those who were fortunate in having cars, or friends with cars, drove far afield of nights in the moonlight or the moonshine, according to their predictions. Experts announced that more pretty girls were seen in chemical combination at this meeting than at any other since the never-to-be-forgotten umpty-umpty meeting in southern Siberia. It was a good meeting.

To be sure, there were a few flies in the chemical ointment. Some divisions, with soft-hearted chairmen and long-winded speakers, established new endurance records at the expense of time schedules. In other cases it happened that authors were so absent-minded as to forget to come to the meeting at all. Such accidents make it difficult for Mr. Ketone to get to hear Doctor

Lignin's paper at anywhere near the time it is actually delivered. More chairmen are needed who will recognize the social implications of a time schedule and sink their personal modesty in making possible the efficient visitation of various divisional meetings by men who wish to glean one bit of information here and another there, rather than gluing their pants to the seat in one room. The American Chemical Society is organized in divisions, and these divisions should have freedom of action, but there seems to be no particular sense in isolating a division from outside contact by failing to maintain a definite schedule.

The local committee made the meeting a memorable one with the exceptional entertainment provided Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings, and the wealth of well-conducted industrial trips on Friday. Tribute is paid to the entertainment features elsewhere, as well as to the industrial groups whose financial assistance helped to make them possible. Little difficulty was experienced in handling registration, and this, paradoxically enough, was chiefly in connection with those who had preregistered by mail. The trouble in this case arose in the necessity of handling these members a second time in registering them for the industrial trips. Most of the members sailed through the registration in good time, but getting into a hotel room, even with a six-months' reservation, was quite a struggle for many, many gentlemen. The line was alleged to form on the right, but it looked more like the subway platform at Times Square. With two other conventions in town at the same time, the centrally located hotels were full enough to raise the blood pressure of every-one concerned several points.

Chemistry and chemists received much publicity from the Cincinnati papers, and the Times-Star was available free to all members of the Society during the meeting. Chemistry was even considered important enough to justify some cartoons, one of the best of which is reproduced in this issue [see figure]. From the journalistic viewpoint, chemistry seems to have arrived, but from the austere chemical viewpoint there were the usual ungrateful comments on journalism. Extremely pure scientists and reporters must habitually be at odds over the matter of relative emphasis, at least until all city editors are required to undergo a scientific education. All in all, however, the newspapers handled the reporting of the technical sessions with very creditable restraint and considerable intelligent detail.

One of the major events of the meeting passed practically unnoticed by those in attendance. This was the radio broadcast at 8:30 Tuesday morning, during which Mayor Russell Wilson officially welcomed the American Chemical Society to the city, and President Herman Schneider to the University of Cincinnati,

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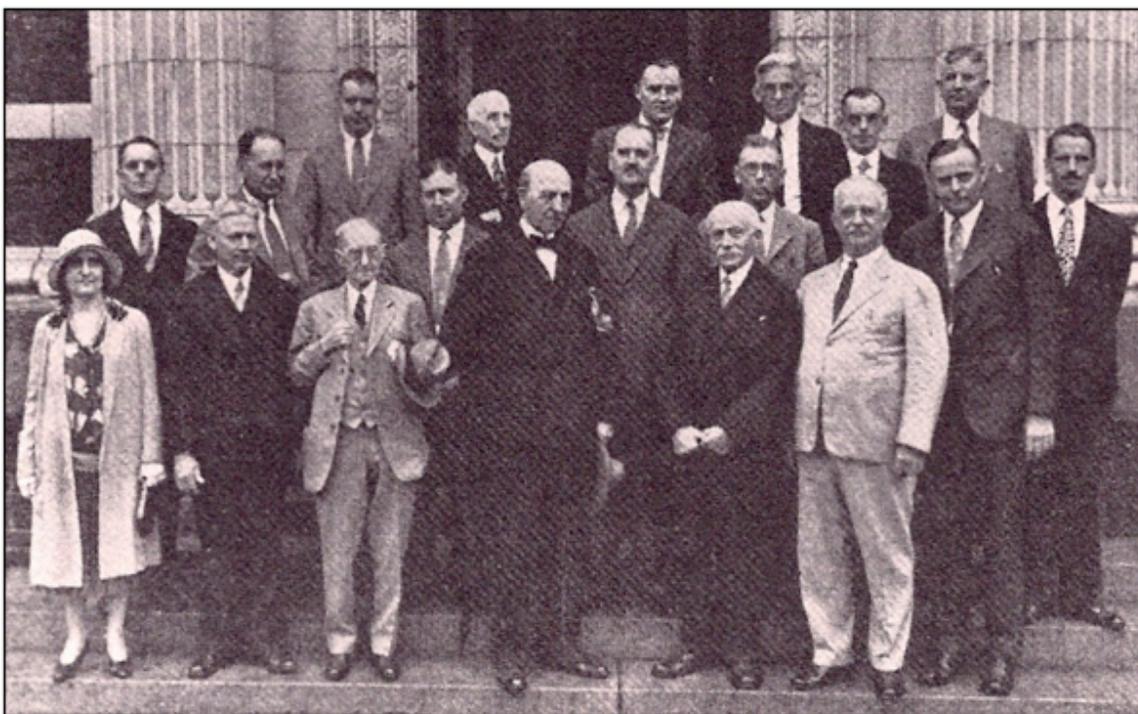
after which William McPherson, President of the Society, responded and spoke a greeting to the chemists of the world. The program was broadcast over WLW, the station of The Crosley Radio Corporation, and simultaneously was given international distribution over short waves at 6060 kilocycles. President McPherson spoke from WLW again on Thursday afternoon, briefly referring to the points made by him the previous evening in a masterly presidential address on "Chemistry and Education."

A group photograph was taken in McMicken Hall on Wednesday morning, copies of which may be obtained for \$1.25, by applying to C. R. Bragdon, Box 17, Evanston Post Office, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The customary arrangements of events was followed beginning with the Council session on Monday afternoon, report of which appears on another page.

sional meetings began in the afternoon, and continued through Thursday morning, with a total of four hundred and eight papers on the program. In addition to the two symposia at the general meetings, four divisional symposia were presented: one on "Endocrines," at a joint session of the Divisions of Biological and Medicinal Chemistry; one on "The Qualifications of Chemistry Teachers," by the Division of Chemical Education; another on "Industrial High-Pressure Reactions," under the combined auspices of the Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, Gas and Fuel Chemistry, and Petroleum Chemistry Divisions; and one on the "Action of Ammonium Citrate on Superphosphates," by the Division of Fertilizer Chemistry.

The entertainment program, described more fully elsewhere, included a dinner and variety show at the zoo on Tuesday evening, with dancing until midnight,



A somewhat stippled group photograph of notables at the 1930 Cincinnati ACS Meeting taken on the steps of the UC Chemistry Building. Front Row (left to right): Mrs. L. W. Bosart, H. S. Fry, J. U. Lloyd, W. McPherson, A. Springer, C. Parsons, A. S. Richardson. Second Row (left to right): J. T. R. Andrews, F. C. Broeman, C. P. Long, C. R. Bragdon, C. Bahlman, A. W. Broomell. Third Row (left to right): W. Burgess, S. Waldbott, E. R. Brumskill, L. W. Bosart, A. O. Snoddy, A. Campbell.

Monday evening a large number enjoyed a banquet and dance in the comfortably refrigerated roof garden of the Hotel Gibson. The scientific sessions commenced Tuesday morning, with two general meetings featuring symposia on "Industrial Fermentation" and on "Non-aqueous Solutions," respectively. The separate divi-

and an enjoyable musical program following the presidential address at Emery Auditorium on Wednesday evening. The ladies were well taken care of throughout the week, their special events including a tea at the Hotel Gibson Monday afternoon; a drive around the city Tuesday afternoon, with a visit to the Crosley

broadcasting station WLW; a luncheon at the Hotel Gibson Wednesday noon, followed by a visit to the Rookwood Pottery and the Sterling Glass Works; and a luncheon on Thursday noon at the Alms Hotel. Ladies and gentlemen joined on Thursday afternoon for a drive around the city, a visit to the Cincinnati Water Works, and a reception in Ault Park.

A large variety of industrial trips attracted the chemists on Friday. Arrangements were made for nine group visits to various local industries, and an all-day trip to Dayton.

We take this occasion to express our profound thanks to the honorary chairmen and the local committees for their untiring efforts in making the Cincinnati meeting so successful. Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the following: the University of Cincinnati, for the use of its grounds and buildings; the Bausch and Lomb Optical Co. for loan of lanterns; the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, for many items of advice and information, and for assistance in conducting registration; the Gibson Hotel, for space required in many of our activities, and for the complimentary tea and luncheon for the visiting ladies on Monday; the Crosley Radio Corporation, for assistance in the entertainment of visiting ladies, and for cooperation on broadcasting; the Thomas and Hochwalt Laboratories, for the complimentary luncheon to those taking the industrial trip to Dayton; the Cincinnati Water Works, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the various industrial plants scheduled for visitation. The following industries, organizations, and individuals, for financial or other assistance, making possible our complimentary dinner on Tuesday evening: Ault & Wiborg Varnish Works, Inc.; The Philip Carey Co.; The Champion Coated Paper Co.; Cincinnati Chemical Works, Inc.; Cincinnati Hotel Men's Association; Coleman & Bell Co.; The Drackett Chemical Co.; The Flintkote Co.; Grasselli Chemical Co.; Hamilton Coke & Iron Co.; Hilton-Davis Co.; The International Printing Ink Corp.; Kemper-Thomas Co.; John Uri Lloyd; The Wm. S. Merrell Co.; Multi Color Type Co.; The Procter & Gamble Co.; Richardson Co.; Rossville Commercial Alcohol Corp.; Shepherd Chemical Co.; Alfred Springer; The U.S. Playing Card Co.; The U.S. Printing & Lithograph Co.; The W. T. Wagner's Sons Co.; The M. Werk Co.; The Isaac Winkler & Bro. Co.

With the awakening of public interest in science, the meetings of the American Chemical Society have developed news value, and constantly take a more prominent place in the parade of daily events. In addition to exceptionally good newspaper interpretation, the Cincinnati meeting was brought to public attention by two radio broadcasts, and by the well-attended address of President William McPherson, Wednesday

evening, with its keen interpretation of the scientific attitude as applied not only to teaching, but to social and political progress.

The radio broadcasts were put on the air through WLW, the Crosley station. The first one was held at 8:30 A.M. Tuesday, and was given international range by short-wave transmission in order to reach the Societe de Chimie Industrielle then in session at Liege, Belgium. Mayor Russell Wilson welcomed the Society in the name of the City of Cincinnati. He paid tribute to the achievements of chemistry, stressing the social significance of the great destructive, as well as constructive, power which it has placed in the hands of mankind, resulting in the pressing need for scientific vision in maintaining international peace.

Mayor Wilson was followed by President Herman Schneider, of the University of Cincinnati, who, in a brief and genial address, declared the Society "a good and a comfortable group to have about," because chemistry, by its tremendous contributions to material prosperity and to physical and mental health, contributes also to social and intellectual well-being.

President McPherson responded to the greetings, commenting on the development of Cincinnati since the previous meeting of the Society in that city in 1914, and then sent the greetings of the American Chemical Society to the representatives of the Societe de Chimie Industrielle in session at Liege, Belgium, during the week of the Cincinnati meeting. He then traced the history of the American Chemical Society in brief, commenting on the fact that the Cincinnati Chemical Society, which later became the third local section of the American Chemical Society, was the second group of importance to be organized in the United States. After greeting such of the honorary members of the Society in foreign countries as might hear the broadcast, and those members of the Society in this country who were unable to attend the meeting, President McPherson tendered the appreciation of the Society to the City of Cincinnati, the local section members, and the University of Cincinnati.

At the public meeting Wednesday evening, President McPherson gave a balanced exposition, punctuated with side remarks of dry humor, of the significance and importance of the scientific attitude, not only in education, but in the solution of social and political problems. He cited prohibition and the attempts to relieve agriculture by governmental withdrawal of wheat from the market as examples of hasty and unscientific approach to problems which could not be solved by sudden political action, and urged the necessity of taking time to produce results of lasting value. In dealing with education, he decried the popularization of science-teaching in high schools and universities with

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its tendency toward shallowness, and the emphasis frequently put upon facts rather than principles.

The public meeting was presided over by Alfred Springer, who shared the honorary chairmanship of the Cincinnati meeting with John Uri Lloyd.

References and Notes

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