

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

WHITSON SADLER

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

Arthur Daemmrich and Jeffrey McDaniel

at

Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

on

19 June 2006

(With Subsequent Corrections and Additions)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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WHITSON SADLER

1940 Born in Bristol, Tennessee on 30 November

Education

1963 B.S., economics, Sewanee, the University of the South
1969 M.B.A., Harvard University

Professional Experience

1970-1974	Lazard & Frères Co. Associate
1975-1977	General Partner
1977	Solvay America, Inc. Vice Chairman
1978-2001	Chief Executive Officer
1994-1996	Houston Museum of Natural Science Member, Board of Trustees
1996-1997	Society of Chemical Industry (American Section) Chairman
1996-2000	Southdown, Inc. Member, Board of Directors
2000-2001	Chemical Manufacturers Association Chairman
2000-2004	Belden, Inc. Member, Board of Directors
2001-present	Solvay S.A. Member, Board of Directors
	American Plastics Counsel Chairman

Honors

1988

Chevalier, Order of King Leopold, Belgium

2003

Chemical Industry Medal, Society of Chemical Industry
(American Section)

ABSTRACT

Whitson Sadler begins his interview with a description of his family history, which he traces back to an English missionary in the 1600s. Born in Bristol, Tennessee, Sadler was the middle son of two formally trained schoolteachers. As a young boy, Sadler's father accepted a position as a ticket agent at American Airlines, which caused the family move several times during Sadler's formative years. Sadler attended high school in Long Island, followed by a year of post-graduate prep school in New Hampshire at The New Hampton School. After this post-graduate year, Sadler enrolled at the Sewanee, the University of the South where he excelled in mathematics; this eventually led him to pursue a degree in economics. After receiving his undergraduate degree, Sadler enlisted in the U.S. Navy, spending most of his four-year service in Washington, D.C. and Norfolk, Virginia.

Following his time in the Navy, Sadler attended Harvard Business School. Upon graduating, Sadler was offered a position at Lazard Frères & Co., where he worked first as an associate and then as a general partner, for seven years. It was during this time that Sadler first began to work with Solvay S.A., which was expanding its business to the United States. After working on the Soltex Polymer Corporation board, Sadler became more familiar with the company and in 1977, left Lazard Frères & Co. to become vice chairman and, after a year, CEO of Solvay America, Inc. Over the next two decades, Sadler worked to expand the depth and breadth of Solvay's various product lines, and became an important member of the Chemical Manufacturers Association, helping to develop the Responsible Care[®] program. Solvay America prospered under his leadership, reaching over 25 percent of Solvay's overall sales by the time of his retirement. Sadler concludes his interview with a discussion of current politics and his activities since retirement.

INTERVIEWERS

Arthur Daemmrich is the director of the Center for Contemporary History and Policy at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. He holds a Ph.D. in science and technology studies from Cornell University and has published on biotechnology policy and politics, the sociology of medicine, and pharmaceutical drug regulation. The projects he supervises at CHF bring long-range perspectives to bear on key issues in innovation, globalization, risk, health, and environmental policy. Daemmrich has held fellowships from the Social Science Research Council/Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

Jeffrey McDaniel is the senior director of development for the New London Hospital in New London, New Hampshire. He spent several years at the Chemical Heritage Foundation as a major gifts officer, associate director, and assistant director. McDaniel holds an A.B. in religion from Dartmouth College and has completed post-baccalaureate studies at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland), Villanova University, and the Community College of Philadelphia. He played an integral role in planning and executing the Chemical Heritage Foundation's 25th Anniversary Initiative.

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