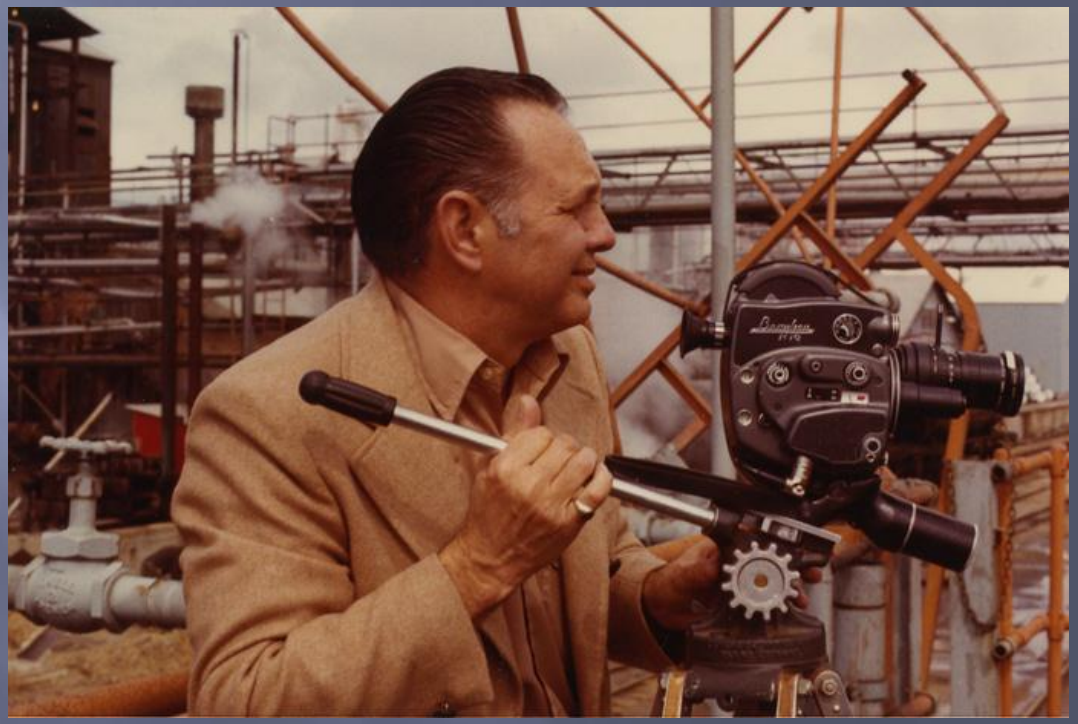
ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS: AN INTRODUCTION

Hillary S. Kativa, M.A., M.L.I.S.
Archivist for Photographic and Moving Image Collections
Chemical Heritage Foundation

Heritage Council
May 13, 2015

CHF's Photo Collections

- Approximately 115 collections totaling more than 50,000 images
- Variety of formats, including print photographs, negatives, slides, film strips, and much more



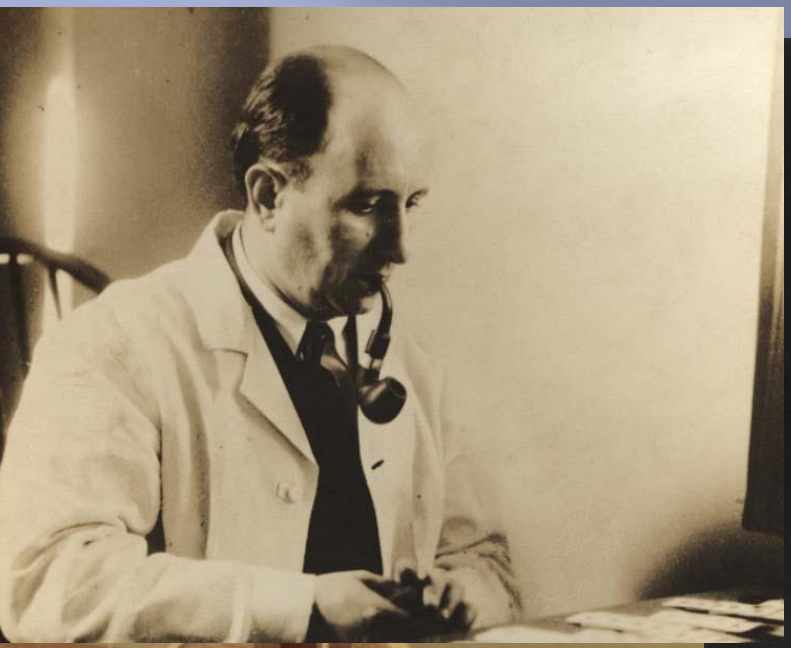
Photographer at Hercules Inc. plant in Hattiesburg, MS (1972)

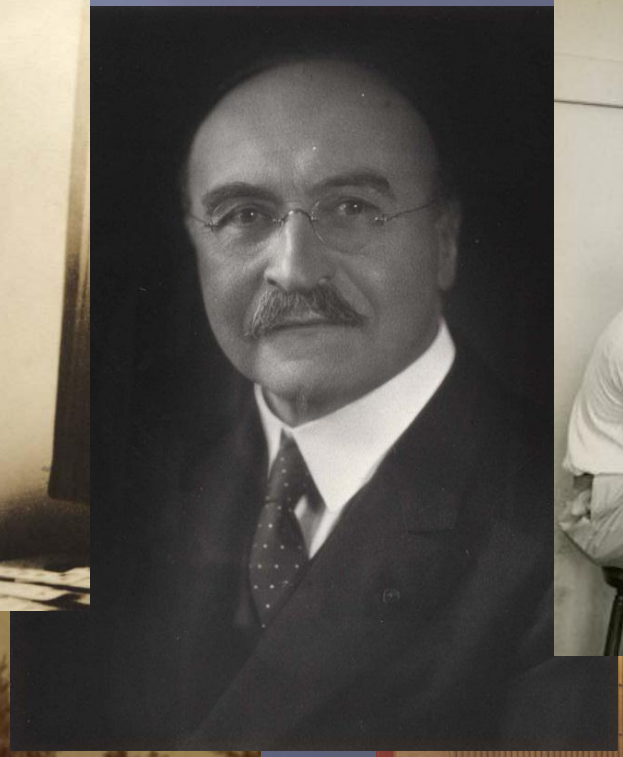
A Diversity of Subjects

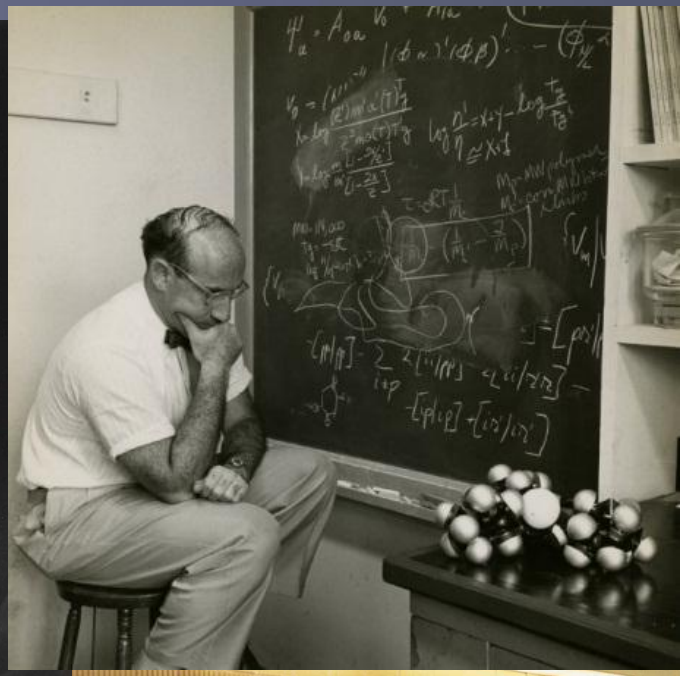
- Formal and informal portraits
- Laboratory facilities
- Industrial production
- Advertising and marketing
- Visual history of chemistry

Chemists' Club Library Open House (1972)

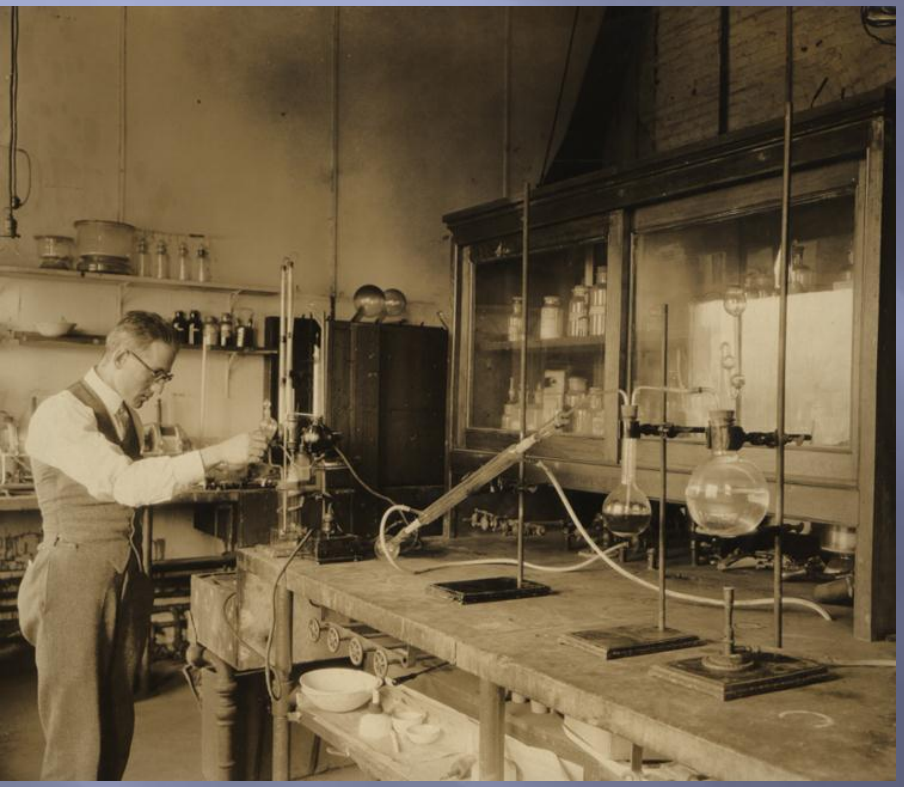
Portraits







Laboratory Facilities



Fixed Nitrogen Research Laboratory (1926)

Hercules Plant in Brunswick, GA (1964)

Industrial Production

Radford Ordnance Works
(circa 1940)

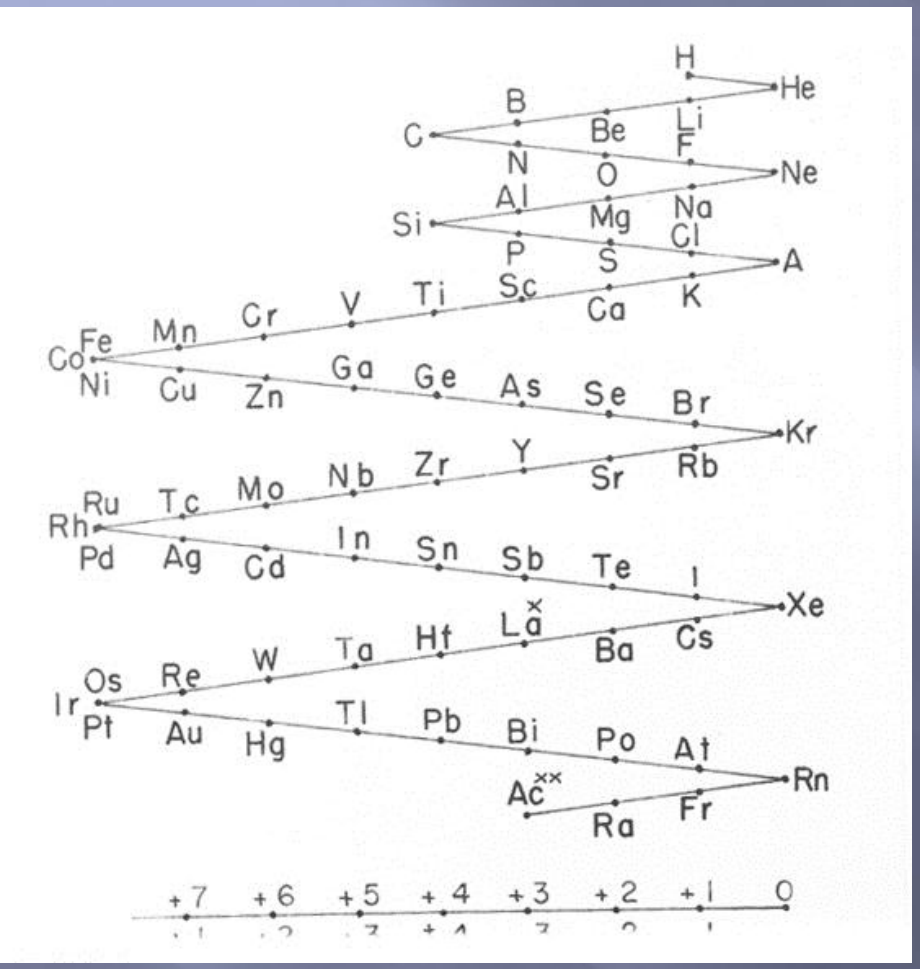
Saran bubble at Dow
Chemical plant (1987)

Advertising

Handi-wrap bags (1963)

Model with Bendix instruments (circa 1960)

Visual History of Chemistry



Woodiwiss periodic chart (1906)

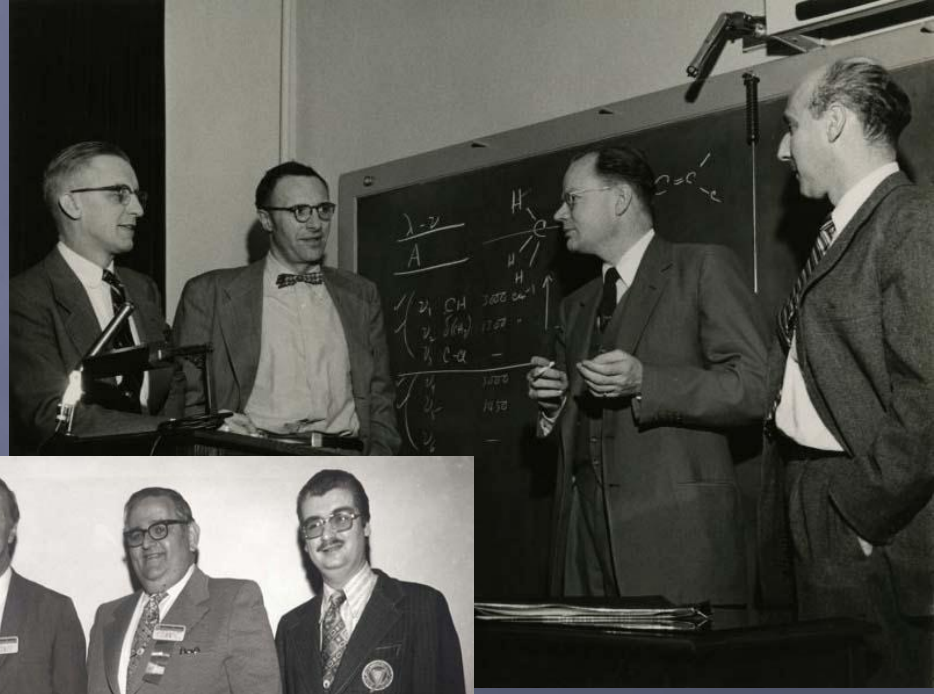
Alcott Crystal #1 (2005)

Personal Papers

Donald Othmer in Chemical Engineering Laboratory (1948)

Professional Networks

- Interactions with peers
- Institutional affiliations
- Mentor-student relationships



Social Networks

- Personal relationships
- Social interactions
- Family life

Corporate Records

Hercules Powder Company employees, Port Ewen, New York (1943)

Dow Chemical Company

- Facilities, employees, operations, products, and advertising of the Dow Chemical Company

Dow Chemical Company

- Mid-20th century shift from industrial applications to consumer products

Hercules Incorporated

- Plants, employees, products, advertising, and brand strategies of the Hercules Powder Company

Hercules Incorporated

- Transition from small explosives company to multi-national corporation

Trade Show Displays

American Mining Congress (1932)

Trade Show Displays

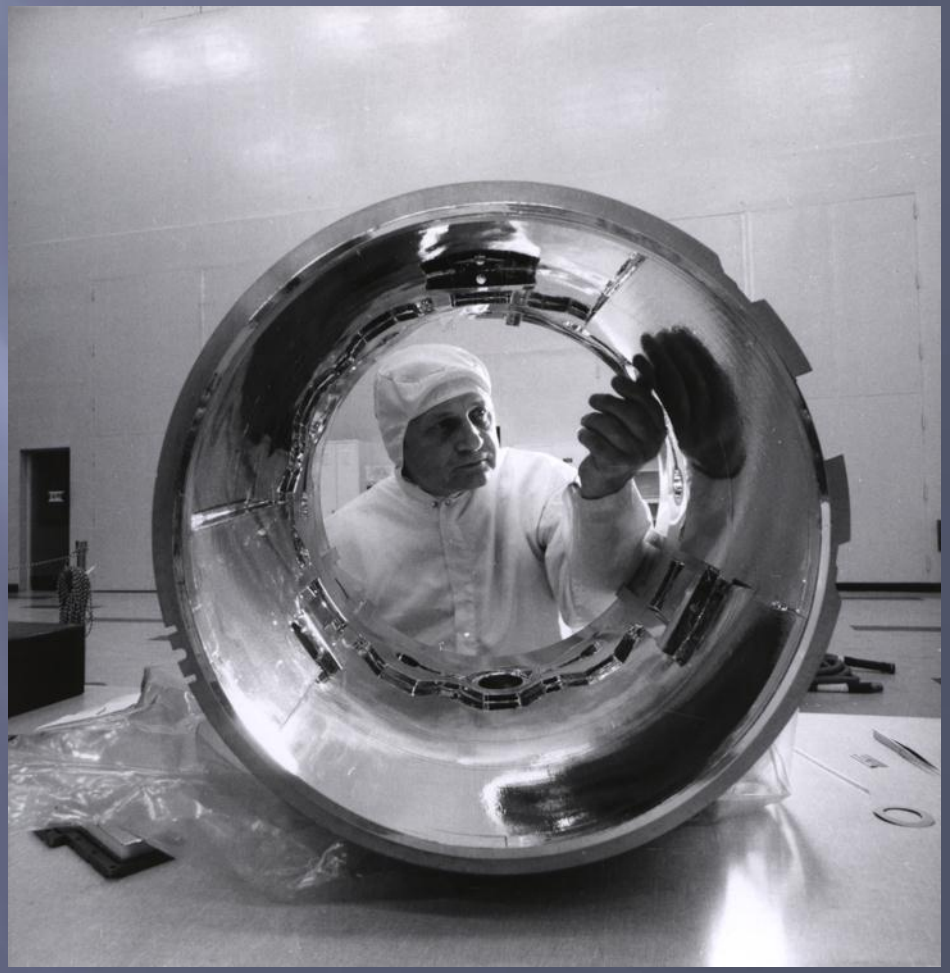
New York City Chemical Show (1947)

Trade Show Displays

Textile Industry Trade Show (circa 1950s)

Perkin-Elmer Corporation

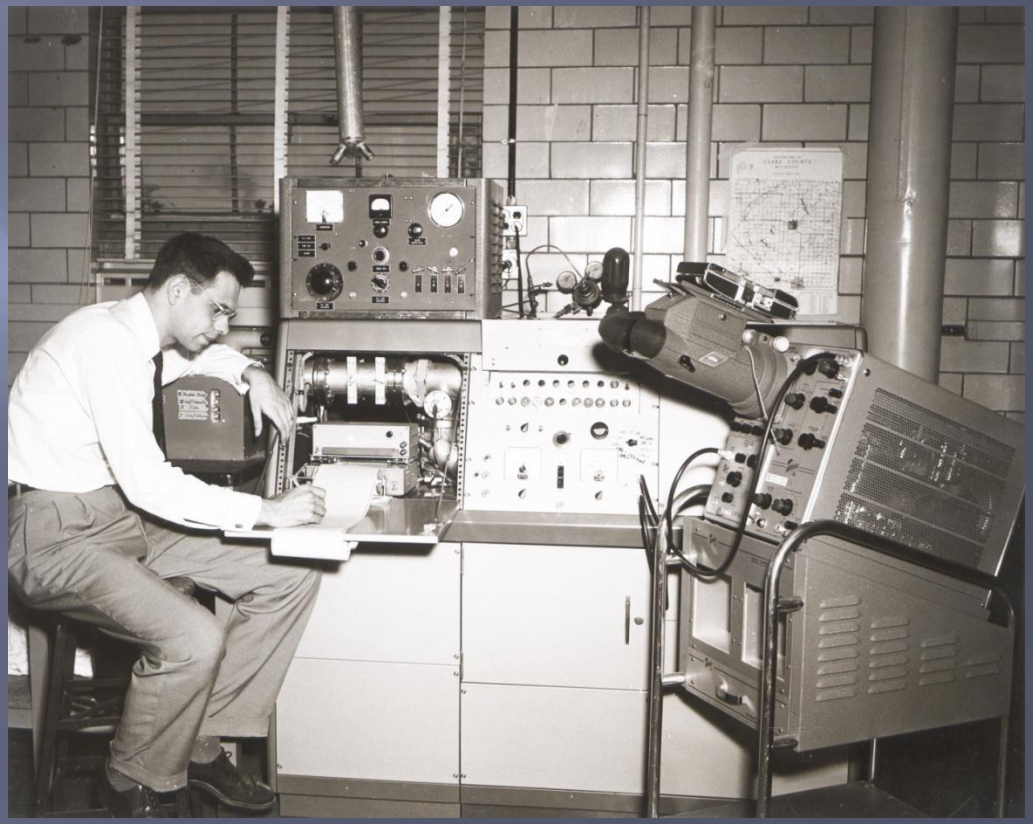
- Instrumentation, staff, and facilities, dating from 1930s-1980s
- Precision analytical instruments in production and laboratory use



Infrared sensor (circa 1960s)

Bendix Corporation

- Creation, production, and marketing of Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer
- Staged publicity photos for advertising and instrumentation manuals



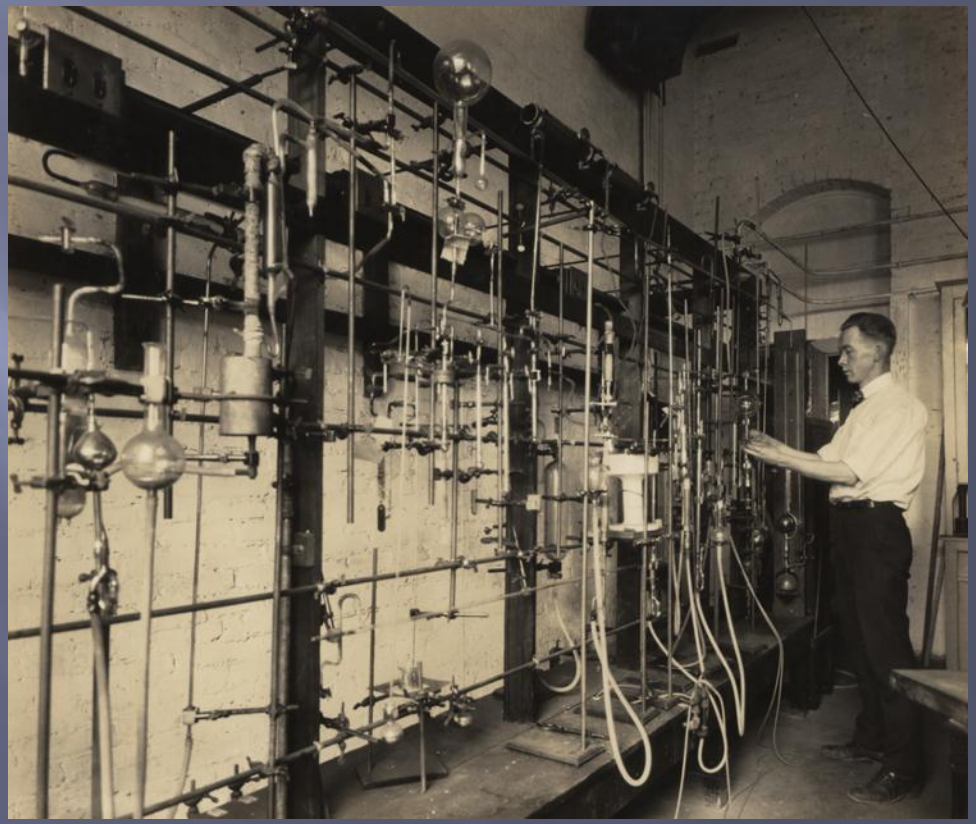
Technician with assorted Bendix instruments (circa 1950s)

Thematic Collections

Nylon Pirns awaiting final inspection
(circa 1940s)

Fixed Nitrogen Research Laboratory

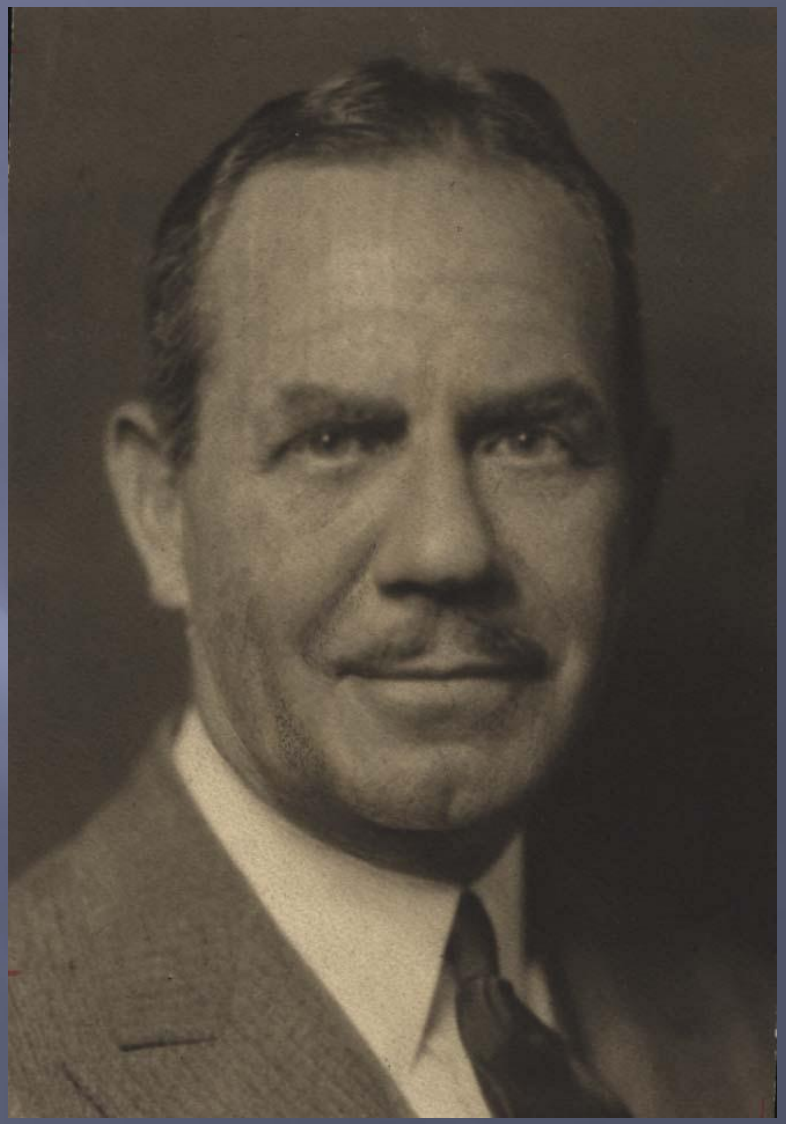
- Collected by Travis P. Hignett
- Stages of nitrogen fixation
- Transition from wartime technology to peacetime uses



Study of Nitrogen fixation by alpha rays (April 1926)

Williams Haynes Portrait Collection

- Collected by prolific journalist Williams Haynes (1886-1960)
- Approx. 1,200 portraits of notable chemists and industrialists dating from the 1800s to the 1960s



Williams Haynes
(circa 1935)

Nylon Photographs and Ephemera

- Collected by Joseph X. Labovsky
- Early stages of Nylon research and production at Du Pont under Wallace Carothers

Autoclave at Semi-Works (1938)

Unique Challenges of Photographic Materials

- Identification
- Description
- Preservation
- Rights Management

Hercules plant in Louisiana (1972)

Identification

- Photographs reflect the time in which they were taken
- Consider factors such as presentation, size, backdrop, pose, clothing, and hairstyle

Tintype portrait of Charles Smyth (circa 1900)

Dating Photographs

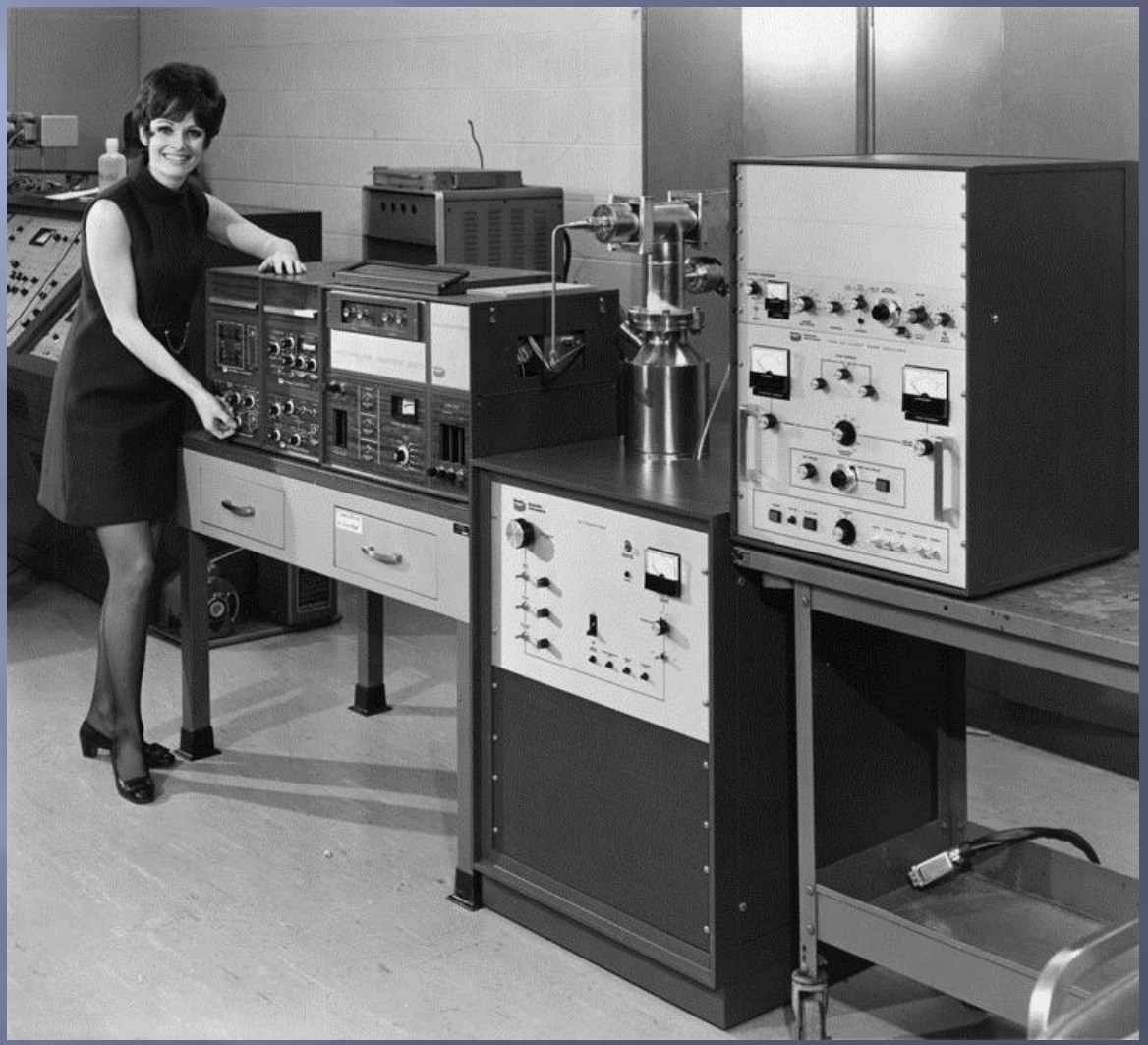
Hercules employees outside Delaware Trust Building (circa 1980s)

Description

- Person (who?)
- Time (when?)
- Place (where?)
- Activities and events (what?)
- Objects (what?)
- Abstract concepts

Chemists' Club Library,
New York, NY (circa 1923)

“Of” versus “About”



Bendix instruments with female model (circa 1960)

“Of” versus “About”

Dye technicians at Althouse Chemical Plant (1952)

Preservation

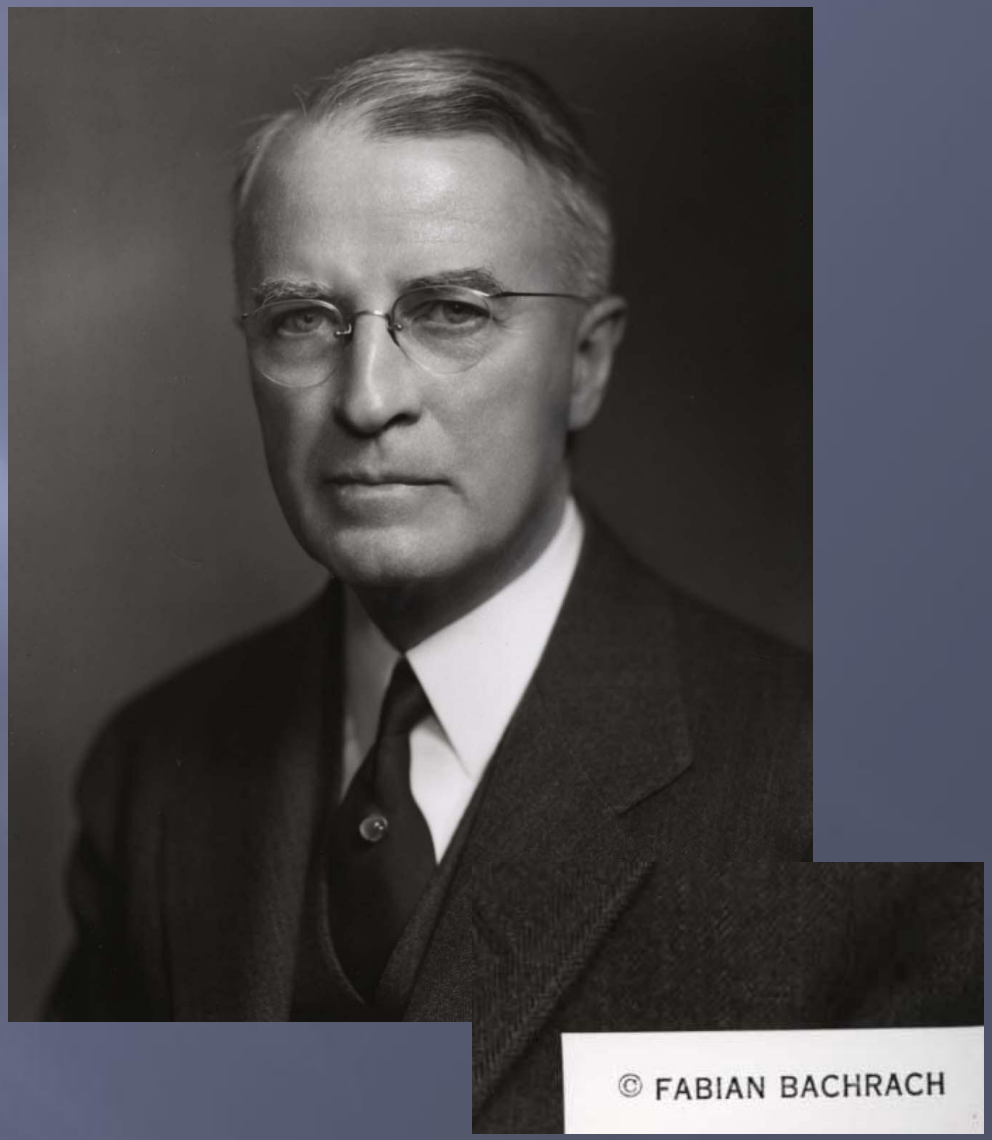
- Understand photographs' vulnerabilities
- Manage your storage environment
- Safely handle, display, and store

Unprocessed photos from the Records of Hercules Inc.

Rights Management

- Copyright protects any original material in a fixed form, whether published or unpublished, from moment of creation

- Possession of a photo is **not** permission to publish or reproduce



Portrait of Benjamin Talbot Brooks (circa 1950)

Thank You!

International Congress on Catalysis (1960)