

CHEMISTRY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

C. A. GROSS

Carbondale Community High School, Carbondale, Illinois

In my brief survey of this topic, I shall report the purposes, organization, history, activities, and future plans of the association. My hope is that this report will not only encourage other groups to organize, but will also encourage the Association of Southern Illinois to continue its efforts with renewed strength.

The purposes of the Chemistry Teachers' Association are to encourage high school and college students in the study of chemistry, to promote activities which will stimulate students, to provide means of adding to the experiences, knowledge, and education of its members, to provide inducements to discuss problems pertinent to the teachers of chemistry, and to unite into a growing fellowship the chemistry teachers in the area known as Southern Illinois.

The idea that the chemistry teachers might organize came to a small group of men in an informal conversation. In fact no one person wants the credit for broaching the idea. Mr. Ray Williams of the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School took the next step by sending out letters inviting chemistry teachers in the locality to an organizational meeting. Harry Wilson of Murphysboro, Robert Whitney of Cairo, E. L. Brock of Mount Vernon, Hal Stone of West Frankfort, Ray Williams of Anna, and C. C. Logan, Harold Catt, Stanley Hays, Dr. T. W. Abbott of the Southern Illinois State Normal University attended the first meeting. At this first meeting an organization was formed after reasons for organizing were discussed. Ray Williams of Anna was elected president and Hal Stone of West Frankfort became secretary. Plans were made to hold monthly meetings in the various towns of the area. The organization continued to grow in membership as committees were appointed to direct the activities.

The first meeting of the organization was held in Carbondale, Illinois at the

Southern Illinois State Normal University on December 7, 1938. In its short history of existence the organization has met once each at Anna, Mount Vernon, Benton, Murphysboro, Cairo, Harrisburg, and twice at Marion and Carbondale. By meeting in different schools the members have had visitation opportunities never before obtained. New ideas have been gained by direct observation.

The activities of the association have had a dual purpose. One purpose has been to provide educational opportunities for teachers to visit local industries, to hear lectures by men in business fields employing some knowledge of chemistry, and to widen the educational horizons of the teachers of chemistry who wish to be professional. Teachers have had the opportunity to visit the Cardox Corporation Plant in Benton where CO_2 is used to make a coal-shattering cartridge and where heater matches are also made. The meeting in Harrisburg gave the members a chance to see a liquid oxygen plant and one of the largest producing coal mines in Southern Illinois, the Sahara Coal Company, which ships on working days about three hundred carloads of coal from its combination strip and shaft mine. The second purpose of the activities has been to stimulate student interest in the fields of chemistry. The chief activity in furthering this latter purpose has been a Chemistry Laboratory or Field Day to which high school students in the area have been invited. Two such days or meetings have been held at the Southern Illinois State Normal University where programs consisting of lectures, motion pictures, exhibits, lecture demonstrations, and campus tours have been given. As a part of the Chemistry Day programs competitive examinations were held and an essay contest conducted. Students were awarded prizes in the form of engraved medals.

As for future plans the association wishes to enlarge its circulating library plan, to study the changing ideas of curricular chemistry, to cooperate with other educational organizations in the fields of science and science teaching, and to find other media for unified stimulation of students. The association hopes to develop interest in other organizations in the state which already serve students. It was not organized to compete with or

minimize the influence of other similar organizations.

One gratifying result of the organization has been the evidence of the finest type of cooperation among the members of this group. The members of the association have been pleased with the number of students who seemed to profit by the stimulation emanating from the Chemistry Laboratory Days.
