

Maurice P. Crosland (1931–



Maurice P. Crosland was born in London, England on March 19, 1931. In his youth he was inspired by tales of his French grandfather, a senior civil servant, who wrote books about Roman law in his spare time. His love of history began at an early age and has always been strong. He took his B.Sc. (1951) in Chemistry and M.Sc. (1953) in history and philosophy of science from the University College, London (UCL). He started his career as a schoolmaster teaching science (1955–1963). While teaching in west London, he embarked on a Ph.D. at UCL on a part-time basis, working in the British Museum Library on weekends and during school holidays. In 1959 he received his Ph.D. in History of Chemistry. After his first book, *Historical Studies in the Language of Chemistry*, was published in 1962, there was an opportunity for a university post at the University of Leeds. He accepted the position of Lecturer in the department of History and Philosophy of Science at Leeds, where he taught a course in the

history of chemistry (1963–1974). During his time at Leeds he was invited as visiting professor at several American universities including: Cornell University (autumn of 1968), where he was invited by Henry Guerlac; the University of California at Berkeley (summer 1968); and the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania (1971).

Crosland was honorary editor of the *British Journal for the History of Science* from 1965–1971. After his second book, *The Society of Arcueil; A View of French Science at the Time of Napoleon I* (1967), was published he was promoted to reader at the University of Leeds (1969) and was also elected to the Académie Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences. At the time of his election as president of the British Society for the History of Science (1974–1976) he was offered a position at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

The University of Kent had established that the Nuffield Foundation might be willing to fund a suitable interdisciplinary project to study the history, philosophy and social relations of science. A committee was set up to find a suitable person and project. Crosland was approached and in 1974, the Unit for the History, Philosophy and Social Relations of Science was established by the university with Crosland as its director. With a limited budget Crosland began to develop the Unit and library resources. He hired Alex Dolby from Leeds and Crosbie Smith from Cambridge. Crosland directed the Unit for some 20 years, along with Smith and Dolby. During that time the Unit grew in stature. It sustained itself with funding from the Nuffield Foundation, grants from the Social Science Research Council, and University support. The Unit drew graduate students from the U.K., as well as from the U.S., Mexico, Germany and Portugal, all bringing their own financial support. The projects supervised by Crosland included the study of research schools; research on J. B. Dumas, C. A. Wurtz, and Marie Curie; projects on reward mechanisms (academic prizes); work on the Royal Society of London; and research on French sources. Crosland taught undergraduate courses in the history of science with an explicitly European slant and introduced a course on the social history of medicine, which was quite popular with Kent students. In August 1994, the Unit for History of Science was reconstituted as the Center for History and Cultural Studies of Science within the School of History. Crosland was named professor emeritus and Crosbie Smith, then reader in the Center for History and Cultural Studies of Science, was appointed Director. The Center's objectives are to promote research in the field of cultural history of science (including technology and medicine) through externally-funded research posts. Through

Crosland's leadership (and now Smith's) the Center has been outstandingly successful in attracting substantial external funding from several highly prestigious sources.

Crosland's interests in the history of science as a field of research resulted in many articles in specialist journals and nine books. Most of the books can be categorized as either history of chemistry or history of French science (with some British for comparison). From his Ph.D. thesis came *Historical Studies in the Language of Chemistry* (1962, 1978, Spanish translation 1988). More suitable for students was *The Science of Matter: A Historical Survey; Selected Readings* (1971, 1992). *In the Shadow of Lavoisier: the Annales de Chimie and the Establishment of a New Science* (1994) was boosted by access to relevant archives. Possibly his most successful book was *Gay-Lussac, Scientist and Bourgeois* (1978, 2004, French translation 1991). This was certainly history of chemistry but very much in a French institutional context and, therefore, overlapping with the second category, beginning with *The Society of Arcueil; A View of French Science at the Time of Napoleon I* (1967). He then edited *Science in France in the Revolutionary Era, described by Thomas Bugge* (1969). There followed *The Emergence of Science in Western Europe* (1975, Italian translation 1979). Very many years of research were required to produce *Science Under Control: The French Academy of Sciences, 1795–1914* (1992, 2002). His *Studies in the Culture of Science in France and Britain since the Enlightenment* (1995) contains reprints of earlier articles. Since 'retirement' he has, among several other projects, made a study of early chemical laboratories with two articles in *Annals of Science*.

Maurice P. Crosland, currently Professor Emeritus, School of History, Rutherford College, University of Kent, received the Dexter Award in 1984 from the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society for his many contributions in the history of science.

Sources

Autobiographical information provided by Maurice P. Crosland.

Anon., "Maurice Crosland," *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*, 4 (1989): 26.

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