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Memorial of Charles L. Christ 1916-1980

ROBERT M. GARRELS

*Department of Marine Science, University of South Florida
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701*

AND JOAN R. CLARK¹

479 Ferne Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94306

Charles Louis Christ died June 29, 1980 at Palo Alto, California, after a long illness with heart disease. He was born March 12, 1916 in Baltimore, Maryland, of German-American parents. He grew up in Baltimore and attended Baltimore City College (high school).

From 1933 to 1940 he studied at The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. At an early age he demonstrated unusual scientific ability and so was able to bypass the usual Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, receiving the Ph.D. degree in 1940. His thesis was "X-ray crystallographic studies upon Etio-porphyrin-1," no doubt influenced by his now famous thesis advisor, David Harker. Charles taught at JHU from September, 1936 to May, 1940 and, in addition, was a research assistant during school years and summers to W. M. Thornton, Jr. in analytical chemistry, S. S. Jenkins in organic chemistry, and D. H. Andrews in chemical physics.

On June 6, 1938 he married Gertrude C. Callahan who survives him. Her work during the early years of their marriage helped support his university studies. Her encouragement and devotion to his profession and interests continued throughout his career.

After receiving his degree, Charles first worked as a research chemist at the General Electric Company, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Here he was responsible for setting up an X-ray diffraction laboratory and conducted research on transformer steels and lightning arrestor materials, using X-ray emission spectrographic and microchemical techniques. In September, 1941 he returned to academic life as an instructor at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. In addition to his teaching, he again set up an X-ray diffraction laboratory.

From October, 1942 to July, 1945 he was back at JHU, this time as an instructor and Associate Direc-



Charles L. Christ circa 1959

tor of their C. Y. War Research Laboratory. This Laboratory, under contract with the U. S. Army Signal Corps and the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships, was responsible for the development of the superconducting bolometer for the detection of infrared radiation. Charles was in charge of all ground and airborne tests of equipment. Towards the end of the war, he became a consultant with Rheem Research

¹Retired, U. S. Geological Survey.

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