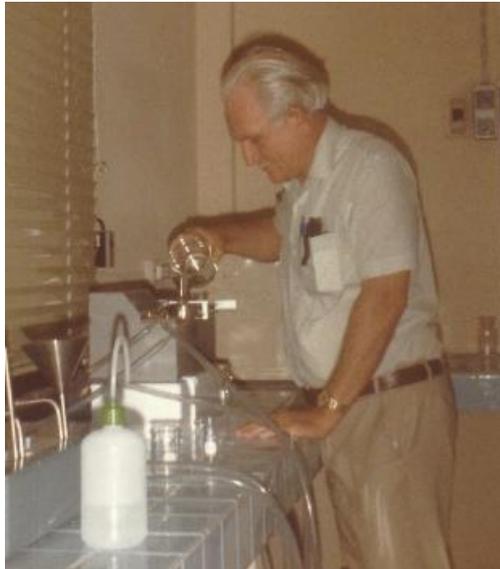




INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SUGAR CANE TECHNOLOGISTS

Francis Henry CONNOLLEY
Sugar Technologist and ISSCT Member

1928 - 2014



In the laboratory in Brazil



With factory staff in Africa

It is with sadness that the belated announcement of the death of Francis Henry Connolley is made. Henry died on August 16th 2014 at a Care Home in Oxfordshire, England, having spent a lifetime in the sugar industry specialising in factory process technology and the chemical control of cane sugar factories.

Henry was born on 30 November 1928 in Queen Street, Jackson Town, Montego Bay in the parish of St James, Jamaica and he began his career in his native country as a sugar analyst at the Rose Hall Sugar Factory in 1948 responsible for routine analytical work in the lab and compiling control reports. In 1951 he was awarded a scholarship by the Sugar Manufacturer's Association of Jamaica Ltd to study at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad where he gained his Diploma in Sugar Technology, followed by his Associateship for work into the removal of evaporator scale by the use of Versene. He remained throughout his life an extremely hard working and dedicated technologist, thorough and organised in all aspects of his work and enthusiastic for his chosen career. Having graduated in 1955, he stayed on in Trinidad employed as Assistant Chemist at the Ste Madeleine Sugar Factory responsible to the Chief Chemist for the day-to-day process and laboratory control of the factory producing raw and sulphitation

white sugar, before returning to Sevens in Jamaica in 1958. Here he spent the most settled time of his life at Sevens Sugar Factory as Chief Chemist and Superintendent of Manufacture before becoming Factory Manager in 1969 up until the closure of the factory in 1974. He was responsible for all aspects of factory operations including ordering new equipment and replacement stores, the preparation of budgets for labour and materials, costs and budget control and the direction of all personnel as well as the maintenance of staff houses.

It was in Jamaica that he met his beloved Mickey. They were married in 1974, a romance which was all too soon cut short by Mickey's early death in 1980.

In 1974 he moved on to the Sugar Industry Research Institute as a Factory Research Technologist inspecting the island's sugar factories. The Factory Research Institute compiled and published a weekly report of the operations of all the Jamaican sugar factories which also advised on any specific process problems arising therein, monitored the quality of all exported sugar shipped from Jamaica and organised training sessions for factory personnel. The Institute also undertook research into aspects of general interest to the Jamaican Sugar Industry. Changes to the Institute, plus the political difficulties of life in Jamaica in the mid-70s became too much for his family life. Henry once had to dive horizontally from bed as a hail of bullets came into his wall from police chasing a fugitive.

He left for the cold shores of England in 1975, but never really adapted to the climate having spent so long in the West Indies. For eight years he worked for Tate and Lyle as a Process Technologist carrying out numerous consultancy visits to cane sugar factories throughout the world. He participated in project planning and implementation for raw sugar and refinery processing plants and the planning and equipping of sugar factory laboratories. In 1978 he supervised factory commissioning trials at the Santa Cruz sugar factory in Bolivia and prepared a detailed study for the implementation of a cane payments system based on sucrose content for the Sugar Association of El Salvador. He moved on to preparing specifications for machinery and equipment and vetting tenders for the supply of equipment to the expanded Mhlume Sugar Factory in Swaziland before being appointed Manager of the Factories Department of the newly formed Corporate Management Division of Tate and Lyle Technical Services. In 1980 he supervised the technical details of the erection of the Simunye Sugar Factory on behalf of the Royal Swazi Sugar Corporation before monitoring its operation and supervising acceptance trials.

In 1982 he continued consultancy visits to Simunye and also the Nakambala factory, formulating computer programmes for the preparation of factory steam balances and analytical checks. In 1983 he added the Katiola Factory of Sodosucre in the Ivory Coast to his portfolio.

In 1983, following redundancy from Tate and Lyle, he became a private consultant specialising in Laboratory Control, Cane Sugar Process Technology and Factory Management, travelling the world, ironically often on behalf of Tate and Lyle. In 1984 he visited the Mid Siam Sugar Factory of Mitr Pol, Thailand and commissioned the laboratory for the analysis of cane samples and trained laboratory staff. He supervised the manufacture of High Test Molasses at Usina Barbacena, Usina Mataray and Usina Olho D'Agua in Brazil before returning to Trinidad to promote training at the Brechin Castle and Ste Madeleine factories, and another quick reporting visit to the Tower Hill and Corozal factories of Belize.

Again for Tate and Lyle, in 1985 he was the Process Technologist with the commissioning team at Pelaihari Sugar factory of Perkebunan XXIV-XXV (Persero), Jalan Merak No 1, in Surabaya, Indonesia. He finished his career with periodic visits to Brazil and its ports of Recife and Maceio as well as Trinidad and Zambia on behalf of the United Molasses Company up to 1989 to supervise the manufacture, storage and shipment of High Test Molasses. One of his final acts for the profession was to write the article Sugar in Brazil's North/North East for the International Sugar Journal and Sugar Cane's joint edition of October 1989 for the XX Congress which took place in Brazil.

Henry had a good working knowledge of both Spanish and Portuguese and enjoyed travelling extensively in South America and New Zealand. During his working life he made many friends with those he met of all nationalities all over the world through his affable good humour and keen interest in what makes things tick. Often quiet and assiduous, he could be more than expansive when the sandbag was pulled up and the tilley lamp swung. A keen shot and fisherman in his youth, golfer and cricketing fanatic, these gave way to all manner of armchair sports, travel and bridge in his later years and he was an active member of the governing committee of his housing association. He almost retired to his native land, but ill health caught up with him too soon and he moved in 2011 to a Care Home in Oxfordshire.

This tribute has been compiled by his nephew from records Henry left behind. My apologies for any technical inaccuracies. He was a member of the Institute of Food Science and Technology UK, the British Society of Sugar Technologists and of the ISSCT from 1986 to 1989 and 1992 to 1995. This tribute aims at presenting Henry to the many sugar technologists who will have come into contact with him during his career. His testimony from Mr Yearwood upon graduating from ICTA in 1955 has 'no hesitation' in recommending him to any employer and asserts he may 'one day be one of the sugar industry's leading men'. I do not know if he quite achieved the position to deserve that accolade, but he was certainly one of the world's army of quiet, calm, diligent and committed workers who seek excellence and achieve high standards.

Compiled by Robert Connolley, nephew of Henry
Oxfordshire, England, October 2015