

Hundred years ago

G. Semenza

Lab. für Biochemie/ETH-Zentrum Swiss Federal Inst. of Technology, Postfach 35, Universitätstrasse 16, CH-8092 Zürich, Switzerland

Our generation of biochemists and the younger ones have learnt as freshmen already to regard proteins as well defined, individual, albeit complicated chemical entities; I guess that very few of us remember having come across expressions like 'colloid' in connection with proteins. We owe much of the clear concepts on these macromolecules to a rather small group of biochemists and biophysicists, one of the most prominent of them being John Edsall. His 100th birthday will be celebrated more fully elsewhere, but we also, 'usual' biochemists must give a thankful thought to the very young medical

student who joined a department of physico-chemistry with Edwin Cohn as the director. The present Editor wishes to thank Prof. Ch. Tanford, who spent several years in the Cohn/Edsall group, for having accepted to write a couple of pages on John Edsall. I have learned, in addition, that 1902 was the year when Emil Fischer and Franz Hofmeister, independently, first proposed that the amino acids in peptides and proteins are bound via the peptide bond: by coincidence, but not by coincidence alone, Edsall's century has been the century of protein chemistry also.