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# The formation of tertiary butyl phenyl ether by a diazonium salt decomposition

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THE FORMATION OF TERTIARY BUTYL PHENYL ETHER  
BY A DIAZONIUM SALT DECOMPOSITION

by

Allan Richard Bernstein *UC 1967*

Senior Thesis Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements of Graduation

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
UNION COLLEGE  
JUNE 1967





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1967  
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This Thesis

by

Submitted by

Allan Richard Bernstein

to the

Department of Chemistry of Union College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of Bachelor of Science with  
a Major in Chemistry is approved by

William B. Martin, Jr.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. William B. Martin, Jr., whose invaluable advice and constant guidance contributed greatly to the completion of the work presented herein.



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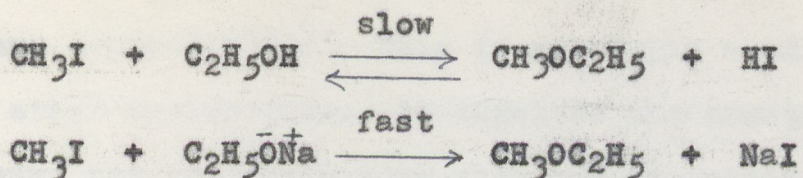
## I. INTRODUCTION.

Diaryl ethers have been prepared by various candidates for master's and bachelor's degrees at Union College in the past (1a,1b,1c). Ullmann reactions were involved, but with some variability in yields and some rather lengthy syntheses. More recently, decompositions of diazonium salts have been studied for preparation of aryl ethers. This might constitute a simpler or more efficient synthetic route.

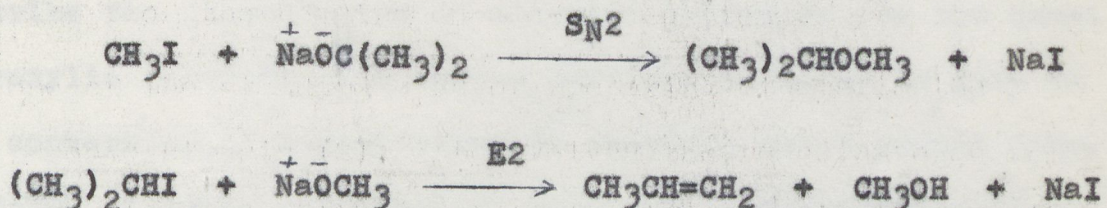
An attempt was made to synthesize tertiary butyl phenyl ether by a diazonium salt decomposition. The reason for choosing this preparation method is that, although primary and secondary alkyl-aryl ethers are fairly simple to prepare in good yields by the Williamson synthesis, formation of tertiary alkyl-aryl ethers presents problems since the  $S_N1$  type reactions with tertiary halides are slow, and reversible if hydrogen halide is formed and not removed.

One of the standard ways of preparing ethers is the Williamson synthesis (2). It involves the reaction of a primary halide,  $RX$ , with a metal alkoxide,  $NaOR^+$ , to form the corresponding ether  $ROR^+$ . The alkoxide is a powerful nucleophile that will readily enter into  $S_N2$  type reactions. Whereas ethanol reacts very slowly with methyl iodide to give methyl ethyl ether, sodium ethoxide reacts quite rapidly.





Complications can occur, however; because with the increase of the nucleophilicity associated with the conversion of an alcohol to an alkoxide ion, there is an even greater increase in a competing elimination type reaction. The reaction of an alkyl halide with an alkoxide may be one of elimination to form an olefin rather than halide substitution leading to an ether, depending upon the temperature and the structure of the halide. For example, if we wished to prepare isopropyl methyl ether, better yields would be obtained if we were to use methyl iodide and sodium isopropoxide rather than isopropyl iodide and sodium methoxide because of the undesirable competition with an E2 type elimination with the latter reaction.

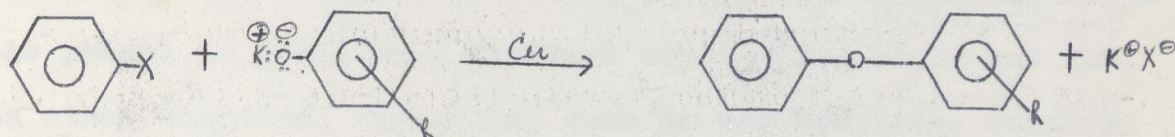


Therefore, the Williamson synthesis is best limited to reactions involving primary halides.

A second general method of preparing aromatic ethers is



the Ullmann synthesis (3). This is generally used to prepare diphenyl ether derivatives. It involves the treatment of halobenzenes and phenoxide ions with copper powder.

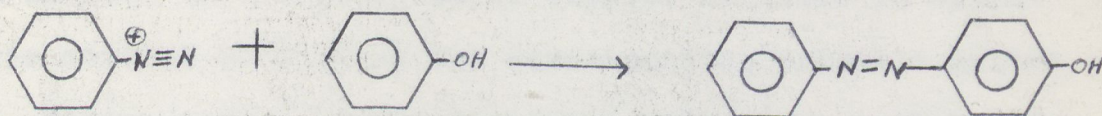


The halogen atom must be active, which is the reason why iodo benzene derivatives are commonly used.

An intensive search through the literature has revealed work already done in the preparation of tertiary butyl phenyl ether. Lawesson and Frisell (4) report the preparation of tertiary butyl phenyl ether in a 56% yield by reacting phenyl magnesium bromide with tertiary butyl phenyl peroxide. They also report its preparation with an 80 to 89% yield by the reaction of phenyl magnesium bromide with methyl tertiary butyl peroxy carbonate (5). Cram, Rickborn and Graham (6) describe the substitution of dimethyl sulfoxide for the usual hydroxylic solvents with sodium tertiary butoxide to give an 86% conversion of bromobenzene to tertiary butyl phenyl ether at 25°C. Another satisfactory approach is aroxylation of an olefinic double bond. Stroh, Seydel and Hahn have treated phenol in ether at 10°C in the presence of dilute sulfuric acid with isobutylene to give an 80% yield of tertiary phenyl ether. (7)

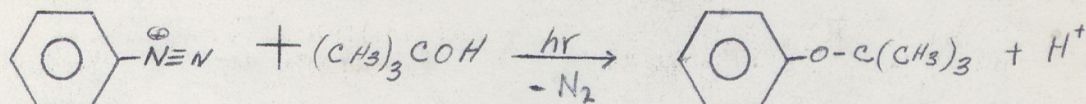


In 1965, Poccia (8) was able to synthesize diphenyl ether in meager yields. Phenyl diazonium fluoroborate was dropped into hot phenol at 80°C, inducing nitrogen evolution and presumably creating a very active phenyl cation that attacked the phenol to yield some diphenyl ether. The yield was low, as other competing reactions, such as azo coupling, occurred too:



This reaction led to the idea that the formation of an ether might be promoted with the use of ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet light would be used to irradiate the diazonium salt and alcohol mixture, and one would look for an ether in the products.

The proposed following reaction was investigated:

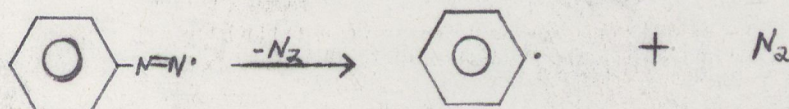
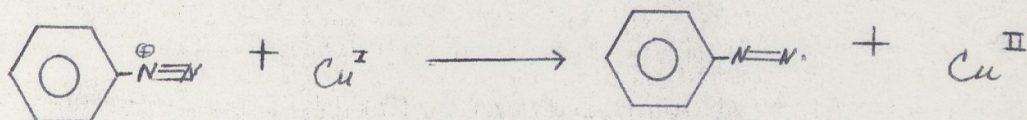


Still another approach was tried using a modification of the Sandmeyer Reaction. The importance of copper as an almost unique catalyst in the reactions of diazonium ions is very interesting. Although many aspects of the behavior of copper are still not clear, cuprous copper appears to

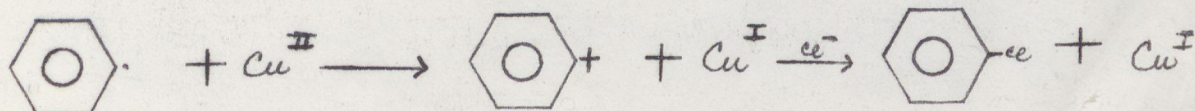


have the power to reduce diazonium ions and permit formation of aryl radicals (9). Copper metal seems to function similarly, possibly because it always has some oxidized copper on the surface (10).

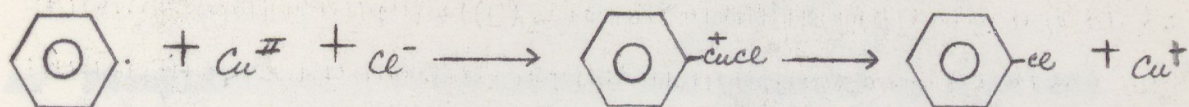
A typical Sandmeyer reaction involves the nitrosation of an aromatic amine to form an aromatic diazonium chloride which in turn in the presence of cuprous chloride in hydrochloric acid at 60°C gives the corresponding aromatic halide (11). Decomposition of the diazonium salt to an aryl halide appears to involve the formation of aryl radicals by an oxidation reduction sequence involving one electron transfers in which copper acts first as a reducing and then as an oxidizing agent (12).



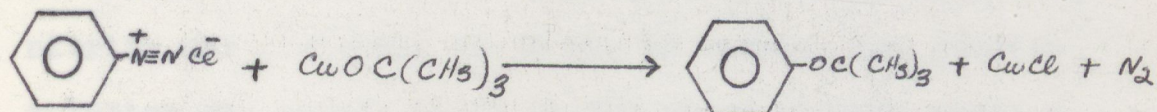
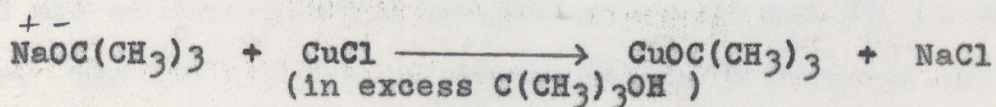
The role of copper in aiding formation of the halide may involve either an intermediate carbonium ion or possibly an organo-copper compound.







The following proposed reaction was tried on the assumption that the copper would aid in the formation of an intermediate cation.





## II. EXPERIMENTAL.

A. Phenyldiazonium fluoroborate was prepared by a method identical to that given by Vogel (14) for the preparation of p-methoxy-phenyldiazonium fluoroborate. However, aniline was used instead of p-anisidine.

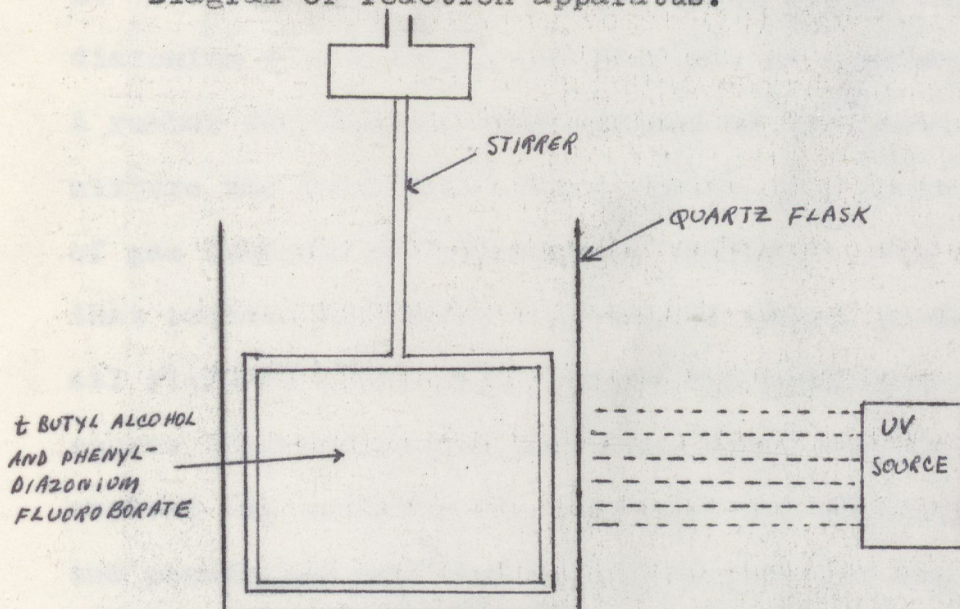
A quantity of 18.2 ml. (0.2 mole) of aniline was added to 50 ml. of concentrated hydrochloric acid and 50 ml. of water. The mixture was cooled to 3°C and a brownish salt precipitated. A batch of 14.6 g. (1.72 mole) of sodium nitrite was dissolved in 30 ml. of water. The nitrite solution was slowly added to the above mixture until a slight excess of nitrous acid was present as found by a starch iodide paper test. The temperature of the reaction was maintained below 5°C by the addition of ice. To the diazonium salt, a chilled solution of 30.4 g. of sodium fluoroborate in 60 ml. of water was added and the diazonium salt precipitated out as a fluoroborate. The precipitate was filtered, washed with 12 ml. of water, 6 ml. of methanol, 10 ml. of ether and dried overnight on filter paper. A total of 23.2 g. of the diazonium salt was collected (60% yield). Phenyldiazonium fluoroborate is stable and can be kept for several days at room temperature.

The irradiation of the diazonium salt in tertiary butyl



alcohol was carried out in a quartz flask using ultraviolet light generated from a mercury arc source.

Diagram of reaction apparatus:



The first time the reaction was run there was no stirrer, and 0.25 g. of phenyl diazonium fluoroborate was mixed with 20.0 ml. of the tertiary butyl alcohol. A delivery tube was set up to measure the volume of gas evolved. This was necessary not only to obtain a rough estimate of the yield, but to be convinced as to whether the diazonium salt was actually decomposing. The phenyldiazonium fluoroborate was insoluble. It was to a small degree self-stirred by evolution of nitrogen bubbles and by convection currents of the light heated solvent and suspension. The steady, slow evolution of gas was observed, but there was no displacement of water in the pneumatic trough due to the probably poor seal between the cork and the quartz



flask. The reaction mixture slowly turned dark yellow with continued irradiation.

B. The reaction was run again using 9.6 g. of phenyl diazonium fluoroborate and 56.7 ml. of tertiary butyl alcohol. A rubber stopper was used instead of the previous cork. The mixture was irradiated for a period of 5 hours. The evolution of gas bubbles had practically ceased at this time. The gas that evolved displaced 21.6 ml. of water, giving a theoretical yield of about 18%. Due to the heat from the mercury arc source that warmed the reaction flask, part of the gas that evolved was probably the result of gas expansion. However, the percentage was high enough to indicate that the ultra-violet light had succeeded in decomposing part of the diazonium salt, since the solution temperature rose to no more than about 40°C.

The reaction mixture was washed first with water and then shaken three times with 25 ml. aliquots of benzene. The water eliminated fluoroborate ions, and hydrofluoric acid that were present. Two infra-red spectra (Fig. 1 & 2) were taken on the products of the benzene extraction after the removal of benzene.

C. The reaction was run again, this time stirring the reaction mixture so that as soon as the diazonium ion was re-



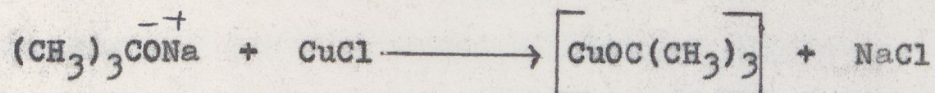
acted it would be swept away from the path of the ultraviolet light thereby reducing the chance for further photochemical reaction. A steady evolution of gas was observed and after five hours of irradiation, the mixture was washed with water and shaken three times with 25 ml. portions of benzene. The benzene was evaporated and an infrared spectrum taken. (Fig. 4) A cavity cell was used and the residue of the benzene extraction was dissolved in chloroform.

G. The catalytic agent cuprous chloride was prepared in the following manner (15). A batch of 10 g. of copper sulfate was added to 33 ml. of water and boiled to ensure the complete dissolution of the salt. Then 3.33g. of sodium chloride was added. Another solution of 2.33 g. of sodium bisulfite, 1.5 g. of sodium hydroxide, and 15 ml. of water was made up and added to the hot copper sulfate solution. A white precipitate of cuprous chloride formed which was allowed to cool in an ice bath and washed once with water by decantation.

A 0.92 g. piece of freshly cut sodium metal was reacted in an excess (30 ml.) of tertiary butyl alcohol. The reaction was extremely slow and the mixture was allowed to stand overnight, protected from the moisture of the air. The cuprous chloride was filtered, mixed with 50 ml. of tertiary

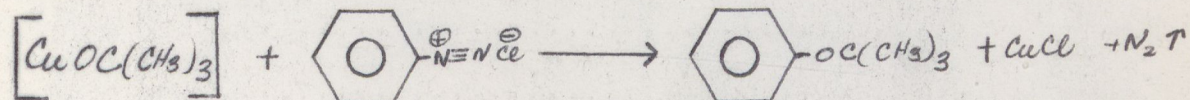


butyl alcohol, and added to the sodium tertiary butoxide.



A light black precipitate formed instantly.

D. The following reaction was carried out using copper as as catalytic agent.



A 5.6 g. (.04 mole) quantity of the diazonium salt was reacted with approximately 0.04 moles of what may have been copper tertiary butoxide. During the reaction there was a vigorous evolution of nitrogen gas and it was necessary to add ice in order to keep the reaction around 0°C. The copper seemed to pass through a red transition complex eventually turning to a dark reddish brown, which in time became black.

The mixture was shaken with ether in order to extract the reaction products. The ether was washed successively three times with 100 ml. portions of sodium hydroxide (eliminating any traces of phenol), water, three times with 100 ml. portions of hydrochloric acid, and finally with water again.



The ether was evaporated and a thin layer chromatogram was made on the residue. The adsorbent used was Camag's preparation of finely divided alumina containing plaster of paris as a binder. Four distinct substances were noted.

Solvent	R <sub>f</sub>	(solvent: benzene)
Benzene		t-butyl phenyl ether (Martin)
1.	0.12	R <sub>f</sub> = 0.52
2.	0.28	
3.	0.41	
4.	0.59	
Dioxane		
1.	0.63	

The liquid residue was allowed to coat the top of a column containing 100 cc. of alumina. The column was eluted with 200 ml. each of ligroin (30-60° boiling range), benzene, ether, and methanol. The first fraction that came off the column using ligroin was dark red in color. A nuclear magnetic resonance (Fig. 5) and an infrared spectrum were taken on the fairly impure substance.

The fraction was dissolved in chloroform and approximately 50 lambda of the solution was injected into the Perkin Elmer Model 154 Gas Chromatogram. The pressure of the helium was 10 psi. and the temperature maintained at 200°C using the two meter long R column. After one minute, the chloroform came off the column at an attenuation of 256.



After 31 minutes and 42 minutes two more peaks were recorded at an attenuation of 4. The helium was allowed to sweep through the column for another hour and no other peaks were recorded (Fig.7).

A nuclear magnetic resonance (Fig. 8) and an infrared spectrum (Fig. 9) were taken on the second fraction (dark brown) that came through the column using benzene.

The third fraction using ether as the eluting solvent was brown. An infrared spectrum (Fig. 9) was taken.



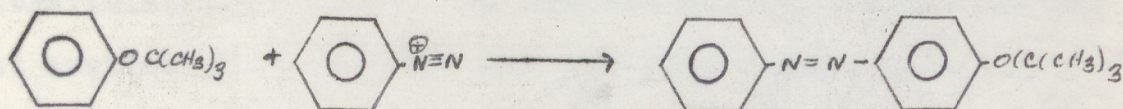
### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

#### A. ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT

The infrared spectra (Fig. 1 & 2) of the products of the first reaction mixture (irradiation of diazonium salt in tertiary butyl alcohol) were compared with the infrared spectrum (Fig. 3) taken by Professor Martin who previously had synthesized tertiary butyl phenyl ether by dropping the diazonium salt into hot tertiary butyl alcohol. The spectrum of Professor Martin's product matches almost peak for peak with that of the product (16) made by the reaction of phenol, isobutylene and phosphoric acid, a standard preparation for synthesizing tertiary butyl phenyl ether. The spectra that were obtained on the products of the irradiation of the phenyl diazonium fluoroborate in tertiary butanol did not show any similarities to those of authentic samples. The only functional group that definitely could be identified was the tertiary butyl group. A strong peak at  $3.45\mu$ . and a medium peak at  $6.85\mu$ . could be attributed to the presence of a tertiary butyl group. However, the 7.9 to 8.15 micron range did not indicate the existence of any arylalkyl ether linkage. The rest of the spectrum did not exhibit any absorption peaks which allowed structure assignment.



Since the desired product was not obtained, it was postulated that the following coupling might have occurred.



Bellamy (17) could not assign definite absorption bands for  $\text{-N=N-}$  or  $\text{>C=N=}$  vibrations. However, Lüttke and Kübler (18) made a study of azobenzene containing on  $\text{N}^{15}$  atom. They showed that the sole difference between the spectra of azobenzene with and without  $\text{N}^{15}$  lay in the positions of the bands at  $1223 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $813 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  respectively. They assigned these bands to  $\text{>C=N=}$  vibrations and did not find evidence of a  $\text{-N=N-}$  bond. These frequencies were checked and no absorption maxima were found in the spectra.

## B. ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT

The reaction was run again, this time stirring the reaction mixture so that as soon as the diazonium ion was reduced it would be swept away from the path of the ultraviolet light; thereby decreasing the probability of any secondary photochemical reactions that might occur. The infrared spectrum (Fig. 4) obtained was analogous to the first two spectra obtained without stirring the reaction mixture.



At this point it was felt that the mercury arc lamp was inadequate for further irradiation experiments since its ultraviolet light output was low and another source was not yet available. There was also the time consuming job of analyzing the reaction mixture, so still another approach was tried.

### C. COPPER REACTIONS

When the cuprous chloride was allowed to react with the sodium tertiary butoxide, a light black precipitate formed which could have been caused by the simultaneous oxidation and reduction of the cuprous ion.

### D. CUPROUS TERTIARY BUTOXIDE AND PHENYL DIAZONIUM CHLORIDE REACTION

During the reaction the copper in the solution passed through a red transition complex eventually turning a dark reddish brown which in time became black. This might have been caused again by the oxidation and reduction of the copper from the +1 state to the +2 and 0 oxidation states. The colors, however, suggest only +1 and 0 oxidation states.

The nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum ( Fig. 5) on the first fraction that came through the column using ligroin (30-60° boiling range) showed two strong chemical shifts,



one at 7.45 ppm. and a singlet at 1.00 ppm. The 7.45 ppm. chemical shift is probably a benzene absorption and the singlet at 1.00 ppm. is attributed to a tertiary butyl absorption. Comparison of this spectrum with known spectra seems to confirm these suggestion. The infrared on the first fraction (Fig. 6) was compared with the standard infrared spectrum (Fig. 3) of tertiary butyl phenyl ether and there was a matching, peak for peak of all the main absorptions. Also present were many small absorptions not found in the standard infrared spectrum. These were attributed to the relative impurity of the author's preparation of tertiary butyl phenyl ether, and the need for further purification of it.

At this stage, it was felt that it might be possible to purify the substance using the Gas Chromatogram by inserting cooled capillary tubes into the outlet of the instrument and allowing the separate components to condense on the walls of the capillary tubes as the various fraction came off the hot column. The condensation was promoted by dropping ether on the walls of the capillary tubes. As it turned out, no effective separation was possible. Since the instrument was operating at an extremely high temperature (200°C), any solidified substance that was already on the walls of the coils inside the instrument, was condensing on the walls of



the capillary tube along with the two components that were trying to be separated. Several times an attempt was made to clean the inner walls of the coils beyond the packed column by using an unpacked column and flushing the instrument successively with 0.2 cc. each of acetone, benzene, and toluene. However, the solvents would not condense even when the temperature was kept as low as 40°C.

The nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum (Fig. 8) on the second fraction that came through the column using benzene shows strong resonances in the 7.3 to 7.5 ppm. range. It agreed completely with the known spectrum of biphenyl. The infrared spectrum (Fig. 9) of the second fraction agreed peak for peak with the known infrared spectrum of biphenyl.

An infrared spectrum (Fig. 10) on the third fraction has not yet been analyzed for its functional groups.

An estimated 20% yield of tertiary butyl phenyl ether has been calculated for this reaction from the areas measured under the peaks on the vapor phase chromatogram.



#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

1. The use of ultraviolet light in the irradiation of phenyl diazonium fluoroborate and tertiary butyl alcohol appears to have produced a coupling reaction. The author feels, however, that if an ultraviolet light source of different frequencies were employed and if a homogeneous reaction mixture could be maintained with constant stirring, formation of tertiary butyl phenyl ether might be achieved.

2. The reaction of cuprous tertiary butoxide with phenyl diazonium chloride to form tertiary butyl phenyl ether appears to have been successful as verified by the nuclear magnetic resonance and infrared spectra obtained from the reaction product. An estimated 20% yield was calculated from the respective areas under the peaks on the vapor phase chromatogram. The yield is promising and the author feels that if the reaction were run at  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  or even lower temperatures, the yield could be increased considerably. It would be interesting during the course of the reaction to check the far-infrared part of the spectrum of the reaction mixture to observe whether any copper in the +2 oxidation state is present, thereby



adding evidence to the proposed mechanism presented herein.



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FIGURE 1

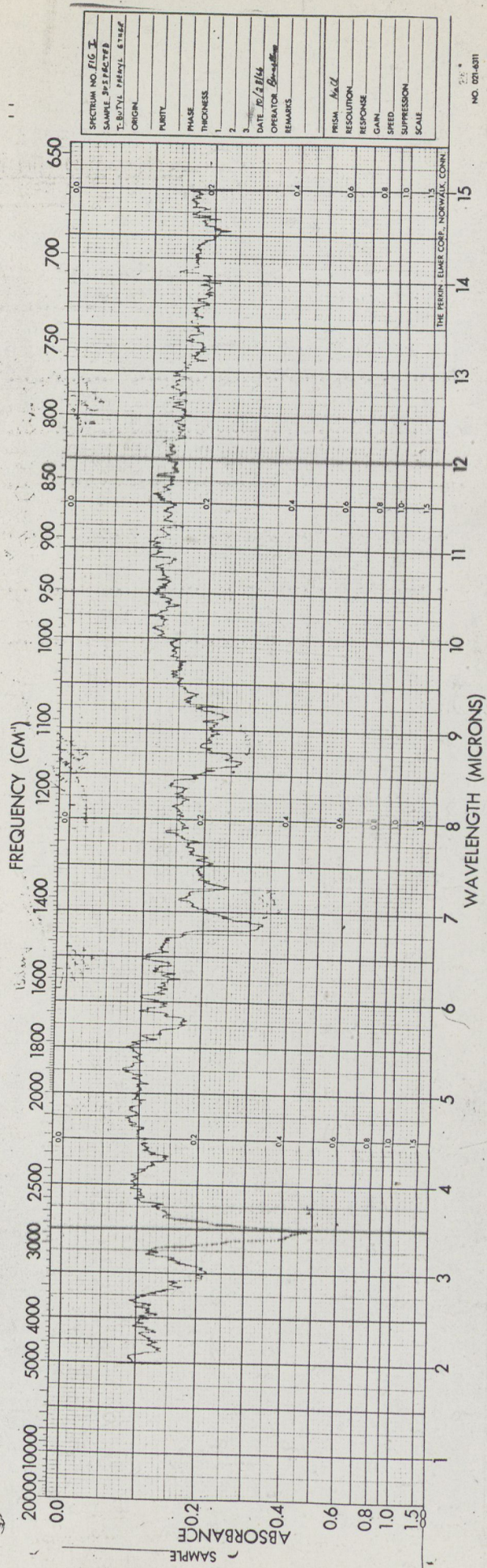
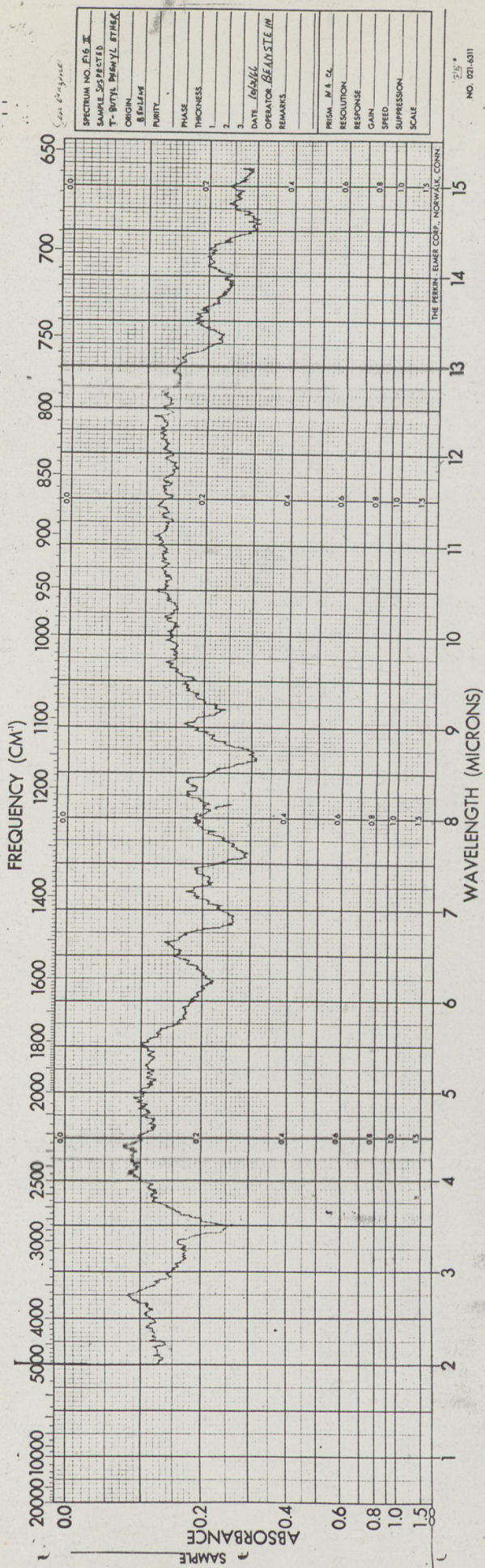
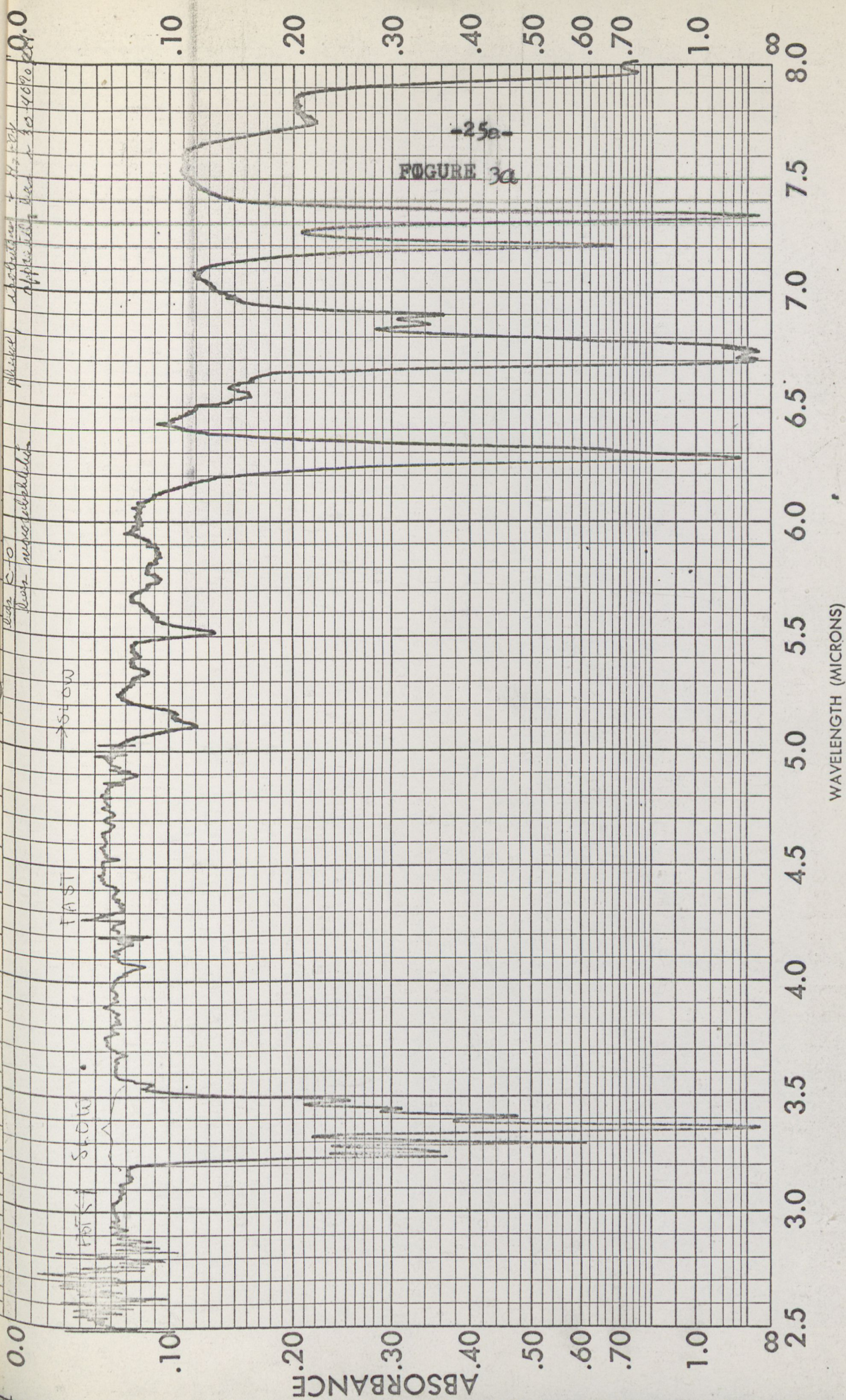




FIGURE 2



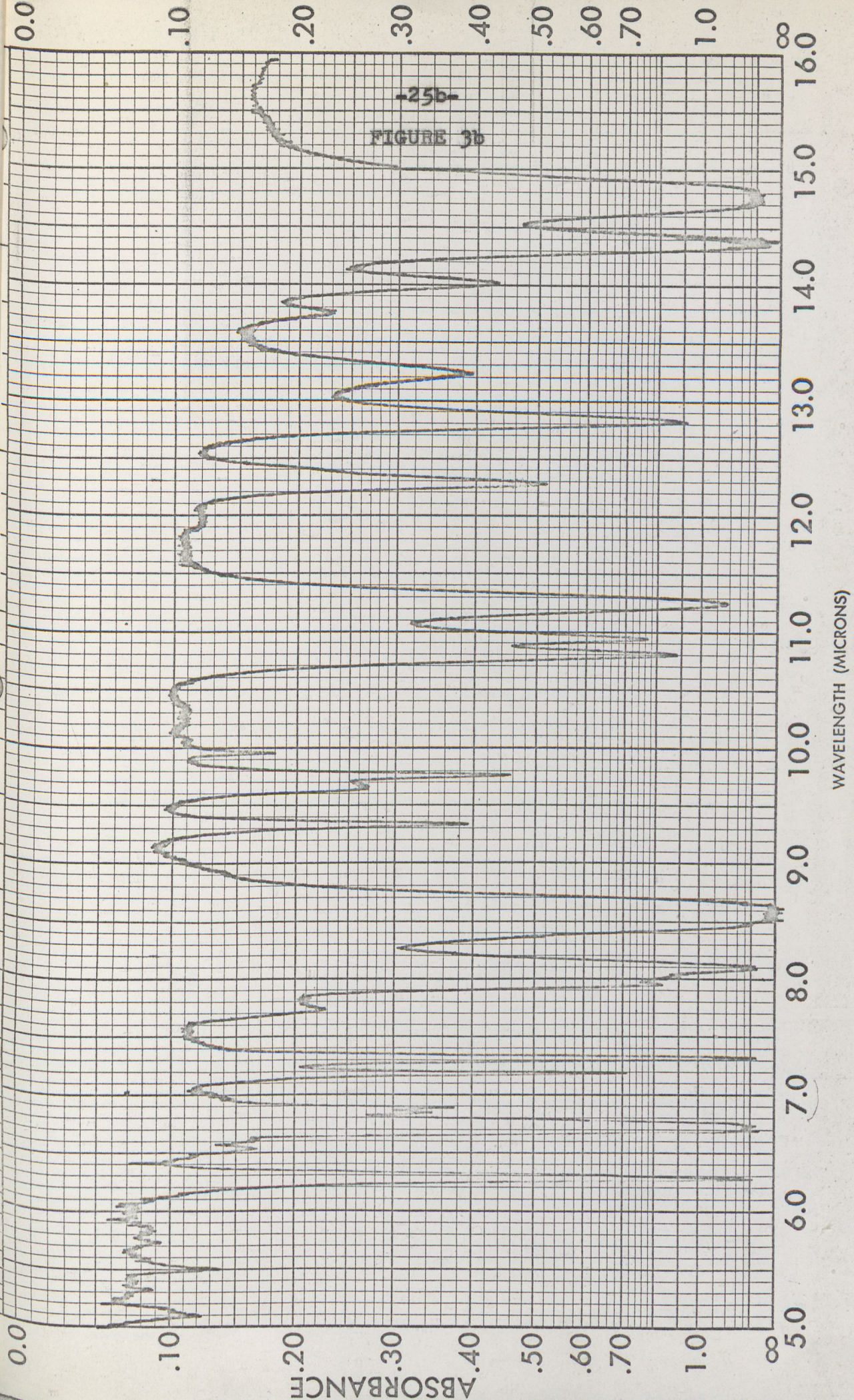




0.0  
0.10  
0.20  
0.30  
0.40  
0.50  
0.60  
0.70  
1.0  
∞

SAMPLE <u>Martin's (Union)</u>	CURVE NO. <u>1</u>	SCAN SPEED <u>FVS</u>	OPERATOR <u>Stein</u>
<u>Suspected</u>	CONC. <u>NaCl cell</u>	SUIT <u>N</u>	DATE <u>9/20/66</u>
ORIGIN	CELL PATH	REMARKS	
SOLVENT	REFERENCE		





SAMPLE <u>Mallinckrodt's (Union)</u> <u>5 cm path</u> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT _____	CURVE NO. <u>2</u> CONC. <u>NaCl cell</u> CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <u>Slow</u> SLIT <u>N</u> OPERATOR <u>Sm</u> DATE <u>9/30/66</u> REMARKS _____
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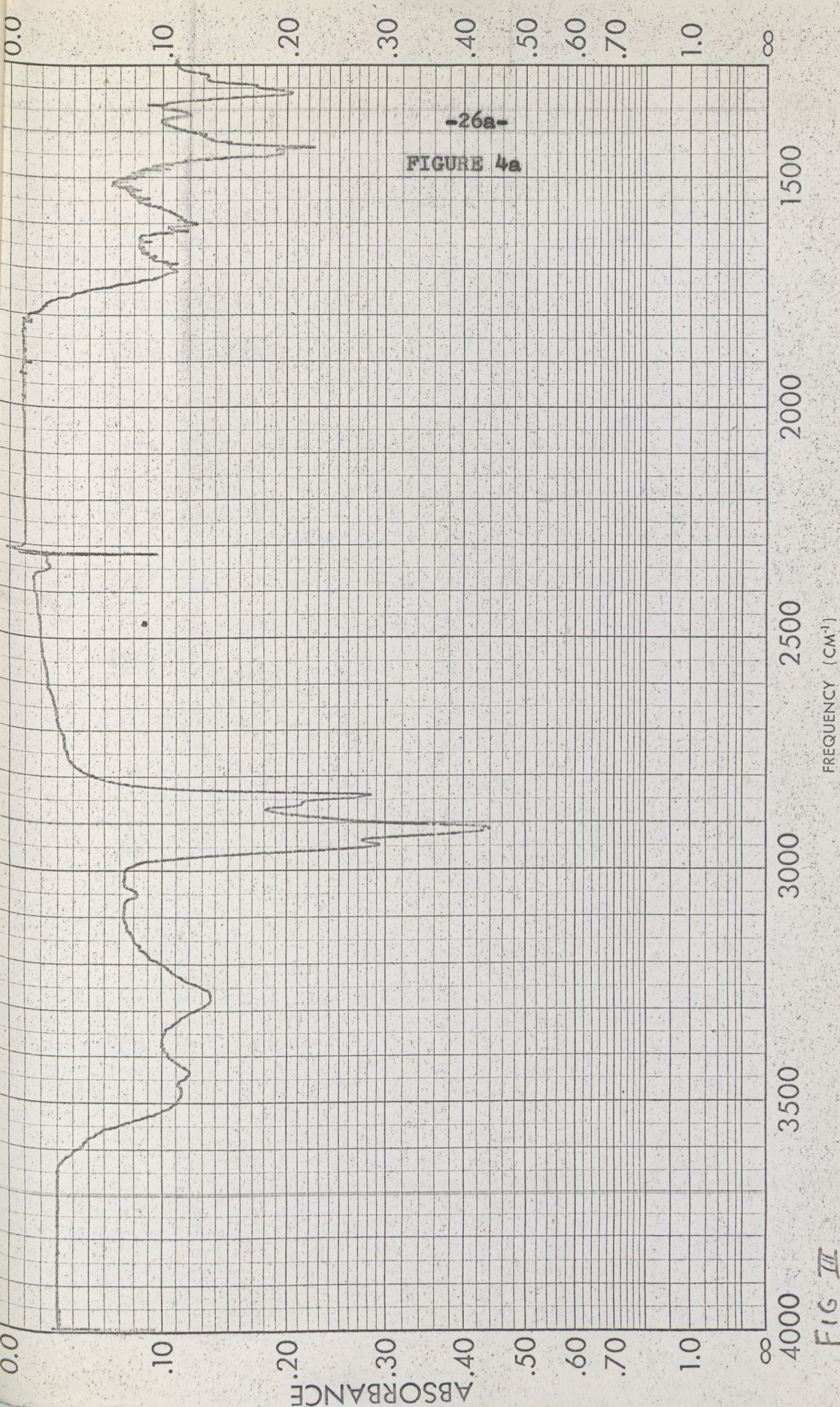
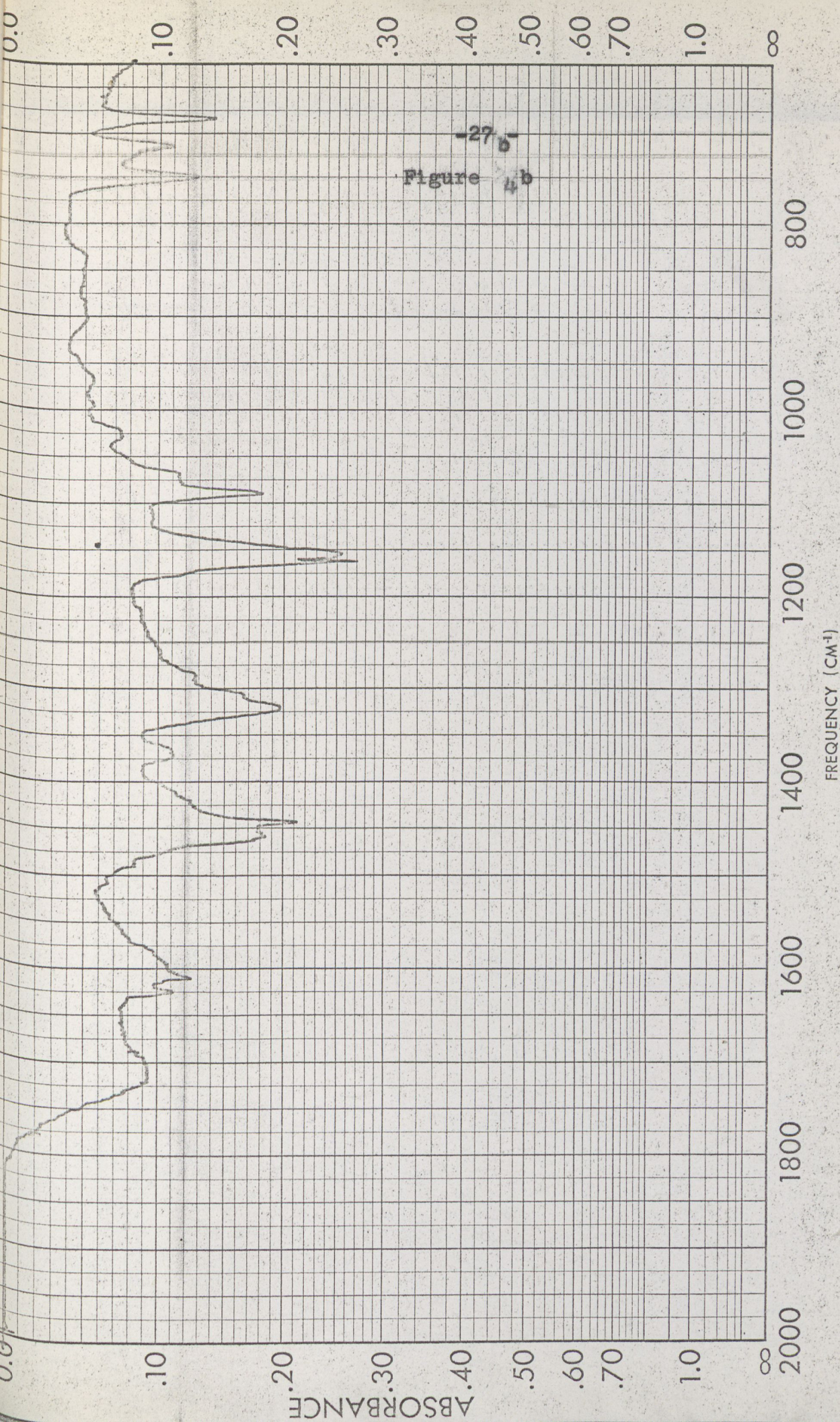


FIG III

SAMPLE <u>SUSPECTED T-BUTYL</u> <u>PHENYL ETHER (STIRRED</u> <u>REACTION)</u> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <u>BENZENE</u>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <u>FAST</u> SLIT <u>25</u> REMARKS _____	OPERATOR <u>BERNSTEIN</u> DATE <u>10/14/66</u>
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SAMPLE <i>styrene di</i> <i>1000-1013</i> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <i>benzene</i>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <i>fast</i> SLIT <i>25</i> OPERATOR <i>Bernstein</i> DATE <i>11/14/66</i> REMARKS _____
---	--	--

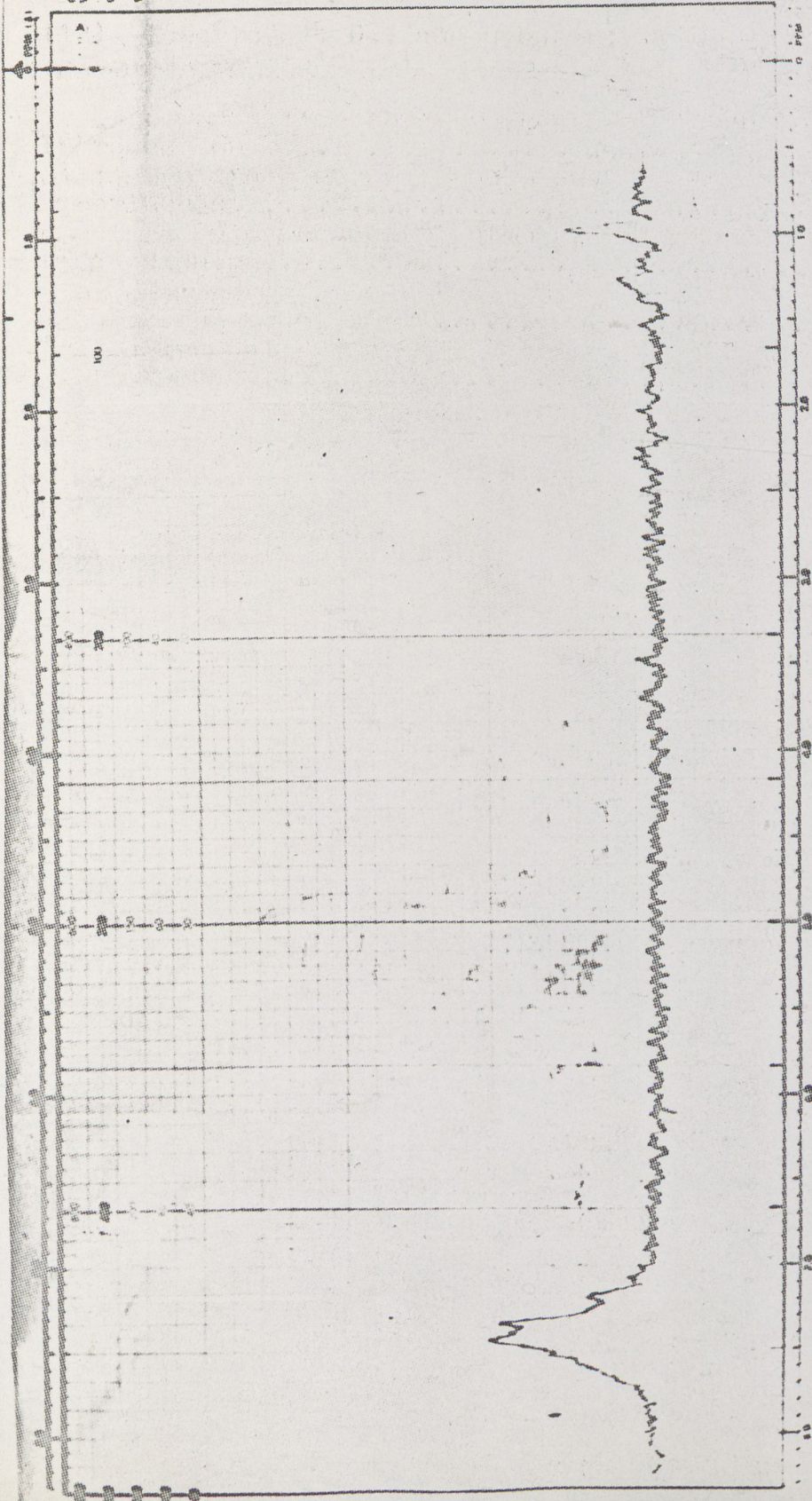


NO. SAC ROOM  
SPECTRUM NO.  
OPERATOR  
DATE

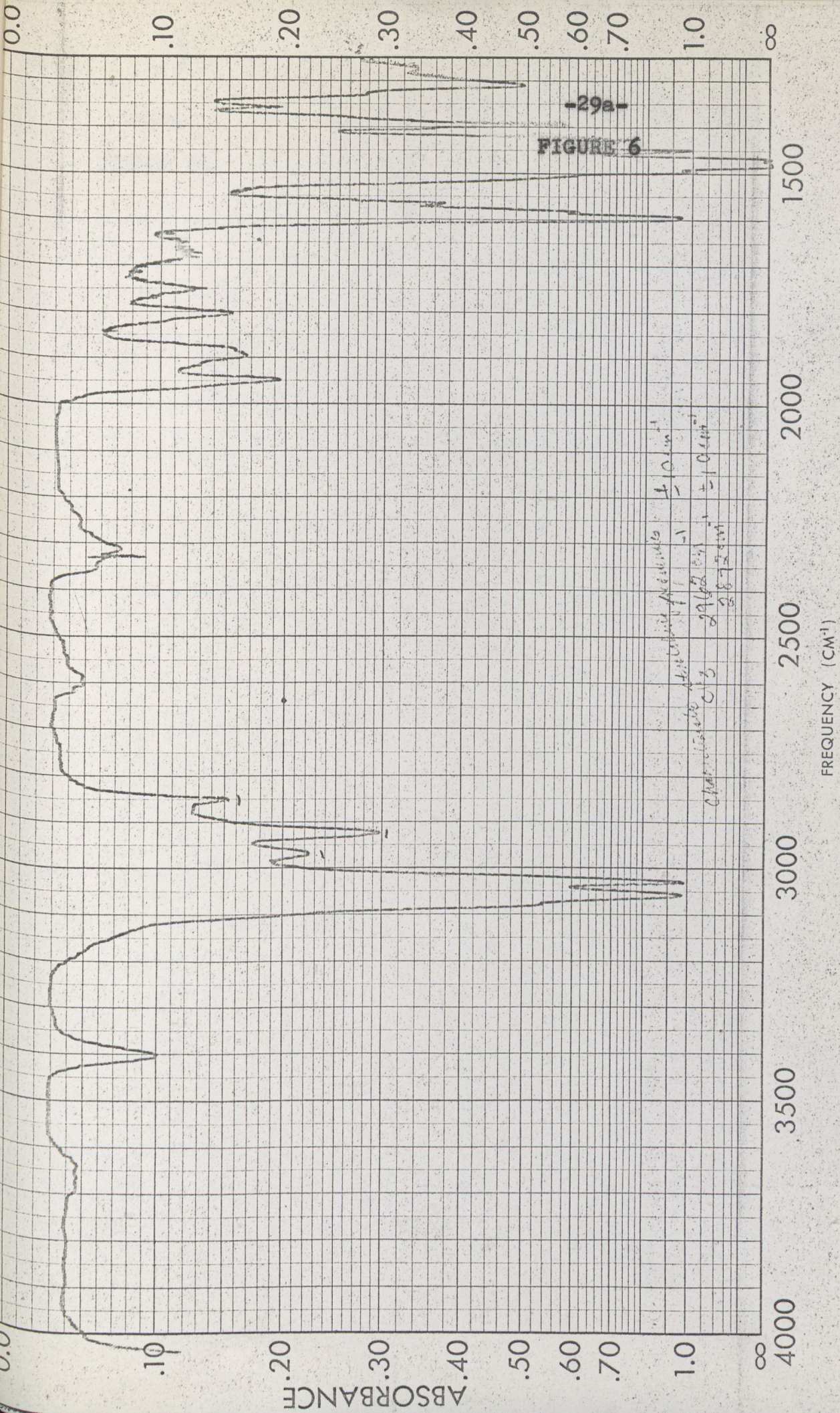
NRVINE  
FREQ. RANGE (MHz)  
B. L. FREQ.  
SWEEP TIME  
SWEEP WIDTH  
SWEEP GAIN  
SPECTRUM TYPE  
INITIALS  
REMARKS

FIGURE 5

VARI







SAMPLE <u>Acetone</u> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT _____	CURVE NO. <u>No. 22</u> CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <u>Fast</u> SLIT _____ REMARKS _____
		OPERATOR <u>B. J. ...</u> DATE <u>2/18/67</u>



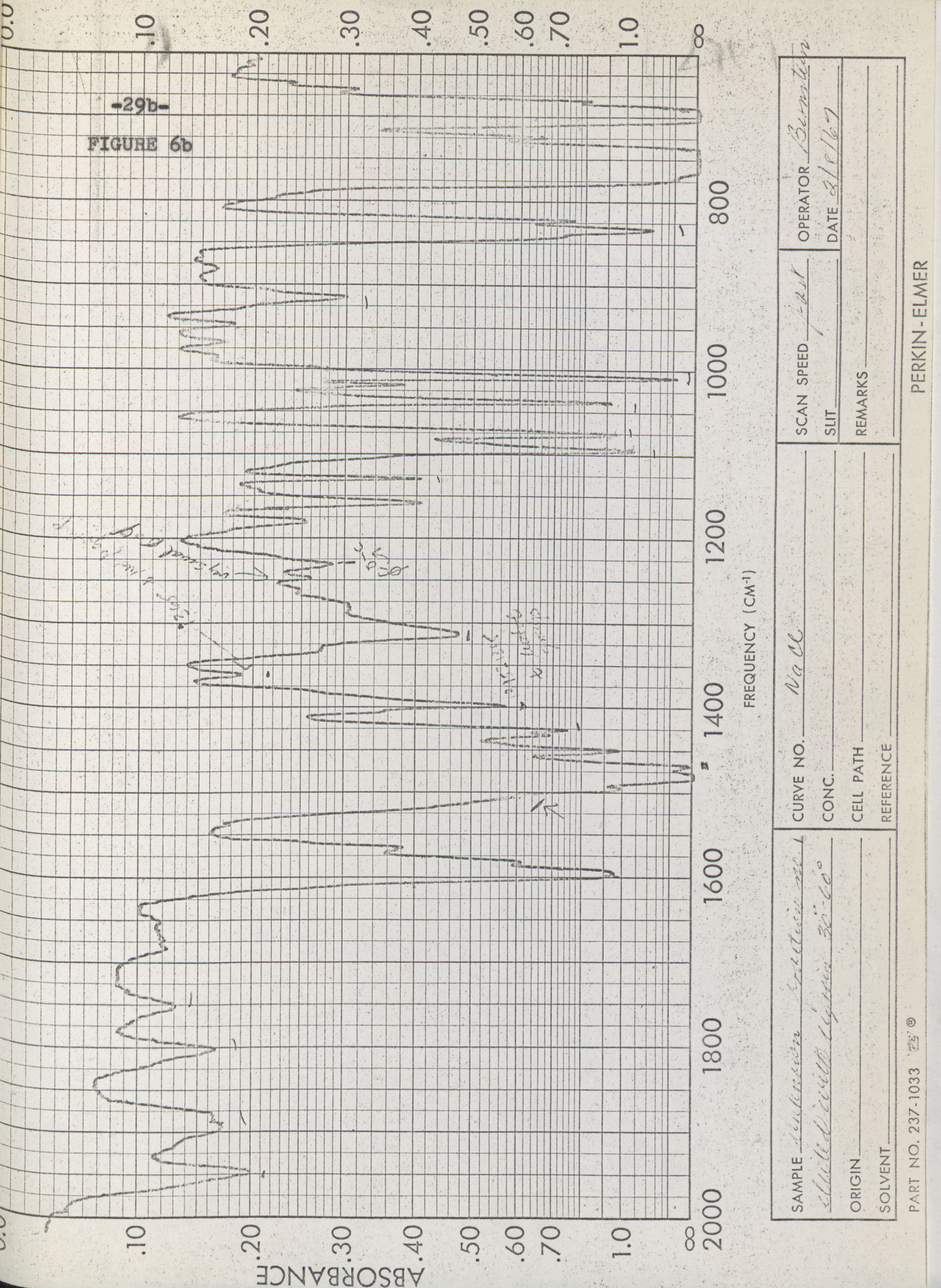


FIGURE 6b

-29b-

SAMPLE <u>Acetic acid</u> <u>diluted with CCl<sub>4</sub> in 30°-60°</u> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT _____	CURVE NO. <u>NaCl</u> CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <u>Fast</u> SLIT _____ REMARKS _____	OPERATOR <u>Burnton</u> DATE <u>8/8/67</u>
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-30-  
FIGURE 7

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14 MINUTES

14

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

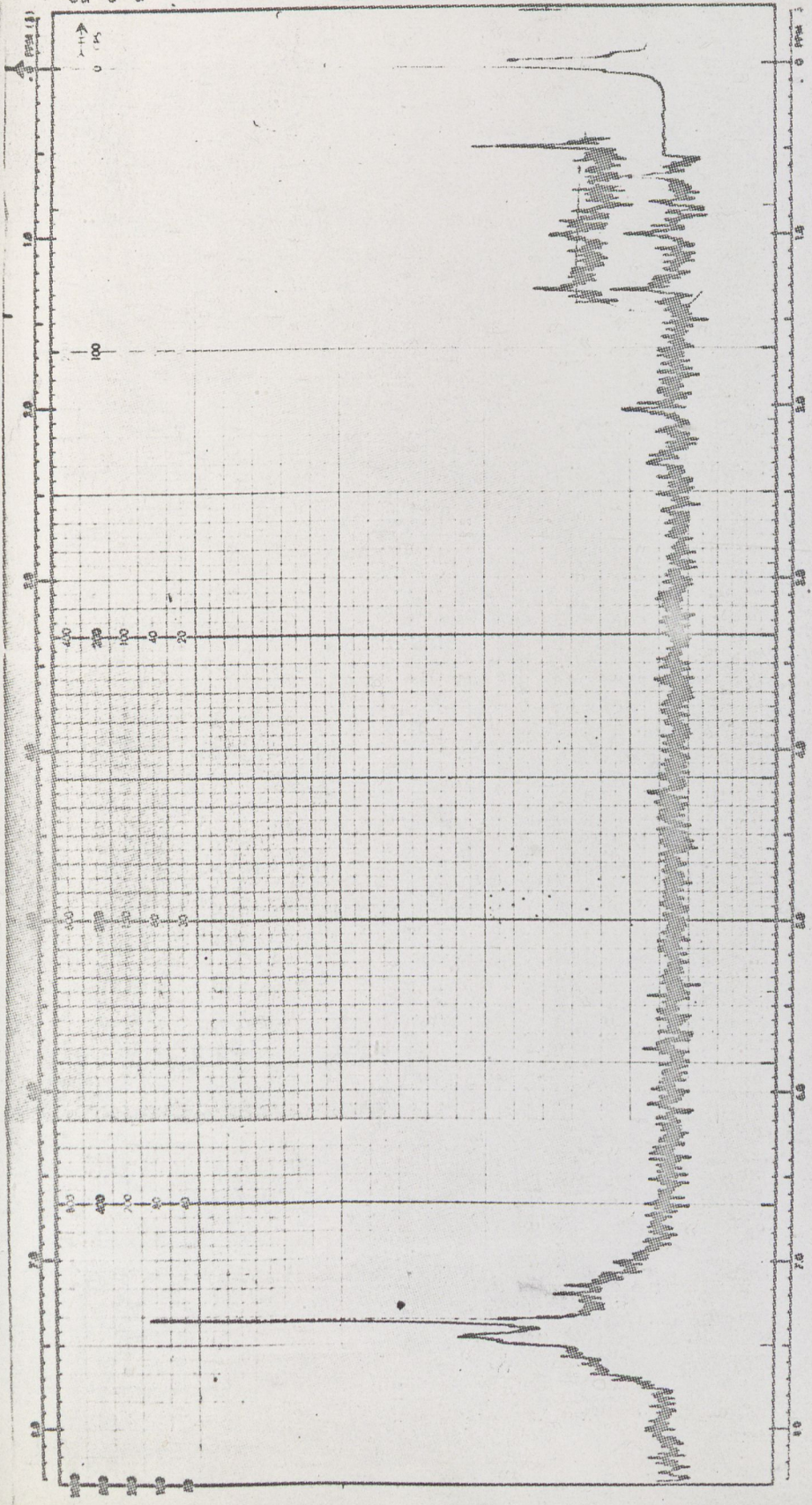
31 MINUTES

14

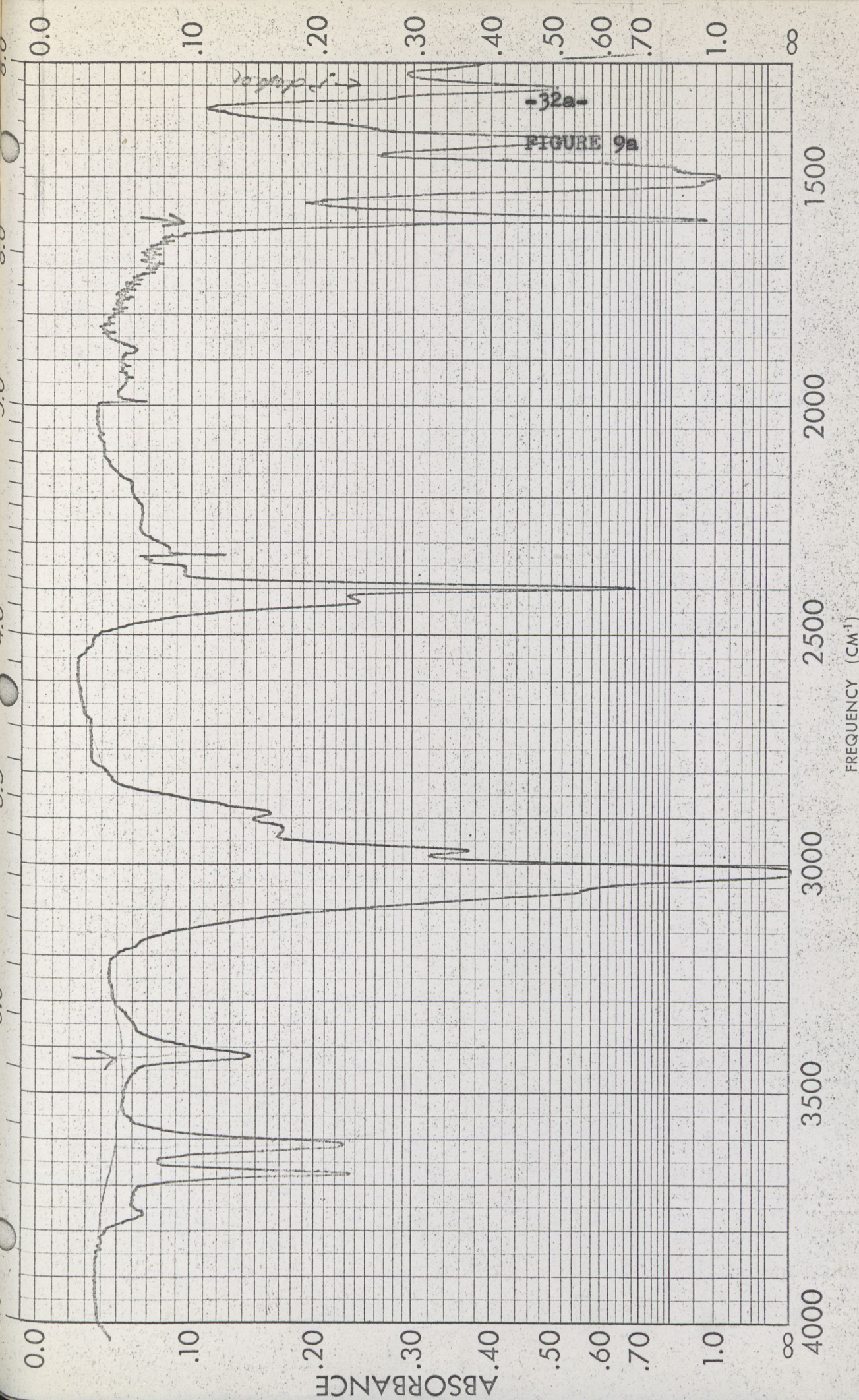


40 MC SWR  
SPECTRUM NO. 1  
OPERATOR: J. J. ...  
SAMPLE: C. 1. ...

SCRYBNER  
PETER LAPOINTE  
E. F. FIELD  
SWEEP TIME  
SWEEP WIDTH  
SWEEP OFFSET  
SPECTRUM AMP  
INTEGRAL AMP  
REMARKS

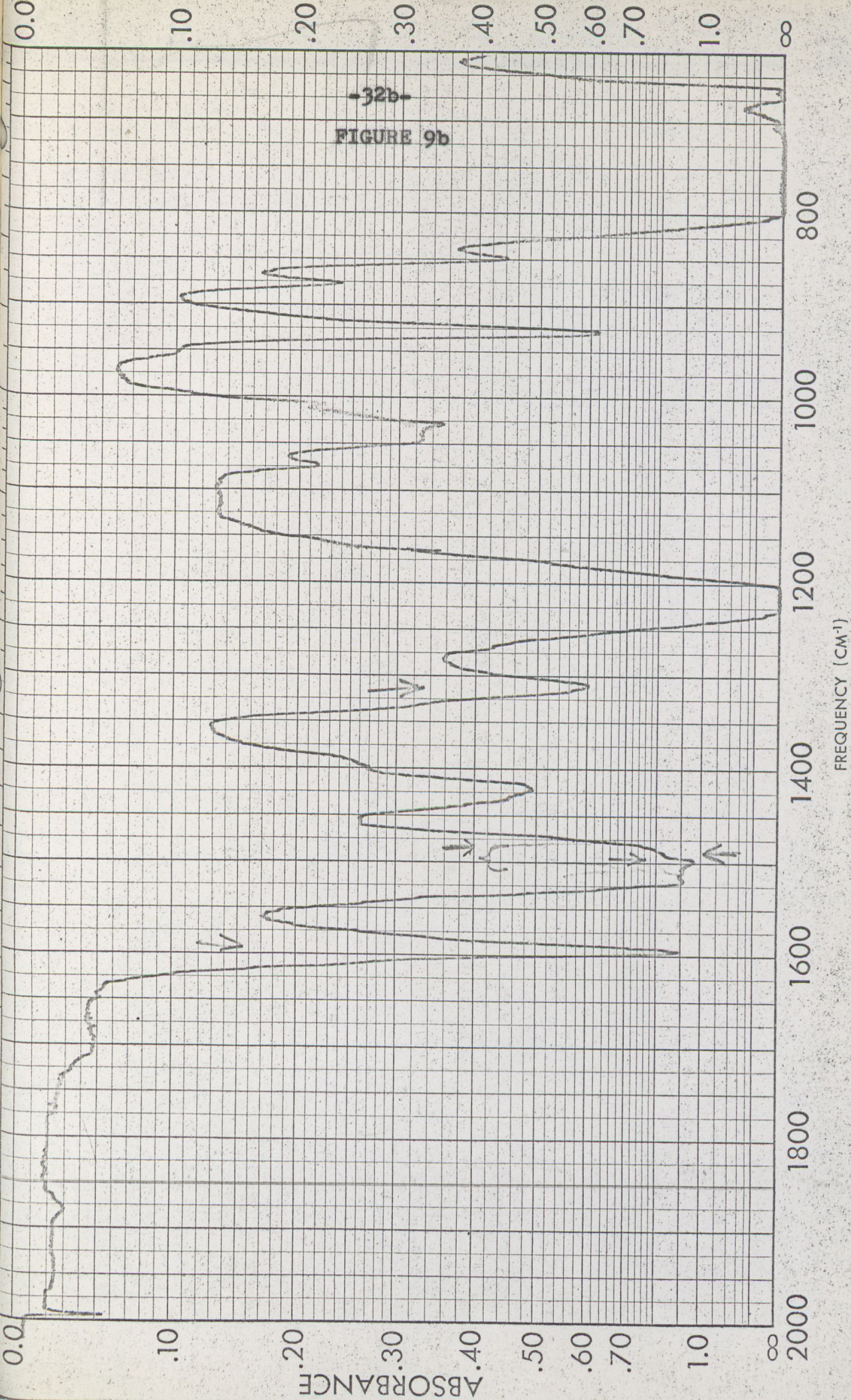






SAMPLE <i>Fracton 5</i> <i>from 6-14</i> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <i>CCl<sub>4</sub></i>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <i>fast</i> SLIT _____ REMARKS _____	OPERATOR <i>Burnstein</i> DATE <i>2/2/67</i>
---	--	---	---





SAMPLE <i>fraction no. 5</i> <i>from benzene</i> ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <i>CCl<sub>4</sub></i>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <i>fast</i> SLIT _____ OPERATOR _____ DATE <i>2/2/67</i> REMARKS _____
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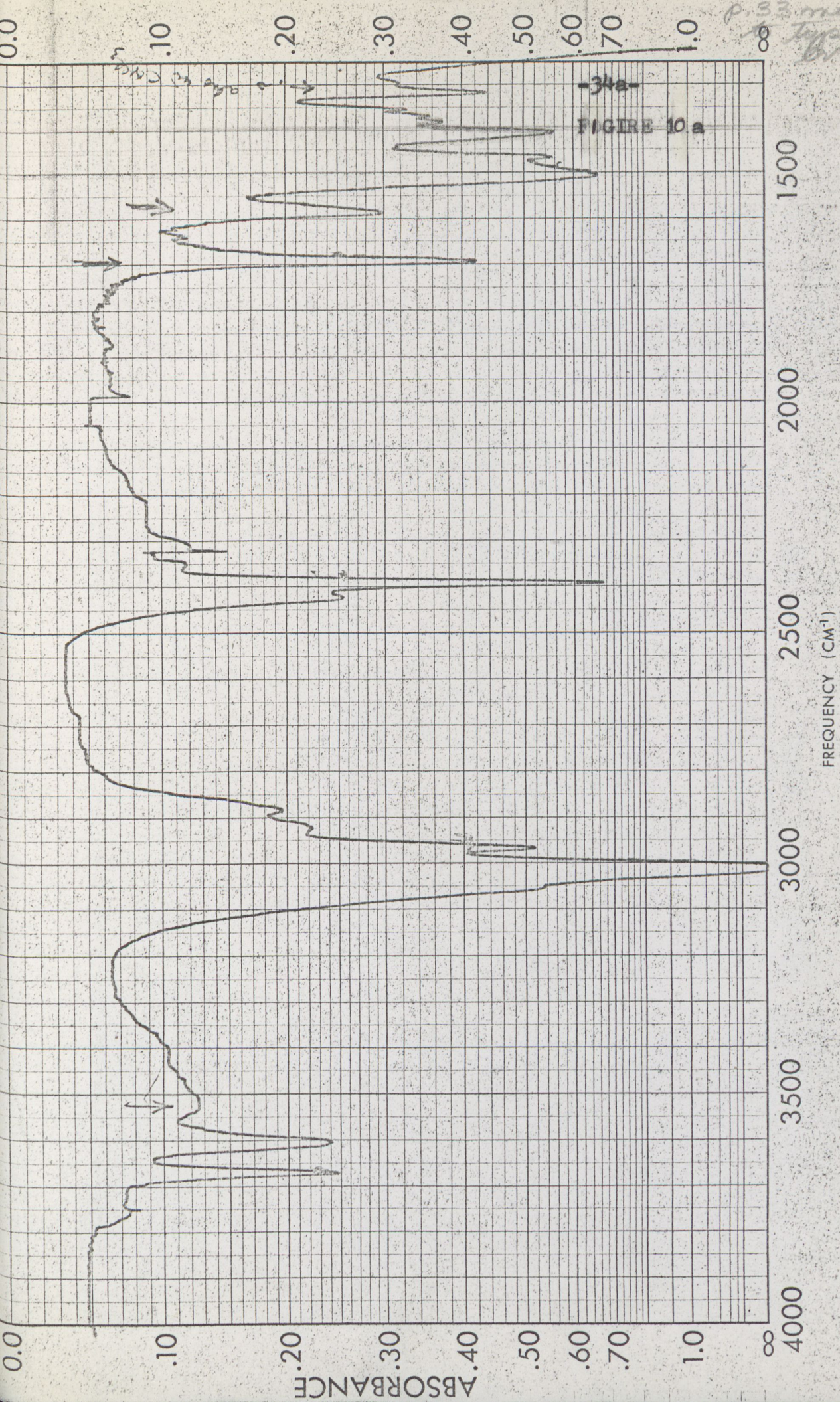
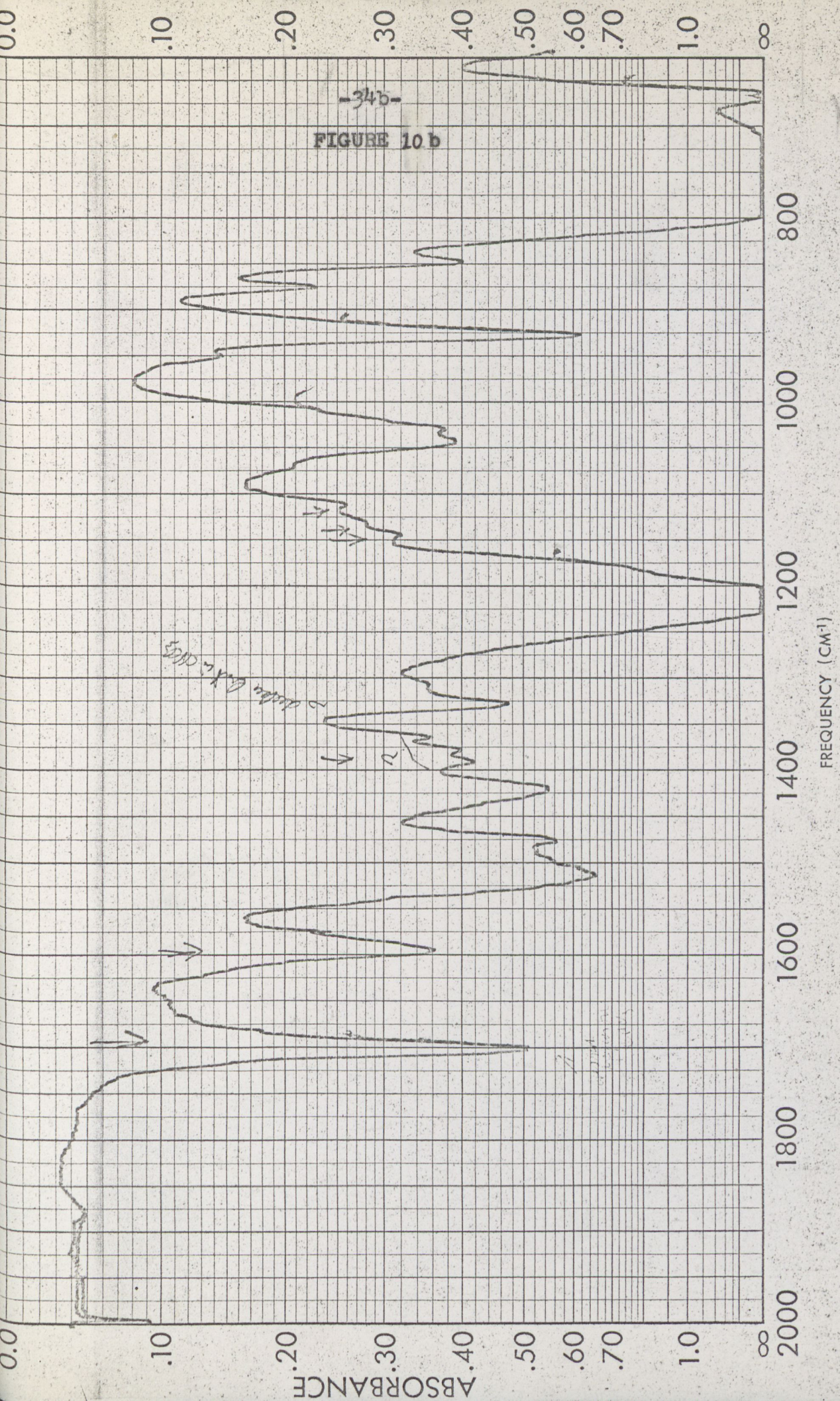


FIGURE 10 a

SAMPLE <u>Sample no. 9 (from)</u> <u>ethyl acetate</u>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	OPERATOR <u>Compton</u> DATE <u>2/3/67</u>
ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <u>CHCl<sub>3</sub></u>	SCAN SPEED <u>fast</u> SLIT _____ REMARKS _____	





-34b-  
FIGURE 10 b

SAMPLE <u>butanone no. 7</u> <u>ethyl with trace</u>	CURVE NO. _____ CONC. _____ CELL PATH _____ REFERENCE _____	SCAN SPEED <u>fast</u> SLIT _____ REMARKS _____
ORIGIN _____ SOLVENT <u>CH<sub>2</sub></u>	OPERATOR _____ DATE <u>2/9/67</u>	