

AUG 8 1974

Optometry Library
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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

NEWSLETTER
OF THE

OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(7000 Chippewa Street, Saint Louis, Missouri, U. S. A. 63119)

Volume 5

July 1974

Number 3

Election again:

Our by-laws state "Election to membership on the Executive Board shall be preceded by the nomination of each candidate by at least three members and the willingness of each nominee to have his name placed on the ballot."

The board member whose term expires this year, Dec. 31, 1974, is Henry W. Hofstetter. Nominations for his replacement for a five year term are hereby requested for placement on the ballot. You may nominate as many as you wish. Send your nominations to Mrs. Maria Dablemont, Secretary-Treasurer.

Election ballots will go out with the October issue of the Newsletter.

You may be curious as to why I have decided not to run for re-election, a decision which I made a year or two ago and so informed the other board members. My reasoning is simple, but, I believe, sound. The Society is now well established and can benefit from new executive direction. It is important that its identity not be associated exclusively with the personality and philosophy of one individual, or even of two or three.

Further, I should like to continue my role as Editor of the O.H.S. Newsletter and shall volunteer my services accordingly to the next Executive Board. The Editor need not be a member of the Executive Board. I am convinced that an editor can do a much more effective job when he is not on his own governing board. Needless to add, the Board would be under no obligation to re-appoint me as editor.

Incidentally, the Executive Board re-elected the same officers for 1974, Hofstetter as President, Levene as Vice-President, and Dablemont as Secretary-Treasurer. The other two members of the Executive Board are Gregg and Tannebaum.

Secretary-Treasurer reports:

As of June 15, 1974, the financial assets of the Society totaled \$1,189.57 with no outstanding debts.

The Society has increased its membership to 140, a 30% increase over a year ago. We have members in 29 American states and Puerto Rico, three Canadian provinces, and 13 other countries. The following new members were added since publication of the membership list in the January 1974 newsletter:

Claro M. Cinco, O.D.
Brian Flynn, L. O. Sc.
Richard R. Lehr, O.D.
Alvin Levin, O.D.
Lewis S. Levinson, O.D.
Prof. Lynn A. Rees
Jack Rubin

The Society is now incorporated as a not-for-profit society in the State of Missouri. Application is being filed with the Office of Internal Revenue for full tax-exempt status.

A quarter century of Grace:

A personal note from O.H.S. member Grace Weiner a few weeks ago let me know that she is retiring from her librarianship at University of Alabama in Birmingham to take up residence in Fullerton, California. Her new address is not yet determined, but I daresay a letter will reach her via the Southern California College of Optometry, Fullerton, where, I also daresay, she will continue to make herself valuable and busy in the library which someday, though not soon I hope, should bear her name.

If we optometrists have become more bibliophilistic these past 25 years, and I would hope we have, it would be difficult to assign as much credit to anyone else as I would assign to Mrs. Weiner. The library she nurtured at the formerly called Los Angeles College of Optometry, now at Fullerton, became nationally recognized within a few years after she took charge. When she started, in about 1948, the few hundred volumes she found stacked on the floor of the two small adjoining rooms in the college's then new stucco-covered barracks-type structure were the complete holdings. Indeed, they had simply accumulated over several decades, that is, those that had not disappeared as books normally do. She was the college's first librarian, employed on a part-time basis with virtually no job instruction other than "to help out" as she thought best.

With initially no formal library budget, and confronted with a rather general lack of awareness of the benefits of a library, if not indeed some doubt as to its necessity, Grace began to scrounge around for books, journals, pamphlets, bulletins, reprints, cash, and almost any form of donation, and eventually budget provisions, which would enable her to add to the collection. Having no prior experience in optometry or visual science she enlisted technical assistance and advice from students and faculty and anyone else who might lend himself to becoming interested. Reciprocal and interlibrary loan arrangements were soon worked out with other librarians in the Los Angeles metropolis. Hers became recognized as a specialty library, and patronage increased. Optometrists, visual science researchers, authors, and others were soon seeking Grace's help. Indeed there were bigger and more comprehensive visual science libraries in the world, but there was something both personal and professional about this one that was different.

Soon she was consulted by journal editors, by other visual science librarians, by visual science book publishers, by the American Academy of Optometry, and by deans of optometry schools. She organized, promoted, exhorted, and served at every opportunity, always winning a larger group of admirers, friends, and supporters.

The name Grace Weiner is a magic word wherever an optometry library is under discussion, yet she is so genuinely modest as to believe that she is outclassed by many who now hold comparable library posts at other institutions. If her opinion is correct, and it usually is, it would be because she used her influence to prevail on other institutions to acquire the most competent persons possible.

It is not in my heart to wish Grace a well deserved period of relaxation and freedom from commitment. Continued exploitation of her time and talent makes more sense to me, and I hope I will not be alone in exercising it.

Grace will not mind, I am sure.

Optometric history courses:

On February 18, through the courtesy of the Office of the Secretary of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), I invited all of the ASCO member institutions to send me information on the coverage of optometric history in their current curricula. To date, responses have been received from 11 of the 16 member institutions, 10 of the 12 in the U.S. and one from the school in Bogota, Colombia. Copies of all of the responses are being supplied to the ASCO secretary and to the Archives of the American Optometric Association.

The responses clearly showed that optometric history is dealt with variously in both of two ways at most schools. One way is to provide the historical background of each topic in the curriculum as the topic is undertaken. Thus, when retinoscopy is taught, with it is included its own history. The other way is to teach optometric history as a topic in itself, i.e., as a course so entitled or as part of a course in Orientation, Socio-optometry, or some similar title. A theoretically third way would be to inject optometry's historical development into a general history course taught as a social science, but there is no suggestion that this occurs, or that it is likely to occur, even in the schools affiliated with universities having history departments.

Since the present information was not intended to offer any clew as to the adequacy of history teaching in individual schools I will simply number the responses randomly and abstract each as follows.

1. The "history of optometry" course includes formal lectures and preparation of papers by students. Topics include glass, spectacles, optics, optometry, and professional aspects.

2. "History of Optometry" course is offered in the second semester of the third year. Lectures derived from Gregg,¹ Hirsch and Wick,² Gregg,³ and Washington Scope.⁴ Students submit papers or oral history tapes which are placed in the library.
3. "Professional Orientation" course is about one-third history, hence about eight lectures. Principal history references are Gregg,¹ Hirsch and Wick,² Gregg,³ and Hofstetter.⁵
4. Approximately 25% of a four credit hour* course in "Social Optometry" throughout the first year deals with optometric history. More recent history is covered as part of a final year course on Social Optometry. Principle reference books are Hofstetter,⁵ several papers by John Levene and by Ryer and Hotaling, Cox,⁶ and Gregg.³
5. Approximately one-third of a one credit hour* "Survey of Optometry" course covers history in the first quarter of the first year.
6. A 2-quarter hour* "History of Optometry" course in the first year covers the history of optometry and visual science from antiquity to the present. A term paper is expected of each student. Principal references are Bailey and Singer,⁷ Cox,⁶ Gregg,³ and Hofstetter.⁵
7. A 2 unit* "History of Optometry" course the first quarter of the first year. Principal text is Hirsch and Wick.²
8. Optometric history is included in an "Optometric Orientation" course in the first year and further reinforced in "Optometric Practice Development and Practice Administration" courses in the third and fourth year. Principal references are Hirsch and Wick,² Gregg,³ and Hofstetter.⁵
9. In a one lecture per week course entitled "Optometry--The Profession and Science" throughout the first year one session is devoted to the history of optometry and most of the other sessions of the first quarter include the history of the topic of the day. The course consists of a series of presentations by invited lecturers.
10. A one quarter-hour* "History and Orientation" course, but with "very little class time on the history of optometry." Several lecturers participate. Some attempt is made, however, to inject appropriate historical coverage in other courses,¹ and substantial reading assignments are made in Hirsch and Wick,² Gregg,¹ and Gregg.³
11. A one semester credit hour* course entitled "Optometric History" is taught in the first year, with the reading assignments in Gregg,³ and Hofstetter.⁵ This course is exclusively history, as there are other courses on "Orientation" and other socio-optometric topics. Students are required to submit term papers on topics of their choice.

References

1. Gregg, J.R., Story of Optometry, Ronald Press, New York, 1965.

2. Hirsch, M.J., and R.E. Wick, The Optometric Profession, Chilton Books, Philadelphia, 1968.
3. Gregg, J.R., The American Optometric Association, A History, Optometric Development Enterprises, St. Louis, 1972.
4. Washington Scope, American Optometric Association, Washington Office, Washington, D.C.
5. Hofstetter, H.W., Optometry: Profession, Economic and Legal Aspects, American Optometric Association, St. Louis, 1964.
6. Cox, Maurice E., Optometry, the Profession, Chilton Co., Philadelphia, 1957.
7. Bailey, Edwin O., and Curtis L. Singer, The Public Welfare and the Profession of Optometry, American Optometric Association, St. Louis, 1964.

*A "quarter" or "semester" hour credit or unit represents one lecture of an hour or less per week throughout a "quarter" (11-12 weeks) or a "semester" (16-18 weeks) respectively.

Anything but humble!

A prominent O.H.S. member, who prefers to remain anonymous, has sent me a note of protest against the oft used expression, "the humble origins of optometry." In support of the protest numerous documents are cited to show that, in fact, the opposite is true, that optometry emerged from among persons of remarkable stature, ability, influence, and affluence in industry, technology, science, the arts, the humanities, education, and civic enterprise.

I agree!

As one who has traveled extensively in areas of the globe where optometry is still "originating" or "emerging" I can testify that even today such movements are being led by persons of great social strength and stamina. True, they may not always fit our currently conceived mold of a professionalized "optometrist-of-the-year", but in their social and cultural settings they are indeed community giants. My contacts with such individuals have given me routine entrée to their own nations' institutions and inner circles at least as privileged as that enjoyed by many an official ambassador with portfolio.

I hope this stirs up comment--proud, not humble, comments.

Service to the community:

Mrs. Elma Stevenson, widow of the late Harry Stevenson, O.D., (1878-1961) of Bloomington, Indiana, was honored on June 5 for her

70 years as a poll worker, voter, and just "good citizen" at an ice cream party at her house at 203 S. Union Street. Julie Nixon Eisenhower phoned Mrs. Stevenson, and President Nixon, Indiana Governor Otis Bowen, California Governor Ronald Reagan, two U.S. Senators, and six U.S. Congressmen sent her letters of congratulations.

Though a staunch Republican, she says she "votes for the man" and lists Democrat Harry Truman right behind Teddy Roosevelt as "my favorite President." She is 91.

When I came to Bloomington in 1952 her optometrist husband Harry kindly opened his office files to me for a longitudinal study of changes in refractive error with age, which was later published. He had been in professional practice 50 years and had a good many records of patients whom he had examined many times in succession.

Light, O'Dea:

"From fifteen or more millenia before Christ to A.D. 1782 there was practically no improvement in lighting at all," says William T. O'Dea in his 1958 book entitled THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF LIGHTING, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. I would be tempted to delete "improvement in" from author O'Dea's modest statement. The date 1782 is identified with the development of the wick oil lamp by Ami Argand of Geneva whence "came a tenfold increase in the light obtainable from a single wick."

Amplly supplemented by anecdotes, literary quotes, cartoons, sketches, maps, pictures, a chronology, a bibliography, and an index, this book itself provides a form of enlightenment never brought to my attention in a history course. Successive fascinating chapters deal with light for the home and for travel, work, worship, theatre, harbor, and sports. Subsections cover such easily forgotten needs as lighting for the carriage, traffic signals, ships, mines, surgery, war, shops, timekeeping, and art galleries, to name a few.

The book is no longer listed in BOOKS IN PRINT, so, if you find a copy in a used-book store, buy it. You will treasure these more than 250 pages of conversation-stimulating information quite unavailable elsewhere.

Light and vision:

As easily overlooked by us as the above mentioned book by O'Dea is a report by Leonard T. Troland which may well be the most historically comprehensive bibliographic survey of the effect of light on vision ever undertaken. Modestly entitled "An Analysis of the Literature Concerning the Dependency of Visual Functions upon Illumination Intensity", it appeared in the February 1931 issue of the Transactions of the Illuminating Engineering Society, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 107-196. An editorial

by J.W. Baker entitled "Light and Vision" on pages 93-94 of the same issue adds informative comments. The survey was in fact a report prepared for the Committee on Industrial Lighting of the National Research Council.

Dr. Troland selected, categorized, and fully identified, like a good writer should, almost 900 actual references and provided helpful comments. He made his selection from approximately 9,000 titles in vision, just about everything published about vision at any time prior to 1926. He planned to do the same for successive decades, but he met with an untimely death shortly thereafter.

Archimedes, Archimedes!

"More on That Burning Glass of Archimedes" is a follow-up commentary by D.L. Timms in the May 1974 issue of Applied Optics, Vol. 13, No. 5, pp. A14-A16.

Says Timms, "I believe modern man discounts the ancient claim because it is historically unlikely, scientifically impracticable, and militarily ineffective."

More on Roy A. Thorson:

In a recent visit to the Philippines I heard two of the currently prominent optometrists reminisce with nostalgia over the role of the American optometrist Roy A. Thorson as one who played a key role in the development of optometry in the Philippines. Some time ago in this Newsletter I mentioned the Roy A. Thorson Award as a memorial. An article in the Optometric Weekly of Feb. 16, 1950, Vol. 41, No. 7, pp. 251-253 describes Dr. Thorson's role in the third annual convention of the Optometric Association of the Philippines, December 10-11, 1949, as follows:

"'Optometric Education, Fraternity and Protection' was used as the title of an address by Dr. Roy A. Thorson who dealt with the purposes for which the association was formed and how the members could apply themselves to effect these purposes. He stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the old, established practitioners and the newly graduated students as each could benefit from the learning and experience of the other; that the practitioner while learning and understanding more of the new theories and optometric techniques from the student, could, through his experience, so guide the student as to avoid the costly mistakes in which he might otherwise become involved."

At the same congress Dr. Thorson was elected one of the nine members of the Board of Directors of the O.A.P. for 1950.

Antonio Joson, Jr., O.D., now practicing in Manila, is still using the ophthalmometer once owned and used by Dr. Thorson.

I should like to know more about Dr. Thorson.

Optics of Alhazen:

A talk on the Paradigm and Methodology in the Optics of Alhazen was given at Indiana University on April 18 by Professor A.I. Sabra of Harvard University under co-sponsorship of the I.U. Departments of History & Philosophy of Science, Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, and the Division of Optometry. Though attendance was shockingly small, perhaps 12 or 15 persons, the talk was both fascinating and sophisticated.

Alhazen, also known as Ibn al-Haytham, whose 1,000 birth anniversary was celebrated recently, served well to accomplish a synthesis, or at least a degree of compatibility, of two doctrines relating to vision. One was the physicists' concept of a form-to-form relationship between the tangible object and the perceived image; the other was the mathematician's concept of rays-between-the-eye-and-the-object. Whether these prior concepts existed as conflicting theories or simply as independent operational descriptions is itself a somewhat controversial question today.

Professor Sabra is presently engaged in translating, and indeed interpreting, Alhazen's books into English and German.

Another private collection:

O.H.S. member Irving Bennett, O.D., calls attention to a report entitled "Newspaper Notes Doloff Collection" on page 31 of the Alumni Bulletin of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Vol. 27, no. 1, Feb. 1974.

Bertram Doloff, O.D. 341 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, Pennsylvania, 18510, was featured in a recent Sunday issue of The Scrantonion for his collection of old eyeglasses and ophthalmic instruments.

AOA adopts bicentennial resolution:

At the June 1974 Congress of the American Optometric Association in Washington, D.C., the following resolution was adopted by the House of Delegates:

- WHEREAS, The Bicentennial of the founding of the United States of America will be observed during 1976, and
- WHEREAS, The goal for the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration is to forge a new national commitment and a new Spirit for '76--a spirit in which, as we celebrate our beginnings, we re-examine founding principles and apply them to our future, and
- WHEREAS, The Bicentennial observance challenges every American to make a personal commitment toward improving the quality of life in America which will have a positive, lasting effect on the future, and

WHEREAS, The Bicentennial observance offers the profession of optometry, having served the majority of Americans with professional vision care services for more than three quarters of a century, an opportunity to become involved collectively and individually in Bicentennial observances at national, state and community levels in fulfilling the role of a professional in American society, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the American Optometric Association pledges its organizational and volunteer support of the goal and spirit of the nationwide observance of the 1976 Bicentennial.

Second reminisce-in held:

On June 19 the second reminisce-in sponsored by the Society was held in the Franklin room of the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. Spurgeon Eure, O.D., presided, with approximately 25 persons in attendance. As in the previous reminisce-in in 1972, the conversation was taped for the oral history file. Several of the oral accounts were identified as confidential and will be treated accordingly, to be made available only to bona fide history scholars.

O.H.S. member Mrs. Harold (Gladys) Kohn brought with her numerous old photographs dating back about 40 years. Among those present it was possible to identify almost every person in each photograph. The photographs will be added to the American Optometric Association Archives.

Raymond Tibaut (1883-1973)

L'Institut d'Optique Raymond Tibaut, Belgium, was so named in memory of Raymond Tibaut (Sept. 10, 1883 - Nov. 29, 1973) in 1955 by L'Association Professionnelle des Opticiens de Belgique. Tibaut was awarded a diploma as "Sight Testing Optician" by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers of London in 1915 and by The Institute of Ophthalmic Opticians in 1916. Testimonials to his long and illustrious career as a teacher and leader in optometry are published in L'Opticien Belge de Belgische Opticien, No. 206, December 1973, pp. 450-455.

Other Memorials:

Dr. Justo Gonzalez Memorial Awards (Reference: Optometric Association of the Philippines).

Dr. Gregorio G. Estrada Memorial Awards (Reference: Optometric Association of the Philippines).

Charlotte Potter Memorial Fund (Reference: Illinois College of Optometry). Charlotte was the wife of American Optometric Association Secretary-Treasurer Jack A. Potter, O.D.

Optical memories forgotten:

Undoubtedly the Greeks had a word for it, or the Romans a phrase, or the French a unique expression, which aptly describes the chagrin of finding out that what one anticipated is really something else completely, and even ludicrously, unrelated. Examples of such experiences include O.H.S. member Jim Leeds' purchase of "Antique Looking Glasses and Frames", my tracking down "The Design of 17th Century French Spectacles" and "Color Discrimination Among Tribal Africans", and an industrialist purchasing my book "Industrial Vision." These were commented on in the July 1971 issue of the Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 11-12.

My most recent one was entitled "Optical Memories", a featured article in Optical Spectra, June 1974. I turned to it with historian's anticipation only to become suddenly aware that the article dealt with optical memory technology in storage capabilities of computing systems!

Witelo Portrait to AOA:

On June 21, before the House of Delegates of the American Optometric Association, O.H.S. member Bernard Mrozinski formally presented an oil portrait of Witelo (Vitellius) to AOA President Robert Day, O.D., as an expression of friendship from Poland. The 40 x 50 cm painting was done this year by K. Borucki, the retired Director of the Museum of Art of Bydgoszcz, Poland, from an illustration in a rare old book in the museum. The whereabouts of the old portrait from which the illustration was copied is unknown. Hence the new portrait is a "second original."

The portrait shows Witelo holding a pair of spectacles in his right hand, graphically emphasizing his contributions to ophthalmic science. He was born in Silesia circa 1225 and died at Witow, Poland.

South African Optometry:

The March 1974 issue of The South African Optometrist, Vol. 33, No. 1, is the souvenir issue marking the 50th anniversary of the South African Optometric Association. In the lead editorial it is reported that the profession's records show that there were 11 opticians holding BOA and SMC qualifications in 10 South African cities between 1896 and 1910. Reproduced are the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the association in March 1924. Another article reviews the commencement of an educational program as the School of Applied Optics in 1931. An article by an 84 year old optometrist is entitled "Reminiscences of over 70 years." A 1931 court case is republished. Several articles are devoted to various other historical aspects, and numerous early photographs and documents are included.

H.W. Hofstetter, Editor