By Robert D. Newcomb  
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There are very few optometry schools that can trace their origins back 100 years, and The Ohio State University College of Optometry is the only university based optometry school that can do so. This book chronicles those 100 years at Ohio State. Columbia University was the first university to operate an optometry school, starting in 1910, but it closed in 1956.

Charles Sheard (1883-1963) joined the Ohio State faculty as a physics professor in 1907. In 1908 he gave a lecture to the Ohio State Optical Association. The optometrists in attendance were so impressed with Sheard that they encouraged him to try to start an optometry school at Ohio State. In 1914, Sheard submitted a proposal for an optometry school to the university president and by September there were 12 students registered in the two year program in Applied Optics as the optometry school was first known. Sheard was the first head of the optometry school. In the lower right area of the collage of pictures
on the front cover (see above) there is a picture of Charles Sheard. There were nine students who completed the applied optics curriculum in 1916.

The optometry program soon expanded to a four year curriculum. In 1918, the first student to receive a Bachelor of Science in Applied Optics from the Department of Physics graduated. The next graduates were eight students receiving their B.S. degrees in 1920. Sheard left Ohio State in 1919 for a research position at American Optical Company in Southbridge, Massachusetts. Howard Minchin was head of the applied optics program at Ohio State from 1920 to 1929.

In 1935, Glenn A. Fry was recruited to Ohio State to head the applied optics program. A photograph of Glenn Fry taken in 1983 is toward the left in the middle row of pictures on the front cover. In the group picture just below that, Glenn Fry and Henry Hofstetter are the first two persons standing on the left side of the bottom row.

In 1937, it was announced that the optometry degree would be changed from a B.S. in Applied Optics to a B.S. in Optometry. In the 1930s, Ohio State started a graduate program in physiological optics. Herbert Mote and Howard Haines received the first M.S. degrees in 1938 and Henry Hofstetter received the first Ph.D. in 1942. In 1964, Ohio State approved a six-year curriculum leading to the Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree. In 1966, Frederick W. Hebbard succeeded Glenn Fry as the director of Ohio State’s optometry school. Subsequent Deans have been Richard Hill, John P. Schoessler, Melvin D. Shipp, and Karla Zadnik.

At the time of the writing of this book, Ohio State had graduated 3,628 students in applied optics and optometry and awarded 347 M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in physiological optics and vision science. This book includes a hundred page chronological history of the optometry school examining curriculum, facilities, research, leadership, and related topics; a seventy-five page section of biographical sketches of most of the faculty members in the school’s history; and lists of endowments, graduates, award recipients, and persons featured in the celebrity eyewear collection created by Arol Augsburger.

This book is a fitting tribute to the optometry school at Ohio State and the many persons who have contributed to its success. The book is profusely illustrated with black-and-white and color photographs. The author is Robert D. Newcomb, a B.S. (1970) and O.D. (1971) graduate of Ohio State and former Ohio State faculty member (1997-2012). He also holds an M.P.H. degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (1975) and is a member of the Optometric Historical Society.

Our History in Focus: the First 100 Years of The Ohio State University College of Optometry, Robert D. Newcomb. Columbus: The Ohio State University 2014, 2014. 232 Pages. Hardcover.