

# HINDSIGHT

## Journal of Optometry History

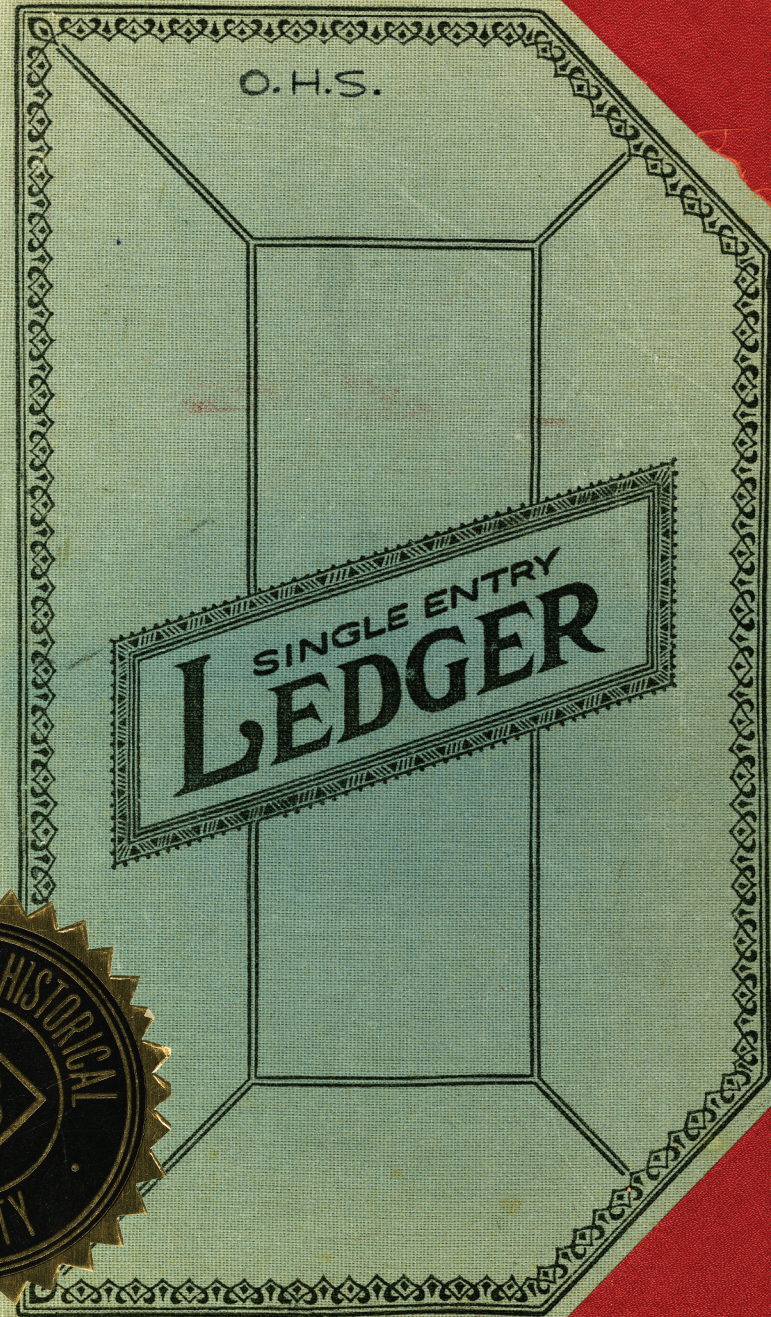
Publication of the Optometric Historical Society

Volume 50 ■ Number 1 ■ January 2019

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### Optometric Historical Society

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	Mrs. Lawrence Biscoe		
	Lawrence H. Foster		
	J.D. Howard	5 00	
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	Sylvio Dupuis		
	M.L. DeBelt	5	
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SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

THE  
optometric  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## HINDSIGHT:

Journal of Optometry History

P-ISSN 2374 3271

E-ISSN 2374-328X

January, 2019

Volume 50, Number 1

*Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History* publishes material on the history of optometry and related topics. As the official publication of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS), a program of Optometry Cares®-The AOA Foundation, *Hindsight* supports the mission and purpose of the OHS.

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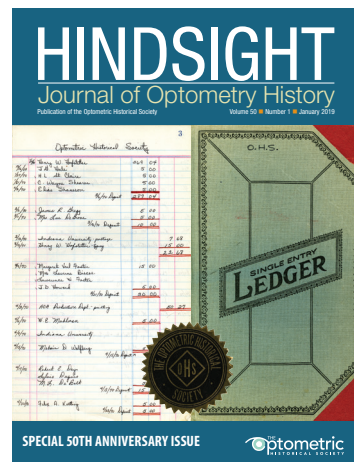
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## ON THE COVER



*Ledger and OHS Seal. RG 430.01. Original objects and images curated by The Archives & Museum of Optometry, a program of Optometry Cares - The AOA Foundation, St. Louis, MO.*

The image on the cover is the original ledger used by OHS co-founder and first Secretary, Maria Dablemont, to record the collection of membership dues for the Optometric Historical Society.

The vintage ledger contains entries for Charter members beginning with Jack Roy Hale in December of 1969 and ending with Dablemont's own renewal in July of 1985. The black and gold OHS seal is an adhesive sticker (circa 1975) featuring an early OHS logotype.

For a complete list of the OHS' charter members, see the appendix in this issue.

## OHS Advisory Committee 2018

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The official publication of the OHS, published quarterly since its beginning, was previously titled *Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society*, 1970-1991 (volumes 1-22), and *Hindsight: Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society*, 1992-2006 (volumes 22-37). Use of the current title, *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*, began in 2007 with volume 38, number 1. The electronic edition and digital copies of all back issues, indexes, and additional information about the journal are available at:

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/hindsight/issue/archive>.

Manuscripts can be submitted for publication at the journal website (<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/hindsight>). Alternatively, a Microsoft Word document can be submitted by email to the editor: dgoss@indiana.edu.



20/20 Hindsight



Optometry in 1969



Origins of the OHS

# HINDSIGHT

## Journal of Optometry History

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## EARLY PHOTOS SIMULATING VISION CONDITIONS

A faculty member in the Indiana University Department of History and Philosophy of Science is searching for the earliest photographs that simulate the subjective experience of various vision conditions. Gregg and Heath's *The Eye and Sight* (1964) contains images credited to the Western Institute of Light and Vision and to Gregg himself, but we suspect that there may be earlier attempts to illustrate these phenomena. If you have information about the existence of other photos, please contact the editor, Dr. David Goss at [dgoss@indiana.edu](mailto:dgoss@indiana.edu).

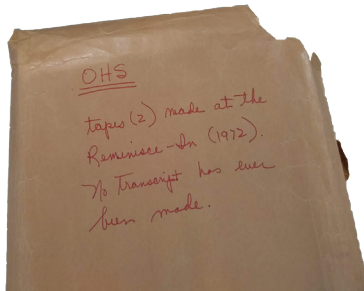


Edna Fugate, Archivist and Reference Librarian, is working diligently with us to make images of and information about the objects accessible in the UPIKE Digital Archives, and to ensure that the materials are well curated. We are



delighted by this opportunity to make our hidden collection more accessible, and welcome a chance to collaborate with our partners in academia to promote public awareness of optometry, encourage research, and support educational programming using museum objects. We look forward to sharing more news about the upcoming UPIKE exhibits with our members. More information about our partnership with UPIKE will appear in the future issues of *Hindsight*.

## FIRST REMINISCE-IN AUDIO



We have found one of two original sound recordings made of the first "Reminisce-In"! The two, 1/4" magnetic reel tapes made during the 75th AOA Congress in St. Louis, MO were deposited at

the Archives & Museum of Optometry (AMO) in 1972. Kirsten Hébert, archivist at the AMO, is working with Dina Kellams, Director of the Indiana University Archives, to transfer the tapes to IU so that they can be digitized and preserved. Stay tuned for information about how to listen to this historic event as it happened!

## AMO LOAN TO UPIKE

The Archives & Museum of Optometry is excited to announce that we have entered a long-term loan agreement with the University of Pikeville, home of the Kentucky College of Optometry and the Frank M. Allara Library Special Collections and Archives. On December 14, crates containing a selection of our large antique diagnostic and therapeutic instruments and equipment arrived at UPIKE, destined for display in the new Health Professions Education Building.

## BLAST FROM THE PAST 2019



Meet us in St. Louis on Friday, June 21, 2019 from 11:00AM-12:00PM for our annual "Blast from the Past" event. This year, Dr. Ed Bennett from the University of Missouri - St. Louis College of Optometry will present his COPE-approved course "Contact Lenses: From the Past to the Future" (59040-GO).

Join your colleagues for Dr. Bennett's illuminating discussion of the past, present and future of one of the most revolutionary innovations in eye care in modern history.

## AOSA BOARD VISITS THE AMO

The American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) Trustees visited the AOA headquarters in St. Louis, MO on Friday, January 4, 2019. During their visit, the Trustees were treated to a pop-up exhibit presented by the AMO featuring items from the 23rd AOA Congress held in St. Louis in 1920. Pictured here is one of several groups that had a chance to spend some time learning more about the history of the profession.





## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, OHS...AND THANK YOU!

This year, 2019, marks 50 years since the founding of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS). During 2019 we will offer some special thematic issues celebrating OHS' 50th anniversary. Included in this issue are articles relating to the history of OHS and its founding. Among the authors for this issue are three of the founding members of OHS: Irving Bennett, O.D., Lester Caplan, O.D. and Raymond I. Myers, O.D.

OHS co-founders Maria Dablemont and Henry Hofstetter, O.D. were the ideal persons to give life to the OHS, not only because of the personal characteristics that made them so accomplished in their respective fields, but also because of the fact that, as they became students of optometry history, they came to recognize that optometry had a history that was "truly proud" (Hofstetter<sup>1</sup>) and "glorious" (Dablemont<sup>2</sup>). They were both very dedicated to the OHS because they wanted to ensure that optometrists had the opportunity to learn about optometry's history and develop the same pride in it they had.

On a personal note, this year is also the 25th year that I have served as editor of *Hindsight*. I was fortunate to have had Henry Hofstetter as my advisor in graduate school, and I appreciate his confidence that I would be a good editor and caretaker for *Hindsight*. There are many OHS members who have my thanks for their support and encouragement, among them being Jerry Abrams, O.D., John Amos, O.D., R. Norman Bailey, O.D., Jack Bennett, O.D., Irving Bennett, O.D., Jay Enoch, O.D., Ron Ferrucci, O.D., Ted Grosvenor, O.D., Chuck Haime, O.D., Doug Penisten, O.D. and Melvin Wolfberg, O.D. I also thank all

our authors and reviewers over these past years. A special thanks goes to Kirsten Hébert for all she has done for *Hindsight* since becoming heritage services specialist at the Archives and Museum of Optometry in 2013.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the OHS, I urge you to consider writing for *Hindsight*, to encourage colleagues to join the OHS, and to help preserve, and educate others about, our truly proud and glorious history.

### References

1. Hofstetter HW. The OHS mission. *Hindsight* 1996;27:17-18.
2. Dablemont remembered for fierce devotion to preserving history. *AOA News* Dec. 1, 1992;31(11):12.

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David A. Goss, O.D., Ph.D.

### Letter to the Editor:

I always look forward to reading each new *Hindsight*. But the Oct 2018 issue was special for me. Your article on Brad Wild was wonderful, thank you! Brad was my teacher at OSU (1967-1971) and later my faculty colleague at UAB (1976-1980). We had the US Navy and the American Academy of Optometry in common, among other things in our lives. He was always a perfect gentleman, both wise and engaging. Your article brought back many happy memories of him for me:

-- Robert D. Newcomb, O.D., M.P.H.

doi:10.14434/hindsight.v50i1.26581



# 20/20 HINDSIGHT: A HISTORY OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY AS CHRONICLED IN ITS NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL

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doi: 10.14434/hindsight.v50i1.26585

## Abstract

This paper gives an account of the history of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS), based on material in its quarterly publication, variously named *Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society* (1970-1991), *Hindsight* (1992-2006), and *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History* (2007-present). Operated as an independent organization for many years from its founding in 1969, the OHS became a part of *Optometry Cares – The AOA Foundation* in 2012. In addition to its publication, now totaling more than 3,300 pages since its inception, the OHS has also held meetings referred to as *Reminisce-ins* or *Blasts from the Past*, in association with annual meetings of the American Optometric Association and the American Academy of Optometry. Officers and participants in the OHS have included many significant individuals in optometry.

## Keywords

American Optometric Association;  
Henry Hofstetter, Maria Dablemont,  
Optometric Historical Society

The Optometric Historical Society (OHS) has had a quarterly publication since its founding. The first issue of the *Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society* was published in January, 1970, and it went under that title from 1970 to 1991 (volumes 1-22). In 1992, the title was changed to *Hindsight*,



Figure 1: *Reminisce-In*, 1972. Dr. Henry W Hofstetter (left), standing. RG 430.01 Optometric Historical Society Records. Image courtesy of The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

while maintaining a newsletter format through 2006 (volumes 23-37). Starting in 2007, volume 38, the title was changed to *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*, and the publication assumed a journal format. Since then the content has shifted in favor of in-depth research articles, but also continues to document OHS activities and news. This article will trace some of the history of OHS as it was recorded in the pages of the *Newsletter* and of *Hindsight*.

A release to the optometric press dated October 31, 1969 about the formation of OHS, resulted in 34 persons sending in their \$5 checks to become founding members.<sup>1,2</sup> Between January and October, 1970, another 24 persons joined.<sup>2,3</sup>

Henry Hofstetter, O.D., Ph.D., was the initial editor of the *Newsletter*. John R. Levene, O.D., D.Phil., professor at Indiana University, stood in as editor for the third and fourth issues of 1970 (volume 1) and two other issues in 1971 and 1975 while Hofstetter was out of the country on sabbaticals. Otherwise, Hofstetter remained sole

editor through 1979. In 1980, Douglas Penisten, O.D., currently Dean of the College of Optometry at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma and then in the initial stages of his Ph.D. studies at Indiana University, joined Hofstetter as co-editor.

The first issue of the *Newsletter* contained the by-laws of OHS. The purposes of OHS were stated to be "to encourage the collection and preservation of materials relating to the history of optometry, to assist in the securing and documenting the recollections of those who have participated in the development of optometry, to encourage and assist in the care of archives of optometric interest, to identify and mark sites, landmarks, monuments, and structures of significance in optometric development, and to shed honor and recognition on persons, groups, and agencies making notable contributions toward the goals of this society."<sup>4</sup> The by-laws listed the members of the first OHS Executive Board as AOA Head Librarian Maria Dablemont (Secretary-Treasurer),



Arthur E. Hoare, O.D., of California, Sol Tannebaum, O.D. of Illinois, John R. Levene (Vice President), and Henry W Hofstetter (President). The first issue of the *Newsletter* also included quotations from responses of several of the founding members. Jerome J. (J.J.) Abrams, O.D. of Indiana, who is still a member in 2018, wrote: "Very proud to be a founding member. I think its purposes are very necessary and worthwhile."<sup>5</sup>

The October, 1972 issue mentioned that OHS held its first "Reminisce-In" on June 20 at the American Optometric Association's (AOA) 75th Annual Congress in St. Louis, MO. (Figure 1) It was attended by 30 persons, 17 of whom gave "brief but revealing and fascinating anecdotal accounts of generally unknown events and incidents in the history of optometry."<sup>6</sup> The meeting was taped to be preserved in the oral history archives at the International Library, Archives & Museum of Optometry which had incorporated earlier that year. The October, 1972 issue also announced that OHS had formed committees on membership, public and professional relations, meetings, and nominations and elections, but it does not appear that these committees continued for long.

The July, 1974 *Newsletter* reported that OHS membership had increased to 140, with members in 29 states and Puerto Rico, three Canadian provinces, and 13 other countries. The second OHS Reminisce-In was held June 19, 1974, in Washington, D.C., at the AOA Congress with 25 persons in attendance.<sup>7</sup>

In 1975, John R. Levene, who had served as Vice President of OHS for the preceding five years, became the President. Henry A. Knoll, Ph.D., Senior Scientist at Bausch & Lomb, became the Vice President. Maria Dablemont

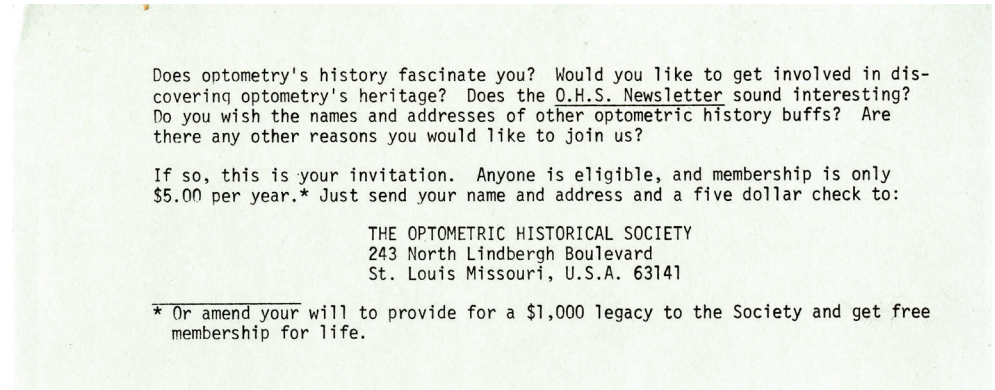


Figure 2: Leaflet advertising OHS membership, October 1976. RG 430.01 Optometric Historical Society Records. The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

continued as Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. Knoll later served as OHS President from 1977 to 1979.

In the October, 1976 *Newsletter*, Hofstetter mentioned that he and a few other OHS members had little blue slips of paper which read in part: "Does optometry's history fascinate you? Would you like to get involved in discovering optometry's heritage?... If so, this is your invitation. Anyone is eligible, and membership is only \$5.00 per year." (Figure 2) They occasionally gave these slips of paper to friends and colleagues or inserted them in correspondence. He felt that the personal touch of this recruitment technique helped to bring in a few new members.

The first formal business meeting of OHS was held July 5, 1977 in Toronto, Ontario (Canada) in conjunction with the AOA Congress. The meeting included ten-minute talks by Henry Hofstetter (on the origins of OHS), Henry Knoll (a review of John Levene's history book *Clinical Refraction and Visual Science*), and Maria Dablemont (on aspects of oral history for optometry), and a thirty-minute open discussion by the approximately 40 persons in attendance. Secretary-Treasurer Dablemont reported that OHS had a financial balance of

\$2,008.86, and a membership of 160, with 45 international members. At this meeting it was announced that the OHS Executive Board made Henry Hofstetter the first Fellow of the OHS.<sup>8</sup>

Hofstetter's account of the origins of the OHS presented at that meeting was published in the October, 1977 issue of the *Newsletter*.<sup>9</sup> He recalled that Maria Dablemont had suggested to him that an optometric historical society should be formed. In September of 1968, during Hofstetter's AOA presidency, Dablemont and two of her assistants visited the Hofstetter home in Bloomington, Indiana, and they worked out the details of what should be included in the by-laws of an optometric historical society. Hofstetter agreed to take the initiative for the formation of the society when his AOA presidency was concluded so that it would not appear that the society was a subsidiary of the AOA. Over the following months, the by-laws were developed to the satisfaction of Hofstetter and Dablemont. In August of 1969, Hofstetter sent a letter to ten persons whom he knew to have concern with optometry history. With that letter he enclosed a copy of the by-laws, and he asked if they were interested in such an activity whether they would



be willing to serve as an organizing member of the Executive Board. The first respondents to that letter--Maria Dablemont, Arthur Hoare, Sol Tannebaum, and John Levene--became members of the Executive Board along with Hofstetter. After the Board members elected officers among themselves, a press release announcing the formation of OHS and soliciting membership was sent to optometric periodicals on October 31, 1969. Those who paid their membership dues by January 1, 1970, were designated founding members.

In his 1977 account of the origins of OHS, Hofstetter also mentioned that OHS was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in the state of Missouri on April 2, 1973, and on February 26, 1975, it was listed as having tax-exempt status so that its donors could deduct contributions for tax-benefit purposes. (Figure 3) He concluded his talk by stating that: "we can now state with confidence that the Optometric Historical Society is a firmly established organization with world-wide membership, a solid reputation, a sound fiscal basis, and all of the technical and legal qualifications to enable it to pursue its aims aggressively and in perpetuity."<sup>9</sup>

The fourth get-together of the OHS membership was held December 11, 1977, in Birmingham, AL, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO). Several of the 31 attendees talked about events and personalities of optometric historical interest. Among those who discussed their observations and experiences were Meredith Morgan, O.D., Ph.D., from U.C. Berkeley, Fred Lit, O.D., Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Southern Illinois University, E.J. Fisher, O.D., and Professor Theo Gumpelmayer, an optometrist and scientist active

in organized optometry throughout Europe and South Africa.<sup>10</sup>

The next meeting of the OHS was held December 9, 1978, in Boston, MA at the New England College of Optometry during the AAO annual meeting. OHS president Henry A. Knoll gave a talk on James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879), the Scottish scientist who not only clarified the relationship between electricity and magnetism, but also did extensive work on vision, being memorialized with terms such as Maxwell's spot and Maxwellian view.<sup>11</sup>

Another OHS Reminisce-In occurred December 8, 1979, at the Southern California College of Optometry in Fullerton (Marshall B. Ketchum University) during the annual meeting of the AAO. Several of the 24 persons in attendance discussed their optometric experiences.<sup>12</sup>

James Leeds, O.D., Indianapolis optometrist who had an extensive collection of optometry books, became president of OHS in 1980 and served in that role through 1984. His presidency was followed by another Indianapolis optometrist, J.J. Abrams, who served as OHS president from 1985 to 1988.

The attendance at the December, 1980 Reminisce-In was 25. It was held in Chicago, IL in conjunction with the AAO annual meeting. Presentations were made by Henry Knoll (on contact lens history) and James Leeds (on history he learned from some of the optometry books in his collection).<sup>13</sup> Maria Dablemont reported that OHS had a balance of \$2,285.20. In 1981, the *Newsletter* reported typical cost for printing and mailing. For the January, 1981 issue, costs were \$92.08 for printing, \$20 for envelopes, and \$89.35 for postage.<sup>14,15</sup>

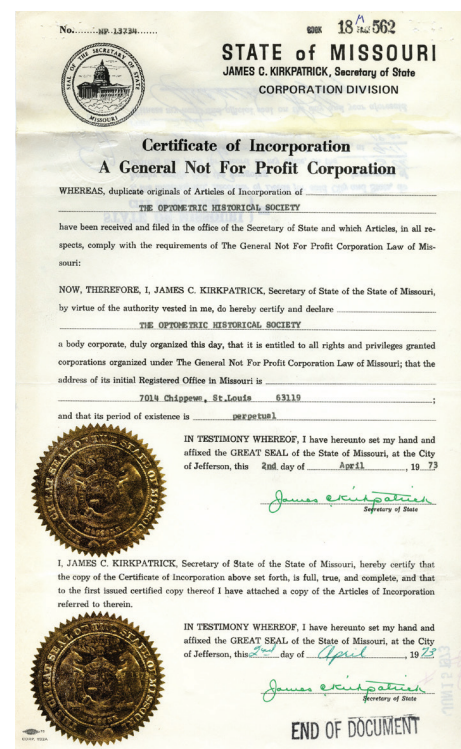


Figure 3: Original articles of Incorporation, Optometric Historical Society, 1973. RG 430.01 Optometric Historical Society. The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

At the December, 1981, Reminisce-In held in Orlando, FL, James Leeds presented a paper on the series of books titled *Report of the Transactions of the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Optometry*, published from 1927 to 1940. The paper was published in the January, 1982 *Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society*.<sup>16</sup> At that Reminisce-In, it was announced that the Executive Board may give OHS recognition certificates to individuals "whose dedication to the scholarly research, examination, interpretation, and disclosure of optometry's heritage has added significantly to the advancement of knowledge of its past and therefore adds to the wisdom which can mold the profession's future."<sup>16</sup> (Figure 4)

The first OHS Recognition Certificate was awarded to optometrist William G. Austin of Bismarck, North Dakota. The certificate was presented at the

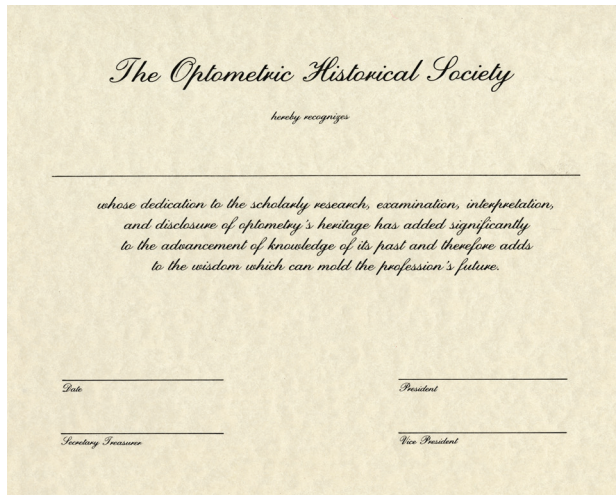


Figure 4: Blank Recognition Certificate. RG 430.01 Optometric Historical Society Records. The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

April, 1982 meeting of the North Dakota Optometric Association by its president, on behalf of OHS.<sup>17</sup>

An OHS Reminisce-In was held December 11, 1982, in Philadelphia, PA. Attendance was only 16, because the Reminisce-In happened to be scheduled at the same time as a “prolonged and intently attended” AAO business meeting. Regardless, the Reminisce-In was said to be “most gratifying as well as entertaining.”<sup>18</sup> Discussants included Maria Dablemont (on the “comfortable” OHS balance of slightly over \$2,000), Jacob Staiman, O.D. (on an unusual pair of century-old spectacles which he brought with him), and Douglas Penisten (on the development of three optometry schools in South Africa).<sup>18</sup>

The April, 1983 *Newsletter* reported that OHS membership had reached 213. Almost 10% of the members were not optometrists, consisting of librarians, opticians, historians, optometrist’s widows, and students. Almost 80% of the members were residents of the United States, with 4% being from Canada, 3% from Australia, 3% from England, and 11% from fifteen other countries.<sup>19</sup> It is likely the that the large international membership was the result of the

extensive correspondence carried on by Henry Hofstetter, and the inclusion in his letters of the small slip of paper inviting his correspondents to join OHS.

The January, 1984, issue of the *Newsletter* announced that the Executive Board had voted to award OHS Recognition Certificates to Martin Topaz, Grace Weiner, Maurice Cox, Israel Dvorine, O.D., Robert Graham, O.D., James R. Gregg, O.D., John R. Levene, O.D., D.Phil., and Jacob Staiman, O.D. It was also announced that the Board had voted to increased OHS dues from the original \$5 per year to \$10 per year due to increased costs of producing and mailing the *Newsletter*.<sup>20</sup> In 1985, OHS membership voted to alter the by-laws to reflect an increase in annual dues to \$10.<sup>21</sup>

The OHS met December 8, 1984, in St. Louis, MO during the annual meeting of the AAO. Forty-five were in attendance for two slide presentations, one by rare book librarian Christopher Hoolihan, who talked about the Bernard Becker M.D. ophthalmology book collection at the Washington University School of Medicine’s library (Becker Medical Library) in St. Louis, MO. William Austin, O.D. of Bismarck, ND, talked about establishing a

permanent exhibit of a turn-of-the-century optometry examination room at the Bismarck Heritage Center. These lectures were said to be “fascinating.”<sup>22</sup>

In 1985, OHS membership was up to 250 members, with 50 of those members being from 19 countries other than the United States. There was double-digit membership in five states: 33 from California, 21 from Indiana, 16 from Pennsylvania, 15 from Ohio, and 14 from New York.<sup>23</sup> This appears to have been the highest membership total to date.

Thirty-five persons attended the OHS meeting on December 7, 1985, in Atlanta, GA held in conjunction with the AAO annual meeting. Douglas Penisten presented a paper titled “Helmholtz, phantom visual imagery, and the idioretinal light.” This was followed by a half-hour Reminisce-In during which “individuals offered fascinating and little known accounts in optometric history.”<sup>24</sup> Maria Dablemont then announced the awarding of OHS Recognition Certificates to James F. Dickson, O.D., Jacob Staiman, O.D., and Irving Bennett, O.D.

The OHS Reminisce-In on December 13, 1986, in Toronto, Ontario during the AAO annual meeting was attended by “twenty-some” persons.<sup>25</sup> E.J. Fisher, former director of the University of Waterloo’s School of Optometry (1967-1975), gave a talk on the history of Canadian optometry. Fisher’s paper was published in a later issue of the *Newsletter*.<sup>26</sup> Also in 1986, it was decided to expand the OHS Executive Board from five to seven members.<sup>27</sup>

The 1987 Reminisce-In was held on December 5, in Denver, CO during the AAO annual meeting. AOA past-president Ron Fair, O.D. (1976-1977) gave an account of the history of optometry in Colorado. Mentioned



prominently in the talk was J.C. Bloom, born in 1867, "who piloted Colorado's optometry profession throughout a very long lifetime." It was noted that "Dr. Fair's presentation met with resounding applause and long aftertalk [sic] by many in attendance who enjoyed the assorted supporting anecdotes."<sup>28</sup> It was also reported that OHS had a total cash balance of \$4,910.55 with no outstanding debts. Maria Dablemont announced that she was stepping down from her position of OHS Secretary-Treasurer, a position she had held since the founding of OHS.

In 1987, the OHS Executive Board established the Henry W Hofstetter Recognition Award "to be given to persons who have made outstanding contributions toward the acquisition of better knowledge of optometry's heritage."<sup>29</sup> The first recipient of the award was Maria J. Dablemont, with the presentation being made December 5, 1987 in Denver at the OHS Reminisce-In.

Thirty-seven attended the December 10, 1988 Reminisce-In held in Columbus, OH. Gregory Good, O.D., Ph.D., spoke on the optometry curriculum in the early days of the program at Ohio State under the direction of Charles Sheard. James Leeds "gave a fascinating account of his career-long experiences originally as an unsophisticated accumulator and now a worldly known collector of optometry-related books, old and new."<sup>30</sup> Leeds' presentation was published in the April, 1989 issue of the *Newsletter*.<sup>31</sup>

The speaker for the December 9, 1989, Reminisce-In was ophthalmologist J. William Rosenthal, M.D., owner of one of the world's finest collections of eyewear. He spoke to about 40 persons about antique scissors glasses and pince-

nez. The *Newsletter* noted that "his interpretations of the utilization of visual aids are well thought out."<sup>32</sup> Before the talk, the Henry W Hofstetter Recognition Award was presented to E.J. Fisher by OHS president T. David Williams, O.D., Ph.D. Those in attendance enjoyed a cake specially made to commemorate the 20th anniversary of OHS. In December, 1989, OHS had a balance of \$5,995.00, and it claimed 230 members, 36 from outside the United States.<sup>33</sup>

The OHS met next on December 8, 1990, in Nashville, TN, during the AAO annual meeting. Douglas Penisten gave a talk entitled "The History of Optometry in America: Information Waiting to be Found."<sup>34,35</sup> In a report from the 1990 Executive Board meeting, it was noted that persons who had not paid dues would be dropped from the membership list, leaving 160 paying members.<sup>36</sup> At the December 14, 1991 OHS meeting in Anaheim, CA, Henry Peters, O.D. gave a paper entitled "Five Optometric Pioneers in the Establishment of the University of California School of Optometry." The five pioneers he discussed were George L. Schneider, O.D., Ralph S. Minor, Ph.D., Frederick L. Mason, O.D., Kenneth B. Stoddard, O.D., Ph.D., and Thomas H. Peters, O.D.<sup>37</sup>

Starting with the January, 1992 issue (volume 23, number 1), the OHS newsletter took on the title *Hindsight* with the explanation that: "The old six-word title has been both clumsy and somewhat undistinguishing from the thousands of other newsletters on the horizon. Neither was the abbreviation NOHS a comfortable acronym. In fact the title as a whole was debatably oxymoronic in the sense that information is hardly 'news' when it is already 'history'. When we started the newsletter back in 1970 we attempted to select or coin a suitable

title, but failed to find a satisfying term. The word hindsight simply eluded us until now."<sup>38</sup>

The OHS went through a difficult period in the early 1990s, and *Hindsight* fell behind in its publication schedule. Although the newsletter was dormant for three years, Henry Hofstetter, as contributing editor, kept writing material for it. In 1995, David Goss, O.D., Ph.D., was asked to take over as editor of *Hindsight*. The material that Hofstetter had written over the intervening years was compiled into eight page issues

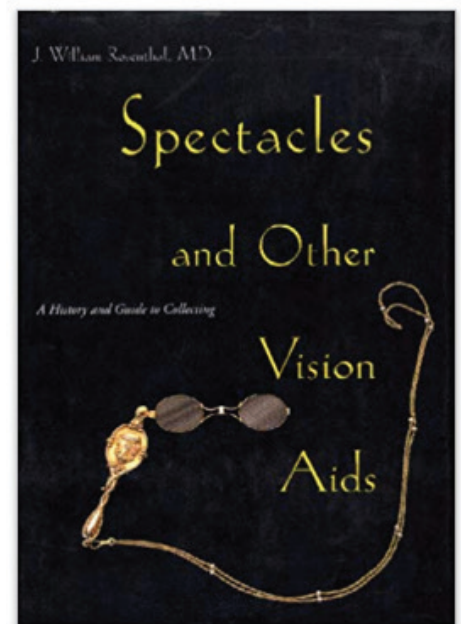


Figure 5: *Spectacles and Other Vision Aids*. ISBN-13: 978-0930405717

which maintained the sequential numbering of four issues per volume and one volume per year. Issues from number 4 of volume 23, carrying an October, 1992 date, through number 4 of volume 26, dated October, 1995, were mailed out in one package to members.<sup>39</sup>

OHS meetings resumed on December 9, 1995, in New Orleans, LA with 22 in attendance, when ophthalmologist and OHS member J.

William Rosenthal, M.D., once again gave a presentation on the history of spectacles. After his talk, Rosenthal showed several of the meeting attendees his display of antique ophthalmic items at the Tulane Medical School.<sup>40</sup> Rosenthal published a hardback book based on his collection and research the following year. (Figure 5)

Henry Hofstetter continued to write most of the entries for *Hindsight* through 1997. Of particular note, his classic editorial "The OHS mission," which I have quoted on many occasions, appeared in the July, 1996 issue.<sup>41</sup> In it, he opined that "*Hindsight's* role is to dispel our depressing ignorance of optometry history." He described how he was not initially a student of history, but he came to recognize "optometry's centuries-long existence" and that it had "as noble and pervasive a heritage" as any discipline.

Optometric icon Charles Prentice was the topic of two successive OHS presentations in 1997 and 1998. On December 13, 1997, in San Antonio, TX Jerry Christensen, O.D., Ph.D., spoke on "Prentice's Profession," discussing Prentice's promotion of optometry.<sup>42</sup> A year later, on December 12, 1998, optician Joe Bruneni gave a talk entitled "Charles Prentice, Optician," (optician being the term that Prentice coined and preferred over optometrist).<sup>43</sup> Bruneni was the author of the 1994 book *Looking Back: An Illustrated History of the American Ophthalmic Industry*. For the December 10, 1999, OHS meeting in Seattle, Jay Enoch, O.D., Ph.D., Professor, University of California, Berkeley, School of Optometry, presented "New Finding on Ancient Egyptian Lenses Dating from 4600 Years ago."<sup>44</sup> The OHS met December 8, 2000, with Arol Augsburger, O.D., Ph.D., future president of Illinois College of

Optometry (2002-2017), speaking on the "Evolution and Early Development of the Celebrity Eyewear Collection," which he had started at The Ohio State.<sup>45</sup>

The January, 2000 issue of *Hindsight* announced that a website for OHS had been established at Indiana University.<sup>46</sup> It was also reported that *Hindsight* was now being printed on acid-free paper at minimal additional cost and that Henry Hofstetter had prepared an index for volumes 21-30 to accompany the previous indexes for volumes 1-10 and 11-20.

Jay Enoch came on board as a Contributing Editor to *Hindsight* in 2001. He continued to produce an interesting article for almost every issue through 2012. Enoch also presented a paper entitled "Use of Concave Mirrors as Magnifiers and Refractive Corrections from at least Roman Times" at the December 7, 2001, OHS meeting in Philadelphia.<sup>47</sup>

Henry Hofstetter died in 2002 at the age of 87. As further evidence of his strong feelings toward the Optometric Historical Society, we may note that the OHS was listed along with four foundations in his obituary as organizations to which memorial contributions could be made.<sup>48</sup>

The 2002 OHS meeting was held on December 14 in San Diego, CA. Walter Chase, O.D., M.S., spoke on "The American Academy of Optometry's Living History," an oral history project he worked on for several years.<sup>49</sup> A membership directory published in the October, 2002 issue indicates that membership was down to 75, with nine of those being from outside the United States.<sup>50</sup>

On December 6, 2003, the OHS met in Dallas, TX during the AAO meeting and Gregory L. Stephens, O.D., Ph.D., presented a paper entitled "Leonard

Thompson Troland: Vision, Technicolor, and the Photon."<sup>51</sup> Jay Enoch was the presenter on "The World's Oldest Mirrors and Why They are Important to Us," for the meeting on December 11, 2004, in Tampa, FL.<sup>52</sup> The next year, on December 10, 2005, vision scientist Robert Boynton, Ph.D., presented "Fifty Years of Viewing Optometry as an Outsider," an interesting paper which was published in the April, 2006 *Hindsight*.<sup>53</sup> Boynton was the winner of the American Academy of Optometry's Prentice Medal in 1997.

The mailing of the October, 2006 *Hindsight* included a ballot for a vote on the OHS Executive Board's recommended increase in membership dues. The annual dues had been \$10 since 1985, so an increase could be expected. The increase was passed so that dues increased to \$25 for regular membership, and a lifetime membership for \$250 was instituted (discontinued in 2015).<sup>54</sup>

With the January, 2007 issue, the OHS quarterly publication adopted a journal format and assumed the title *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*. A cover with a color that approximated optometry's green was added. Printing continued to be done on the Indiana University campus by the same service that copied classroom hand-outs and other materials.

Irving Bennett was elected to the presidency of OHS in 2009, and in 2010 he became a Contributing Editor to *Hindsight*. Bennett worked actively to advocate for OHS. He negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Optometry's Charity - The AOA Foundation for OHS to be placed under their umbrella. Many of the articles Bennett wrote for *Hindsight* were posted as "Historical Gems" on the Foundation website to promote OHS ([bit.ly/ohsgems](http://bit.ly/ohsgems)). After a hiatus



of few years, the Reminisce-In at the AAO annual meeting was successfully reinstituted in 2009 with the room "full of interested listeners."<sup>55</sup>

The 2010 Reminisce-In was held on November 19 in San Francisco, CA with Alden N. Haffner, O.D., Ph.D., speaking on "The Ups and Downs of Optometry's Relationship with Organized Medicine and Organized Ophthalmology."<sup>56</sup> Haffner's paper was published in the January, 2011 issue of *Hindsight*.<sup>57</sup> In 2011, Linda Draper, staff for The Archives & Museum of Optometry, helped to straighten out OHS membership lists and finances, and the OHS membership voted to expand the Executive Board from seven to nine members.<sup>56</sup> An index for volumes 31-40 was compiled and mailed to members, following the precedent of publication of indexes for volumes 1-10, 11-20, and 21-30.

The next meeting of the OHS was held October 14, 2011, in Boston, MA in conjunction with the AAO meeting. Alden N. Haffner and Howard Backman, O.D. gave their historical views on the evolution of optometric care provided under Medicare in the United States and in Canada.<sup>58</sup> Secretary-Treasurer Arol Augsburg reported that OHS had a checking account balance of \$13,354, and there were 98 current members, six from outside the United States.<sup>58</sup>

There were two OHS meetings held in 2012. For the first, OHS met at the AOA annual meeting for the first time in many years. That meeting was held on June 28 in Chicago, IL with an open discussion of historical topics. Then the OHS met in October in Phoenix, AZ in conjunction with the AAO annual meeting. This was the first time that the OHS meeting was known as a "Blast from the Past" after having been referred to as a "Reminisce-In" for many years. A talk attended by

over 50 persons was given by Morton Greenspoon on a "History of Contact Lenses in the Movies."<sup>59</sup>

In 2012, the cover of *Hindsight* was redesigned and the October, 2012 issue was the first to carry a color photograph on the cover. In 2013, all back issues of the *Newsletter* and of *Hindsight* beginning with volume 1 were scanned and made available on IUScholarWorks, Indiana University's online repository of scholarly works and journals. Issues older than two years were made available open access, while newer issues could only viewed by OHS members.

John F. Amos, O.D. was elected president of OHS in 2013. He stated that Irving Bennett who had served as OHS president for the previous four years, "deserves our gratitude for providing stability to the OHS."<sup>60</sup> He credited Bennett with increasing the visibility and membership of the OHS. Amos further stated that the merger of OHS into Optometry Cares – The AOA Foundation was going forward. This change was set in motion by Bennett, who had noted that OHS was limited in being run entirely by volunteers and having no staff support. He also discovered that its federal tax exemption for non-profit organizations had lapsed. Bennett negotiated the MOU with the Foundation, stipulating that after a three year trial period, which ended in January, 2014, the OHS would transfer its assets to Optometry Cares (formerly named Optometry's Charity) and become a heritage services program of the Foundation alongside The Archives & Museum of Optometry (AMO).

Kirsten Hébert was employed as Heritage Services Specialist for the AMO in May, 2013. Her background and skills made her an ideal person to work with the OHS. She has managed the OHS program and supported

the activities of the OHS Board and Advisory Committee, expanded the OHS presence on the Optometry Cares website, and facilitated collection of membership dues and maintenance of the membership list.<sup>61</sup> In 2014, she starting publishing articles in *Hindsight* and was first listed as a contributing editor in 2015. She has supplied photographs for inclusion in *Hindsight*, and starting in 2016, worked to improve its layout and format. She has also become the online and print journal manager, working with IUScholarWorks staff to improve the functionality of the electronic edition of *Hindsight*.

A "Blast from the Past" OHS lecture was held in June of 2013 in San Diego, CA in association with the AOA meeting. Dr. Greenspoon again talked about the work done by himself, his father, and his current practice partners in providing contact lens services for the movies.<sup>61</sup> Greenspoon's presentation was co-sponsored with the Contact Lens and Cornea Section of the AOA. The speaker for the June 26, 2014 Blast from the Past in Philadelphia, PA was Alden N. Haffner on "Expanding the Scope of Practice in a Complex Health Care System."<sup>61</sup>

In 2015, after the OHS completed its transition into a program under Optometry Cares, the OHS Executive Board became the OHS Advisory Committee. Membership stood at 97 in June, 2015. The presenter for the Blast from the Past lecture at the OHS meeting on June 25, 2015, in Seattle was Lester Caplan, O.D., M.Ed., who spoke about his time as the first Optometric Consultant to the Indian Health Service in his lecture "The Early Years of Optometry in the Indian Health Service."<sup>62</sup>

In 2016, Ronald R. Ferrucci, O.D., became the president of OHS. The January, 2016 issue of *Hindsight*

announced that it would be the last one that members would receive in print form for their regular membership dues of \$35. Current issues would be available to members only at the *Hindsight* website at IUScholarWorks. Those members wishing to receive the print copy would pay an additional \$25 each year to defray the costs of printing and mailing, which in 2015 averaged about \$5 per copy.<sup>63</sup>

The July, 2017 issue of *Hindsight* became the first of OHS's quarterly publication in its 48 year history to be printed at the AOA headquarters in St. Louis, MO, all the previous years having been printed on the Indiana University campus. A visually pleasing lay-out was designed by Chris Martin, the AOA's Graphic Production Specialist. Copyediting, layout and design are now achieved through a collaboration between Martin, Hébert and the editor.

The October, 2017 issue of *Hindsight* was a theme issue celebrating the 50 year history of the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA).<sup>64</sup> It featured eight contributions from officers of the AOSA over its history, extending from Raymond I. Myers, O.D., AOSA co-founder and president in 1968-69, and Ronald Ferrucci, AOSA president in 1973-74, to Andy Mackner, AOSA president in 2017-18.

In 2017, OHS established liaisons for each of the members of the Association of Schools and College of Optometry (ASCO). In 2018, some new items were added to the OHS website. Organized into sections on oral history, optometry history bibliography, optometry's historic places, and repositories of optometric interest, they were designed to help those who were seeking resources for the study of optometry history.<sup>65</sup>

The June 21, 2018 OHS Blast from the Past speaker was ophthalmologist David Fleishman, M.D., who presented "Eyeglasses Through the Ages" to 25 attendees at Optometry's Meeting. His lecture was the first Blast from the Past to be COPE-approved for continuing education credit and "received excellent reviews."<sup>66</sup>

I note in closing that as I went through the pages of the OHS quarterly publication to compile this history of the OHS, I was reminded once again what a wealth of information it contains on the history of optometry. The 196 issues in the first 49 years of the *Newsletter* and *Hindsight* total over 3,300 pages, truly representing a compendium of information on optometry history. Over the years, *Hindsight* has featured articles by more than sixty different authors, and we are looking to include more authors in the coming years.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Optometric Historical Society and its work in the documentation, preservation, and recognition of optometric history in all its various forms, let us endeavor to bring it even greater success in the future.

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# THE YEAR THE OHS BEGAN: OPTOMETRY IN 1969

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doi: 10.14434/hindsight.v50i1.26586

## Abstract

The year 1969 was a time of tremendous change in American society as well as in the profession of optometry. In the broader culture, academics, students and community activists organized grassroots campaigns to change institutions from the bottom up. For optometry, this movement began with the January 1968 "LaGuardia Meeting," when a small group of optometrists planned a campaign to transform the profession by agitating for the American Optometric Association (AOA) to advocate for the expansion of the scope of practice. Ripe for change, the AOA membership began to respond. In June of 1968, despite early opposition, OHS founder Henry W Hofstetter, O.D. was the first full-time academic to serve as president of the AOA. Only one year after La Guardia in February of 1969, the AOA held the Airlie House Conference which set a new course for the profession. When the movement to change optometry gained traction, the keepers of the culture began to recognize the need to document the past. In December of 1969, Hofstetter and AOA Librarian Maria Dablemont founded the OHS to ensure the history of optometry would not be lost. This first-person reminiscence by Irving Bennett, O.D. recounts his recollections of the individuals and events instrumental in the formation of the OHS.

## Keywords

American Optometric Association; Optometric Historical Society; Henry Hofstetter; Airlie House; 1969; Reminiscence

HINDSIGHT: Journal of Optometry History



Figure 1: Students stage sit-in on the IU Bloomington Campus on April 30, 1969 to protest fee increases. IU News Bureau, "Owen Hall Rally Panorama," Indiana University Archives Exhibits, accessed January 13, 2019, <http://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/items/show/806.e>

## The Year was 1969

A lot of things were going on in the world, in our country and, of course, in the profession of optometry in 1969. What was the world like 50 years ago, the year when the Optometric Historical Society (OHS) became a reality?

The major musical story that year was the last public performance of the Beatles. The saddest story was the brutal killing of actress Sharon Tate by the Manson Family. On the international scene, the very first Concorde airplane test flight was conducted in France. As if to answer this, the Boeing Company debuted its 747 jumbo jet. For the sports world, my former patient Joe Namath led the New York Jets to victory over the Baltimore Colts in the first post-season game to be called the "Super Bowl." In August of 1969, more than a half million men, women and children gathered in a small upstate New York town near Woodstock, NY for four days of rain, sex, drugs and rock and roll. Protests were common in 1969, (Figure 1 and there were many protests against President Richard M. Nixon and his "Vietnamization" of Southeast Asia.

For the profession of optometry there were two major events in the year 1969: The Airlie House Conference and the founding of OHS, both of which took place under the direction of Henry W Hofstetter, O.D.

## The Legacy of Henry W Hofstetter

I got to know Dr. Hofstetter not too many years before the OHS was founded. At first, it was from a distance. Surprisingly to me and most everyone else, I was named editor of the *Journal of the American Optometric Association* in 1956, and that assignment took me to many meetings where optometry leaders were present. Earlier, Hofstetter had been the head of the Los Angeles College of Optometry (later known as the Southern California College of Optometry); he became better known after he was named director of the Division of Optometry at Indiana University. He had made national optometric history in being the influential force in forming the first National Board of Examiners in Optometry in 1951. I admired him for his direct and outspoken manner. There was never a doubt where Hank Hofstetter stood on the issues.



## Bradford Woods

My first direct one-on-one contact with Henry Hofstetter came in the early 1960s when he invited me to Bradford Woods Manor, an old mansion owned by Indiana University. The site was used for University-related retreats. Henry and his colleague Dr. Bob Tubesing had invited 20 optometrists to a conference that was to be completely informal, without organizational representation and entirely at the personal expense of participants. The Bradford Woods Conferences had no agenda; no subject was taboo and no record of who said what were kept. It was an event in which a participant was encouraged to “roll up their sleeves” and say what they want about topics related to optometry. There was no loss for expression at Bradford Woods. I was impressed. Bradford Woods was no doubt the inspiration and motivation for the “La Guardia Meeting” some years later.

## The American Optometric Association

The election of Henry Hofstetter to the American Optometric Association (AOA) Board of Trustees in 1962 was unusual. (Figure 2) As an academican, he was perceived by some to pose a threat. As a professional association, the AOA's largest constituency was optometrists in private practice. There was a concern that a full-time “academic” would not fully understand the needs and concerns of these practitioners. When Henry Hofstetter initially announced his candidacy for the Board of Trustees, he was not selected by the Nominating Committee. Bill Baldwin, O.D., also a faculty member at Indiana University, took up his campaign. I joined the chorus and we beat the odds and he was elected! It did not take long



Figure 2: Swearing in ceremony, Board of Trustees, 66th AOA Congress, 1963, Minneapolis, MN. Hofstetter is third from right. Original photograph by George Camballi. 2016.IMG.0851.2. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

for Hofstetter to show he was a team player, a deep thinker and a visionary. His ascent up the ladder of leadership was steady; soon his colleagues on the AOA Board recognized his inventive views, his logic and his sincere dedication to the future of optometry.

In 1973, at the 76th annual AOA Congress in San Francisco, Dr. Hofstetter was honored with optometry's prestigious Apollo Award. At that same meeting an Apollo was also granted to Lucie Baines Johnson Nugent, the daughter of the former U.S. President Lyndon Johnson. I was on the stage with Hank Hofstetter that year as the recipient of the National Optometrist of the Year award. (Figure 3)

## The Airlie House Conference

In 1968 Henry Hofstetter had become AOA's 47th President. No doubt about it—the most historic event that occurred during his administration was the Airlie House Conference. The Airlie House Conference was held in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Warrenton, Virginia in February 1969. It was a meeting thought by many optometrists as the most important conference ever held for the

profession.

The trigger for the Airlie House Conference was without a doubt the trailblazing, famous “LaGuardia Meeting.” Called by the late Norman Haffner, O.D. in 1968, LaGuardia was a meeting of optometric leaders who traveled to New York representing no one but themselves to discuss and evaluate changing optometry from a purely drugless profession to one that embraced a yet-to-be defined medical model. This off-the-record gathering debated not only if the profession needed to change its scope, but also how it could strategically legislate that change! The La Guardia attendees agreed to go back to their state affiliate associations and lobby for an official position on expanding the scope of optometry practice from organized optometry.

The Airlie House Conference was the AOA's response. At the time, many optometrists were unfamiliar with the Airlie House Conference since the meeting planners wanted and received little public exposure. Only 18 carefully selected optometrists participated in the three-day meeting that was sponsored by the AOA. The meeting set the goal for the profession we have today. It was perhaps this

recognition that the profession was on the brink of a transformation that would define the future that instigated an urgency to curate its past.

## **The Optometric Historical Society**

In 1969 the OHS was born. Finally, an organization dedicated to preserving optometry's glorious history was created. The OHS was the brainchild of Maria Dablemont, AOA's first full-time librarian, and Henry Hofstetter, who had just finished his term as president of the AOA. Hank and Maria could not have done this without each other. Together it was a slam dunk!

## **Reminisce-In (Blast from the Past)**

The OHS annual event, the "Reminisce-In" first took place in 1972 in St. Louis, MO. The event was named to recall the radical, consciousness raising "teach-ins" and "sit-ins" born of the Civil Rights Movement. Future events welcomed speakers from "outside" disciplines, including ophthalmology, and that policy continued yearly to the present. For example, in December 1989, the annual meeting included a program featuring ophthalmologist J. William Rosenthal, M.D. who had an extensive collection of eyewear. In 2018, the OHS event was a continuing education course on historic eyewear presented by David Fleishman, M.D. The title "Reminisce-In" was modernized to "The Blast from the Past" in October 2012 at the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) in Phoenix, AZ, where Dr. Morton Greenspoon presented on the history of costume contact lenses in the movie industry. Dr. Greenspoon went on to present this topic at Optometry's Meeting® the following June with great success.

The OHS' annual event was held more frequently in conjunction with the annual meetings of the AAO rather

than at the annual meeting of the AOA likely because Hofstetter felt that optometric history appealed more to academics, while the AOA reflected more the political side. At the time, an event modeled on a "teach-in" may have seemed to be a natural fit at a conference of academics. However, with the inauguration of the Blast from the Past as a continuing education course at Optometry's Meeting in 2018, this may be beginning to change. Perhaps in our current climate of change, younger optometrists are becoming aware once again of the importance of history when facing an uncertain and dynamic future.

## **Membership**

The organization's membership never was large, occasionally exceeding 100 people. Many members were (and are) institutions,

like optometry college libraries. Surprisingly, former AOA and AAO presidents, all leaders who lived and breathed optometry in their leadership years, rarely joined OHS! Now as then, it will take a small "Band of Brothers" to gather, collate and communicate history as it is being made to each new generation of optometrists.

I was one of the relatively few who joined the OHS at its founding. Why? Probably because Hank asked me to do so and I had great respect for him. Also, I have always felt that history is an important component of education. I was on my city's board of education for 18 years and, in that capacity, promoted history education in public schools. As editor of the Journal of the American Optometric Association, I published many articles on the history of the profession. It is with these individual efforts, like those



Figure 3: AOA Award Winners, AOA Congress, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 1973. Pictured from left), Irving Bennett, O.D., national optometrist of the year: Henry W. Hofstetter, O.D., Ph.D. and Mrs. Luci Baines Johnson Nugent, Apollo Awards. AOA President J.C. Tumblin (right) presented the awards. 2016.IMG.2005. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

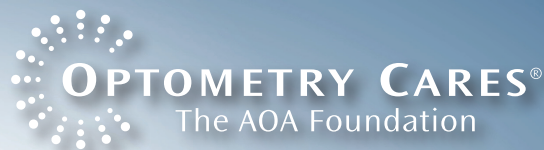


who publish articles in Hindsight, that optometry's history will be preserved.

### The Future of OHS

What does the future hold for OHS? In 2015, the OHS officially became a part of Optometry Cares – The AOA Foundation after a three-year trial period. The meetings are held in conjunction with Optometry's Meeting—the annual AOA Congress—and the Foundation staff includes a heritage services specialist to manage the activities of the OHS and the Archives & Museum of Optometry. The OHS has finally found a home. Henry Hofstetter and Maria Dablemont would be pleased.

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# A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE 50TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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doi: 10.14434/hindsight.v50i1.26588

## Abstract

*Personal reflections of Dr. Lester Caplan, a founding member of the Optometric Historical Society, on his involvement with the OHS during the course of his career as a private practitioner in Baltimore, MD, as an academic at the University of Alabama, and his leadership in public health optometry at the local, state and federal level.*

## Keywords

*American Optometric Association; Optometric Historical Society; Public Health; Indian Health Service; University of Alabama*

In March 2018, I received an email from the Editor of *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*, Dr. David Goss, informing me that the year 2019 will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS) and that a special issue of the journal was planned to celebrate the event. He said that he was hoping to include some comments or an article from me, as an original member of the OHS. I thanked David for the invitation and went on to say that I would love to write an article for this special *Hindsight* edition. Among the topics that were suggested to me for an article were personal involvement with the OHS and any experiences that influenced me and benefitted my optometric work.

*HINDSIGHT: Journal of Optometry History*

In 1969, the founding year of the Society, I was in private practice in Baltimore, MD. I recall joining the OHS when it first came on the scene, as I wanted to be a part of an organization that would not only provide our profession with the rich history of our past, but would continue to record, in one form or another (and how that form has changed over the intervening 50 years), the continuing growth of the profession well into the unforeseeable future. Little did I know or ever dream that I would possibly make a small contribution to that history. When David sent me the names of the original 34 founding members of the organization, only eight had a familiar ring: Hofstetter, Dablemont, E.B. Alexander, Irv Bennett, Kiekenapp, Knoll, Tannebaum and Paul. The only one I knew personally was Al Paul, O.D., a fellow Maryland optometrist. What really surprised me were the names not on the list, but which were very familiar to me, such as Henry Peters, O.D., A. Norman Haffner, O.D. and Irv Borish, O.D. I am sure they joined shortly thereafter as I recall their attendance and active participation in almost all of the early OHS meetings. Future noted optometric historians, such as David Goss, Arol Augsburger, Bob Newcomb, John Amos and many more had not yet graduated from optometry school or were in the very early stages of their optometric careers.

In 1968, as chair of the Maryland Optometric Association Committee on Public Health, I negotiated the inclusion of Optometric Services in the Title XIX (Medicaid) Program with Maryland's Department of Public Health. I believe that Maryland was

the first state to approve optometric services for Medicaid recipients. In January, 1969, the year of the founding of the OHS, I was appointed the optometric consultant to the director of the Indian Health Service. It was this event that launched my career in the national public health arena and directly influenced and dictated almost every pivotal moment of my long optometric career.

In 1974, the Public Health and Environmental Health Section of the American Academy of Optometry invited me to present a paper at their annual meeting about the U.S. Public Health Service and, in particular, the Indian Health Service. The paper was published in the June 1975 edition of the American Academy of Optometry's journal. That, along with my 1978 article in the February 1978 AOA's journal, "The Long Road to Eye Care" (a history of the first 10 years of the Indian Health Service Optometry Program) deepened my appreciation of the OHS, the national optometric organization that would preserve the past and record the future.

My career path changed dramatically, over the years that followed. In 1979 I entered academia, joining the faculty of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry. I frequently joked that my success in academia came about by my inability to hold a job, having started out as director of the Optometric Technician Program, then chief of Contact Lens Services, followed by assistant dean for Clinical Services (Director of Clinics) and director of the Externship Program. Each of these positions afforded me the opportunity to actively participate



in national common interest groups and in some cases, if a group did not exist, help it organize, develop and grow. So over my 36 years in academia, writing about the history of several of these organizations became my passion. In addition to a number of Indian Health Service Optometry updates, I lectured and wrote articles about the Vision Care Section of the American Public Health Association, the Association of Optometric Contact Lens Educators, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry's (ASCO) first Special Interest Group (SIG); the Clinic Directors SIG and its predecessor the Association of Clinic Directors/Administrators of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ACDASCO).

My only involvement with the OHS over the years was being a loyal lifetime member, a devoted attendee at almost all of its annual meetings and an avid reader of its outstanding *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*. All that changed in late 2013 when, Dr. John Amos, president of the OHS, asked me if I would be willing to be interviewed by him and Kirsten Pourroy Hébert, the Heritage Services Specialist for the Archives and Museum of Optometry. The Archives were starting an Oral History Project and Dr. Amos thought that my history as the Optometric Consultant to the Director of Indian Health Service for 16 years was a compelling story that should be heard and preserved in the archives. The interview was completed and Dr. Amos invited me to present that history at the Society's "Blast from the Past" lecture in conjunction with the 2015 AOA meeting. (Figure 1) In 2016, when I was honored with the Henry B. Peters Award by the Public Health and Environmental Health Section of the American Academy of Optometry, I lectured on my 66

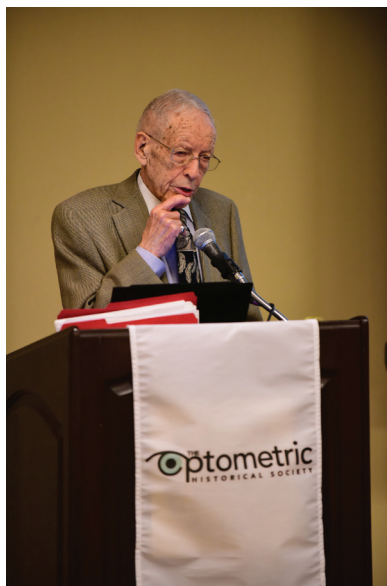


Figure 1: Dr. Lester Caplan speaking at *Blast from the Past*, June 2015, Seattle, WA. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

year history in optometry, relating significant periods in my professional life to the dramatic changes that were occurring in optometry during those same time periods. Shortly after that lecture I decided to expand on my PowerPoint presentation and write a detailed paper on the subject with the all-encompassing title, "Eye to I – 66 years of Optometry through the Eyes of a Clinician, Educator, Administrator, Consultant and Public Health Optometrist." Although I did not intend to submit it for publication, I did send it to Ms. Hébert for possible placement in the Archives and Museum of Optometry, as I felt that the paper had some historical value, presenting an overview of the profession from the last half of the twentieth century into a decade and a half of the twenty-first century. I was somewhat surprised, but naturally pleased, when I received an email from Dr. Goss, informing me that he had received the paper from Ms. Hébert and the reviewer of the article recommended it be published. The article was published in the January and July 2017 issues of *Hindsight*.

Being published in the Optometric Historical Society's journal was such an appropriate and nice way to bring an end to my optometric history writing career.

I am awed as I reflect on the 50 year history of the OHS the many brilliant and talented members who have added so much to the profession by their writings, teachings and most important of all, their lasting contributions that transitioned optometry from the vision care profession of the mid-twentieth century to the total eye and vision care profession of today. What would we have been without them: Borish, Haffner, Peters, Hopping, Gregg, Amos, Augsburger, Bennett, Runninger, Bailey, Morgan, Rosenbloom and so many other former and current members of the OHS whose impact on the history of our profession was equally notable. A very special "thank you" goes to Dr. Goss, who, as editor of *Hindsight* for half of the Society's 50 years, made sure that much of our profession's history would not be lost and that it would be saved for posterity. Happy 50th Anniversary to the OHS.

# THE ORIGINS OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY: A FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF OHS FOUNDERS AND CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

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doi: 10.14434/hindsight.v50i1.26587

## Abstract

*This article is a first-person account of the historical development of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS) which includes a description of the pivotal roles played by co-founders Maria Dablemont, AOA Librarian, and Henry W Hofstetter, O.D., Ph.D., and the conditions that contributed to the need for a historical society. The author was a student, colleague and contemporary of Dr. Hofstetter and Ms. Dablemont during his education and employment in St. Louis, MO*

## Keywords

*Optometric Historical Society; American Optometric Association; Maria Dablemont; Henry Hofstetter ILAMO; Indiana University; optometry education*

During the second half of the 1960s, I was a student at the Indiana University (IU) Division of Optometry and an employee of the American Optometric Association (AOA). At IU, my mentor was Henry W Hofstetter, O.D., Ph.D., director of the Division of Optometry. At the AOA, I was employed in the library during the summer of 1967 under the direction of Head Librarian, Maria Dablemont. (Figure 1) Thereafter, I remained with the AOA part-time until my graduation in 1970. I continued at the AOA full-time for two more years as Director of Career Guidance following

my graduation. My association with Hofstetter and Dablemont continued during the 1970's, before, during and after the formation of The Optometric Historical Society (OHS).

The OHS was founded in late 1969 by Henry Hofstetter and Maria Dablemont. Hofstetter's writings<sup>1</sup> show they conferred back and forth for several years about starting a historical society. After Hofstetter had completed his term as president of the AOA, he was free organizationally to originate the OHS.

Dablemont's library started with a collection that existed before she came to AOA in 1964, and she accumulated others. The core of the AOA collection consisted of optometric journals and books published between 1900-1950, AOA organizational records compiled by Ernest H. Kiekenapp, O.D., during his tenure as AOA Secretary (1922-1957), and the materials collected by AOA Public Information and Relations Directors Walter Kimball and Elmer Soles.<sup>2</sup> The acquisition of the E. LeRoy Ryer Collection in 1965 was the kind of private assemblage of papers, books, artifacts and memorabilia that helped to give the repository significance outside of the AOA and its constituents. Ryer, an early leader in both the American Academy of Optometry and the AOA, represented the interests of both the practicing and academic optometrist.

Dablemont's stewardship of the archival and museum materials gave her a global view of optometric history which not only incorporated her AOA perspective, but also was inspired by



*Figure 1: Maria Dablemont, 1978. 2017. FIC.3521. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry*

relationships with optometry schools and libraries, state associations, and the optical industry. She developed an almost religious passion for the history of individuals, events and organizations of optometry.<sup>1</sup> She recognized what others might consider optometry's "humble" beginnings as the foundation for what developed into a unique discipline that serves the visual needs of a diverse, technologically advanced society. Various motivations were important to a developing interest in optometric history specifically at that time:

- The changing role of national healthcare including within the military,
- More optometric manpower needed to advance national healthcare changes which included a primary-care optometry model,<sup>3</sup>



- An expanding scope of optometry,
- Attempts by ophthalmology and medicine to establish order in allied health professions and relegate optometry's role,
- With AOA's 75th year anniversary approaching, a more advanced stage of professional development for optometry was occurring and making its history more relevant, and
- Changing definitions of professions brought about by commercial advertising among professionals.

In the 1960's, the Medicare and Medicaid federal health insurance programs and health manpower shortages were defining the direction of nationalized eye care. Optometry's leaders became the resource that represented the majority of vision care providers. Delineating optometric care and its independent professional status to the government and public was partly influenced by its history. Organized medicine was proposing that ophthalmology absorb all aspects of vision care, and optometrists—like other health professionals, technology groups and public health organizers—be considered allied health care providers subservient to the medical physician.

Federal financing of health manpower and optometry schools emerged as the major elements of the government's plan to expand access to healthcare. All schools went through significant expansion in federal funding of facilities, clinics, libraries, and student scholarships and loans. The University of Alabama at Birmingham started a new optometry school as part of an existing health care educational system, and optometric education became co-

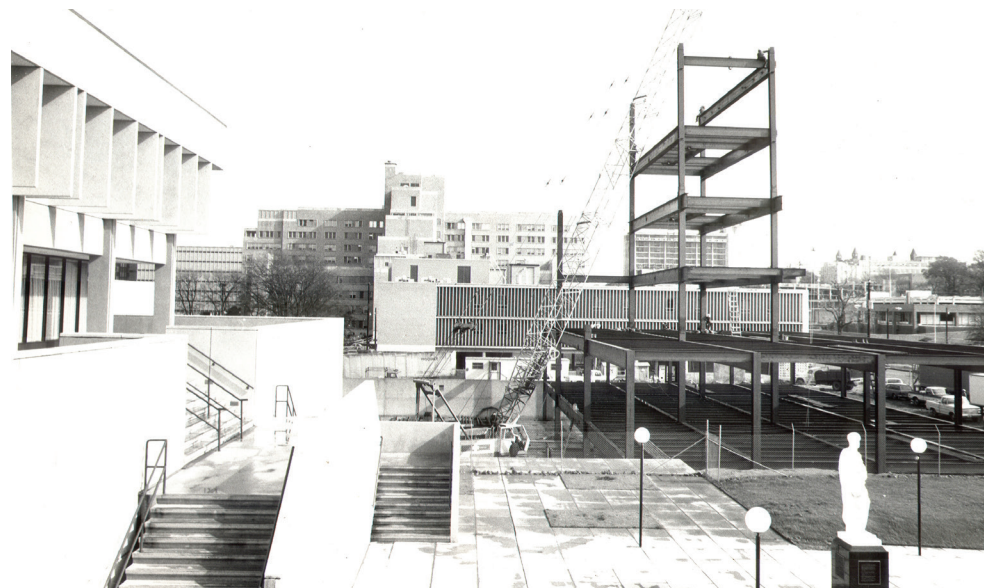


Figure 2: Construction of the UAB Optometry Building, 1974. Image courtesy of the UAB Archives, University of Alabama at Birmingham.

mingled with the basic medical courses of other disciplines. Most all optometry schools had substantial expansions, if not new buildings and clinics, during this time. (Figure 2)

Dablemont performed a number of co-ordinational functions with the optometry libraries, which had expanded significantly during this period. For example, optometric research published before 1960 was not well indexed in bibliographic databases such as *Index Medicus*—the predecessor to the National Library of Medicine's MEDLINE. This made research difficult not only in optometry history, but also in other areas crucial to vision care providers such as contact lenses, visual therapy, rehabilitation and clinical eye examination. At least two optometry school libraries, Southern College of Optometry and Illinois College of Optometry, started reference systems with Dablemont's support. Dablemont also worked with governmental sources and with optometric journals to satisfy criteria for inclusion. Eventually, this would lead to a federal grant award to the library in 1968 from the National Library of Medicine to

support expanding their collections and build the International Library, Archives & Museum of Optometry (ILAMO).

Expanding the scope of practice, specifically allowing optometrists to acquire privileges to prescribe and administer diagnostic and therapeutic drugs, became critical in developing a model of vision care that effectively positioned optometrists to serve as primary eye care providers. This model of eye care could then be compared with the other alternatives, such as one with the primary care physician doing much of the eye care—as in the United Kingdom's National Health Service at the time—or with optometrists as assistants to the ophthalmologist.

In the 50 years leading up to the founding of the OHS, optometry had shifted from a trade model to professional service model and optometry practices began to look more like medical offices, and less like storefronts. However, some "commercial practice" optometrists were slow to accept their new identity as healthcare providers and to relegate

more commercial functions which were, for many, their main source of income. Likewise, the “medical office” optometrists were ultrasensitive to references to their mercantile roots. Those who were promoting the study of optometry history and preservation of its heritage, like Hofstetter and Dablemont, were confronted with divergent views. These differing perspectives and the forces instigating professional change were considered by the OHS co-founders as justification for a greater historical awareness.

Hofstetter was a thoughtful and formal academic and more measured in his advocacy than Dablemont. He became her major advocate for the Optometric Historical Society and more broadly in the objectives that would lead to the future ILAMO. Starting in the mid-1960’s, Hofstetter was ascending the AOA leadership ladder, serving as a trustee and officer on the AOA board and, in 1968, becoming the first optometry school chief executive to be elected AOA President. Because of the prominence of optometry schools at the time, Hofstetter was a very effective communicator for the entire profession. Hofstetter was a constant user of Dablemont’s library, although paradoxically he considered history to be one of his weaker subjects in school. His book on optometry history *Optometry: Professional, Economic and Legal Aspects*,<sup>6</sup> established his reputation as a historian.

Dr. Hofstetter, who was known for his collegiality, called those who were squeamish about optometry’s beginnings in the spectacle trade “nincompoops” in his explanation to Dablemont about why her historical research was poorly received by some.<sup>4,5</sup> Maria was always intense in presenting optometric history in the most erudite way. Her concept

of a “profession” was of the “learned profession” (classically limited to medicine, law, theology or the doctorate in philosophy). Not only was this a difficult concept to relate to optometry, but professions starting with law were beginning to advertise to derive its patient or client population.

Because of their complementary abilities and perspectives, Dr. Hofstetter and Ms. Dablemont became an important duo in promoting interest in and the value of history of the profession to optometry leaders. This is manifest in their founding of the OHS. Of particular value was Hofstetter’s analysis of Dablemont in a memorial article.<sup>1</sup> Dablemont was a spirited romantic and intellectual born in Brazil who spoke often with a somewhat unintelligible accent, especially when she was excited. She was well educated in literature and in languages, often impatient, and used her global view to address problems. Maria’s intensity and dedication toward the OHS is best shown in her introduction in a letter to the charter members. “As the creation of AOA was a turning point in organized optometry, I have no doubts whatsoever, that the creation of the Optometric Historical Society will be equally important to the profession, if it is directed toward the fulfillment of the profession’s need for socio-historical studies, authorized documentation and availability to responsible researchers of historical resources.”<sup>7</sup>

At the 50 year anniversary of the Optometric Historical Society, we can look back at its beginnings to gain some insight to the OHS’ purpose, the forces contributing to its creation, and the roles of its founders Dablemont and Hofstetter. In the United States, the decade of the 1960’s was known

for its aggressive sociological change and upheavals. In no way was Henry Hofstetter or Maria Dablemont extreme in their undertakings, but they were nevertheless taking a progressive direction that resulted in a successful half century of the OHS. Over the course of the next 50 years, few can doubt the continuing progress of the OHS, when its cumulative history will be a touchstone for a maturing profession.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Kirsten Hébert from The Archives & Museum of Optometry, for her comments and editing of the manuscript.

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### FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Newsletter of the Optometric Historical Society for January, 1970 (volume 1, number 1) listed 33 OHS founding members who had paid their \$5 membership dues for 1970. The April, 1970 newsletter noted that one founding member had inadvertently been left off that list making a total of 34 founding members. Those 34 persons responded to a brief release to the optometric press dated October 31, 1969, announcing the formation of the OHS. The following is a list of those founding members:

J.J. Abrams, Indianapolis, IN  
E.B. Alexander, Duncan, OK  
Irving Bennett, Beaver Falls, PA  
Marvin R. Berman, Dover, DE  
Bruce J. Brewer, Bloomington, IN  
Lester Caplan, Baltimore, MD  
Maria Dablemont, St. Louis, MO  
H. Ward Ewalt, Pittsburgh, PA  
F.H. Gathercole, Fitchburg, MA  
J.R. Hale, Sunnyside, WA  
J.R. Hillard, Louisville, KY  
Arthur E. Hoare, Costa Mesa, CA  
Karl O. Hoefert, Casa Grande, AZ  
H. W Hofstetter, Bloomington, IN  
Earl J. Hunt, Johnstown, PA  
Ernest H. Kiekenapp, Minneapolis, MN  
Henry A. Knoll, Rochester, NY

Robert S. Lamborn, Tucson, AZ  
James P. Leeds, Indianapolis, IN  
John R. Levene, Bloomington, IN  
Robert W. McMaster, Southbridge, MA  
Maxwell Miller, Pottsville, PA  
Raymond Myers, Bloomington, IN  
S.M. Oppenheimer, Memphis, TN  
Albert L. Paul, Laurel, MD  
H.H. Rosser, York, PA  
E. LeRoy Ryer, Hawthorne, NY  
Sol Tannebaum, Park Forest, IL  
M.D. Torrence, Hutchinson, KS  
Bernard Watkins, Branchville, NJ  
J.M. Weber, Trenton, NJ  
Grace Weiner, Burbank, CA  
Minerva H. Weinstein, Bronx, NY  
Lester D. Welch, Fremont, CA

### PRESIDENTS OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The following fifteen persons have served as presidents of the Optometric Historical Society over its fifty year history. The years of their OHS presidencies are given in parentheses. This is a distinguished group of leading academicians and practitioners, including former optometry school deans, American Optometric Association presidents and award winners, American Academy of Optometry presidents and award winners, a former American Optometric Student Association president, and Fellows of the American Academy of Optometry. All have been optometrists except for Henry A. Knoll who held a Ph.D. degree in physiological optics and had a close relationship with optometry throughout his career. Nine of the fourteen optometrists in the group held M.S. or doctoral degrees in addition to their optometry degrees.

Henry Hofstetter (1970-1974)  
John R. Levene (1975-1976)  
Henry A. Knoll (1977-1979)  
James P. Leeds (1980-1984)  
Jerome J. Abrams (1985-1988)  
T. David Williams (1989-1990)  
Meredith W. Morgan (1991-1995)  
Charles Haine (1996)  
Walter W. Chase (1997-2000)

Douglas K. Penisten (2001-2004)  
Jay M. Enoch (2005)  
Charles Haine (2005-2006)  
Melvin Wolfberg (2007-2008)  
Irving Bennett (2009-2012)  
John F. Amos (2013-2015)  
Ronald R. Ferrucci (2016-2018)

## OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARD RECIPIENTS

In the 1980s, the Optometric Historical Society presented recognition certificates to persons who had made significant contributions to awareness of optometry's heritage. In the late 1980s, the name of the award was changed to the Henry W Hofstetter Recognition Award. The eleven persons who received recognition certificates from 1982 to 1985, and the two persons who received the Hofstetter award are as follows:

### OHS Recognition Certificates

1982 William G. Austin, OD  
1983 Martin Topaz  
1983 Grace Weiner  
1984 Maurice Cox  
1984 Israel Dvorine, OD  
1984 Robert Graham, OD  
1984 James R. Gregg, OD  
1984 John R. Levene, DPhil  
1985 Jacob Staiman, OD  
1985 James F. Dickson, OD  
1985 Irving Bennett, OD

### Henry W Hofstetter Recognition Award

1987 Maria Dablemont  
1989 E.J. Fisher, OD



## LIST OF MEETINGS OF THE OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND SPEAKERS

For many years, the OHS held nearly annual meetings called “Reminisce-ins.” In 2012, it was decided to refer to these presentations as a “Blast from the Past.” These meetings have been held in conjunction with the annual meetings of the American Optometric Association (AOA) or the American Academy of Optometry (AAO). The following is a list of those meetings, their locations, the annual meeting during which they occurred (AOA or AAO), the attendance where known, and the speakers. At some meetings, there was an open discussion in which attendees shared their historical perspectives and experiences, as opposed to one or more scheduled speakers. Attendance was often limited by competition with concurrent lectures or meetings.

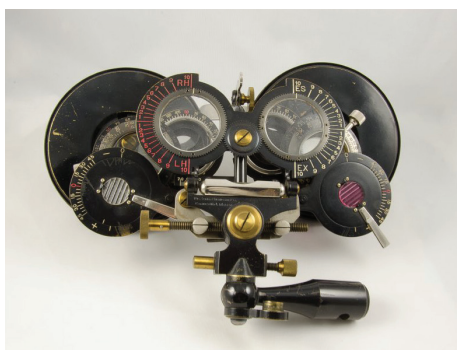
Date	Location	During	Attendance	Speaker(s)
June 20, 1972	St. Louis	AOA	30	Open discussion
June 19, 1974	Washington, DC	AOA	About 25	Open discussion
July 5, 1977	Toronto	AOA	About 40	Henry Hofstetter, OD, PhD; Henry Knoll, PhD; Maria Dablemont
Dec. 11, 1977	Birmingham, AL	AAO	31	Open discussion
Dec. 9, 1978	Boston	AAO	?	Henry Knoll, PhD
Dec. 8, 1979	Fullerton, CA	AAO	24	Open discussion
Dec., 1980	Chicago	AAO	25	Henry Knoll, PhD; Maria Dablemont; James Leeds, OD
Dec., 1981	Orlando	AAO	At least 31	James Leeds, OD
Dec. 11, 1982	Philadelphia	AAO	16	Maria Dablemont; Jacob Staiman, OD; Douglas Penisten, OD
Dec. 8, 1984	St. Louis	AAO	45	Christopher Hoolihan, MLS; William Austin, OD
Dec. 7, 1985	Atlanta	AAO	35	Douglas Penisten, OD
Dec. 13, 1986	Toronto	AAO	Over 20	E.J. Fisher, OD
Dec. 5, 1987	Denver	AAO	At least 30	Ron Fair, OD
Dec. 10, 1988	Columbus, OH	AAO	37	Gregory Good, OD; James Leeds, OD
Dec. 9, 1989	New Orleans	AAO	40	J. William Rosenthal, MD
Dec. 8, 1990	Nashville, TN	AAO	?	Douglas Penisten, OD, PhD
Dec. 14, 1991	Anaheim, CA	AAO	?	Henry B. Peters, OD
Dec. 9, 1995	New Orleans	AAO	22	J. William Rosenthal, MD
Dec. 13, 1997	San Antonio, TX	AAO	?	Jerry Christensen, OD, PhD
Dec. 12, 1998	San Francisco	AAO	?	Joe Bruneni
Dec. 10, 1999	Seattle	AAO	?	Jay Enoch, OD, PhD
Dec. 8, 2000	Orlando, FL	AAO	?	Arol Augsburg, OD, PhD
Dec. 7, 2001	Philadelphia	AAO	?	Jay Enoch, OD, PhD
Dec. 14, 2002	San Diego, CA	AAO	?	Walter Chase, OD, MS
Dec. 6, 2003	Dallas, TX	AAO	?	Gregory Stephens, OD, PhD
Dec. 11, 2004	Tampa, FL	AAO	?	Jay Enoch, OD, PhD
Dec. 10, 2005	San Diego, CA	AAO	?	Robert M. Boynton, PhD
Nov., 2009	Orlando, FL	AAO	?	
Nov. 19, 2010	San Francisco	AAO	?	Alden N. Haffner, OD, PhD
Oct. 14, 2011	Boston	AAO	11	Alden N. Haffner, OD, PhD; Howard Backman, OD
June 28, 2012	Chicago	AOA	?	Open discussion
Oct., 2012	Phoenix	AAO	Over 50	Morton Greenspoon, OD
June, 2013	San Diego	AOA	?	Morton Greenspoon, OD
June 26, 2014	Philadelphia	AOA	?	Alden N. Haffner, OD, PhD
June 25, 2015	Seattle	AOA	?	Lester Caplan, OD, MEd
June 29-July 1, 2016	Boston	AOA	Not tabulated	Ronald Ferrucci, OD
June 22, 2017	Washington, D.C.	AOA	NA	David Ferris, OD (cancelled)
June 21, 2018	Denver, CO	AOA	25	David Fleishman, MD

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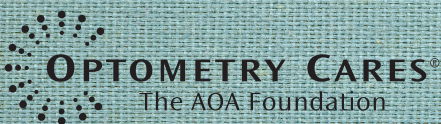
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