

FROM THE EDITOR: WHY OPTOMETRY HISTORY?

The primary significance of studying and reading about optometry history may differ from one person to another. It may help guide present-day decisions, it may teach about ethics and perennial problems, it may aid in developing one's professional self-image, it may help to enhance pride in the profession, it may communicate to the public the important contributions of optometry to society, it may help to honor individuals whose efforts have made optometry what it is today, or it may just be fun and interesting.

While all of the above hold some significance for me, perhaps most important may be the example set by so many historical figures in optometry. I have been fortunate to have many good optometric role models among my instructors, mentors, and colleagues, such as Carol Pratt, O.D., Donovan Crouch, O.D., Henry Hofstetter, O.D. and Ted Grosvenor, O.D., to mention just a few. But the study of optometry history has also given me additional role models from optometrists I have only read about, persons such as Dr. E. Leroy Ryer, Dr. Elmer Hotaling, Dr. Frederic Woll, and Dr. John P. Davey. Their dedication and accomplishments are an inspiration.

This is the third themed issue of *Hindsight* in which we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Optometric Historical Society. In the January and April issues, we presented articles on the history and founding of the OHS, and articles honoring its co-founders Maria Dablemont and Henry Hofstetter. In this issue we feature essays relating to the significance of optometry history as a field of study and pertaining to the mission and work of the Optometric

Historical Society and other entities preserving and celebrating optometry history.

Monroe Hirsch, O.D. and Ralph Wick, O.D. in their 1968 book *The Optometric Profession*, divided the history of optometry into two eras: (1) early optometry, beginning with the invention of spectacles in the late thirteenth century, and (2) modern optometry, beginning in about 1890. Whether we look at early optometry, modern optometry, or even 21st-century optometry, we can find lessons to be learned, optometrists to admire and emulate, and interesting stories to enjoy. As members of the now 50 year old Optometric Historical Society, let us redouble our efforts to investigate, preserve, record, and disseminate the fascinating history of our noble profession.

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