

## FROM THE EDITOR

**David A. Goss, O.D., PhD**

Indiana University School of Optometry

[dgoss@indiana.edu](mailto:dgoss@indiana.edu)

doi 10.14434/hindsight.v52i4.34343

This issue of Hindsight features two articles by contributing editor John Amos. The first of these documents the history of the passage of legislation for the use of diagnostic drugs by optometrists in Alabama. His article illustrates the dogged persistence and attention to detail that were required to secure passage of such legislation. The second article discusses the adoption of the term optometrist. It also includes a brief look at the life and achievements of John C. Eberhardt who championed the use of the term.

Writing in 1968, Hirsch and Wick<sup>1</sup> observed that in the evolution of optometry, one can discern an early optometry period from about 1300 to about 1900, and a modern optometry period starting around the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. The early optometry period started with the invention of spectacles, and saw slow improvements in lens making, the gradual introduction of vision testing procedures, and the beginnings of the concepts of providing a service. The changes around the turn of the twentieth century were much more rapid, including, for example, the start of optometry schools, passage of licensure laws, and formation of professional organizations. Such early twentieth changes helped to more clearly define optometry and prompt a transition from trade to profession.

The articles in this issue by Dr. Amos highlight two important developments in optometry, and he provides historical context. The adoption of the term optometrist helped in establishing a more uniform identity, and was one of the early twentieth century changes that helped to more clearly define optometry. A later twentieth century transition was the departure from a drugless profession. Dr. Amos discusses national events leading up to the decision to pursue legislation authorizing pharmaceutical use and then details the work in Alabama for passage of legislation for the use of diagnostic pharmaceutical agents. One could wonder if Hirsch and Wick were writing today, whether they would suggest an additional period of optometry history, in which pharmaceutical use had become an integral part of optometric services.

### Reference

1. Hirsch MJ, Wick RE. The Optometric Profession. Philadelphia: Chilton, 1968:2-3.



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