

NEWSLETTER
OF THE
OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(7000 Chippewa Street, Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. 63119)

Volume 4

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Number 1

Election report:

In October the O.H.S. members re-elected Sol Tannebaum, O.D., to the Executive Board for the term to expire December 31, 1977.

John R. Levene (1973), Henry W. Hofstetter (1974), Maria Dablemont (1975), and James R. Gregg (1976) are the other continuing Executive Board members.

In December the Executive Board re-elected the following to serve as officers for 1973:

President: H. W. Hofstetter
Vice President: John R. Levene
Secretary-Treasurer: Maria Dablemont

Comments from the President:

In December I sent a memorandum out to the members of the Executive Board recommending that someone else be elected to the Presidency, and, to make it easier to comply, I offered to continue as Editor. My reason was simply that it is important that the Society not acquire the appearance of a one-man show.

The other members of the Executive Board are not in disagreement with me on this point, but the opinion was expressed that next year would be more appropriate, thus to give the recently appointed Committee on Nominations and Elections more time to seek out a successor.

Under these circumstances I hereby re-appoint for the year 1973 the members of the various committees announced in the previous issue of the Newsletter.

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Stereoscope à charnière:

O.H.S. member M. J. Revell has an article entitled "The history of the synoptophores" in the July 8, 1972, issue of The Ophthalmic Optician, Vol. 12, No. 14, pp. 640-646. Nineteen figures add greatly to the reader's interest, as does the author's easy style of writing. The first figure shows three early examples of Sir Charles Wheatstone's reflecting stereoscope. E. Javal is given credit for redesigning it with hinges (à charnière) so it could be adapted for various angles of squint.

The developmental sequence of instruments prompts at least a wisp of amusement. The earliest, 1838, model by Wheatstone consisted merely of two plain mirrors joined at right angles. The subsequent century saw a variety of complex and elaborate designs. The most recent design, in 1956, was "a single vertical mirror placed equidistant from the two adjacent walls of the consulting room . . . which were used as the target carriers".

Theoretical history:

In many disciplines the adjective "theoretical" is used to identify the branch of a science or discipline which deals with the laws, theory, and explanation of phenomena. Familiar examples include "theoretical physics", "theoretical astronomy", and "theoretical chemistry". Now, I have never heard anyone refer to "theoretical history", but it makes sense to me that it should be that aspect of the discipline of history which concerns itself primarily with theory and explanation, as distinct from descriptive and documentary accounts of historical incidents and developments.

An example of good and sophisticated theoretical history, in my

opinion, is Ralph E. Wick's "The evolution of a profession" in the July 1972 issue of the Journal of the American Optometric Association, Vol. 43, No. 7, pp. 726-738.

History of visual science in Russia:

"PROBLEMS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL OPTICS, Volume 15, Physiology of Vision Under Normal and Extremal conditions" is the title of a 1971 National Aeronautics and Space Administration publication, 225 pages, (NASA TT F-650) for sale by the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22151 @ \$3.00. It is a translation of a similarly titled 1969 publication of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences edited by V. G. Samsonova et al. The volume includes all of the 36 previously unpublished papers read at the 5th Conference on Physiological Optics held in October 1966 in Moscow.

The Inaugural Address to the Conference by Editor Samsonova reviews the history of visual science in the Soviet Union. He reports that "only a few distinguished scientists worked in the field of physiological optics" in pre-revolutionary Russia, naming three: M. I. Averbakh, P. P. Lazarev, and L. A. Orbeli. Centers of development of physiological optics were founded soon after the October Revolution, the first one in Leningrad in the State Optical Institute in 1923 "where the optics of the eye, its correction, and the problem of increasing the working efficiency of the visual system were studied". Several new laboratories were founded in the prewar period and the publication of a physiological optics journal was begun. In 1943 the Committee for Physiological Optics of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. was organized, and "every year seven or eight scientific meetings were held . . ." In 1946 an All-Union Conference was organized.

Joseph Le Conte's SIGHT:

Almost a hundred years ago Joseph Le Conte, Professor of Geology and Natural History at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote a 275 page book entitled "SIGHT: An Exposition of the Principles of Monocular and Binocular Vision", D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1881. Just recently I perused the book to determine once again whether it would now seem as well written as when I first saw it about 35 years ago. Indeed it is a superbly written tome, one that I could heartily recommend for reprinting today even as a paperback for the many who enjoy reading sophisticated but understandable science publications.

What seems to me a bit strange is that Le Conte is mentioned so rarely in the introductory paragraphs of visual science articles dealing with the same topics that he covered, and most elegantly. Many a current scientific article begins with, "According to Helmholtz . . .", "In 1863 Donders pointed out . . .", etc., but no one ever seems to give Le Conte a nod of recognition.

Why did Professor Le Conte write this book? He explained in his preface, "In writing this treatise I have tried to make a book that would be intelligible and interesting to the thoughtful general reader, and at

the same time profitable to even the most advanced specialist in this department. I find justification for the attempt in the fact that there is not, to my knowledge, any work covering the same ground in the English language."

He also commented, "As a means of scientific culture, the study of vision seems to me almost exceptional."

Who was Le Conte?

Joseph Le Conte, 1823-1901, is listed in WHO WAS WHO IN AMERICA and in WORLD WHO'S WHO IN SCIENCE as a geologist and natural scientist. He was awarded the LL.D. degree by the University of Georgia in 1879, and by Princeton in 1896. During the Civil War he served the Confederacy as chemist of the medical laboratory and of nitre and mining operations. From 1869 to 1896 he was professor of geology at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to the book on SIGHT his major publications included a textbook entitled ELEMENTS OF GEOLOGY, and a course of Sunday lectures entitled RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

For many years the optometry school at Berkeley was housed in Le Conte Hall. It seems probable that it was Joseph Le Conte in whose honor the building was named.

Dyslexia history:

A rather good and succinct historical review of concepts, definitions, and descriptions of dyslexia is included in a to-be-continued article entitled, "The problems of the dyslexia child" by M. V. Elstein in the June 16, 1972, issue of The Optician (London), Vol. 163, No. 4234, pp. 10-13.

History of the N.J.O.A.:

Enthusiastic O.H.S. member Jack M. Weber, O.D. is Chairman of the New Jersey Optometric Association Committee on History. He informs us that his committee is embarking on a five-year project which will chronicle the history of his association, "- something like a smaller version of Jim Gregg's history of AOA."

Jack requests all the help he can get. In particular he needs the loan of "any documents, anecdotes or other memorabilia which . . . could . . . help in the preparation of my manuscript." He is particularly interested in the period between 1900 and 1940. His address is 1420 Greenwood Avenue, Newton, New Jersey, 08609.

Dear Abbe!

Jena Review, a bimonthly publication with editorial headquarters in Jena, DDR (East Germany), is issued simultaneously in two English language editions so subtly different as to be differentiable only in a side-by-side page-by-page comparison. Both editions are printed in the German

Democratic Republic under the same government "license No. 1447" and "Index-No. 32104". For several years the Indiana University Optometry Library has been receiving the two editions through separate channels, one by subscription and the other as a gift, but the difference was not detected until the last 1971 issues arrived early in 1972. One of the 1971 editions has nos. 5 and 6 as separate issues, but the other has nos. 5-6 in one issue with its outside cover pictures identical to those of no. 6 in the former. The pagination in the former totals 371 and for the latter only 335. The combined nos. 5-6 issue in the latter edition include all of the articles in no. 6 of the former, but only a few from no. 5. Excluded are a group of 13 separately authored articles relating to historical developments leading to the "125th Anniversary of CARL ZEISS JENA". The outside front cover and the inside and outside back cover of no. 5 are also excluded from the combined issue. The year's issues prior to nos. 5 and 5-6 in the two editions have identical pagination.

The other differences between the two editions all relate to the use of the word ZEISS. The terms "VEB Carl Zeiss JENA" and minor variations are replaced by "aus JENA", "JENA Optical Works", "JEAN-made", etc. in the latter edition wherever the word ZEISS would otherwise appear in article titles, on the cover page, or in the text. The single exception is in very small print in the publisher's statement where the editor's address is listed at "Carl-Zeiss-Str. 1", the name of the street!

The publisher's statement in the former edition shows distribution directly from the East Berlin publisher, while the statement in the latter lists two distribution agencies in the U.S.A., one of which, interestingly, is "ZENA Company".

Both editions are mailed directly from the same address.

It would appear that the two editions are intended for two different groups of English-language readers, the sans-Zeiss edition for the U.S.A. and the Zeiss-identified edition for English-language readers elsewhere.

The explanation? The restriction in the use of the word ZEISS in the U.S.A. distribution is obviously due to a judicial interpretation in a U.S. District Court on November 7, 1968 (293 Federal Supplement, 892), and a decision on March 12, 1969 (298 Federal Supplement, 1309-1318) followed by a U.S. Court of Appeals action argued May 5, 1970 and decided November 2, 1970 (433 F.2d Federal Reporter, 686-708).

According to Alona E. Evans, "Judicial Decisions: Carl Zeiss Stiftung v. V.E.B. Carl Zeiss, Jena", American Journal of International Law, Vol. 63, no. 3, July 1969, pp. 636-639, "An action for trademark infringement was brought by Carl Zeiss Stiftung, a foundation located in the Federal Republic of Germany, and Zeiss Ikon, A.G., a related West German corporation, against V.E.B. Carl Zeiss, Jena, a corporation located in the German Democratic Republic, and related firms. Both principals claimed to be legally identical with, and the successors to, the Abbe Foundation of Jena,

which had had exclusive use of the disputed Zeiss trademarks and trade names until 1949, when the Soviet Military Administration in East Germany expropriated the commercial facilities and assets of the Foundation, an act which purported to extend to all Zeiss trademarks wherever located. After the expropriation, the official representatives of the original foundation transferred their organization to West Germany and carried on their business in the name of Carl Zeiss Stiftung. In 1951, the foundation known as V.E.B. Carl Zeiss, Jena, was established in East Germany and undertook to market photographic equipment using trademarks similar to or identical with those controlled by Carl Zeiss Stiftung. Judge Mansfield held that Carl Zeiss Stiftung was legally identical with and the successor to the foundation which had been expropriated in East Germany, that this foundation and related corporations were entitled to sole and exclusive use of the trademarks and trade names in dispute in the United States, and V.E.B. Carl Zeiss, Jena, had infringed upon their trademarks and trade names and had competed unfairly with the plaintiffs in the United States."

Incidentally, the East German Jena Review lists alternate titles in several languages, suggesting that separate editions are published in German, Russian, French, and Spanish also. The West German firm, in Oberkochen, West Germany, (about 40 miles east of Stuttgart), publishes a periodical of roughly similar format, style, and size entitled ZEISS INFORMATION in several languages, namely, English, German, French, Spanish and Italian. Recognition of the "125th Anniversary" is boldly noted on the front covers of the 1971 publications of both the East and West German "ZEISS" firms.

Hail Hale!

O.H.S. member Jack R. Hale, O.D., has put both the Neill and Pacheco optometric dynasties in the shade in a letter dated August 16 in which he reports himself as the grandson of optometrist Clarence Young who started a 48 year practice career in 1921. His grandfather, an aunt, three uncles, a first cousin, and he himself have accumulated 248 years of optometric practice! The details of this family were reported by Jack Hale in the March 15, 1966, issue of the Optical Journal and Review of Optometry, Vol. 103, No. 6, pp. 44-49, under the title "231 Years in Optometry -- The Story of a Family." Seventeen years were added to their score since the article was published, and, with two living members, a quarter of a millennium should be reached in 1974.

The family contributions included ownership and operation of the former Washington School of Optometry in Spokane.

As if to ward off further challengers, Jack added the following P.S. "This is only close relatives. My son has indicated an interest in Optometry":

Bifocal history:

"Some pages of bifocal history" by A. G. Bennett in the July 21, 1972, issue of The Optician (London), Vol. 164, No. 4239, pp. 6-11, covers some previously unpublished documentation of bifocal design, invention, and

development in the early part of this century. The contributions and roles of Messrs. E. L. Parks, J. H. Sutcliffe, A. H. Emerson, Malcolm Bentzon, Harry Newbold, F. B. Watson, Edward Culver, Stanley Emerson, and Henry A. Courmettes are interestingly described.

Franklin and bifocals:

Our vice-president John R. Levene has broken out in print again, as he does frequently, with an article entitled "Benjamin Franklin, F.R.S., Sir Joshua Reynolds, F.R.S., P.R.A., Benjamin West, P.R.A., and the Invention of Bifocals" in Notes & Records of the Royal Society of London, Vol. 27, No. 1, August 1972, pp. 141-163. He has uncovered pieces of evidence that make the sole attribution of the invention of bifocals to Franklin questionable.

The abbreviations F.R.S. and P.R.A. in the title, incidentally, stand for Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Royal Academy.

Apotropaic eye symbols:

What may well be the most unusual eye-related hobby of all is the collecting of amuletic and talismanic eye symbols by Riichi Iwasaki, an ophthalmic optician whose address is Ginza New Central Bldg., 9-14, 5-Chome, Ginza, Tokyo, Japan. His collection, which he showed me proudly, includes one apotropaion dating back to 500-600 B.C., one to 700 B.C., and one to 1200 B.C., with dates officially certified. Several are undated but also believed to be comparably old. In addition he has accumulated an album of personally photographed symbols obtained in visits to historical museums, all in full color.

His four most prized possessions are beautifully illustrated in an ophthalmic promotional brochure of the Japanese Optical Consultants Association, a small association of solo optometric practitioners of which Mr. Iwasaki is Chairman. The folding brochure is in Japanese.

A fascinating discussion of the function of apotropaic eye symbols is provided in THE EVIL EYE by Edward S. Gifford, Jr., M.D., The Macmillan Company, New York, 1958.

Such representations of the eye, variously carved, painted, or sculptured on ornaments, murals, mummy cases, etc. as a protection against evil magic influence are typically grotesque, often impressionistic, and frequently hideous in design. The most frequent appearance of one such divine and magic eye in modern times is that which appears at the top of the thirteen-step pyramid on the back of any U.S. one-dollar bill.

Buddha teaching:

"One can get fire if he holds a lense between the sun and some combustible, but where does the fire come from? The lense is an enormous distance from the sun; apparently there is no connection, but the fire

certainly appears upon the combustible."

So reads a passage from THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA published by BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI, Tokyo, Japan, 16th edition, 1972, p. 68, to illustrate by analogy how "...the light of Buddha's Wisdom is concentrated upon the human mind..."

A passage on the next page includes a parable of a man who "looked into what he thought was the polished side of a mirror and not seeing his face became insane."

Another passage, p. 71, includes the classic story of the several blind men and their respective perceptions of an elephant.

A mirror is mentioned again on page 73, and on page 109 is the admonition, "But it would be foolish for a man to put out his eyes just because he is fearful of being tempted by beautiful forms."

Buddha Gautama, later known by his followers as Sakyamuni, was born not later than 563 B.C.

Who was Desmond?

A leading Japanese optometrist, Fumio Morrey, tells me that he and some of his colleagues obtained much of their early optometric education from a Dr. Desmond, an American optometrist who was in Japan in about 1930 under the auspices of an American optical firm. Out of curiosity I checked "Desmond" in a series of old Blue Books of Optometrists. The name L. D. Desmond first appears in the 1924 issue listed in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, without a street address, thus suggesting that he might have been a recent optometry graduate not yet in practice. The next issue, 1926, showed the same listing, still with no address, but also a D. Desmond listed in Shanghai, China, at 7 Lovelane. The 1928 and 1930 issues no longer showed "L. D." in New Brunswick, but continued to list D. Desmond at the 7 Lovelane address in Shanghai.

So ends another short optometric saga.

Optical genealogy:

202 years ago, in 1750, a little shop opened up for miscellaneous retail business at 24-12, 3 Chome Nishiki Nakaku, in Nagoya, Japan. In about 1872 the store included spectacles among its wares. The same shop still operates as a very modern retail opticianry establishment in the same location. It is called Tamamizuya Optician Co., Ltd., and is managed by its president and owner, Mr. Shozaburo Tsuda, a refracting optician, a prominent local citizen and Rotarian. Mr. Tsuda is the seventh generation in the firm, and his son, in association with him, is the eighth. Another son is presently studying optometry at the Southern California College of Optometry, in Los Angeles.

THE SPECTACLES, by POE:

The short story "The Spectacles" by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) originally appeared in the Dollar Newspaper on March 27, 1844. The tale again appeared in the Broadway Journal sometime between October 15 and December 3, 1845, during which time Poe was the journal's editor and publisher. Though the tale may be found now in any of several variously published collections of Poe's complete works, it seems not to have been a favorite of critics, nor of compilers of selected writings of Poe. For example, Arthur Hobson Quinn who wrote an extensive biography of Poe and a preface for one of the complete collections said merely, " 'The Spectacles' ... is one of the most absurd of the grotesques. The story of Mr. Talbot (sic! The story is about a Mr. Simpson), who is so near-sighted that he falls in love with his great-great-grandmother, defies criticism." Another critic, Edward Shanks, commented, "I have an ineradicable suspicion that he (Poe) thought rather highly of the nauseating buffoneries of such a tale as 'The Spectacles.' "

I read the story. I am afraid I agree with Poe rather than with his critics. It is thoroughly enjoyable. To arouse your curiosity, let me quote the last sentence of the tale: "In conclusion: I am done forever with the billet doux and am never to be met without SPECTACLES."

How did I become aware of this very literary testimonial to spectacles? I happened to see the title, "Edgar Allan Poe und 'Die Augengläser' " in the September 15, 1972, issue of Süddeutsche Optikerzeitung, Vol. 27, No. 9, pp. 666-672, in which Dr. Emil-Heinz Schmitz referred to one of his student experiences at the Jena school when a professor chided him for being unaware of this very pertinent contribution of Poe's. In due time he tracked down the story and retold most of it, in German, in the article cited.

History of spectacles:

Appearing several times a year in Süddeutsche Optikerzeitung is a series entitled "Aus der Geschichte des Brillenglases" by Dr. Emil-Heinz Schmitz. The 38th installment of this series appeared in Vol. 27, No. 9, September 15, 1972, pp. 684 ff. Unfortunately the collection of this periodical convenient to me is quite incomplete, so I have not ascertained when the series started, but I did determine that the 23rd installment appeared early in 1969. I also note that in an advertisement in the current issue there is listed a book of 144 pages and 101 illustrations by E.-H. Schmitz entitled "Die Sehhilfe im Wandel der Jahrhunderte" for sale by the abovementioned journal at 7 Stuttgart, Postfach 669, West Germany, at D.M. 9.50 (approximately \$3). I have requested acquisition of a copy by the Indiana Univeristy library and I shall report more about it and the author when it arrives.

E. LeRoy Ryer, O.D. (1880-1972)

To me the name of Dr. Ryer, like his Fifth Avenue address, had long symbolized a sort of socio-professional court into which one of my humble

standing might never be invited. So, when in June 1948 I received a very informally written note addressing littl' ol' me as "Dr. Hofstetter" and signed simply "E. LeRoy Ryer", asking for my opinion on a clinical procedure, I suddenly gained the revelation that he was not just famous but also a very genuine and human person.

Unfortunately for me, my contacts with Dr. Ryer were limited almost entirely to occasional correspondence, invariably on a professional or technical matter, but always very informal, yet never involving our personalities, family matters, friends, or hobbies. So, upon the death of this great optometric patriarch, pioneer, leader, and mentor I came to the shocking realization that I know much about the man but not really the man himself.

I do know that within hours of his death he was still contributing to his profession, still trying to put together and submit a few more thoughts to help restructure the heritage of our profession, the spirit of which he was the embodiment.

Corporal Engelmann, O.D.:

Dr. Otto R. Engelmann, a Chicago optometrist known to almost every other optometrist, paid us a visit at Indiana University on Nov. 9 to give a talk on "Fifty Years of Optometric Progress". Born in Germany, he reports being the first to serve as an optometrist in the U.S. Army, in World War I. Knowing my interest, he presented me with his file copy of an eight-page single-spaced typewritten letter which he wrote to the Hon. Paul McNutt, Director, Manpower Division, Washington, D.C., on January 14, 1943. This masterpiece document, reports Dr. Engelmann, brought about the placement of the first optometrist to work as an optometrist in the U.S. Army in World War II. He also reports that the famous Paul McNutt happened to be a personal acquaintance of his.

Of special historical interest is the approximately one full page of the letter in which he described his own military optometric services 24 to 26 years earlier, as follows:

"My work included the refraction of eyes and the writing of prescriptions for glasses, the fitting, servicing, doing minor repairs, and adjustments necessary for those who wear glasses.

"I organized the mechanical setup and distribution of our force for mass eye examinations, such examinations revealing data regarding the health, visual acuity, muscular unbalances, stereopsis, and color vision.

"I served as surgical assistant at all eye operations as the average hospital nurse is not familiar with eye operation routine.

"During the absence of our commissioned eye physician, which lasted almost three weeks, I carried on the work of the Department, diagnosing and treating eye diseases and performed minor surgical

operations. Even though my training as an Optometrist did not qualify me for the practice of medicine, nevertheless, the results were entirely satisfactory and I was generously complimented for the services rendered.

"Every morning I distributed the incoming eye cases among the various departments, assigning patients for refraction, treatment or operation as the case indicated. This, in itself, required trained diagnostic ability.

"In addition to this I made out all the requisitions for instruments, equipment, and supplies, made inventory reports, statistical reports and actually wrote the department's annual report to Washington.

"For a period of three months I conducted classes in refraction at the request of physicians who intended to do refraction after leaving the army. For all this the army named me "Optician" at \$36.00 per month with the rank of Corporal.

"When the Commanding General of the 86th Division came to us for glasses, our C.O. Major Jean, Army Ophthalmologist asked me to do the refracting stating that of the eye physicians in our department, none had any specialized training in refraction, Most of them had picked it up after entering private practice.

"When I volunteered and requested my transfer to a Field Hospital to accompany Major Jean to Vladivostock, Russia, Lt. Col. Michie, Base Hospital C.O. refused my transfer stating that I was a key man in my department."

British optometrists in W.W. II:

Optometrist Frank Dickinson, 35 The Square, St. Annes-on-sea, Lancashire, England, writes that although the profession is not recongized in the U.K. armed forces as well as in the U.S. military, "British optometrists were certainly used during the war but generally as assistants to ophthalmologists rather than in their own right. But we did get other recognition; I was asked to take charge of a newly created eye clinic in a huge ammunition factory (34,000 workers) during the early months of the war. I built up a team of optometrists and we ran a daily attendance at this clinic, which was part of the medical setup. We worked in close cooperation with the factory doctors. The Senior Medical Officer was a lady . . . and she learned a lot about what optometry can offer!"

H. W. Hofstetter, Editor