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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Number 1

NEWSLETTER
OF THE
OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(7000 Chippewa Street, Saint Louis, Missouri, U. S. A. 63119)

Volume 5

January 1974

Election report:

Unwittingly we neglected to enclose a ballot with the October issue for the election of a member to the Executive Board for the term beginning now to expire December 31, 1978. Also unwittingly, nobody called our attention to the error! So, the best we can do is enclose the ballot with this issue and ask all of you to respond promptly.

This time we have a contest. Three have been duly nominated, and all three are charter members who contribute regularly.

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Hunt scores again:

The second \$100 canceled check of O.H.S. member Earl J. Hunt, O.D., has been forwarded to the American Optometric Association Museum for display alongside the canceled check for his earlier \$100 contribution, the first in memory of his mother and the second in memory of his father.

Incidentally, Dr. Hunt enclosed a little blue O.H.S. membership invitation slip with each of his holiday greeting cards this year.

Revell brings patents:

O.H.S. member M.J. Revell dropped by in December on his return to England from the American Academy of Optometry meetings in San Francisco to say hello, to experience one of the severest snowstorms in Hoosier history, and to deliver copies of the following British patent specifications of optometric historical interest:

No. 388,200: A New and Improved Apparatus for Developing the Sense of Vision, and Improving the Muscle Balance of the Eyes. The applicant was Ernest Reynolds Maddox, and the date of acceptance was February 23, 1933.

No. 354,999: (Patent summary): Eye-exercising apparatus, by J.R. Howard and O.P. Raphael, July 30, 1930.

No. 355,626: (Patent summary): Appliances for ocular exercise, by Elliott Optical Co., Ltd. and W. Green, December 24, 1930.

These copies have been forwarded to the Library of the American Optometric Association.

Prolonged occlusion by incarceration:

A local friend and neighbor, Mrs. John B. Patton, called my attention to an interesting late 17th century account of squint elimination by a long period of solitary confinement, as follows:

"The Rev. Father Ephraim when entering the Inquisition was searched, but there were only found, in the pocket which these monks have sewn to their cloaks in the middle of the back, a comb, an inkhorn, and some pocket handkerchiefs. The searchers forgot that the Capuchins have also a small receptacle in the mantle under the armpit, where some small requisites are carried, and Father Ephraim was not searched in that direction. This left him four or five lead pencils which are covered with wood lest they should be broken, and as the pencil is used you pare off the wood. These pencils afforded a resource whereby Father Ephraim was less wearied during his imprisonment than he otherwise would have been, and that, squint-eyed as he was, he went out with a vision in which there

appeared to be scarcely any defect. It is the custom in the Inquisition to ask the prisoners every morning what they wish to eat that day, and it is then supplied them. The Maltese cared for little besides tobacco, and he asked for it at morning, noon, and night, which were the times when food was taken to them. This tobacco was all cut and packed in white paper nearly of the size of a quarter of a page, for throughout all the East tobacco in powder, and all drugs and other wares which can be so treated, are wrapped in white paper; this tends to the profit of the seller, who weighs the paper and the goods together. This is the reason why so much paper is used in Asia, and it is the principal article of trade of the people of Provence, who export theirs even to Persia. I make these remarks in reference to Father Ephraim, who carefully collected all these pieces of white paper in which the tobacco brought to the Maltese was packed, and it was upon them he wrote with his pencil his daily thoughts in prison. This was partly the cause that his sight lost much of its natural defect, and when I beheld him again I had at first some difficulty in believing that he was the same Father Ephraim who had been much squint-eyed previously, as he appeared to be so no longer. The cell where he was confined had for sole window a hole 6 inches square, with bars of iron, and this hole was so placed that when Father Ephraim wished to write he could only have light on the side opposite to that where he ordinarily directed his sight; and so it was that by degrees it became right; thus he derived from this fact some advantage during his imprisonment."

This account is taken from TRAVELS IN INDIA by JEAN-BAPTISTE TAVERNIER, Translated from the original French Edition of 1676 by V. Ball, Second Edition edited by William Crooke, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, London, 1925.

Ophthalmologist turned artist:

The recently received UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) greeting card catalog includes a card illustrated by a scene entitled "Farmyard Gathering" by Paps. The artist "Paps" was, according to the description, a "Noted German eye specialist Waldemar Rusche" who "began painting at age 70 when he retired as Chief of the Bremen Hospital Eye Clinic."

Dr. Rusche was a member of the Deutsche Ophthalmologische Gesellschaft. He died in 1965.

This interesting tidbit was sent to me by Mr. Thomas E. Eichhorst, a frequent contributor to the O.H.S.

Hunt corrects Hopping:

In a letter dated November 6, O.H.S. member Earl J. Hunt, O.D., wrote:

"Received the Optometric Historical Society Newsletter yesterday and read it last evening. I always greatly enjoy

reading it. Would like to pass on some information for the next issue. On page 52 Cross Memorial tree revisited: 'Another memorial is for a man named Pinchot who, I believe, was a former governor of California.'

"This should be corrected. Gifford Pinchot, 1865-1946, was an American forester and public official. He served in the division of forestry, United States Department of Agriculture (1898-1910). He was a member of many conservation commissions. He has the distinction of being the only Governor of Pennsylvania to have served two terms (1923-1927, 1931-1935). A Pennsylvania Governor could not succeed himself until just recently. Gifford Pinchot has done much for forestry and conservation of our natural resources both in Pennsylvania and the United States."

As an M.D. remembered it:

The September 1973 issue of the Indiana Magazine of History, Vol. 69, No. 3, pp. 193-273 featured an article by my friend the late Philip Todd Holland, M.D., entitled "I Remember It This Way", in which he reminisced on early Bloomington, Indiana, beginning about 1910 when he was five years old, at which time Bloomington had a population of 8,838. He described the office of his father and grandfather Holland, both of whom were medical doctors, as follows.

"Dr. Philip and Dr. Frank Holland had their office listed as Drs. Holland & Holland in a frame building with a railed porch around the front of it and in the south two rooms of this building an optician by the name of Dr. Luck fitted and ground glasses and made up spectacles for people. On Sunday he preached at the old Campbellite Church which was way out on North Indiana above 10th Street at that time. Dr. Luck was a small man who was dark complexioned and very studious in his appearance and industrious about his work and it was always fascinating to watch the machinery that he had to grind the glass into the lenses that he was making. This he did in the back room of the two rooms which he occupied. Drs. Holland occupied the rest of the office . . ."

Later in the article Dr. Philip Todd Holland commented, "In 1908 approximately, the town decided that Bloomington needed a new post office building so they condemned and took over the land from the alley between 6th and 7th up to 7th and College on the east side of the street. This was, of course, where my father and grandfather's office was and also the office of Dr. Luck, the optician, whom I mentioned earlier."

An Editor's footnote confirms the fact that "William L. Luck, optician, was for a number of years pastor of the University Park Christian Chapel located on Eleventh Street at the northeast corner of Indiana Avenue."

The 1912 Blue Book of Optometrists and Opticians listed Dr. Luck as a graduate of the Northern Illinois College of Optometry in 1900.

The autographed quilt:

When I made a visit to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in 1953 Mrs. E.I. Cummings, whose husband was the Secretary-Treasurer of the local optometric society, was doing some unique needlework on a huge piece of tapestry or quilt. She solicited signatures of optometric visitors on the cloth and then she would weave each signature into the cloth with fine thread of contrasting color. As I recall she had the signatures of Charles Sheard, Ernest Petry, Ivan Nott, and many other dignitaries on it. Needless to say I felt very honored to be asked to sign it too.

Dr. and Mrs. Cummings have since passed to their reward. About a year and a half ago I happened to recall this bit of optometricana and wondered what had become of it. I wrote an inquiry to a long time friend of mine, Emanuel M. Finkleman, O.D., who practices in Winnipeg. Luckily he had just been asked to write the history of the Manitoba Optometric Society so his interest was sparked by more than ordinary curiosity, as he too did not know what had become of it. He immediately prepared a letter of inquiry to go to the entire society membership. (He also joined the Optometric Historical Society!)

In September, 1973, more than a year later, he wrote me as follows: "With regard to the quilt which you mentioned in your letter of July 17, 1972, we located the quilt and had it on display at the Canadian Optometric Convention which was held in Winnipeg in July. We feel that the historical value of this quilt is such that we should preserve it in some form or other. It is our intention at the moment to make it available to the joint meeting of the Canadian Association of Optometrists and the American Optometric Association when we meet in Toronto in 1977. If you think it would be desirable to have it on display at any other convention, please let me know and I am sure we can accommodate you."

At present the quilt is in the office of Donald C. Small, O.D., 401 Boyd Building, 388 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Second reminisce-in scheduled:

Wednesday afternoon, 2:30 to 4:30, June 19, 1974, is the time of the second O.H.S. reminisce-in during the American Optometric Congress in Washington, D.C. Otherwise Wednesday is Family Time for the Congress, so there will be a minimum of conflicting activities.

Dr. Spurgeon Eure has made the arrangements for this delightful two-hour informal get-together when any and all of us can spin our tales of optometric events as we saw them.

Memorials down under:

A reading of the Thirty-Second Annual Report & Balance Sheet (for 1972) of the Victorian College of Optometry, University of Melbourne, Carlton, Victoria, Australia, disclosed the following memorials to optometrists: The Howard S. Bell prize, the Lewis R.

Slade prize, and the Nathan library. An inquiry to Professor B.L. Cole, Director of the College, brought the following information:

"The Howard S. Bell prize commemorates an optometrist of that name who was prominent in optometric affairs in the 1920's and 1930's. The Prize was first awarded in 1948.

"Lewis R. Slade is an optometrist, now deceased, and the prize is donated by his son, also an optometrist, F.R. Slade.

"The Nathan Library is so named to commemorate the contributions made by Bertram Nathan, an optometrist, first chairman of the Opticians Registration Board 1936-1945 and councillor of the Victorian (originally the Australian) College of Optometry 1946-48 and 1955-57. During the second period he was honorary treasurer to Council. The naming of the Library also commemorates the contribution of his son John Nathan, also an optometrist, who was the first diplomate of the College and who has held the offices in the College of clinic director and director of studies and is currently the President of the College. The plaque in the library reads 'This Library is named the Nathan Library (incorporating the Victorian Optical Association Memorial Library) in appreciation of the long and devoted service given to the College by Mr. Bertram Nathan as Councillor and Treasurer and by Mr. John Nathan as Director of Studies 20th October 1960'.

"Both are honorary life members of the College and I enclose copies of the citations read when they were admitted to honorary life membership.

"Recently we have established the C.W. Kett Archive to hold papers, books, instruments and other items of historical interest. The archive is in memory of C.W. Kett, Optometrist, a councillor of the College from its inception until his death in 1970. Brian Flynn and Michael Aitken are honorary curators of the archive and I am sure they would welcome correspondence with you and other members of the Optometric Historical Society. I have sent them a copy of your letter and this reply."

The J.L. Saks Foundation:

In the July-September 1973 issue of the South African Optometrist, pp. 4-5, South African Optometric Association president Selwyn Super announced the establishment of the J.L. Saks Foundation. Here's why.

"Because of 'J.L.'s exceptional contribution to the cause of Optometry and the Association almost from its inception, and continuously and actively over these past 50 years, it is felt that no greater honour can be bestowed on our Honorary Life President than that the Foundation should be set up in his name.

"In the 50 years of our Association, 'J.L.' has spent 18 years as Vice-President, 1929-1947, and 7 years as President, 1947-1950, 1958-59, 1962-65. In addition to these high offices, he has served as Hon. Secretary, was one of the first examiners in

1930 at the first examination for opticians ever held in South Africa, and has been a member of the Examination Board almost continuously until a few years ago. He has twice been editor of our Journal, The South African Optometrist, a position he holds currently."

More memorials to optometrists:

The Glenn H. Moore Memorial Fund (Reference: Illinois College of Optometry, Chicago, Illinois)

The MacElree Building (for George A. MacElree, O.D., Reference: The Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

The Max Schapero Guest Lecture Series (Reference: Southern California College of Optometry, Fullerton, California)

The Albert Damon Love Scholarships (Reference: University of Houston, College of Optometry, Houston, Texas)

1899 Optometry Student Journal:

Believe it or not, on January 16, 1899, appeared the first issue of The Optical Journal Supplement, a monthly "Devoted to the Science of Optometry, A Magazine for Students." Though it continued the volume and issue numbers of its parent publication, Vol. 5, No. 1, it was issued completely separately, with a separate subscription price (\$1.00) and its own pagination. Its parent publication, The Optical Journal, was numbered Vol. 6 during the same year. Publication continued for several issues, but I do not know when it was discontinued. Hopefully, one of our librarian readers can enlighten us.

Library collections improving:

Though all gifts to the American Optometric Association Library and Archives are duly recorded in the official minutes of the AOA Board of Trustees and acknowledged by a letter from the AOA President to the donor, occasionally a donation is of such historical significance as to justify special mention here. Such is the case with a long series of contributions donated by the Bausch & Lomb Scientific Library in recent months. These have included numerous volumes and issues of 16 different periodicals, some dating back to the turn of the century.

I can report from long experience that early issues of many periodicals in the ophthalmic field were often difficult to obtain through interlibrary loan, certainly much more difficult than early issues of periodicals in the more classic disciplines of chemistry, physics, psychology, etc. Today, however, thanks to the cooperative

efforts of well organized visual science libraries, almost any early ophthalmic periodical that exists can be found and borrowed quickly and efficiently. The AOA library now ranks among the best in this respect.

Light and shadows:

A very fine review of the origin and development of retinoscopy is given by Michael Millodot, O.D., Ph.D., in an article entitled "A centenary of retinoscopy" in the October 1973 issue of the Journal of the American Optometric Association Vol. 44, No. 10. The contributions of Cuignet, Mengin, Parent, Bowman, and numerous others are carefully described and documented. The history of the terms *kératoscopie*, *rétinoscopie* dioptriscopie, skiascopie, and retinoscopy to identify the procedure is also thoroughly covered.

A letter to Dr. James R. Gregg:

"Dear Sir,

"I recently acquired an antique optometric device while pursuing my hobby of collecting antique scientific optical instruments. Having read your 'The Story of Optometry,' which I found fascinating, I thought as a historian you might be able to give me some information that would aid me in dating my item. It is a 'do-it-yourself' eye tester consisting of a wooden stand at one end of which a reading card would be attached. At the other is a turret of 20 lenses from +8.00 to +0.25 diopters. The 'best' lens would be determined by trial and error, and then the similar strength would be selected from the tradesman's stock. The maker is the American Spectacle Co. of New York, N.Y. How recent were such devices still legal? Also, do you have any information on the company? Thank you for your cooperation.

"Jack Rubin
238 Moore St.
Princeton, N.J. 08540"

Optometrist becomes millionaire:

In his "Man about Town" columns of July 25 and 26, 1973, in The News American, Baltimore, Maryland, writer Seymour Kopf dedicated a lengthy accolade to 80 year old Isaac Taylor of Ellicott City, "-- builder of the Taylor Manor Hospital -- the most amazing institution of its kind in the world . . . where mental patients, drug addicts and alcoholics are treated as if they were kings and queens in a Utopian state."

Though " . . . one of the least known great men of the 20th Century" Isaac Taylor, reports Kopf, is "a modest man." His family was poor, and

he soon started selling the Baltimore News at a half-penny profit. After holding a job with Julius J. Jenkins, a manufacturer of jewelry, he "went to Philadelphia to learn watchmaking in the morning and optometry at night. At age 20 he returned to set himself up in a little store on Main Street in Ellicott City."

The report continues: He built the first movie house in Ellicott City, and also "the first colored high school." Later he became "a leading board member of the Sheraton-Tel Aviv Hotel, the vice-president of the American-Israel Corp. (Israel's major financial house), vice-president of The Citizens National Bank of Laurel, chairman of the board of the Reisterstown Federal Savings & Loan Association, and so many other endeavours." In 1939 he bought a 10-bed mental institution, "turning it into its present 151-bed palace -- a miracle of enterprise . . ."

Upon reading Mr. Kopf's startling account, I did a bit of sleuthing to learn Dr. Taylor's role in optometry. He relinquished his Maryland license to practice optometry about two years ago after holding it for 50 years. He has not practiced any optometry in the last 30 years or so, and prior to that he operated a jewelry store. The records do not show that he was ever a member of the American Optometric Association or of the Maryland Optometric Association.

There is a bit of fascinating history in the fact that he renewed his optometry license year after year after year, suggesting that it gave him an inner satisfaction which even a millionaire can appreciate.

Aqua-crystal spectacles:

OUR EYES IN HEALTH AND DISEASE -- SPECTACLES, THEIR USE AND ABUSE is the title of a yellowed and brittle booklet, 17 X 10.7 mm, 20 pages plus paper cover, copyrighted January 21, 1889, and sent to me by D.G. Hummel, O.D., 7029 Royalton Road, Royalton, Ohio 44133, recently. Priced at ten cents, the booklet advertises O'NEIL'S Department Store in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, from which aqua-crystal spectacles "can be had", and "MILLINERY" is mentioned too. Symptoms of weak sight, diseases of the eye, myopia, presbyopia, hypermetropia, cataract, and when to begin wearing glasses are discussed. Several pages of testimonials in behalf of "The Periscopic Aqua-Crystal SPECTACLES" by physicians, ministers, attorneys, and others are included, as well as a graduated test-type for use at 14 inches and several pages of text material in other languages. George Elliott & Co., 38 Maiden Lane, New York is identified as the wholesale only IMPORTING OPTICIANS.

Anomalous retinal correspondence:

"ARC - an historical review" is the title of an article by O.H.S. member M.J. Revell in the September 1, 1973 issue of The Ophthalmic

Optician, Vol. 13, No. 17, pp. 964-966 & 971. He credits Johannes Müller with the first recorded reference to the condition in 1826.

Eyeglasses in early woodcut:

"... the woodcut is the first one in America to depict eyeglasses" reports O.H.S. Vice President John R. Levene in ATTI DELLA FONDAZIONE GIORGIO RONCHI, Anno XXVIII, N. 4 Luglio-Agosto, 1973, Pagg 571-576. The woodcut was made by John Foster (1648-1681), the earliest engraver or printmaker in America.

Vasco Ronchi - 75 years:

The following is a complete translation, by O.H.S. Secretary-Treasurer Maria Dablemont, of an article in L'Opticien Belge de Belgische Opticien, No. 203, September 1973, p. 363.

"Born in Florence, December 19, 1897, Professor Vasco Ronchi will celebrate his 75th birthday this year.

"Possessor of various university diplomas, his life has been full of scientific activities. He created the Italian School of Optics, and his National Institute of Optics constitutes an organism unique in its kind, holding complete administrative and technical autonomy.

"Professor Ronchi created also, in 1926, the Italian Association of Opticians, and in 1945, the Foundation G. Ronchi.

"His didactic activities are devoted to the Universities of Florence and Trieste. He is a prolific scientific writer, particularly in the field of optics and its history.

"Member of numerous academies and international scientific organizations, president of several Italian and foreign associations, possessor of high honorary distinctions, Professor Vasco Ronchi is, even more, a friendly and sincere man. Well-known in Belgium, a country he often visits, a personal friendship has developed between Professor Ronchi and the directors of the A.P.O.B. (Professional Association of Belgian Opticians).

"This association joins all the opticians of Belgium in extending Professor Ronchi their best wishes for a long and happy life."

Adolph Lomb Optical Library:

Recently O.H.S. member Henry Knoll sent me a photocopy of an article by James P.C. Southall entitled, "Concerning the Adolph Lomb Optical Library at the University of Virginia" in the University of Virginia Alumni News of June 1943, pp. 2-3 & 14. The article is written

in an intimate style in which Professor Southall refers to Adolph and Harry by first names, "Harry" apparently being Henry C. Lomb, Adolph's younger brother. Says Southall, "Oft had I heard of the famous collection of books on optics which Adolph and his brother Harry had made together from their earliest boyhood It contained literally everything under the sun pertaining to geometrical optics besides many volumes of the science of light and vision, many of them original editions, in English, German, and French, occasionally in other European languages, also. Some of them were written in Latin"

The article includes a portrait of Professor Southall, the only portrait of him I have seen.

WWI and optometry:

The "In Memoriam" statement for the late David S. Fox, O.D., in the December 1973 issue of the Journal of the Texas Optometric Association, Vol. 29, No. 12, reveals that he had a distinguished record in World War I and that he developed his interest in optometry as a career while serving as a hospital corpsman in the Army of Occupation in Germany. Dr. Fox passed away October 7, 1973, in Galveston, at the age of 80.

Just how optometrists may have served in their professional capacity in World War I has never been researched. The decade of the 1970's probably will produce a great many obituaries of WWI military personnel, and especially of optometrists who, like Dr. Fox, were involved in the conflict either in an optometric role or in a role which prompted them to pursue optometry as a career.

Would that someone had the interest and the time to explore this fascinating area of optometric history.

H.W. Hofstetter, Editor