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NEWSLETTER
OF THE

OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

(243 North Lindbergh Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. 63141)

Volume 9

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Number 3

Please notice address change:

The above-shown address for the Optometric Historical Society is new. It is the office address of Mrs. Maria Dablemont, our Secretary-Treasurer. It is also the new address for ILAMO, the International Library, Archives, and Museum of Optometry, Inc.

The St. Louis post-office will undoubtedly forward incorrectly addressed mail to the new address for a year, but play it safe by using the new address now.

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Q.E.I. (which was to be found out):

The request of Professor E.J. Fisher of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, in the October 1977 issue of this newsletter for information on three early instruments prompted OHS member D.C. Davidson of East Sussex, England, to refer the matter to Mr. I.D.C. Pain, a member of the Board of Directors of Keeler Instruments Ltd., London. Following some preliminary exchanges of correspondence between Davidson, Pain, Fisher, and me, Mr. Pain wrote me as follows:

I had the great pleasure, last week, of meeting Professor Fisher when he came to London; I hope that I gave him the information he required and that he enjoyed his visit to the Keeler Museum.

In answer to your wanting information about the Keeler Museum, may I just tell you that for the last forty years I have been somewhat of a magpie. It has always been a part time activity of mine and at long last the place seems to be getting organised. I am having a showcase constructed where all the instruments will be on display with their corresponding dates. I do hope that if you come to London, in the future, that you will come and visit it and that I will have the pleasure of meeting you.

Mr. Pain's address is 21-27 Marylebone Lane, London W1M 6DS, England.

Friendly comments from Professor E.J. Fisher:

Every issue of the OHS Newsletter brings out some new curious aspects of Optometry's history to interest Optometry historians.

Your reference to Molyneux recalls the delightful short paper given by H.B. Morton at the Dublin International Optical Congress in 1965. You were there and gave a paper. As you know Molyneux was an Irish philosopher and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, the site of the Congress. The paper has 10 references including a couple by G. Berkeley, also an Irishman.

As a follow-up to the appeal of mine which appeared in the October 1977 (8,4) issue in regard to the Decagon "Ophthalmoscope", I received from Keeler a copy of the manual for the instrument, the patent, and found an article by Conrad Berens and Charles K. McLaughlin which appeared in the American Journal of Ophthalmology, Vol. 17, no. 5 pp. 402-414. The instrument was an early measuring ophthalmoscope containing a measuring grid to determine the extend of the disc and lesions, and as well an objective optometer designed to measure ametropia in several meridians.

I had the pleasure of visiting Mr. I.D. Pain and seeing the Keeler collection of early ophthalmoscopes recently. The collection contains two of the Decagon instruments. Also there are many prototype and production instruments made by Keeler through this century. There are specimens of other makes of ophthalmoscopes and several other instruments as well as some books. The collection is cramped for space, but Mr. Pain has indicated that changes are being planned. For any visitors to London, a visit to the Keeler Library and Museum, 21-27 Marylebone Lane, is well worth while.

Finally, your reference to the new issue of Swaziland stamps prompts the suggestion that an Optometric Philatelic group might be formed as a part of O.H.S. In addition to Alan York, O.D. there is Robert C. Coleman, O.D. 1718 Camina de 'la Costa, Apt. #6, Redondo Beach, California, who compiled an excellent listing of stamps commemorating "blindness prevention", World Health Day, "Eyes on Stamps", etc. I'm working on a display now for our museum and would like to obtain listings of "famous people wearing spectacles". There was a series commemorating Galileo and the telescope as well but I have not located this yet.

So much for history and now back to work. (signed "Ted")

Letter from Professor L.A. Ress:

Dear Dr. Hofstetter,

The result of further correspondence, this time with the United States Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, D.C., is such that it brings to light additional information which I would like to take this opportunity to share with the readers of the OHS Newsletter regarding the ophthalmic situation at the "Island of Tears", also known as Ellis Island.

You will recall that in the previous installment, in the April issue (pp. 28-29), of what now appears to be an ongoing series devoted to the subject of the nature of the eye examinations given to alien immigrants at Ellis Island, it was reported that provision was made for the hiring of "civil surgeons" (Immigration and Nationality Act, sec. 234) in the event of the unavailability of medical officers of the United States Public Health Service.

Now, on the basis of information contained in the Operations Instructions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Part 34.2 which sets forth certain pertinent definitions, I can pass on to you the definition of a "Medical Officer", as set forth in paragraph (e). Namely, "a physician of the Public Health Service assigned or detailed by the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service to make mental and physical examinations of aliens."

Before, we knew only the qualifications of the supplementary personnel. Now, the professional identity of the regular examining staff has been ascertained.

Before adding further enlightenment in the form of some statistics regarding the pathology situation and resultant deportation, I would like to bring to your attention certain points regarding the literacy requirement.

A literacy requirement, as opposed to being able to read the eye chart as a means of disproving blindness to any degree, first went into effect with the 5 February 1917 Congressional enactment of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Section 212 (a) in the form updated as of 6 February 1973 reads "... the following classes of aliens shall be ineligible to receive visas and shall be excluded from admission to the United States:" Section 212 (a) 25 refers specifically to "aliens ...over sixteen years of age, physically capable of reading, who cannot read and understand some language or dialect; ..." (Updated as of 1 December 1976.)

We are now left with two questions to be answered with reference to these two citations of law. For the former quotation, the question that comes to mind in view of the fact that reading scores in the schools are decreasing quite definitely and that the general public simply doesn't read any more, is a query as to the nature of the applicable loophole so that there was and still is an opportunity to enter this country and yet bypass the literacy requirement. The puzzle with regard to the latter citation is merely to ascertain precisely what the literacy test actually consists of. You see, there is already a built-in loophole contained within the phrase "read and understand some language or dialect;" as the reader will immediately realize, not a word is spoken of reading ability being limited to English, although the assumption is that if one had been able to master, and I use this term advisedly, one language, then "mastery" of another language to the same level of competency would not be asking too much. One is led to wonder as to what went wrong. This is especially true when we read the two following portions of the Immigration and Nationality Act and learn that the law is quite lenient, or perhaps unrestrained would be a better description, in these matters.

Section 212 (b) updated as of the 12 January 1977 informs us that "the provisions of paragraph 25 of subsection (a) shall not be applicable to any alien who (1) is the parent, grandparent, spouse, daughter, or son of an admissible alien. . ." All a family group needs is one reader and the whole group can be admitted as far as the literacy requirement is concerned.

As we will now see, the requirement, as far as the nature of the reading matter is concerned, is not all that much either. Section 212 (b) continues at quite some length "for the purpose of ascertaining whether an alien can read under paragraph 25 of subsection (a), the consular officers and immigration officers shall be furnished with slips of uniform size, prepared under direction of the Attorney General, each containing not less than thirty nor forty words in ordinary use, printed in plainly legible type, in one of the various languages or dialects of immigrants. Each immigrant may designate the particular language or dialect in which he desires the examination to be made and shall be required to read and understand the words printed on the slip in such language or dialect."

So now you know, dear readers, those of you who have a large number of foreign born patients in your practices and clinics, why keeping some foreign language periodicals at hand in lieu of the standard reading cards is not always enough. Also, when the Ellis Island facility was at its "height of popularity" in the early years of this century, sometimes as many as 5,000 individuals were examined in one day alone. At best, the testing was cursory. However, let us not make the mistake of thinking that the inspection job was not done. Our main interest lies with the function of the second medical officer of whom it has been said that "he inspected the eyes of the immigrants, being especially on the lookout for signs of trachoma."

This brings us to some statistics regarding the presence of pathology in the eyes of the immigrants and their consequential deportation, whether they could read or not. In the previous installment figures were given for deportations as a result of illiteracy. Now I can present to you some figures based on medical reasons for deportations. Of course only eye-related conditions will be cited. The years covered run from 1894 through 1904 inclusive. The Medical and Surgical Report of the United States Immigration Service, Port of New York uses the fiscal year ending 30 June as the basis of its reckoning.

- 1894 Of a total of 162 total deportations for medical reasons; there were one each for Conjunctivitis, Keratitis (vascular), Ulcer of Cornea, Myopia, and Amaurosis.
- 1895 One deportation for chronic granular Conjunctivitis, (My copy of Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary lists this condition as synonymous with Trachoma. Therefore we are on the right track.) The Trachoma and related condition figures will shortly climb in a most dramatic fashion and so will the deportations.
- 1896 One deportation for each of the following: Conjunctivitis (chronic), Optic Nerve (atrophy), Cataract (hard, double), and Ptosis.
- 1897 Of a total of 115 medical deportations there were one each for Trachoma, Keratitis, Staphaloma (sic), Retinitis Pigmentosa, and Amaurosis (sic).
- 1898 One deportation each for Keratitis and Opacity of Cornea, two cases of Conjunctivitis (acute), and 110 deportations for Conjunctivitis (granular). Also recorded is one case of Keratitis who deserted from Ellis Island. (Figures on desertion are included in the tables only for the years 1898 and 1899. The total number of deserters was minute, as will soon become apparent to the reader. As far as what is meant by "deserted," I can only assume it means leaving Ellis Island, in New York Harbor, without permission, which, for medical reasons, was not going to be granted, and swimming to Manhattan Island, thereby gaining entry, although illegally, to the promised land, America. Of course, the probability of drowning in the process, is quite high, but desperation serves to explain many ill-conceived acts.) The other medical-related deserters that year were one who was diagnosed with "tubercle of lung", and two cases of Favus, a contagious skin disease which Tabor's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary relates to crusted ringworm, certainly an undesirable ailment to be allowed free entry to our shores. As is now evident, for 1898, the eye-related, medical-deserters accounted for 25 percent of all medically-related "escapes" from Ellis Island.
- 1899 One deportation each for Blind (O.U.), Abscess (lachrymal sac), and Ulcer of Cornea. Glaucoma was found to be present in two deportees. (Incidentally, this is the only mention of this particular condition which I found in checking through the figures for both deportation and treatment during the years 1894 through 1904, inclusive. Also, the reader should bear in mind that the facilities of the United States Public Health Service at Ellis Island were used not only to detect anomalies and thereby bar entry to this country, but also to treat those who would respond favorably to medication, better

hygiene, or whatever and then admit them. The United States Public Health Service operated, along about 1913 (a few years hence from the period currently under discussion), both a general hospital and a separate communicable disease hospital which were located on Ellis Island and served immigrant needs. In all fairness, it must be stated that the function of the Medical Staff was examination. It was not the function of the Medical Staff to exclude an alien or to participate in the legal determination of admissibility. However, one should never underestimate the power of a Medical Report.)

To continue, a case of "Increasing Blindness" was admitted to the United States by the Board instead of being deported in 1899. Just one example, and there were others, not necessarily eye-related, of compassionate, nonruthless, and nonheartless carrying-out of respective duties. In 1899 there were also 298 deportations for Conjunctivitis (granular) besides two deserters with this condition. For this year, these two anonymous individuals account for 100 percent of all medical-related desertion cases. It appears that security was very tight.

- 1900 The total number of deportees for medical reasons climbed to 353. Of these, 262 were diagnosed as Conjunctivitis (granular). No other eye-related medical deportations are listed for that year.
- 1901 There were two deportations for Keratitis along with 192 for Conjunctivitis (granular).
- 1902 Of a total of 1,064 medical deportations, one resulted from Keratitis (chronic), two from Blindness, five from Cataracts, eighteen from Defective Vision, and 488 as a consequence of Trachoma.
- 1903 Conjunctivitis and Ectropion were responsible for two deportations each, Defective Vision and Loss of Eye accounted for three each, Blindness and Opacity of Cornea for five each, eight were deported because of Cataracts, while 748 cases of Trachoma merited deportation.
- 1904 Cataracts resulted in four deportations, Conjunctivitis (chronic) in six, Defective Vision in eleven, and Conjunctivitis (granular) in 812.

In going over the list of anomalies, the predominant involvement of cornea and conjunctiva is overwhelming. The potential of such an appliance as Contact Lenses in such a situation with its mandatory requirement for fastidious hygienic habits boggles the mind in so far as how much further damage would have been done. Of course, in some cases, the use of the lenses might have alleviated some suffering, loss of vision, and unnecessary discomfort.

The philatelic item on p. 31 (April 1978) prompted me to dig out a Pakistani postage stamp which was issued as part of a "Prevention of Blindness" campaign. I have another for my own collection, so after you peruse this one you are most welcome to cede it to the ILAMO collection.* If the Museum does not, as yet, have a specific philatelic collection, perhaps now would be the time to organize one. I must apologize for not being able to give any specific information about the date of issuance of the stamp. All I can tell you is that I came across it at the INTERPHIL Exhibition held in May 1976 at Philadelphia, PA.

On the assumption that you are still awake after having made your way through all of this, I do want you to know that, as in the past, you have my full permission to use the contents hereinabove for publication in the OHS Newsletter as you see fit.

With best wishes for a productive summer,

*The 20^P stamp has been forwarded to ILAMO---HWH.

On clinical use of color:

Dan G. Hummel, O.D., of North Royalton, Ohio wrote, "Leed's letter regarding 'Scientific Tests of Colored Glass for Optical Purposes' brought to mind that in the 1930-1940 period many optometrists were treating ailments with colored glass. I no longer have my list of these.

"One, more scientific, was Ryer and Hotaling's use of color to reduce cataracts. If you have not read it, you may find it interesting and unusual."

Rummaging retrievals:

"Rummaging" may not be the best choice of words, but according to my Webster it has a rather wide variety of meanings, at least one of which must describe the staff activity in the headquarters of the Indiana Optometric Association in Indianapolis which disclosed a small stack of old documents of such disheveled, faded, and long unused appearance as to invite any person addicted to orderliness to toss it into a waste basket with the utter confidence that it would never be missed. Fortunately, a sense of archival responsibility prompted the I.O.A. Administrative Director Ron Wuensch to take steps to insure further preservation of this collection. Therefore he carefully packaged the material and forwarded it to me with a memorandum that suggested that it be placed somewhere where its retention will be safeguarded.

The collection includes what seems to be a complete set of minutes, some in longhand, some typed, of the Indiana Optometric Association from 1901 to 1936, inclusive. Also included are a notebook containing lists of attendants of many early successive conventions, a list of 1903 contributions to a legislative fund, several typewritten history papers of a few pages each reviewing the decade prior to the 1907 enactment of the Indiana optometry law, a 6-page typewritten history paper detailing the period from 1907 to World War I, some 1935 correspondence between Dr. VanOsdol, probably the author of the above papers, and Drs. Charles W. Conner and I.M. Rowe, relative to the 1907 enactment, and several odds and ends of programs, notes, and letters.

All of this is now permanently housed in ILAMO, the International Library, Archives, and Museum of Optometry.

The udjat eye:

The udjat eye is highlighted twice in the beautifully assembled book by I.E.S. Edwards, TUTANKHAMUN: His Tomb and Its Treasures, published by Metropolitan Museum of Art and Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, 250 pp., \$35. One, on page 146, is part of bracelet found on the mummy's right arm. The other, on page 171, is part of a pendant. Other engravings of the udjat eye or the eye of Ra may be seen on an alabaster chalice, p. 26, on a chariot, p. 46, on a wood chest, p. 65, on an alabaster casket, p. 71, on the coffin, pp. 128-129, and on another pendant, p. 156.

Additionally, a pair of udjat eyes on a pair of blinkers used on a bridle made of bark and overlaid with gold are shown in a promotional illustration for the book, according to reviewer Ann Stuart Anderson on page D5 of the Louisville, Kentucky, Courier Journal and Times of July 17, 1977.

The word "udjat" itself is said to mean "sound, healthy". Additional legendary interpretation is suggested in the text.

Of eie-bright, fenel seeds, and more:

Published, or in fact faithfully republished, in 1975 by Walter J. Johnson, Inc. of Norwood, New Jersey, and Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Ltd., of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, is a very small, 10 x 15 cm, book of less than 70 pages with hard cover and the updated title TWO TREATISES CONCERNING EIE-SIGHT by Walter Bailey (Joh. Fernelius and Joh. Riolanus). The booklet includes the title page of the original 1616, Oxford, edition which reads as follows: "TWO TREATISES CONCERNING the Preservation of EIE-SIGHT. The first written by Doctor Bailey sometimes of Oxford: the other collected out of those two famous Phisicians Fernelius and Riolanus."

Of the wide variety of medicines, both internal and topical, of great help in the preservation of sight, we are assured, the two especially favored were, first, the herb eie-bright, also spelled eyebright (of the genus Euphrasia), and second, fenel (also spelled fennel) seeds. The value of eiebright, mixed with various foods and drinks, including wines and beers, was documented with authoritative testimonial. With proper diet and the inclusion of the recommended herbs a Bishop in Ireland whose vision started to "wax dimme, about his age of fifty yeares...did live to the age of 80 years, with good integrity of sight".

‘इसके लिए एक चश्मा चाहिए।
पड़ोसिन की नजर लग गयी है!’

Correcting the evil eye:



चित्रकार : का. प्र. शर्मा

The Hindi cartoon reproduced here is from the December 1977 issue of Optometry Today, a quarterly journal published in New Delhi, India. The translation made by the editor, Dr. Narendra Kumar, has the lady saying, "I want spectacles for him (the child); he is suffering from the evil omen of the woman next door!" Obviously she has read the sign on the wall which, translated, says, "Glasses for eyesight available here." It happens that the Hindi word for eyesight, "n-a-j-a-r", also means evil omen.

First decade of O.E.P.:

A chronology of events and accomplishments within the Optometric Extension Program from 1929 to 1938 is outlined in the February 1978 issue of Optometric Extension Program News, Vol. 50, No. 5, pp. 2-3.

The first issue, Vol. 1, No. 1 of the printed O.E.P. News appeared in September 1936 with Ralph Barstow as editor. Prior to that time there was a monthly newsletter edited by Dr. E.B. Alexander.

Making history now:

In the history of the world the current decade will certainly be identified with the changing role of women, exploration of space, and the emerging of Israel as a nation of major international significance. Embodying all three developments simultaneously is none other than 28 year old Judith Resnik, daughter of a native Israeli optometrist, holder of a degree in engineering and a science doctorate, and one of six women recently chosen by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for training as an astronaut.

Judith's father, Marvin Resnik, O.D., who practices in Akron, Ohio, was born in Palestine and immigrated to the U.S.A. as a teen-ager. In the caption of the news report sent to us by OHS member Jacob Staiman, O.D., of Baltimore, Maryland, Judith's father is referred to as a Sabra. In my dictionary a sabra is said to be a native-born Israeli, apparently an adoption of the Hebrew word Sabēr, meaning "prickly pear", a plant widespread in the desert regions of southern Israel.

Donders, Darwin, and Bell:

According to F.C. Donders, Sir Charles Bell (1774-1842) reported in a paper on the Nerves of the Orbit which he read before the Royal Society on the 19th of June, 1823, "That pressure of the eye-lids protects the eyes against the injurious influence of determination of blood, in violent or continued expiratory action." (examples: coughing and sneezing). Donders also quoted the theory at greater length from Bell's subsequent publication, "The Nervous System", etc., London, 1830, p. 209.

Then, in the autumn of 1870, accompanied by his friend William Bowman, Donders paid a visit to the celebrated Charles Darwin, at which time Darwin asked Donders his opinion of Bell's statement. Darwin attached great importance to the question, as he was then engaged in the subject of physiognomy. Donders agreed to undertake an analysis of the plausibility of Bell's statement. His extensive reply, which included the above information, appeared in the Nederlandsch Archief voor Genees en Natuurkunde of December 5, 1870. The English translation of the same article by William Daniel Moore, M.D., who had previously translated Donders' manuscript for his classic book, was published in Beale's Archives of Medicine, Vol. 5, 1870, pp. 20-38. This is a rare volume, perhaps the only copy of which is in the National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

Donders' analysis, incidentally, is truly thorough and comprehensive. To the best of my knowledge it may well be even now the most up-to-date evaluation of the function of the orbicularis muscle available. It may also be the most unfamiliar of Donders' publications! It offers convincing scientific support to Bell's theory.

Sir Charles Bell expounded on his theory in several articles, one of which is entitled "The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression" published in London in 1877 by George Bell and Sons. A previous issue by Bell under the same title was published in 1844 in London by J. Murray, and his "Essays on the anatomy of expressions in painting" was published in 1806.

Charles Robert Darwin's discussions of the role of the lid muscles are included in "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" published in London in 1872 by John Murray, and again by Philosophical Library, New York, in 1955. Also Darwin's M Notebook and N Notebook, supplements of Darwin on Man, by Howard E. Gruber and Paul H. Barrett, published in 1974 in New York by E.P. Dutton include discussions of the role of the orbicularis muscle on pages 226-297 and 329-351.

Of what historical significance is this?

Perhaps much more than we think, says Richard McClintock, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, San Diego. He has formulated a fascinating hypothesis that the forces of contraction of the orbicularis oculi and other facial muscles which occur as responses to sociological, psychological, and environmental circumstances may cause myopia. It was he who called my attention to the involvement of Donders, Darwin, and Bell in this routinely ignored ocular activity.

Would that we could challenge physicists!

O.H.S. President Henry Knoll submitted a copy of the editorial entitled "Remembering ourselves" by Spencer Weart which appeared in the March 1978 issue of Physics Today, Vol. 31, No. 3, page 120. The following is the opening paragraph:

One of the things which makes the physics community unique is our attitude towards our own history. There is no group of scientists, perhaps no profession anywhere, that takes as much interest in its own history as American physicists. Imagine a group without history-- imagine people without a memory. Amnesiacs, knowing nothing of their past, also have no identity in the present; and by not understanding how they once succeeded or failed they are helpless before the future. A community bereft of its history will be precisely as aimless and incapacitated as an amnesiac. In modern America a number of groups seem to be near this state, owning either no history at all, or worse, a grab-bag of distorted myths. Fortunately the physics community stands a better chance than most of preserving its collective memory.

Much history:

To many of us a history of contact lenses might well begin at about 1932 with only a brief paragraph or two to cover the prior developments. Not so. A 9,000 word article was published in 1932 in the Archiv fur Augenheilkunde, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 390-414, as a mere "historical introduction" to contact lenses: "Über Haftgläser, I, Geschichtliches", by Dr. Vikto Much. The list of cited references alone totaled 159!

An original copy of the journal is located in the John Crerar library in Chicago, Illinois. John Griffin, O.D., of the Southern California College of Optometry sent me a copy of the English translation, which I shall place in the Indiana University Optometry Library.

Dr. Much erroneously gave credit to J.F. Herschel for the original idea of a small, closely mounted, spherically curved prosthesis of transparent material to serve as an artificial cornea. He was of course unaware of the then undiscovered notations in mirrored writing in the margin of a page in one of Leonardo Da Vinci's notebooks in which the tiny spherical corneal contact lens was explicitly described.

Another optometrist memorialized:

The James Cobean Memorial Award (Reference: The Ontario Association of Optometrists, Canada).

H.W. Hofstetter, Editor