NEWSLETTER
OF THE
OPTOMETRIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(243 North Lindbergh Boulevard, Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. 63141)

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Tumblin in:

J.C. Tumblin, O.D., 5319 Broadway, N.E., Knoxville, Tennessee 37918, was duly elected to membership on the Executive Board of the Optometric Historical Society for the five year term 1979-1983. "Jim" has been a popular servant to the profession for many years and a long time member of this society. His credentials are outstanding.

It is interesting to note that although the Society is now in its 10th year of existence its five-member Executive Board, with each member elected to a five year term, has experienced a steady and wholesome turnover. Only one member of the original board is still serving.

By-Laws amended:

All but one returned ballot showed a favorable vote for the Legacy Membership section. The one not marked in favor appeared to be an oversight, as it was not marked at all. One person who voted For the amendment added a qualifying "but without enthusiasm," but gave no explanation.

Now, to qualify for Legacy Membership, and thereby be exempted from annual dues, you need only have your will revised, or supplemented by what lawyers call a codicil, to provide a legacy to the Optometric Historical Society of a monetary amount of no less than $1,000. When you have done this, simply inform the O.H.S. Secretary-Treasurer of your action.

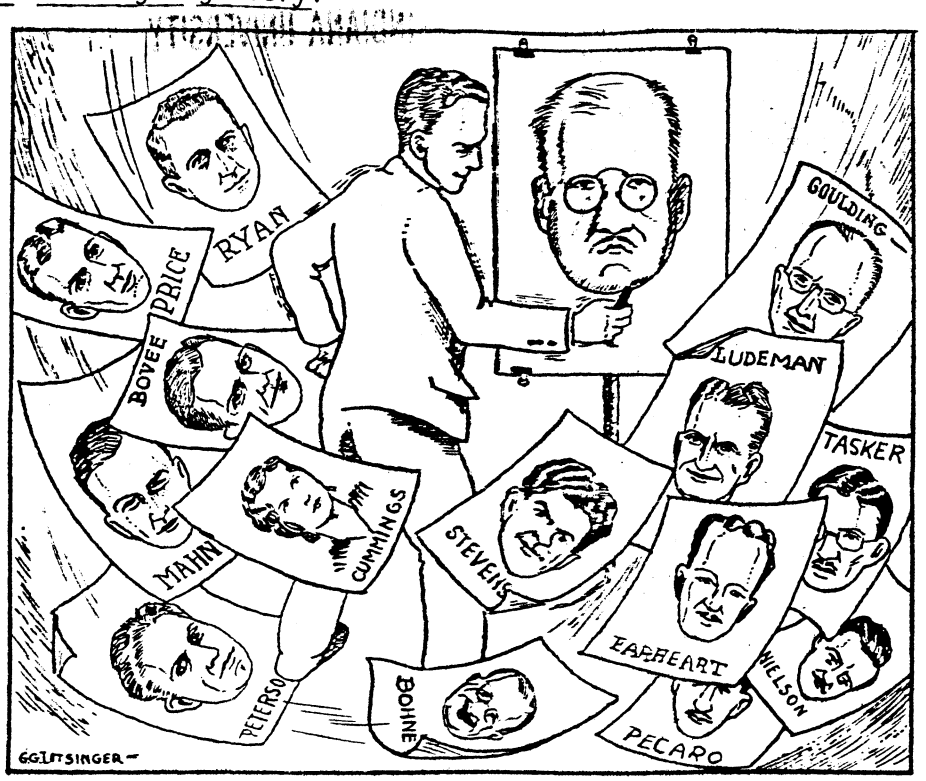
I have asked my attorney to revise my will accordingly, and, with a little luck and no procrastination on his part, I could be the first Legacy Member!

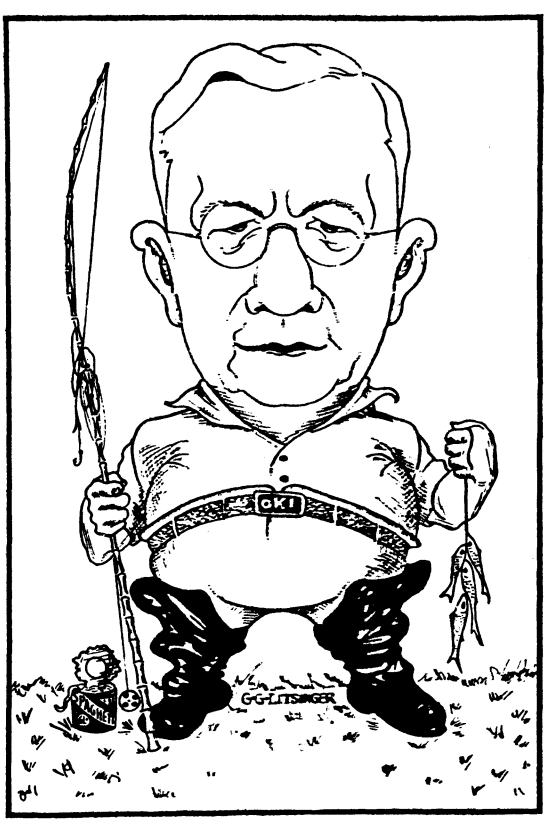
Speaking of money:

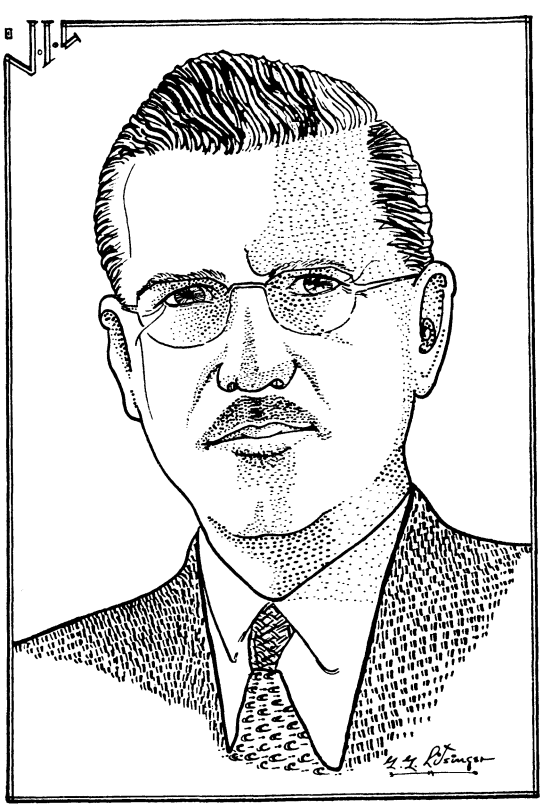
Secretary-Treasurer Maria Dablemont reports that as of December 7, 1978, the financial assets of the Society have accumulated to $1,818.64. Of this, $1,681.47 is in an interest-bearing savings account, $78.78 in a checking account, and $58.39 in petty cash.

She also reported that the major expenses of the Society are those of the printing and mailing of this newsletter, especially the PAR AVION mailing to our many overseas members. This may well be the only optometric periodical delivered more or less simultaneously around the world. Of this we should be proud, for the participation of our overseas members is a special asset in my opinion.

The Geo. G. Litsinger gallery:







Top picture, self-caricature of the student-artist drawing Dr. W. Jerome ("Jeri") Heather and sketches of fellow students. Lower left is Professor Ernest Occhiena, "Papa Okey". Lower right is Dr. Wm. B. Needles. All by George Litsinger, O.D., during Northern Illinois College of Optometry school year 1930-31.

A Maxwellian literary review:

The following is a paper read by O.H.S. President Henry A. Knoll at the brief gathering of O.H.S. members and friends in the New England College of Optometry Library on Saturday evening, December 9, 1978.

James Clerk Maxwell (1831 - 1879)

Nineteen seventy-nine is the centennial of the death of James Clerk Maxwell one of the 19th century giants of physical science. His works include many contributions to the science of vision. For some unknown reason his name is missing from the histories of this field. This brief paper is my attempt to correct these omissions and I offer the suggestion that the Optometric Historical Society declare 1981 the Maxwellian Year.* In this way I hope to encourage our members to seek out the several biographies of James Clerk Maxwell and his collected works and thereby discover the depth of the man who is often known only as the author of Maxwell's equations. With four equations Maxwell summarized, in concise mathematical form, the relations between electricity and magnetism. They constitute the starting point for the investigation of all electromagnetic phenomena.

In spite of the paucity of references to the man, his name is often on our tongues. In our discussion and papers we often speak of Maxwell's Spot and Maxwellian View optical arrangements in our experimental apparatus. I will speak here only of these two; it would take all too long to discuss his contributions to color vision, colorimetry, and stereoscopy.

Before discussing Maxwell's Spot and Maxwellian View optical arrangements, I will take just a brief tangent into his work on color. Had I been asked when the first color projection was exhibited I would have guessed sometime early in the present century. Not so, James Clerk Maxwell gave a demonstration of trichromatic color reproduction at the Royal Institution in London on May 17, 1861! This event was celebrated by the Maxwell Colour Centenary, a three day conference held at the Imperial College of Science in May of 1961. The conference was co-sponsored by the Colour Group, The Institute of Physics, The Physical Society and the Inter-Society Color Council of America.

In Maxwell's early work involving color vision he used a color top to explore color mixtures. Later he designed and constructed a color mixing apparatus using monochromatic colors. As he viewed the spectrum colors he noticed a black band whenever his eye was directed to the blue portion of the spectrum. The band never appeared in any other part of the spectrum. He correctly ascribed the appearance of the band to the absorption characteristics of the macula pigment. Maxwell also noted that Haidinger's Brushes are seen in connection with the spot, hence he concluded that this polarization phenomenon is also associated with the structure of the macula.

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*1981 will be the sesquicentennial of Maxwell's birth.

Maxwell's Spot has been the bane of colorimetrists and a boon to investigators of binocular vision. It is disturbing in color mixing experiments whenever mixtures involving the blue end of the spectrum are being explored. The resulting confusions were minimized by using a 2° field in the determinations of the trichromatic characteristics of the so called standard observer. It is only in recent years that data are being collected for 10° color fields. I need not tell this group the usefulness of Maxwell's Spot in binocular color vision work.

The color mixing apparatus used the sky as the light source. In order to utilize the available light most efficiently, Maxwell imaged the slits of his apparatus upon the observer's pupil. This optical arrangement is widely used in microphotometry, spectrophotometry, telephotometry, and in vision experiments where light levels are low or one wishes to eliminate the effects of pupil size changes. The optics of the retinoscope serve as one example wherein the retina of the patient's eye is focused in the observer's pupil. Were these the only contributions made by Maxwell to the science of vision, his name should stand with Scheiner, Bowman, Badal, Brewster and others. Yet his contributions go far beyond those which I have briefly described above.

Herewith the titles of a few of his vision papers to give you a taste of his accomplishments: "On The Theory of Colours in relation to Colour-Blindness" (1855), "On the unequal sensibility of the Foramen Centrale to Light of different Colours" (1856), "Accounts of Experiements on The Perception of Colour" (1857), "On the Theory of Compound Colours and the Relations of the Colours of the Spectrum" (1860), "On The Theory of Three Primary Colours" (1861), "On the best Arrangement for producing a Pure Pectrum on a Screen" (1867), "The Construction of Stereograms of Surfaces" (c. 1868), "On Colour-Vision at different points of the Retina" (1870) and "Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand Helmholtz". The last written about 1876, is a biographical sketch in recognition of Helmholtz' fusion of physical and biological sciences.

James Clerk Maxwell was born in Edinburgh on the 13th of June 1831. He was descended from the Clerks of Midlothian, a well known Scottish family whose history can be traced back to the 16th century. His father John adopted the surname of Maxwell on succeeding to an estate which came into the Clerk family through marriage with a Miss Maxwell. James was an only child whose parents were devoted to him, as he was to them. His mother died when he was 8 years old. Fortunately his father was able to supply much of the love and devotion which was lost upon the death of Mrs. Clerk Maxwell. His formal education was obtained at Edinburgh University and Cambridge University where he had the good fortune of having capable and inspiring professors.

He obtained professional appointments at Cambridge and at Aberdeen. The crowning event of his productive life was being appointed the first Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics. He not only taught in the Cavendish Laboratory, but designed it and supervised the construction and equipping of this famous scientific institution.

In 1865 he had an attack of erysipelas from which he recovered. However, starting in 1877 his health declined and he died on November 5, 1879, at the age of 48. A measure of the esteem of his contemporaries is attested to by the appearance of a full length biography three years after his death and a two volume collection of his scientific papers published in 1890.

References

1. Campbell, Lewis and William Garnett, The Life of James Clerk Maxwell, Macmillan and Co., London, 1882.

2. Niven, W.D., Editor, The Scientific Papers of James Clerk Maxwell, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1890.

Some reminiscing correspondence:

O.H.S. Executive Board member Jim Leeds sent me some interesting correspondence from another book accumulator, George Gunter Litsinger, O.D., 1221 N. Lundergan Ave., Park Ridge, Illinois 60068. With Dr. Litsinger's permission, here is one dated June 10, 1978.

"Dear Dr. Leeds:

"I was more than delighted to receive your note, and amazed that you still have my 1930 mimeographed diagrams, and your huge collection of books on optics. This prompted me to take an inventory of the important books that I have on hand, and have enclosed the list.

"The Donders book could easily sell for $50.00, though I have marked in it many notations; I studied it many many times, until finally it resulted in hero worship. From about 11,141 record cards, I constructed my own amplitude of accommodation table, and it corresponded quite closely to Donders', and he used only about 200 to 280 cases.

"I was age 21 in 1930, and we were told the toughest state board question was 'Trace the blood from the heart to the eye, and back again' (I don't think the question was ever asked). Instruction on this was very poor in the classroom, so I saw the need for a page by page diagram to make it clear. The book contained 50 pages, and was titled, 'Ocular Anatomy' or 'Anatomical Diagram of the Human Eye'.

"I didn't know how to type (and still haven't) but went out and paid $40.00 for a used Underwood (and the same one I am using now). I had never cut a mimeograph stencil, and didn't know there was 'correction fluid' available, if I made a typing error.

"100 were sold at N.I.C., on Drexel Blvd., Chicago, for $1.50 each.

"Later on, at Monroe College, Dr. Gilbert Hicks (a dear friend) urged me to print about 400 more, for the students there. I imagine that is where you obtained it.

"In 1929 at N.I.C. I tried another venture. Those were the depression days, and I needed money. Went to Swift & Co. with a one pint lard can, and $2.75 in my pocket to buy pig eyes. They were five cents each, and I planned to sell them to the other students for 50¢ each. 'How many do you want,' he asked. 'Oh, just fill up the lard can.' I figured the can couldn't hold more than fifty eyes, and I had the $2.50 to cover it. I had to wait an hour. 'O.K. here's your lard bucket, there are 300 eyes in it!' Wow!! $15.00! They were ready to shoot me on the spot. He started to count out 50 eyes, stopped on the fourth, turned to me and said, 'Give me your $2.50, take these 300 eyes, and get the hell out of here!'

"I was in my glory. One for every student to dissect at N.I.C. I sold three, and couldn't even give the rest away. They wouldn't touch the slimy things.

"I passed the State Boards of Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin, but never left Illinois. Vowed I would move as far away from Chicago as possible, but spent most of my 48 years in it. August 1977, I moved my office into Park Ridge, Illinois, and still busy as ever. I was hoping to have a bit of peace and quiet, because I am now 68. The Blue Book tells me you are 60, so you know what I mean.

"Again, nice to hear from you."

For those of you unfamiliar with American abbreviations let me explain that N.I.C. refers to the Northern Illinois College of Optometry, and Monroe College to Monroe College of Optometry, both of which were located in Chicago. Swift & Co. was an abattoir or slaughterhouse.

Dr. Litsinger's inventory of books on "the human eye" includes well over 40 volumes, two pre-1900, ten from the first decade, seven from the next, six from the next, etc.

Prompted by Leeds:

Like anyone else who has been around long enough to get one's name on a variety of mailing lists and who is reasonably faithful about answering his mail I regularly receive my pound or kilogram of mail each day. Most of it is beautifully typed, attractively printed, or gorgeously assembled into illustrated brochures with variegated type size ostensibly to lure one into perusing it for messages or at least to scan it for gems of wisdom or nuggets of information, which, though surely more negotiable in ordinary textbooks and encyclopedias, temptingly seem analogous to freely distributed after-dinner mints.

Fascinatingly, however, in the daily postal delivery there is often an ordinary envelope addressed in longhand, sometimes in pencil, or with slightly blotched ink. It may even be slightly mangled in the process of hand-sealing with tongue-licking of the flaps. Perhaps it was written by a seventh grader seeking help for his or her class project. Whatever, it is the most exciting letter in the day's mail! If I don't open it first, it is only because I have in mind getting the other postal literature out of the way so I can enjoy this one leisurely.

Now it so happens that a few OHS members are personally uninhibited when it comes to writing a letter. They may whip out a very brief note to me during a ten minute break, or even a more deliberate commentary in the course of a relaxed evening, just for relaxation. With no special attention to literary elegance or the possibility of a dangling participle or split infinitive, they merely want to share spur-of-the-moment thoughts.

Then, to their surprise, they often find their spontaneous gems reproduced in this Newsletter. The surprise is that I presume others may be interested. For example, Dr. Jim Leeds, one of our most regular correspondents scribbled off a memo to tell me he recently picked up several books published in the 1950's as follows:

La Myopie Héréditaire des Médicis.
Les Causes de L'Épidémie de Trachome en Belgiques au XIX^{éme} Siècle.
La Oftalmogia en Tiempo do los Romanos.
Breve Conspecto do la Oftalmologia Árabe.
Ibn Al-Haitham (Alhazen).

He also found two books by Dr. Max Meyerhof, as follows:

Las Operaciones de Catarata de'Ammar Ibn Ali Al-Mausili, 1937, in four languages. . . Spanish, English, French, and German.
The Book of the Ten Treatises on the Eye Ascribed to Hunain Ibn Is-Haq (809-877 A.D.), 1928, Cairo, in Arabic and English.

Frankly I found the list fascinating. Don't you? No pressure to buy them, to understand them, or to remember them. An unparalleled satisfaction for some may even come merely from one's freedom to ignore them.

Blindiana history:

Niza Uslan, an attendee at our December 9 get-together, forwarded to me a copy of an article by Kenneth A. Stuckey, Research Librarian at the Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts 02172, entitled SAMUEL P. HAYES RESEARCH LIBRARY: FORMERLY THE BLINDIANA LIBRARY. It appeared on pages 17-18 of the Spring, 1977, issue of DIKTA, Vol. 2, No. 1, a publication of the Southern Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The entire article follows:

The library was founded in the 1880's by the second director of Perkins School for the Blind, Michael Anagnos. During a visit to Vienna, Anagnos saw Dr. Mell's outstanding library devoted to material to the blind. On his return to America, Anagnos began his own collection of "Blindiana." In the coming years a number of books were obtained from the great collection in Vienna. This proved to be very fortunate because Mell's collection was almost completely destroyed by the Nazis during WWII leaving only a few copies of these precious books, most of them in the Perkins collection.

Some of the books in the Perkins collection date back as far as the 15th and 16th century. From its small beginnings the library increased in size, providing many with the one of the few sources of information on blindness during the 19th century. With the development of training programs for teachers of the blind in the 1920's, there was a need for even more complete sources of material. In 1966 the collection moved to a building which was designed to both preserve and display its treasures. Also, with greater numbers in the teacher training programs provided by Perkins, there was a need for more adequate studying accommodation for both students and the increasing number of researchers who use its resources.

The library collects any print material about the non-medical aspects of blindness. (It does have a medical section on ophthalmology which is satisfactory for most educators but not extensive enough for doctors.) It is divided into three main sections: material about blindness, material about deaf-blindness, and the school archives. In addition, there is a museum on the history of the blind and deaf-blind and a historic collection of embossed books for the blind including the first book embossed for the blind by Valentin Hauy (Paris, 1786) and the first book embossed in English (Paris, 1818). Maps for the blind and even a collection of postage stamps and letter seals have found a place in the library.

Over the years the library has built up a collection of over 18,000 books, serials in the field, magazine articles, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, fiction books with blind and deaf-blind characters, books written by blind and deaf blind authors, and photographs and pictures depicting the blind.

Every two months a list of new additions to the collection is compiled and distributed to the Perkins staff. An annual accessions list is published with all items listed and cross-referenced under subjects. This accessions list can be obtained at a cost of $2.50 from the Library, Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts, 02172. At this time, a deaf-blind bibliography is being updated which will cover the years 1910-1977.

The library is open, on a reference basis, to anyone interested in the field of blindness, Monday through Friday 8:30-5:00. It loans out material to student's attending Boston College's Special

Education programs, Perkins staff, and to libraries on inter-library loan. Over the years a number of authors have used the collection for books on the education of the blind and deaf-blind.

The most notable addition to the library in recent years has been the collection of material about Helen Keller and her household (1920-1969) collected by her close friend and associate, Nella Brady Henney.

It is an old library. As the same time its aim is to be as updated as tomorrow.

Further comments of historical interest by Miss Isabella Stevenson Diamond and others on the occasion of the 1966 dedication ceremony appear on pages 3-17 of the December 1966 issue of The Lantern, Vol. 36, No. 2, published by Perkins School for the Blind.

Never to be outdone, Dr. James Leeds did some browsing in Cambridge to discover, and purchase, a 65 page 11 X 15 cm booklet by Edward E. Allen entitled "The Perkins Institution for The Blind," privately printed at Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1924.

History of an optometry library building:

The December 9, 1978, gathering of O.H.S. members and friends in the the beautiful and stately Library of the New England College of Optometry at 420 Beacon Street in Boston, Massachusetts, prompted many questions about the building itself. Thereupon Ms. Eleanor Warner, Librarian, distributed copies of a brief history and description of the building which she had prepared for many an inquiring patron. Here it is:

> The building was constructed in 1894 for Miss Emily Sears, who lived here with her two unmarried brothers. One of the brothers, Dr. Henry Sears, married rather late in life and continued to live here until the birth of his first child, then moved to 86 Beacon Street. This child, also named Emily, is now Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge. Coincidentally, 1894 is the year of the founding of the Klein School of Optics, which eventually became The New England College of Optometry.
>
> The house was subsequently owned by Mr. Wellington, a merchant; the Wolbach family (related to Mr. Wellington); the Vedanta Society, which maintained a residence and worship center; Mr. Andrew Maclachlin, who converted it to nine apartments; the Chandler School for Women; and the Massachusetts College of Optometry, now The New England College of Optometry.
>
> Two of the Wolbach sons still live in the Boston area: William Wellington Wolbach, President and Director of The Boston Company; and the astronomer for whom the John G. Wolbach Library of the Harvard College Observatory is named.

Built on filled land near the center of what had once been a shallow bay (the Back Bay) and after Boston's Great Fire, it is the first "fireproof" house in Boston. The supporting beams are steel, the interior walls are masonry, and fire brick or steel is laid between floors and ceilings. (You may note, however, that the main staircase and the old elevator shaft both provide excellent avenues for the quick spread of fire.) Each room has a fireplace, those on the first floor being framed with Italian marble. Before Storrow Drive was built (1951), the land in back extended down to the Charles River.

The small garden in front was planted by the Maclachlans and includes very fragrant, old-fashioned roses and a magnolia tree originally brought from China about 1800 and then transplanted here from the family home. The large anchor fixed to the front of the building was also added by the Maclachlans. After anchoring their cabin cruiser over Great Fawn Shoal off Winthrop, Mr. Maclachlin and his brother were unable to raise anchor. They dragged to their mooring in Hull, where the Harbor Master found that they had hooked through the ring of the old coaster anchor.

Entry

Because of the large scale of the building, the great size of the doors is not immediately obvious. They are five feet wide and nine feet high. The lace framing the inner door is hand made. The wrought iron gates between the security turnstiles were found in the coal bin and were once the back garden gates. They have been installed here in reverse: hinged sides in the center. The marble lined lavatory under the main staircase still has the original sink with its unusual swing faucets.

Main floor

The gold wall canvas in the oak panelled reception area was hand painted, quite possibly after the canvas was hung, as the pattern continues over the corner beads, while the canvas does not. The ceilings on this level are thirteen feet high.

The carved marble above the fireplace in the front drawing room continues the pattern of cherubim decorating the exterior door frame and the reception area. The leaded casement windows are glazed with Boston's famous lavender glass. The action of the sun on impurities in the glass caused it to change color.

The dining room, now the library's audiovisual room, is panelled with rosewood. Its wall covering above is hand tooled leather.

Our reference room was the family library. The wall covering above the shelves is also leather, but was probably machine embossed. Traces of the original coloring may be seen at the left of the fireplace. As in the dining room, the huge windows, with built-in storm windows, are glazed with plate glass.

The small room at the back of the audiovisual room was the butler's pantry and had a dumb waiter to the kitchen below. There was a loft in the back part of this room, with a wrought iron spiral staircase providing access. The door leading to the fire exit was cut through after the building ceased to be a private residence.

Basement

Excepting the boiler room (not open to the public), the lower level has been rearranged several times. Now housing the library's bookstacks, it once contained the kitchen, laundry, and servant's commons. A gap in the ceiling, where a wall was removed, reveals the fire brick laid between the floors.

Second floor

The riverside rooms were a suite with its own bathroom and dressing room, where there are still clothes hangers topping long poles, needed to hang clothes from rods near the eleven foot ceiling. French doors lead to a tilted deck over the butler's pantry. The rooms overlooking Beacon Street were separate bedrooms. A doorway was opened between them when the building was converted to apartment use.

Third floor

There were two bedrooms on the Beacon Street side (now study rooms) and a three-room suite on the river side (now the residence of a college employee).

Roof

(not open to the public)

In addition to the skylights, there is a 13' x 15' penthouse, wood panelled below a continuous strip of casement windows around three sides. The doors and a built-in cupboard are in the fourth side. While its original use is not known, one can envision summer dinners here, with the windows open to catch the breeze off the river, and a magnificent view of Cambridge and Boston. The Wolbach boys made it theirs during summer vacations from boarding school.

Mighty, indeed!

In reference to the wording of the memorial plaque to William Bowman in St. James Church, Picadilly, London, (page 60 of the October issue) Dan G. Hummel writes, "If memory serves me right, having been raised among the 'Leather-kneed Methodists', those 'Mighty Voices Three' were Father, Son, and Holy Ghost".

Then, when my secretary Shari typed the preceding paragraph she asked her Catholic-reared office associate Pat what she thought the "Mighty Voices Three" were. She gave the same answer!

Finally, Jerry Abrams sent me a brief memo with the same advice.

History of color theory:

"It may be surprising, on the assumption that primitive man and modern man have similar colour vision, that there seems to be no appreciation of individual difference in the sensation of colour or of the concept of colour defect in ancient writings which describe colour vision".

So stated Stephen R. Cobb of the Department of Psychology of the University of Glasgow in an article entitled AS I SEE COLOUR in the October 14, 1978, issue of The Ophthalmic Optician, Vol. 18, No. 20, pp. 747-748, 751-753, 754, 756, and 761-763. (The intermittency of pages is due to advertisements.)

Beginning with "The primitive life of Paleolithic man...", he then made a sophisticated and fascinating analysis of the history of our knowledge of color perception and of the philosophical relationship of color perception to other sensory phenomena. At least 65 references are listed.

Holmes stereoscopes available:

A hand-crafted Stereoscope said to be a handsome reproduction of the famous instrument, "Invented in 1859 by Oliver Wendell Holmes", is advertised in a recent issue of The Rotarian by Stereo Classics Studios, 145 Algonquin Parkway, Whippany, New Jersey 07981. Offered also are 62 3-D pictures taken between 1859 and 1920 and a 20-page illustrated booklet entitled "The Story of the Stereoscope".

Optical parlor books:

Editor John N. Howard of Applied Optics, in his October 15, 1978 issue, Vol. 17, No. 20, page A240, calls attention to three paperback reprints of early publications of visual or optical fascination, all presently offered by Dover, as follows:

THE MAGIC MOVING PICTURE BOOK by Bliss, Sands, and Co. (Dover, 32 pp., $1.75). First published in London in 1898, this book contains eighteen pictures of Victorian scenes, plus a ruled acetate moiré screen. When this screen is moved over the pictures they come to life: smoke pours from the stacks of the side-wheeler river boat, fires burn, wheels turn, volcanoes erupt.

HAND SHADOWS by Henry Bursill (Dover, 33 pp., $1.25) is a republication of an 1858 Victorian book: a picture book illustrating how to cast hand shadows of a rabbit, camel, goose, dog, and many other remarkable resemblances.

TOPSYS AND TURVYS by Peter Newell (Dover, 72 pp., $2). Each drawing in this 1893 book is actually two. Turn to any page; the drawing you will see will have a caption under it. Then, turn the book upside down and another picture emerges from the page, and the tale-in-verse is completed by a new caption.

Early diopters magnified!

The following is a verbatim copy of the description of a conversation piece illustrated in the 1978 Happy Holiday catalog of the Adam York Unique Products Company of Hanover, Pennsylvania:

> (C) THE SUN, THE MOON, THE STARS... See them all just as Galileo did in 1612 when he developed the original version of our Florentine Telescope. In a mere 16-inch instrument the great Italian astronomer was able to produce a magnification of 33 diopters - more than enough to discover the planet Jupiter, and to prove the Copernican theory that the earth revolves around the sun and not, as had been believed, vice versa. Marvelously detailed reproduction is cast of solid bronze, stands a foot-and-a-half high on antiqued wood base, and in every way permits you to duplicate the Galilean achievement. (The telescope itself is easily dismounted from the base for outdoor star-gazing.) Converts a den, library or office into a more interesting "universe". Specifically prepared historical data pamphlet included. Florentine Telescope (#UH921163), $275.00.

On a clear night I can see Jupiter with two diopters!

NSPB beginnings:

A brief note in the Summer 1978 issue of Prevent Blindness News, Vol. 4, No. 2, page 1, explains that the origin of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness (NSPB) was a small committee formed seven decades ago by Louisa Lee Schuyler "to spread the knowledge that instilling prophylactic drops in the eyes of the newborn is an almost certain way to prevent blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum."

Schmidt centenary:

March 30 of this year will be the 100th birthday anniversary of the optician Bernard Voldemar Schmidt whose name is familiar to every optical instrument designer. Born on the tiny island of Naissaar, also called Nargen, in the Gulf of Finland about 17 kilometers off the north coast of Estonia, Schmidt attempted as a boy to make a concave mirror by grinding together the lower parts of bottles with sea-sand from the island beaches. While still in his early youth he lost his right arm in an accident. After studying engineering in Sweden and Germany, in about 1900, he began to make telescope mirrors of outstanding quality for amateur astronomers, and later he made a number of ingenious lenses, mountings, and drives for major astronomical installations. His crowning achievement was the invention and construction of "Ein lichtstarkes komafreies Spiegelsystem" (a light-intense coma-free mirror system) now known as the Schmidt camera. His descriptive paper, by the same above-quoted title, consisted of less than two pages, pages 25-26, in the January 17, 1931, issue of Centralzeitung für Optik und Mechanik, Vol. 52, No. 2, with no figures, illustrations, or equations, apparently his only published article.

Especially fascinating are a few excerpts from Volume XII of the Dictionary of Scientific Biography, 1975, page 186:

"Schmidt always was an odd man, who neither married nor was willing to lead a normal life. He once said that he got his best ideas on awaking slowly after some days of complete intoxication. Drink was certainly the cause of his early death."

"Schmidt... did all of his work alone and unaided. He polished his mirrors by hand, using glass instead of metal disks."

"Schmidt spent the last year of his life in a mental hospital and died there." (In Hamburg, Germany, December 1, 1935).

Where are our historical collections?

In a recent, September 1978, issue of American Society for Microbiology, Vol. 44, No. 9, pages 458-463, two very competent librarian authors, Antonio R. Raimo and Helen J.G. Mayo, gave a detailed account of 19 libraries in the Baltimore-Washington area with extraordinarily fine history of medicine and science collections. The list included such major resources as the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, National Museum of Natural History, and the Pan American Health Organization. The account provided addresses, telephone numbers, hours, names of contact persons, information on borrowing and use privileges, and identification of special collections.

Obviously a similar directory could be prepared of special optical, visual, optometric, and ophthalmic collections of archival and historical significance stashed away in many an institution and repository as well as in privately owned settings. I recall on one occasion receiving the interlibrary loan of a rare optometric publication from a lighthouse library, and on another occasion a similarly rare volume from a glass company museum. It seems probable that the personal library collections of some of our early predecessors were willed or otherwise assigned to the libraries of respective alma maters which otherwise may have little contact with the ophthalmic community.

In fact, most such collections are unlikely to be identified as special or name collections. Their existence as collections might only be detected by browsing through the library stacks in call-number areas that pertain to vision and discovering several books with ex libris identification of prior owners. Armed with the name of a prior owner one may then go to the office of chief librarian and, with a little archival luck, ascertain the complete list of items acquired from the prior owner or his estate.

If such discoveries are reported to the editor of this newsletter and duly published in subsequent issues another purpose is served, that of a cumulative registry of such collections.

Incandescent centennial, 1979:

A year-long "Centennial of Light," an international celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Thomas Edison's invention of the incandescent lamp on October 21, 1879, was announced by Walker L. Cisler, chairman and chief executive officer of the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, headquartered in Detroit, Michigan.

The inventor's first laboratory was removed board-by-board, nail-by-nail, and even the earth from the building's front yard, from its original site in Menlo Park in New Jersey to Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.

Inquiries or requests for additional information may be addressed to The International Committee for the Centennial of Light, Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, P.O. Box 1310, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830. The toll-free telephone number is 800-243-8561.

The original incandescent lamp, incidentally, does not exist. Edison broke the bulb so that he could study its burned out filament.

Industrial growth in optics:

The following tidbits from the July-August, 1978 issue of the Technical Information Center Bimmonthly Bulletin (Soflens Technical Library) Vol. 5, No. 4, pg. 3, illustrate in very personalized terms the development of one familiar component of the optical industry during the last century and a half.

> In 1835 John J. Bausch opened a store in the balcony of the Reynolds Arcade to sell spectacles, thermometers, field glasses, telescopes, magnifiers, opera glasses, microscopes and horn glasses. The rent for office space was $1.53 per week.
>
> In 1882 Edward Bausch, son of John J. Bausch, was earning $1,400 per year.
>
> In 1866, Bausch & Lomb, located in a small room on Water and Andrews Streets, employed 28 workers. In 1873 when the company moved to St. Paul Street, there were 71 employees. That was followed by a growth of 1,000 employees by 1900. Forty years later, during World War II, employment reached upwards of 11,000.

The cited addresses are all in Rochester, New York.

18th Century Croatian Ophthalmics:

"Ophthalmological themes in baroque-iconography in northwest Croatia" is the translated title of an illustrated article by V. Dorn in the September, 1978 issue of Klinische Monatsblätter für Augenheilkunde, Vol. 173, No. 3, pp. 427-435. Illustrations include votive models of the eye in wax, silverplate engravings of frontal views of the eyes and eyebrows, and of spectacles, an oak woodcut of a blacksmith at the forge showing him wearing spectacles with temples, frescoes of St. Lucia and St. Vitus with eyeballs in hand, and of the healing of the blind man of Jericho, and various biblical miracle scenes involving blindness or vision. Included also are 24 supporting literature citations. From these the author has made a very sophisticated interpretation of the prevailing and popular ophthalmic knowledge in the area in the 17th to 19th centuries. The church or museum location of each example is provided.

Barnacles in 1628:

What was England like at the time King Charles I granted a charter to the Spectacle Makers Company of London? Can you hear a couple of loud-voiced apprentices of Master Optician David Ramsay hawking ready made spectacles with such tantalizing cries as, "What d'ye lack your reverence...the Greek and Hebrew will have harmed your reverence's eyes---buy a pair of David Ramsay's barnacles. The King, God bless him, never reads without them!"?

Such conversation was taken from Walter Scott's Fortunes of Nigel in which he portrayed a faithful picture of city life at that time. "Barnacles," incidentally was contemporary English dialect for "spectacles".

This and numerous other illustrations of the early 17th century state of the ophthalmic optical arts are privided in an article entitled "Optics in Merrie England" by F.R. Woodcock in the September 1978 issue of The South African Optometrist, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 136, 138, 140, and 142.

Possibly a first?

The following appeared in the "Administrative Professional" section of the classified advertisements in the November 1 issue of the Bloomington, Indiana, Herald-Telephone:

> WANTED Optometric Assistant. Full or part time.
> Send resumé to box 2146, c/o The Herald-Telephone.

H.W. Hofstetter, Editor