

OPT

NEWSLETTER
OF THE
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January 1992 Newsletter:

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

You may find yourself taking a second glance at the heading of the next issue of this newsletter. After twenty two years of being "the Newsletter" it will have a new title - Hindsight. More on this in the next issue.

Past OHS award recipients:

The following list of past OHS award recipients was compiled and submitted by OHS member and ILAMO librarian Bridget Kowalczyk.

Recognition Certificates

William G. Austin, O.D.	1982
Martin Topaz	1983
Grace Weiner	1983
Maurice Cox	1984
Israel Dvorine, O.D.	1984
Robert Graham, O.D.	1984
James R. Gregg, O.D.	1984
John R. Levene, Ph.D. (posthumously)	1984
Irving Bennett, O.D.	1985
James F. Dickson, O.D.	1985
Jacob Staiman, O.D.	1985

Henry W Hofstetter Recognition Award

Maria J. Dablemont	1987
E.J. Fisher, O.D.	1989

Armati's "tombstone" illustrated:

In the last issue of the Newsletter (Vol. 22, No.3, p.27) we printed a letter from OHS member Dr. Robert von Sandor in which he detailed his thoughts on the Armati "tomb" in Florence, Italy. In his letter he made reference to the "tomb" design change which occurred when it was moved from the convent to the church. The illustrations below are those sent by Dr. von Sandor. Since publishing Dr. von Sandor's letter we have received follow-up responses from both Dr. Abrams and Dr. Enoch. These will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter. This is becoming an Armati serialization! Who says history is boring.

This is the "memorial" before the demolishing of the convent.



and this is the memorial in the church to day.



Optometry at Ohio State University:

Four pages in the March 1991 issue of the Ohio State Alumni Magazine, Vol. 82, No. 7, pp. 39-42, are devoted to a feature historical article captioned "Can you read this clearly?" by free-lance writer Sandra Gurvis. Supplemented by several early artists' depictions of wearers of contemporary visual aids it describes the museum of the College of Optometry. The author interviews the curator Arol Augsburg at length on historical milestones in eyewear and optometry. The development of the optometry curriculum itself from its establishment in 1914 under Sheard's direction and its later expansions under the administrations of Deans Fry and Hebbard is also chronicled. It is written in very popular style but nevertheless quite accurately, not an easy accomplishment.

The Ocularscope

In the collection of OHS member Jim Leeds is an Ocularscope neatly preserved in its original 19 x 14 cm mailing envelope addressed to a "John W. Golden, Box 73, Dunbar, Pennsylvania" from "Grand Rapids Wholesale Opticians, Ledyard Building, Corner Monroe and Ottawa Sts., Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.", with a 4-cent stamp and an illegibly smudged postmark. The legend on the Ocularscope declares it patented in the United States on December 18, 1903, and in Canada on November 3, 1903. A typed letter of transmittal and order advice is dated 12/5/1908.

Accompanying the Ocularscope is a packet of originally moist lens cleaners, a card offering the Christmas gift of a free calendar with every order for spectacles or eye-glasses received before January 1, 1909, a printed sheet of testimonials from pleased customers, an Express Money Order application form, two spectacle order forms, a paper chart for distance acuity, a 44 page catalogue of spectacles and eye-glasses copyrighted April 3, 1903, in which are listed also spectacle cases, reading glasses, a tripod microscope, magnifiers, hearing instruments, and artificial eyes.

The Ocularscope itself is a 33 x 5 cm stiff laminated cardboard scale cloth-hinged at its midpoint to permit folding into the mailing envelope. It is similarly hinged at one end to a 5 x 5 cm cardboard square with linen backing in the center of which is a 15 mm aperture containing a thin lens of about 10 diopters strength. A 7.7 mm square card with a wide slit for sliding along the long scale piece is imprinted with words in very small letters. The scale values consist of alphabet letters in black FOR OLD SIGHT and in red FOR NEAR SIGHT. The customer is instructed to hold the lens end directly in front of one eye, the other eye closed, and to slide the square piece until the words are "clear and perfect". The letter on the scale at which the square piece rests is then entered on the QUESTION BLANK order form shown on the next page.

G. R. WHOLESALE OPTICIANS LEDYARD BLDG. Grand Rapids, Michigan
Cor. Monroe & Ottawa Sts.

NO.	RECEIVED BY	FILLED BY
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DO NOT WRITE IN ABOVE SPACES

DATE.....

QUESTION BLANK

This blank, carefully filled out, including remittance is all that is necessary to send to us when ordering glasses.

GRAND RAPIDS WHOLESALE OPTICIANS:

Gentlemen—Inclosed find \$.....for which please send me pair of glasses No.....as illustrated on page.....of your catalog.

WRITE PLAINLY

Name.....

(Street and No., P. O.)
(Box or Rural Route).....

Town.....

State.....

Age?.....Occupation?.....

Ever worn glasses?.....If so how long?.....

In testing your eyes with "OCULARSCOPE," on what letter, or nearest what letter, can you see fine print on target the best? With Right Eye?.....With Left Eye?.....

BLACK or RED Letters?.....In testing your eyes with DISTANT CHART, ✦

state the smallest line of letters you can see at from 15 to 18 feet away. Right Eye?

.....Left Eye?.....Is your face Large, Medium or Small?.....

Are your eyes wide apart, close together, or about the average distance?.....

.....Is your nose between the eyes large, broad, flat, thin, high, narrow or small? (Describe as near as you can, as this is very essential).....

Do you wish Glasses for READING?.....

Do you wish Glasses for DISTANCE?.....

Do you wish BI-FOCALS?.....

Special Remarks.....

✦ WE CAN NOT FILL YOUR ORDER FOR GLASSES UNLESS WE HAVE BOTH
READING AND DISTANT TEST COMPLETE.

The Oculometer:

An apparent but slightly variant successor to the Ocularscope is the Oculometer of Moore & Evans, Wholesale Jewelers, 218 So. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill. The one at hand is also in the Leeds collection and had been received by an E.A. Waller of Stratford, Iowa, in a 2-cents postage-due envelope on August 3, 1927. Its difference from the turn-of-the-century Ocularscope model is in minor construction detail, the test procedure being functionally identical. It, too, is labeled "patented". Its accompanying literature and order form lack the apparent sophistication and finesse of the earlier gadget.

Worth mentioning again:

Someone has said quite correctly that if one gets nostalgic in a historical museum one is indeed getting old! The latest occasion for me is the perusal of the inventory of the Optometry Museum at The Ohio State University College of Optometry. The collection has been mentioned before in our July 1984 and January 1987 issues, on page 68 of volume 15 and page 4 of volume 18 respectively.

In the 120-item inventory recently called to my attention are several items which were still in use or in storage there during my years as a student and later as a faculty member, consecutively between 1936 and 1948. Several of the items I have never seen elsewhere. The Wellsworth Twentieth Century Test Type Cabinet was still in use when I was a student. It featured a wire mesh screen to prevent flies from leaving specks on the roll chart. The Myoculator and Kratoculator, a combined unit if my memory is correct, were useful for demonstrating the differential effects of Helmholtz's, Fick's, and Listing's axes on ocular rotation, quite remote from their intended use. The Amblyo-Syntonizer was a magnificently impressive instrument of many claims but no proof. The Kratometer was the brain child of a South African ophthalmologist who reported marvelous cures of strabismus through its use. Etc., etc., etc.

The curator is Professor Arol Augsburger, O.D., who would surely send you a copy of the inventory upon request.

H.W H.

Oops!

The origin of 20/20 as "normal" visual acuity is described as an error in a brief historical note by Antonio Augusto Velasco e Cruz in the August 1990 issue of Optometry and Vision Science, Vol. 67, No. 8, p. 661. He reports that Helmholtz had arrived at approximately one minute as the smallest visual angle of distinctness by using the combined subtense of a dark bar and a light bar of a grid as his criterion. Inadvertently or otherwise, the 28 year old Snellen adopted Helmholtz's one minute as normal but used the subtense of only the stroke or gap of each block letter instead of the sum of stroke and gap.

Tscherning is quoted as having pointed out this error in 1898. The author suggests that "it is time to believe him."

S.L. Kumar, 1926-1990:

The late Surinder Lal Kumar, a journalist entrepreneur, founded, edited, and published the Indian Optician in 1968, at which time it was the only journal in India serving the needs of both the industry and the profession. It had been preceded by a discontinued journal of the same name in the '50s. Under formidable odds Mr. Kumar singlehandedly nurtured the journal into a successful venture with a fine reputation. It played a strong mediating role in the development of the trade and industry and in the encouragement of professional optometric development.

His surviving family will continue the publication with their assurance that his guiding principles will be followed. Much of the history of Mr. Kumar's personal life and efforts is described in the November/December 1990 issue of the journal, Vol.23, No.123, pp.10-28.

Optical Society of America:

A chronology of key events in the history of the Optical Society of America appears on pages vii-viii of its 1990-91 Membership Directory. The chronology starts with its establishment by 30 charter members in 1916. Membership reached 200 in 1920 and 400 in 1925, at which time it published the three-volume translation of Helmholtz Physiological Optics. By 1988 the membership exceeded 10,000.

Promotional humor:

Among the professional effects of the late Otis R. Hale, O.D., of Kokomo, Indiana, was a large manila envelope with 51 sheets of 11 x 14 inch off-white art paper on each of which is a delightful cartoon (two examples shown below) resembling some of the old Abe Martin cartoons. Next to each cartoon is a clever optometric message written in excellent longhand and undersigned Otis R. Hale, Opt. D.

They illustrate an optometrically creative promotional effort of a past era. The clothes of the portrayed characters suggest the late twenties or the early thirties, at which time Dr. Hale had started practicing. His optometrist son born in 1932 had never seen or heard about the cartoons and could only guess that they appeared in a local newspaper.

The collection will be donated to ILAMO.



And when you consider the price of eye-glasses, consider this truth:—

There never was anything made but what someone else could make it worse and sell it cheaper.

Otis R. Hale, Opt.D.



There is no such thing as a "fairly good" pair of glasses; any more than there's such a thing as a "fairly good" egg. They are either perfect or awful!

Otis R. Hale, Opt.D.

See and hear:

The International Library, Archives, and Museum of Optometry, Inc., lists four newly acquired LIVING HISTORY INTERVIEW video cassette tapes as follows:

(No. VT-185)	Dec. 5, 1989.	Guest: Dr. Lynn Gabriel.
(No. VT-186)	Jan. 23, 1990.	Guest: Dr. Robert Graham.
(No. VT-187)	Jan. 29, 1990.	Guest: Dr. Solon Braff.
(No. VT-188)	Feb. 13, 1990.	Guest: Dr. Morris Applebaum.

These were jointly donated to ILAMO by Dr. Margaret Dowaliby, the feature host, and the Southern California College of Optometry. The tapes are 1/2" VHS, about 30 minutes long, and available for loan from ILAMO.

Myth or mirth:

Maurice Belanger reports a patient asking him whether there is truth to the assertion that one-eyed pirates wore a heavy golden earring on the lobe of one ear to enhance and preserve the vision in the remaining eye. The patient also asked if there was any link between this belief and the use of acupuncture. It was further suggested that the shape of the human ear resembles the fetus in the womb, the lobe corresponding to the baby's head.

Spectacles for myopes:

On August 25, 1451, a gentleman from Ferrara, Italy, wrote a letter to an optician in Florence acknowledging receiving four pair of eyeglasses, one pair with broken lenses. He requested that these lenses be replaced with others for "near vision" because three of the four pair were for "distant vision."

On October 21, 1462, a Milan duke wrote his resident ambassador in Florence, "Because there are many who request of us eyeglasses that are made in Florence . . . we ask you to send us three dozen pair, one dozen . . . for distant vision, that is for the young; another [dozen] . . . for near vision, that is for the elderly; and the third for normal vision."

On November 4, 1462, the ambassador sent the glasses to the duke's secretary with the postscript, "These eyeglasses are of four types. Let the Lord choose those he wants, and let me know because I can send him as many as he likes."

On November 20, 1462, the ambassador wrote the secretary that he was pleased to learn "that the duke and duchess had liked the spectacles and expressed greater pleasure at the revelation that they did not need eyeglasses for the elderly but used those for the young." (The duke was 61 and the duchess 37)

On June 13, 1466, the son of the then deceased duke requested 200 pair of eyeglasses from the same Florence ambassador with labels as follows: 15 pair for ages 30, 35, 40,

45, 50; 15 pair for ages 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70; 10 pair for medium vision for the young; and 10 pair for distant vision for the young.

These five recently discovered documents provide convincing evidence that concave lenses for myopes date back to at least the middle of the fifteenth century, about a hundred years earlier than we thought. This conclusion and detailed discussion of the evidence and implications appear in an article by Vincent Ilardi entitled, "Eyeglasses and Concave Lenses in Fifteenth-Century Florence and Milan: New Documents" in the Autumn 1976 issue of Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 341-360. OHS member Charles Letocha kindly sent us a copy.

Much of the article relates also to the evidence that Florence had an early reputation for fine eyeglasses, that their manufacture was a major enterprise, and that spectacles were an important aspect of costume art. The author also includes some interesting hypothetical explanations of the dearth of written information about spectacles in the first three centuries following their discovery and the fact that telescopes were not developed until late in the sixteenth century even though the necessary lenses were long and plentifully at hand.

A 44 page Italian translation of this article with many new data by Guido Lopez was printed and distributed by Metal Lux, s.p.a., 20159 Milano, Italy, Via Paolo Bassi, 9, in 1978. The title is "Occhiali alla corte di Francesco e Galeazzo Maria Sforza."

News from the U.K.:

The October 1990 Newsletter of the Ophthalmic Antiques International Collectors Club, issue No. 23, reported the reopening of the British Optical Association Foundation Museum at 10 Knaresborough Place in London on September 4 after a two year period of redecoration and re-organization. The rare items on display included a pair of 18th century whalebone temple spectacles, letters from George Bernard Shaw to his optician, a prototype rotary trial case, and many unusual antique ophthalmoscopes. Visiting hours, by appointment only, are Monday to Friday, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Also reported in the Newsletter is a pair of Scarlett-type spectacles in the Kassel Museum of Scientific History. They are signed "Temme Fecit Kassel". Temme was Optician to the Court of Hessen-Kassel at the beginning of the 18th century.

In the same issue is a review by C. Richard Keeler entitled, "Early years of the ophthalmoscope", together with 12 illustrations from C. Wilbur Rucker's "History of the Ophthalmoscope", 1971, previously mentioned in the Newsletter of the O.H.S.

It is quite apparent from their Newsletter that the primary interest of the Collector's Club is in collections, as the name implies.

Other commentary includes reference to private collections, Sotheby's, the Clore Gallery, the Deutsches Museum in Munich, the Wellcome Museum of the History of Science, and the Dolland and Aitchison Museum. Listed as well are eleven antique fairs occurring in the U.K. during October, November, and December. A light touch is provided by the text of an advertisement by John Marshall of Ludgate Street, London, in the Daily Courant of 17th September 1720 which declares "that an abundance of Persons sight is spoiled by using false spectacles sold by Toymen and other ignorant Persons."

Wanted - history!:

The following "classified" was passed on to us by OHS member Bridget Kowalczyk and is being published here at the request of the author, Dr. Fred Brechler.

WANTED: Persons interested in histories of schools and colleges of optometry and optometric education. Fred Brechler, Ph.D., is studying the history of the formation of the school at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He wishes to correspond with others to exchange ideas, etc. He's already been in touch with Hank Peters and Henry Hofstetter. Contact Fred at 904 Fairway Park Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082, Phone - 904-285-1185.

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