

HINDSIGHT

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The OHS is up and running!

Library

It has been a long time since you received a copy of *Hindsight*. To be precise, the last issue was published in July 1992 (Vol. 23, No. 3). This package contains the back issues and brings everyone up to date.

For future readers of this newsletter, the above paragraph will have no real significance, but it needs to be recorded that during the "dormant newsletter period" of three years, Henry Hofstetter kept writing and the blurbs kept piling up. My sincere thanks to Henry for his persistent pen and to David Goss for organizing the completion of these back issues.

D.K.P.

The Cohen Collection:

Another unique holiday greeting card with an ophthalmic theme in 1991 was that of Gilbert B. Cohen, O.D., featuring several pairs of 17th and 18th century spectacles and cases overlaid on a photograph of the painting CONSPICILLA by Johannes Stradanus, given to Gilbert by Pierre Marly.

In a separate memo we learn that the Cohen Collection is the result of 22 years of his acquiring items from Europe and the Orient relating especially to spectacles without temples. His main interest is in the Chinese items, as the Chinese used the most interesting materials in the making of their spectacles. He reminds us that such items are now almost impossible to acquire at reasonable prices. To illustrate his interests and some of his collection, he prepared a video for presentation at the annual meeting of the Ocular Heritage Society a couple of years ago. A copy of the video can be found at ILAMO for anyone interested in viewing it.

The videotape, together with Dr. Cohen's very homey comments, fascinatingly portrays not only a good number of his prized acquisitions but also a dedicated collector's difficulties and gratification. We learn, for example, that a few items were archaeologically found in the accumulated settings of Dutch canals and outdoor privies with occasional helpful dating by discarded pieces of Delftware or other contemporary artifacts of known period.

Who owns Zeiss?

A gift from Florence Gaynes from the collection of her late husband Ernest Gaynes, O.D. is an unusual 280 page, 24 x 18 cm. hard-cover book entitled, "The Zeiss Works and the Carl Zeiss

Foundation in Jena" by Prof. Felix Auerbach, translated into English from the 5th German Edition by R. Kanthack, published in London but printed in Germany. The precise date of publication is not shown, but several entries are dated 1924 and one of the 255 illustrations is a 1926 folded, paste-in aerial view of the huge plant.

A subtitle explains that the text deals with "their scientific, technical and sociological development and importance popularly described." It is pointed out in the foreword that, in addition to its appealing to "those interested in the manufacture and development of optical instruments and their uses," the extensive detail of Abbe's scheme "for the solution of the eternal problem of capital and labour . . . will interest a much larger circle of readers."

The author's philosophical springboard is his division of practical optical history into three undulatory periods, - - - scientific, unscientific, and scientific, identified approximately with, (1) the Moors and early Western opticians, (2) the rule-of-thumb era of optical craftsmen, and (3) the age of scientific research as exemplified by Fraunhofer (1787-1826). Then arrived Zeiss (1816-1888), the optical businessman, Abbe (1840-1905), the optical scientist and technologist, and Schott (1851-?), the optical glassmaker, successively joining the Jena complex as a team.

Almost two-thirds of the book describes the key personalities and the well explained technical and developmental details of 150 or more Zeiss, optical and ophthalmic instruments and products including their application and utilization in laboratories, industry, and the military. Most of the remainder relates to the industrial philosophy, functions, and involvements of the relatively unique organization operating under the Zeiss rubric.

The sequence of ownership may be cursorily described as follows: 1846-1875, Carl Zeiss was the sole owner; 1875-1881, Zeiss and Abbe were joint owners; 1881-1888, Carl Zeiss and his son Roderick and Abbe were in partnership; in 1888 Carl died and Roderick retired leaving Abbe as the "captain" or sole owner; in 1891 Abbe created the "Carl Zeiss Foundation" and deeded the total assets of the company over to it. He personally authored the provisions of the charter in such thorough detail as to win him an honorary doctor of laws degree from a university faculty of law (plus some criticism that he had deprived his widowed wife and daughter of a share of his estate). The charter was officially approved by the grand-duke of Saxony in 1896.

One of the many conditions of operation in the charter was a directive that no employee, chief or otherwise, may receive a salary greater than 10 times the average annual wages of employees over 24 years of age with three or more years of seniority. Other provisions covered problems of work administration, piece work pay, work week length, welfare, pensions, patent rights, etc. Financial beneficiaries of the foundation included the University of Jena, the optometry school, numerous local institutions, and municipal projects. The university and municipality both had advisory

representation in the foundation's administration, as did the employees.

The foundation owned the Zeiss works lock, stock, and barrel, but who owned the foundation? Who appointed the governing board? The author devoted dozens of pages trying to answer these questions but, if he did, I missed it. Yet it was no minor issue in German industry. for the firm had a peak of 9,300 employees in 1916.

Readers of this newsletter may recall that, briefly reviewed in the January 1973 issue, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 7-9, was a celebrated federal court case attempting to resolve the question inasmuch as there are presently two Zeiss firms, one in East Germany and one in West Germany, and both claimed rights to the name Zeiss!

Zeiss reunited:

An interesting editorial commentary on Zeiss developments following World War II and through realignment after the tearing down of the Berlin Wall appears on the Editor's Page of the February 1992 issue of American Laboratory, Vol. 24, No. 4, News Edition, p. 4, entitled "When the Wall Came Down" by Gabor B. Levy. His comments were prompted by a recent visit to Germany. It included the optical works in Jena, the Carl Zeiss Company, which had been one of the leading firms of the former communist world.

He reviews much of the 150 years of development of the conglomerate as has been covered to some extent in earlier issues of this newsletter. He adds that the East German component became the "leading instrument supplier to the entire Eastern Block, . . . a bloated, centrally managed behemoth with plants in 25 major locations and some 69,000 employees." Under reunification the German government transferred majority ownership of Zeiss-Jena to the western Zeiss in Oberkochen. The author describes some of the drastic measures taken to integrate the two previously independent but largely parallel companies into complementary units. It is projected that the readjustment will be complete by 1996 and "that it will be a world leader in optical and electronic scientific instruments under the sole ownership of the foundation set up by the visionary Ernst Abbe."

The Baltimore myopia fiasco:

OHS member Edward Goodlaw sent me a November 1971 issue of the Optometric World, vol. 58, no. 11, on page 6 of which is an obituary of Arthur E. Hoare (1890-1971). On pages 8, 10, 14, and 18 there appears his presumably last publication entitled "The Baltimore Myopia Control Project: The Aborted Confrontation Between the AOA-OEP and Ophthalmology." Dr. Goodlaw referred to Dr. Hoare as one of the "stalwarts" of optometry, with which most of us old-timers would surely agree. Among other involvements Dr. Hoare was an Associate Editor of the Optometric World and an enthusiastic founding member of the Board of Directors of the Optometric Historical Society.

The Baltimore project was a joint undertaking by the Optometric Extension Program (OEP) and the Public Health Bureau of the American Optometric Association (AOA) as proponents of the postulate that myopia was controllable by visual training, and by the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Institute of Ophthalmology as the challengers of the postulate. Subsidizing the project were Mr. and Mrs. Gould, editors of the Ladies Home Journal, whose myopic daughter Cecily had previously received visual training from George A. Crow, O.D., with great satisfaction.

The "confrontation," according to Hoare, took place in 1944 with Dr. Crow as one of the several clinical participants for optometry. The official report of the project was made by the Public Health Bureau to the AOA at the annual meeting of the House of Delegates on June 26, 1945. Separate technical reports by each of the two parties, optometry and ophthalmology, appeared respectively in The Journal of the American Optometric Association and The Journal of the American Medical Association. Some years later Dr. Crow was prevailed upon, probably by Dr. Hoare, to record his memories of the project on audiotape. This tape is presently available from Vision Extension, Inc., 2912 South Daimler Street, Suite 100, Santa Ana, California 92705-5811, as Tape #5 of Series A of HERITAGE TAPES. To appreciate Dr. Crow's disappointment in the way the project was managed, or mismanaged, one needs to hear the tape itself, but the verbal essence is well covered in Dr. Hoare's article.

Dr. Hoare concluded that the project "was foredoomed from the start," and "as having been a classical display of professional obfuscation on the one hand, and at the clinical level; and as a masterly display of professional naivete on the other hand."

As an appendix to this article Dr. Hoare lists 22 staff members representing the optometric and visual training interests in the project, 15 optometrists and seven others. Two additional optometrists are identified in the text of Dr. Crow's reminiscing. None of the involved ophthalmologists are individually identified.

Also, as an addendum to the tape Dr. Crow reminisced his participation in what were familiarly called the "Renshaw Summer Sessions" on The Ohio State University campus in the 1940's and into the early 1950's. Many of the concepts of visual training were developed and/or debated at these rather exclusive sessions attended by invited visual scientists and designated optometric guests of the O.E.P.

Is the role of visual training in myopia control now a dead issue? Perhaps not, say Joseph N. Trachtman and Vincent Giambalvo in an article entitled, "The Baltimore Study, 40 Years Later" in a 1991 issue of the Journal of Behavioral Optometry, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 47-50. They review and re-analyze the data reported by both the optometrists and the ophthalmologists and conclude that the two parties did not use the same sets of data!

A man and his mission:

Sent to us by Executive Director Robert K. Williams of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation are two serial reprints entitled The Skeffington Saga, Parts one and two, The Man and The Mission, which had appeared in the May and July, 1966, issues of the Optometric World. They were written by the late Arthur Hoare, O.D., a career-long contemporary of A.M. Skeffington, O.D.

Dr. Hoare regarded himself "a relentless critic of Skeff" but undertook to write these reviews in a kindly frame of mind to reveal for the historical records the human trails of a personage who, though perhaps the best known optometric leader of his era, to many was something of an enigma, certainly controversial, often regarded as a zealot or at least a dedicated missionary, and occasionally as a bit of a showman. To extract the very personal information Dr. Hoare prevailed on Dr. Skeffington and his devoted wife Mary Jane Skeffington, M.D., each to answer numerous persistent questions and supplemented his resources by invitations of comments from several other national figures among Skeffington's wide circle of acquaintances.

From this we learn about his English father, a seaman, his Danish multilingual mother, his dropping out of high school, his early drifting involvement in a variety of menial jobs in the "Go west, young man" spirit, a subsequent period of theological studies leading to ordination, his graduation from the Needles Institute of Optometry in Kansas City in 1917, his immediate enlistment in the U.S. Army Tank Corps ending with an end-of-war discharge in 1918 before serving overseas, eleven years of private practice in Kearney, Nebraska, his participation as a clinical demonstrator at the 1924 American Optometric Association Congress (where he and Hoare met) in Kansas City, and his chartering of the Graduate Clinic Foundation, Inc., in 1926 (somewhat obscured by E.B. Alexander's more aggressive Optometric Extension Program, originally the Oklahoma Extension Program, beginning in 1928).

It was also brought up that he and Mary Jane were childhood sweethearts and that she studied medicine after they were married. Their home life was quiet and plain, as was much of his traveling life living out of an ordinary suitcase. Exemplary of his philosophy was his oft remark that "Yesterday ended at midnight," in line with which he refused to keep files, records, or dates. Though lacking any formal scientific training he avidly pored over the science literature in search of explanations of visual mysteries.

The "Skeffington era" approximated the second quarter of this century. The newly enacted optometric registration laws had legalized a host of thousands of "grandfather clause" licensees most of whose training consisted of "hands-on" spectacle-fitting experience supplemented by private study and/or several weeks or months of attendance of one or another of the many privately owned teaching facilities offering optometry courses. Skeffington vigorously introduced to these optometrists a clinical procedure concept to counterbalance the more sophisticated clinical

procedures being taught to students of accredited institutions of higher education undertaking to fulfill the new optometric licensing standards. His indoctrination included the "21 points," "check, chain, and typing," "syndrome analysis," and numerous other concepts and labels which provided significant technological competence and a conceptual matrix befitting the more professional desires especially of those academically lacking the more scientific infrastructure.

He seemed to recognize the need clearly, and filled it well.

H.W H.

The Duncan Diary:

The simple designation, "Duncan, Oklahoma," without a street name, house number, zip code, or post office box number, was perhaps the best known postal address in American optometry during a period encompassing most of the middle third of this century. It was the address of the Optometric Extension Program, more familiarly called the O.E.P. Its members were commonly labeled "O.E.P.ers." They were by no means a majority of optometrists but, in my opinion, the most expressive and aggressive contingent dedicated to advancing optometry's professional status. In contrast, the town of Duncan was a little known, oilwell-sustained community of several thousand people in the semiarid Great Plains, not even a crossroads of beaten intercity paths. Then, as now, the reader of this paragraph probably would not know its geographic location, only the postal address, Duncan, Oklahoma.

In Duncan lived and practiced one E.B. Alexander, O.D., the organizer and promoter of the O.E.P., and, in effect, its owner until he eventually had it incorporated as a nonprofit foundation with an autonomous governing board of directors. Many details about the program and the involved personnel are given in a series of three papers aptly entitled "The Duncan Diary," Parts I, II, and III, by Arthur E. Hoare in the May, July, and August 1967 issues of the Optometric World, Vol. 54, Nos. 5, 7, and 9, pp. 10 ff., 10 ff., and 12 ff., respectively. Part I deals with "The First Forty Years" and provides many biographical details of E.B. Alexander himself, a 1920 graduate of the Needles Institute of Optometry after a World War I stint in the U.S. Marine Corps. Initially chairing a Southwest Oklahoma Study Group he nurtured its expansion into the Oklahoma Extension Program in 1928 and finally the nationwide Optometric Extension Program in 1931.

Part II covers "The Team" of co-workers surrounding Alexander, which included such nationally familiar names as A.M. Skeffington, Jewel Young, Martha Stem, George Crow, Harry Fuog, and Sol K. Lesser.

Part III describes the organizational growth of the O.E.P. between 1928 and 1968 and in limited detail its closely integrated educational and political involvement with the American Optometric Association during the O.E.P.'s first decade.

Altogether the three documents may well be presumed accurate and informative and written with a friendly pen. Dr. Hoare's elegant style of writing makes them delightful reading though he omits any reference to the fact that, while subscribers to the O.E.P. were a devoted lot, there also existed a significant number of other well-meaning optometrists who took sometimes vehement exceptions to its teachings and political maneuvers.

It was an exciting era.

H.W H.

Linda Casser the third:

When Linda Casser was elected President-elect of the Indiana Optometric Association to serve as president in 1992-93, she checked on the probability that she was a first. Indeed not. Preceding her were Miss Margaret J. Erisman of Lafayette, who served in 1913-15, and Miss Clara M. Sweitzer of Richmond in 1920-23.

Erisman was a 1900 graduate of the Chicago College of Ophthalmology and did some post-graduate work in St. Louis. Sweitzer was a 1907 graduate of the Rochester School of Optometry and a member of Beta Sigma Kappa. Dr. Casser received her B.S. and O.D. degrees from Indiana University in 1976 and 1978, respectively, and is presently an Associate Professor of Optometry there.

Do any OHS members know whether other state optometric associations had female presidents as early in their history as the Indiana Optometric Association?

Ophthalmoscopes:

Gesnerus [an acronym?], previously titled Publications of the Swiss Society for the History of Medicine and Natural Science, Supplement 41, is a 1990 paperbound 22.5 x 15.5 x 0.5 cm booklet of 82 pages entitled "Vom Helmholtz-Augenspiegel zur Funduskamera," authored by Alfred Schett, and published by Verlag Sauerländer, Aarau, Switzerland. The author, a volunteer co-worker at the Zürich Museum of Medical History, is a learned electrical engineer and longtime collector of surgical instruments who, after retirement, specialized more and more in the history of ophthalmoscopes. In 1981 he started to inventory, classify, and annotate, among other things, the ophthalmoscopes and related items at the museum.

Each of several dozen ophthalmoscopes are illustrated in photo-offset and identified with their designers, users, or makers beginning with the Helmholtz model demonstrated in 1850 and publicized in 1851. Subsequent instruments include models enabling the user to make estimates of the refractive error, schematic eyes for retinoscopic proficiency development, multi-viewing models for demonstrative teaching purposes, electrically adapted models,

table-supported ophthalmoscopes, and a 1925 Nordenson fundus camera.

In addition to the verbal descriptions of each instrument and its carrying case or etui and a few helpful comments about the inventor or user, more than a hundred footnotes provide background or resource information.

No cane, no glasses:

What appears to be an excerpt from biographical notes by choreographer Agnes de Mille is a boxed item of four paragraphs about the late choreographer Martha Graham entitled "Aging Eyesight" in the March 1992 issue of the Journal of Optometric Vision Development. The item reports her death in 1991 at the age of 91 (at arithmetic variance with two other references identifying her birth in 1894).

She is reported as having suffered both painful arthritis and grossly deteriorating eyesight in her later years but refused to use either a cane or glasses. She is described as having on one occasion told a pink scarf on a chair, "You needn't wait any longer, Mary." She had difficulty judging stage lights, resulting in overbright and even garish lighting in her later years, as she demanded. The costumes similarly became bolder and more glitzy.

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