This autobiography was written by Dr. Israel Dvorine (1899-1989) when he was 86 years old. He practiced optometry in Baltimore, Maryland, for six decades.

Dr. Dvorine was from a religious family and moved to America from Russia in 1913 when he was age 13. There are nine chapters in the book; Chapter 1 covers the years from 1899 to 1918, while Chapter 9 focused on the years from 1952 to 1985. I first read this book many years ago and I reread it this past year. I think any current optometry student would find the book intriguing since Dr. Dvorine did not go to college. He started working at the Baltimore Optical Company and then apprenticed two years with an optometrist before sitting for the optometry board exam in Baltimore in 1922.

The author brought many new ideas to the optometry profession at the time, including the "Dvorine Animated Fusion Training Charts" as well as working on the first American color blindness test (the Dvorine Pseudo-Isochromatic color blindness test). He was a hands-on person; he worked as a press operator when the color test was printed to make sure the required precise matching of colors was achieved.

Dr. Dvorine had a loving wife and family. He was also an accomplished sculptor, sculpting figures of more than 300 individuals and donating many of them to museums and historical societies. He was very talented in developing relationships with people, including a deep respect for one of his teachers (Miss Wheeler) with whom he remained in contact until she died. One sad event included his losing one eye after he had cataract surgery and developed an infection.

A significant element of the book is that Dr. Dvorine was always grateful to the United States for giving him the opportunity to succeed as well as contribute to the profession of optometry. Among the recognitions he received were an honorary doctorate degree from Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1981 and the American Optometric Association Optometrist of the Year award in 1983.

It was a quick book to read since it was only 139 pages of text. It also contains a 15-page ‘appendix,’ which includes copies of correspondence from President Ronald Reagan to Dr. Dvorine acknowledging the receipt of one of Dvorine’s sculptures, a letter from him to the Armed Services Medical Material Standardization Committee concerning plates for color vision testing, and a list of 52 publications by Dr. Dvorine. This book was written when Dr. Dvorine was in his late 80’s, and some literary critics may think the writing was not very sophisticated. However, I recommend the book to all optometric readers.