

APR 03 1996

HINDSIGHT

Indiana University

MAR 14 1996

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Newsletter of the
Optometric Historical Society

243 North Lindbergh Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63141, USA

Volume 25

JULY 1994

Number 3

Do visual rays come or go?

Have you sometimes wondered, as have I, whether the interpreters of early Greek, Roman, and other ancient documents involving the science of seeing really were correct in translating early theory of vision as a process of rays emanating from the eye? If so, you may appreciate the article entitled "Fourth Century Visual Science" by Hofstetter and Stayskal in the January 1992 issue of Optometry and Vision Science, vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 76-79.

It is the first English translation of a treatise on vision identified with Heliodorus of Larissa and his student Damianus in the fourth century A.D. The original had been translated into Latin and Italian by Ignace Danti in 1573 and into German by Richard Schöne in 1897, all of which were quite accessible to Stayskal and me during our efforts to interpret the text correctly.

The treatise is truly a very sophisticated dissertation and represents the most authoritative concept of vision through several centuries.

H.W.H.

Early use of O.D. title:

The following paragraphs appeared as a news item on page 111 of the January 7, 1915, issue of the Optical Journal and Review of Optometry, vol. 35, no. 2:

An interesting development in the Pennsylvania situation occurred last week. The State secretary, Mr. Van Essen, was notified that the Northampton County Medical Society, at a recent meeting, received a report from a committee instructed to bring about prosecutions against practitioners alleged to be violating the ordinance prohibiting the use of misleading advertisements. Dr. V.S. Messinger, Easton, Pa., chairman of the committee, reported that he had made formal complaint before acting Mayor Tonkin, Easton, against Horace L. Lichty, an optometrist, for using the title "Dr." before his name.

Mr. Lichty, in a letter to Mr. Van Essen, said that he is a graduate of the Philadelphia Optical College, chartered under the laws of the State, and that his advertising was in no way misleading, as he always uses the word optometrist in connection with his name when he uses the title "Dr." He has used the same title in his present location for 17 years.

The officers of the Pennsylvania Optical Society are in touch with Mr. Lichty and feel that any attempt to injure an optometrist in the Keystone State is the concern of all.

Although the journal editor and apparently the Pennsylvania Optical Society officers refer to Lichty as "Mr.," his "17 years" use of the "Dr." title in advertisements indicate its legitimate public use as early as 1898 or 1897. Could this be the earliest?

About guild medals:

From P.H.M. Aangenendt, Strijpsestraat 190, NL-5616 GW, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, we learn that a few early guild or craft-union medals have been preserved that show spectacles on them. They are from Middelburg and Vlissingen in the province of Zeeland in the south of The Netherlands. Because spectaclemakers were such a small group their organizational needs were accommodated by membership in the larger silk and textile guild. So, for example, the front face of one of the medals shows the interior of a textile shop while the other face illustrates various crafted products, including a pair of spectacles. Medals were serially numbered and each member of the guild received one, thus to serve as a kind of identification or pass at functions requiring the member's attendance, for example, the funeral of an honoree. The earliest Vlissingen medals date back to 1694. The extant Middelburg medals date variously between 1592 and 1705.

Mr. Aangenendt further reminds us that the oldest known spectacle company or spectaclemakers guild was formed in Venice, Italy, between 1284 and 1317. From Venice, with its worldwide commercial connections over land and sea in the 14th century, the craft was introduced to Flanders, now a part of Belgium, together with the city of Antwerp, and the former region of Brabant, now partly in both Belgium and The Netherlands. The skills subsequently spread to Nürnberg, Fürth, and Regensburg, Germany. A significant date is 1478 when a Jacob Pfuhlmeier in Nürnberg, Germany, registered himself as a "Parillenmacher" (spectaclemaker), the earliest one vocationally identified by name.

In about 1580 the Dutch city of Middelburg had a prosperous glass industry which led to the needful capability of glass grinding. One of the contemporary spectaclemakers there was Hans Lipperhey (c.1570-c.1619), who discovered that a combination of separated lenses would produce the telescope, and another was Zacharias Janssen (1580-c.1638), who similarly assembled a combination of separated lenses to produce the microscope. It is very probable that they each had a guild medal.

Mr. Aangenendt's annual greeting card for 1987 included a front and back true-color reproduction of a 55 mm Middelburg medal dated 1677 in his own collection. The brief explanatory legend is of course in Dutch. The card is being forwarded to the ILAMO.

Ocular Heritage Society:

The July 1992 newsletter of the "other" OHS reported on the May 1992 annual meeting in Gainesville, Florida, and included copies of the eight papers presented there, as follows:

"Abe's Eyes," 4 pages, Jerome J. Abrams, O.D., an assemblage of observations on Abraham Lincoln's eyes as gleaned from the literature.

"Ophthalmology and Vanity Fair," 17 pages, Andrew P. Ferry, M.D., a commentary on three ophthalmologists, Jonathan Hutchinson, (1890), Robert Brudenell Carter (1892), and George Anderson Critchett (1905) written up in Vanity Fair as men of the day.

"Carl Zeiss and his Associates," 7 pages, E.J. Fisher, O.D., a biographical review of the optical contributions of Carl Zeiss, Ernst Abbe, Otto Schott, and M. von Rohr.

"The Diagnosis of Disease from Ancient Coins," 3 pages, Jay Galst, M.D., a commentary on the appearance of facial warts or nodules, bulging necks, protuberant jaws and eyebrows, flaring nostrils, etc. on numismatic portraits indicative of diseases of the era.

"No-stitch, 1 mm Cataract Surgery," 9 pages, Charles Letocha, M.D., a history of sutureless cataract surgery.

"Steel Spectacles and Cases," 3 pages, William Rosenthal, M.D., on the use of steel in the design of temples, bridges, eyewires, and cases.

"Vision aids; an Optical History," 9 pages, Martin B. Singer, a history of the industry."

"Better Eyesight Without Glasses," 6 pages, John W. Tull, M.D., a survey of publications, systems, and techniques intended to avoid the need for glasses.

In response to Dr. Dickson:

OHS member Eric Muth takes exception to the "Notes from a collector" commentary on pages 2 and 3 of the January 1992 issue of Hindsight, as follows:

Dr. Dickson writes that Marco Polo described Chinese spectacles. Though many other such statements have been made, the exact reference (Polo's description) is elusive as none has quoted it. If it is in fact true all of us would greatly appreciate knowing more from Marco et al. Additionally we would like very much to see the prints mentioned from ca. 1392

which prove that the Chinese were using spectacles at that time either with or without powers.

The assertion that the alleged ca. 1392 spectacles' sidearms (normal temples, said Dr. Dickson) were hinged at the center in order to fold in on themselves leaves us thinking that Mr. Ayscough's 18th century advertisement announcing "double jointed frames, an entirely new contrivance" was either a blatant lie, a reinvention or, as suspected, not at all present in China until the late 18th to early 19th century.

Regarding the sidearms said to be shown on the cover (I regret I have not seen them) "which appear to be plastic or tortoise shell and curved to fit the contour of the sulci of the ears," this style is definitely known on paper in Adams patent of 1797; however, we must all agree that the alleged 600-year-old date is as preposterous as it is when attributed to the front itself.

Some of us are collectors, some historians. We must be careful about crossing over into territory unknown to us in that we do great disservice to the world's interested peoples when we generate myths, untruths, and unknowns upon them under the guise of expertise.

Progressive addition lenses:

"30 Jahre Gleitsichtgläser: Wo stehen wir heute?" (Thirty years of progressive lenses; where do we stand now?) is the title of a brief but well illustrated review of the development, trends, and future of progressive addition lenses for presbyopia in Germany by Dieter Kalder in the May 20, 1992, issue of Deutsche Optiker Zeitung, Vol. 47, No. 5, pp. 36-41. Considered are not only the functional designs but also population age trends and utilization as a function of age and adds.

Hirschberg's volume 10:

Volume 10 of Frederick Blodi's English translation series of Julius Hirschberg's eleven volume History of Ophthalmology appears to be the last volume authored by Hirschberg himself. It deals with nineteenth century ophthalmology in fourteen national areas of the globe not covered in previous volumes, namely, The Netherlands, Scandinavia, Russia, Poland, Spain, Hispano-America, Portugal, Brazil, Greece, Turkey, The Balkans, Canada, Japan, and Egypt. It is primarily a biographical directory of many hundred persons identifiable with ophthalmological activities and developments of the era and areas designated, including dozens of full-page portraits.

Of possible optometric interest are the biographical notes pertaining to numerous names that relate also to our academic

background, such as Donders, Gullstrand, Helmholtz, Holmgren, Jäger, Landolt, Nagel, Snellen, Tscherning, et al. Their optometrically significant contributions are understandably treated as quite secondarily incidental to ophthalmology's evolving mission during especially the latter half of the century.

The disproportionate shares of the text for each nation's size (e.g., The Netherlands 44 pages, Hispano-America seven pages, Greece six pages, etc.) quite evidently reflects merely the ready availability of information to Hirschberg, but the wealth of information is impressive nevertheless.

Besides the biographical notes much information is provided on the establishment of ophthalmological programs and professorships in universities, mostly late in the century. Prior to their development there were virtually no ophthalmologists as such but simply general physicians, e.g. Donders, who included medical and surgical eyecare and emerged in time as full-scale eye physicians by dint of circumstances, interest, and reputations. Until then ophthalmology seemed to have no organizational esprit de corps, guild-like affiliation, or other ad hoc identity as a professional rallying point. This unfortunately meant that the earlier countryside had been plagued with any number of freely self-designated ophthalmological "experts" or quacks that could hardly enhance the status of the eventual but slow-coming specialty.

With the entree into university settings the specialty quickly blossomed, with formalized curricula, research, serial publications, and international professional communications. At least one gains this broad impression with the perusal of this volume. Thus, if this volume has any special historical significance for optometry it is in the analogy it provides for optometry's decades later participation in universities. This was a delay which I have theorized to have been attributable to the protective guild philosophy, a heritage still in effect in many areas.

H.W H.

Emory Hill's influence:

Appearing in three installments in the December 31, 1914, January 14, 1915, and January 28, 1915, issues of The Optical Journal and Review, vol. 35, nos. 1,3, and 5, pages 37-38, 161-162, and 293-294 is an article by Emory Hill, M.D., entitled "Some Historical Data Concerning Glasses," I, II, and III respectively. It was reprinted from Ophthalmic Record, vol. 23, 1914, pages 504-515. It is in fact a much abridged version of Dr. Hill's article on "History of Eyeglasses and Spectacles" in the American Encyclopedia of Ophthalmology, vol. 7, pp. 4894-4953, 1915, in which he gives credit to Edwin C. Bull for much help in its preparation. Bull was a Pasadena, California, optometrist who had accumulated an outstanding collection of early eyewear. It appears

that Hill also obtained much of his historical information from J. Hirschberg's voluminous German history of ophthalmology.

Hill's flowing literary style makes for easy reading so that it seems probable that the appearance of his relatively comprehensive articles in three different publications has dominated the prevailing concepts of eyewear history among Americans during this century. Actually Hill was quite cautious in his assertions, as indicated by the great frequency of such introductory phrases as "It is said", "There is a legend of. . . .", "If we may believe the story", "It is possible that", "One may say that", etc.

This, of course, is how much of history has to be written, but unfortunately the caution does not transfer easily to the reader. The Armati saga, now well analyzed as a hoax, is the classic example in the ophthalmic field.

Punktal lens history:

Two articles in the April 20, 1992, issue of Deutsche Optiker Zeitung, vol. 47, no. 4, deal with the technical, commercial, and professional history of the Punktal lens. In the first article "Seit 80 Jahren richtungsweisend," pp. 8-10, editor Dieter Baust interviews scientist Bernd J.L. Kratzer of the Carl Zeiss corporation in Aalen, Germany, concerning the eighty years of related milestones experienced by the company. In the second article, "80 Jahre Punktal Brillengläser," pp. 14-15 and 18-19, Dr. Wolfgang Pfeiffer of the same company briefly mentions the prior technical history and then describes the technical and professional developments after the introduction of the lens in 1912. Pointed out are the roles of Moritz von Rohr, Wolfgang Roos, and others.

A triple entrée:

Dr. James Leeds sent me a May 5, 1939, printed and folded program of the annual banquet tendered to the graduating class of 1939 by the class of 1940 of the School of Optometry at Columbia University. The program was carefully sealed in a plastic envelope and with it was a penned note from Leeds requesting its hasty return because he had promised to give it to Dr. A.N. Haffner, apparently for the college archives at State University of New York. The hand-lettered name of "Mr. Wilfred Blackham" on a dotted line on the front suggests that it served also as a place card as well as a menu and attendance list. According to the 1938 Blue Book of Optometrists Blackham was a New Jersey optometrist serving as a Lecturer at Columbia University.

On the front inside is a randomly ordered list of 25 "Guests of Honor," apparently all in administrative or academic roles. About a third of them are listed with Professor or Dr. titles and the others, including several well known optometrists of the era, with Mr. (including one Miss) titles. Under MARCH OF EVENTS are

listed speeches, entertainment, awards, and introduction of class officers. The impressive menu on the inside back page includes main courses of chicken, lamb, and flounder (Was the Great Depression over?). Listed alphabetically on the outside back page are the 55 members of the class of 1939 and the 45 members of the class of 1940.

What does all of this reveal? With such names as George Pegram, J.P.C. Southall, Frederic Woll, et al. on the guests of honor list, an assumption of prestige is apparent. Also, the use of the doctorate title was still under resistance in 1939. What is gratifying is that Blackham did not throw his place card away, that Leeds rescued and preserved it, and that Haffner wants it for the archives.

H.W H.

Another optometric collector:

A full tabloid-page feature in the March 9, 1992, Antique Week, vol. 24, no. 49, is an article by Marlyn I. Margulis entitled, "Optometric detective finds eye wear fascinating." Interviewed is Jay De Mesquita, O.D., of New Jersey, about his hobby of investigating and collecting antique eyewear and his collection of over 500 items.

Besides describing the eral features of eyewear as influenced by styles, customs, materials, technology, and clinical science Dr. De Mesquita points out the related historical involvement of optometry as well. He supplements his search by visiting libraries and museums to study old paintings for clues about the spectacles of centuries ago. Even descriptions in early Sears, Roebuck and Harrods catalogs sometimes spell out the purposes of special eyewear features.

A fellow stickler writes:

In response to a citation in the item entitled "Old optometrists never die" on page 11 of the January 1992 issue of Hindsight, vol. 23, no. 1, that "Dr. Worden graduated from the Los Angeles College of Optometry in 1927," Robert A. Williams writes:

In 1927 the institution now known as the Southern California College of Optometry was known as the Los Angeles School of Optometry, not College. SCCO has had several names in its long and illustrious history. Founded in 1904 as the Los Angeles School of Ophthalmology and Optometry, the first name change was to add the word "Medical" in 1911 to LAMSOO. It became LASO in 1921 or so and "College" in 1948. All of this can be found in Jim Gregg's History and Development of SCCO, 1984.

Indeed, not only is Williams correct, but the totality of facts as described by Gregg make fascinating reading. Gregg's 27-page Chapter 4 on "The Era of University Affiliation 1929-1933" alone adds much to the name-change saga and reveals a phase of optometry's history that is easily unappreciated.

A.O.A. and I.O.O.L.:

Although the American Optometric Association was actively involved in the founding of the International Optical League (now the International Optometric and Optical League) its membership lapsed in 1931. The following paragraph from the November 1932 issue of The Dioptric Review, pp. 233-234 describes the circumstances:

The American opticians have never paid a subscription in accordance with the recognised scale, as the constitution of their Association does not permit them to place a tax or assessment upon their members for this purpose. They therefore conceived the idea of obtaining subscriptions to the League by issuing to their members an I.O.L. certificate of membership for the sum of 1 dollar per year. The Executive Committee considered this matter very fully, and came to the conclusion that they could not approve of the certificate, not only because such a procedure was open to abuse, but also because the Statutes of the League only permitted of the admission of associations or societies, and not individual members of the League. As a result of the Executive's request for the withdrawal of this certificate, the American Optometric Association resigned from the I.O.L. in June, 1931.

Editor:

Douglas K. Penisten
College of Optometry
Northeastern State University
Tahlequah, OK 74464
USA

Managing Editor:

David A. Goss
School of Optometry
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405
USA

Contributing Editor:

Henry W Hofstetter
1050 Sassafras Circle
Bloomington, IN 47401
USA