HINDSIGHT

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For the record:

Maria J. Dablemont, nee Maria José Florence Dias, was indeed the exclusive founding parent of the Optometric Historical Society. How did this come about?

She was appointed in 1964 by the American Optometric Association to organize the accumulated and accumulating documents of the so-called library created in 1902 by the Physiological Section of the Association, a collection of publications which had been mostly stashed into broom closet areas, if not strayed. At almost my first personal acquaintance with her, probably the same year, she pointed up the need for an optometric historical society and suggested to me that I should initiate its founding. Despite my informing her that I was in no sense a historian, history having been my poorest subject in school, she started literally hounding me personally, and perhaps others, to take steps to organize a group. In 1968, accompanied by a library assistant, she even made a visit to our home, a four hour's drive from St. Louis, to emphasize the need. On that evening we whipped up a rough set of bylaws and decided on three other persons to enlist as fellow founders, three she had earlier prevailed upon to support the movement. On the same evening we prepared a three-paragraph statement to be released to the optometric press a year later, August of 1969, at which time my term as AOA president would be completed. The published release almost instantly brought in 33 five-dollar membership checks and a $100 contribution, enough to provide a functioning treasury to support a quarterly newsletter. Maria served immediately as Secretary-Treasurer, a role which she filled until she begged off in 1987, a volunteer function which meant direct attention to every detail, including even the quarterly insertion of our newsletters into manila mailing envelopes addressed personally by her.

But for Maria all this was purely incidental and secondary to her assigned employment mission, the AOA library. Under her stewardship was accomplished its expansion into the now world famous ILAMO, the International Library, Archives, and Museum of Optometry, Inc., with its own Board of Directors and a staff of at least a half dozen busy, full-time, trained experts, several endowments, a number of memorial collections, museum displays, and reciprocal working relationships with a host of other libraries locally, nationally, and internationally.

Who was this lady? A bit younger than I, I know, but her vigor, drive, and demeanor made her seem even more years younger.

She divulged her age only under strictest confidence, which I honor. She was born in Alagoinhas, Bahia, Brazil, into an early renowned Portuguese-Brazilian family of well-known professionals, reared and educated in Brazil with graduate education and advanced training in the rare combination of both library and archival science, with fluency in Portuguese, English, Spanish, and French, and competence in Italian and Latin. The topic of her graduate research thesis was "The Baroque Influence in Brazilian Literature." Her Summa Cum Laude degree qualified her as a teacher, a vocation which she pursued briefly. Next she was appointed by the late Brazilian President Vargas as a federal librarian. On a part-time basis she worked also as a copywriter and proofreader for an advertising agency and as a free lance writer for a technical magazine.

She arrived in the U.S.A. in 1955, a move which apparently had to do with her marrying the late Earl Dablemont of St. Louis, her number one admirer, and with whom she bore their son Edward. After several years of employment in the foreign departments of three import-export firms in St. Louis she was discovered and employed by the AOA as noted above.

What sort of person was she? Above all other traits she was persuasive, unrelenting, and convincing, sometimes gently, sometimes forcefully, but always with an identity of having prepared her grounds thoroughly, accurately, and purposefully in the interest of the world at large, the profession as a part of that world, or, only incidentally, the one she would undertake to influence. Never was there a trace of self-aggrandizement or self-serving promotion. If one would give her credit for an accomplishment she would plead with the accuser to dismiss the notion. If she now knows what I am writing she will be angry! But never vindictive.

She asked for and treated advice with care. She took advanced courses to improve her archival competence in her work. She studied and researched the history of optometry avidly and penetratingly. As treasurer of the OHS funds she guarded expenditures with utter frugality, often denying herself legitimate reimbursements of expenses incurred for OHS purposes. She was persistently creative in the development of the many service features of ILAMO. In her study of optometric history she often came up with philosophical gems such as, "The disavowal of optometrists' image as providers of eyeglasses has led the profession to dismiss its fine heritage." With regard to optometrists' frequent reference to their "humble beginnings" she furiously declared, "There is nothing humble about your history. You have a glorious past." She often recited names of certain early optometrists as honorable patriarchs of the profession. She published articles on optometric history in several journals of international stature.

She was truly admirable.

After her retirement and her husband's death she returned to Brazil in July 1991 to be near her son, grandchildren, and other members of the family. She died on November 9, 1992.

H.W H.

Optometry at Waterloo:

The period of 1967-1992 was the first quarter century of the School of Optometry at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The primary witness to the school's development was none other than Dr. E.J. Fisher, the founding Director and Professor, whose affiliations included another third of a century with the predecessor institution, the College of Optometry of Ontario. It is fortunate that he was prevailed upon to write the history of optometry at Waterloo.

The result is an unpretentious looking 23 x 17.5 cm booklet of 26 pages and several photographs entitled simply as TWENTY FIVE YEARS and published under sponsorship of the School of Optometry. Unpretentious, yes, but chock-full of details that could only have been extracted from the mind of the author with his cautious awareness "that memory plays many tricks, even when using such props as minutes of meetings, students' yearbooks, journal news items, newspaper clippings, photographs, and conversation with others who were there."

In his documentary preamble Fisher briefly reviews optometry's emergence from several centuries of spectacle maker guilds, its 20th century adoption of the title "Optometry," and the early Canadian apprenticeships and brief training offerings.

The first legislative optometry bill in Ontario was enacted in 1919 with the stipulation that the Board of Examiners in Optometry should make arrangements to provide training for new entrants. The first course was offered at the Central Technical School, Toronto. A parallel development occurred during the same era in the French-speaking province of Quebec. In 1925 the Ontario Board opened its own professional college in Toronto as the "College of Optometry of Canada," later renamed "College of Optometry of Ontario." This was the institution that negotiated the transfer of its students, faculty, staff, equipment, records, and other units to the University of Waterloo in 1967. These and many more details led up to the "beginnings" of the present university program.

The merger was not as simple as one might presume, for a university is structured very differently from a traditional free-standing professional school. The trials, tribulations, and frustrations are well described and really make recommended reading for the optometry student.

Also described are the extracurricular student activities, enrollment trends, faculty and staff acquisitions, new clinical

programs, optometric specialty developments, lecture programs, research efforts, graduate study, departmental space problems, finances, continuing education, library resources, a museum, and interdisciplinary involvements.

The text is so clear, so believable, that it should be recommended reading to anyone wishing to gain an appreciation of the philosophical differences between a university affiliated and a free-standing school. It also provides a clear picture of the growth of optometric education in Canada, especially Ontario.

Monroe B. Levoy:

OHS member Jerry Abrams presented the following paper at the April 1993 meeting of the Ocular Heritage in Mexico City. Dr. Abrams prefaces his paper by stating, "I wrote this paper with the main purpose in mind of giving recognition and paying tribute to a man who gave to our ophthalmic industry the concept of 'fashion eyewear.' He pioneered this concept 50 years ago."

Monroe B. Levoy—Optician

Monroe B. Levoy was born in New York City in June 1901 and died October 1973. He was the second generation member of his family in the ophthalmic profession. For over 25 years he continued and expanded the firm of B.M. Levoy, opticians, began by his father in the late 1800's. For many years they maintained and practiced fine quality opticianry on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Monroe B. Levy during these years conceived, developed, and introduced the concept of fashion eyewear as an accessory. He developed the idea that eyeglasses should have color. They should have design. They could be jeweled. They may have silver and gold. This new philosophy of his was to change the public's mind-set that eyeglasses should be fund and should make a fashion statement. He uniquely phrased eyeglasses as being eyewear. He believed that eyewear can be elegant. Eyewear can be fashionable. Eyewear can be stylish and eyewear can be beautiful. In the early 1940's Mr. Levoy formed the TURA Company and introduced a revolutionary lightweight aluminum that could be anodized into a rainbow of high fashion colors. Colors before were never presented for eyeglasses as he now could produce them in colors of navy, olive green, pink, red, peach, and charcoal grey. This "TURA" high quality frame was more than a frame. He said this was a "Frame of Mind," a fashion accessory that could be feminine, flattering, and fun to wear. This innovative approach and his pioneering idea was for a woman to have an entire wardrobe of eyewear to properly accessorize every outfit in her closet. Secondly, he did not overlook the men. They, too, should be in that fashion limelight as well. The men's TURA frame came later but did revolutionize the idea that eyeglasses for men also can be "eyewear" and be in fashion for mean as well as a handsome suit, shirt, and tie can be.

The next step was that he added ornamentation to his frame. TURA was the first to put jewelry on a spectacle frame. He put silver, gold, precious, and semi-precious stones in elegant designs on his eyewear collection.

In the 1960's Mr. Levoy became the first manufacturer to add a famous designer to his ophthalmic product. Christian Dior was his designer labeling his new OPTYL material and still keeping it in high fashion. He was the first in the industry to advertise eyewear in such publications as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Town & Country*. Fashion shows were held in hundreds of cities throughout the country. Models wore designer clothing form leading department stores with, of course, matching eyewear by TURA.

This idea of eyewear with a fashion statement could best be sold to the ophthalmic professions by women, and Mr. Levoy felt so strongly about this point that his entire sales force across the country consisted of women. A first again in a field that was always dominated by men, now TURA was represented by all women and to this day this holds true. As a result of TURA's success in this area, today 65% of all frame manufacturer's sales reps are women.

Mr. Levoy and his able staff held seminars for the professionals in the 1950's and the 1960's across the country telling his story and promoting TURA and his concept that beautiful, high fashion, and colorful eyewear could spell success to the professionals who supported his ideas and his philosophy. In 1968 he authored a book entitled *The Art of Positive Dispensing*. In its forward, Mr. Levoy says, "The dispensing methods that served twenty years ago are no longer adequate to meet the challenge of today's fashion conscious and price conscious patients. The successful practitioner must employ new skills, new arts, and these cannot be acquired by guesswork, intuition, or by trial and error."

In his book, his dispensing methods and techniques help the professional and the patient decide faster on the right eyewear, on multiple eyewear, and at a higher fee. He says that this positive approach has been proven over the years and, in every case, has led to a more effective, a more profitable way of dispensing with greater service to the patient. Today, TURA INC. carries on Mr. Levoy's ophthalmic tradition of style and elegance. The anodized aluminum frames of early days have changed to gold and silver metal and OPTYL plastics of the 1990's with spring hinged frames and other modern innovations to make eyewear enjoyable to wear. The fact remains that Monroe B. Levoy, optician extraordinaire, has left his mark in the ophthalmic industry. An innovator and pioneer, he made people aware of how important eyewear is to their appearance and that eyeglasses can be fun to wear, can be fashionable to wear, that they can make a statement, and that they can make a difference for 70 million people in America who wear them.

Afterimages:

Professor Arthur B. Evans in the Department of Romance Languages at DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana 46135, edits a journal called Science and Fiction Studies and wishes to track down any early or recent biological experiments, real, presumed, or mythical, which have generated the belief that bleached retinal images can be detectable after death. The belief has become a part of "common knowledge" and folklore, especially in detective novels and science fiction. All clues will be welcomed by him, and us.

Following are some of Professor Evans's examples of author's using the concept in their writings. In "At the End of the Passage" in Life's Handicap: Being Stories of Mine Own People, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931, pp. 265-269, Rudyard Kipling provides

a discourse among several characters as to the feasibility of identifying the killer by looking into, or photographing, the open eyes of a dead body in a coffin. In a short story, "Claire Lenoir," in Revue des Lettres et des Arts, Oct. 13-Dec. 1, 1867, later incorporated into his novel Tribulat Bonhomet, 1887, and subsequently translated by Arthur Symons as Claire Lenoir, NY, Albert & Chas. Boni, 1925, novelist Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, writing in the first person, cites on page 42 a newspaper clipping crediting L'Academie des Sciences de Paris with stating the authenticity of the claim that the eyes of sheep, horses, and cats conserve in their eyes the impression of the objects they have seen before they die. On pages 219-22, continuing in the first person, he describes the agonizing revelation of a detailed scene observed ophthalmoscopically in the eyes of a dead woman.

In Les Frères Kip, Paris: Hetzel, 1902, Jules Verne describes, in French, experiments "by certain ingenious scientists," showing "that the image of exterior objects imprinted upon the retina of the eye are conserved there indefinitely."

Other references to a photo in a dead person's eye include E.T.A. Hoffman, "The Sandman," 1817; Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cat," "Ligeia," etc.; and many more in Professor Evans's collection. In the sample he provided, the most recent was in 1974, a biography by Jacques-Henry Bornecque entitled Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: Creator et Visionnaire, Paris, Nizet.

Professor Evans has published some of his findings on this popular belief that the image of the last thing seen at the moment of death remained imprinted forever upon the retina of the eye. Below are some comments which were adapted, or even lifted, from his article entitled "Optograms and Fiction" in Science-Fiction Studies, #61, Volume 20, Part 3, November 1993, pp. 341-361.

Jules Verne (1828-1905) not only incorporated the concept into his fictional plots but also "explained" the "scientific" basis for the "phenomenon" as a relatively well-known notion supported by scientific reports on optograms. Indeed, in 1876 Franz Boll of the University of Rome had discovered the bleaching of rod pigment in the frog retina. In 1877 Professor Willy Kühne at Heidelberg took a picture, an optogram, of a barred window with a dark-adapted rabbit eye. The findings of both were quickly featured in various newspapers and journals.

The concurrent rapid technological advances and popularity of photography enhanced the public awareness and understanding of the phenomenon. Popular extrapolation suggested that "the final image viewed before death should remain fixed forever—like a photo—within the dead person's eyes." Popular belief in these "facts" became so common that "some police departments began to take close-up photographs of the eyes of murder victims in the hope of identifying the murderers." By the same token, some murderers

destroyed the eyes of their victims to prevent identification of the killer.

Traces of the belief persist even today, supported no doubt by utilization of the optogram in the plots of literary works. By the 1920's, however, the public's unquestioning belief in optograms began to wane, perhaps because of their continuously unrealistic portrayal in literature and/or their lack of success in police murder investigations. However, at about the same time there emerged the science fiction of the microscopic brain-scan transferring the location of the fascinating post-mortal images from the eyes to the brain. Their apparent feasibility seems enhanced by the marvels of modern electronic developments making ordinary reasonableness an inadequate criticism of validity.

An offprint of the article by Professor Evans has been deposited in ILAMO.

H.W H.

Optometry's legal status in Germany:

With the early onset of prepaid health care in Germany reimbursement for glasses was interpreted as allowable only upon authorization by a medical physician. Under this interpretation the long unchallenged pattern developed that ophthalmologists wrote the prescriptions and optometrists (Augenoptiker) dispensed the glasses except in the instances that individual patients preferred to pay for their own and chose the prescriptions of the Augenoptiker.

In 1992 in the ophthalmological news magazine Der Augenarzt, vol. 26, pp. 170-172, there appeared an article entitled "Optische Rehabilitation—durch wen?" (Optical rehabilitation, by whom?) which dealt quite possessively with many issues at the overlapping fringes between ophthalmologists and optometrists. In response the Deutsche Optiker Zeitung invited the legal counsel of the Zentral Verband der Augenoptiker, Dr. York-Friedrich von Bremen-Kühne, to submit a historical account of the litigation that had taken place relative to optometrists' refractive rights. The account appeared in the October 20, 1992, issue of the DOZ, vol. 47, no. 10, pp. 64-65.

Briefly, the issue had been precipitated by the refusal of a health insurance office in 1953 to reimburse the ophthalmic charges of a fully qualified Augenoptikerin because the prescription was not signed by a physician. The date of the first court decision, in her favor, was February 2, 1957. Then followed a series of appeals and related higher court actions ultimately involving the presidents of the two professional societies as plaintiff and defendant. On February 4, 1972, in the highest court it was determined that the determination of visual ability by a nonphysician was in no sense an exercise of medical care.

A mysterious black box:

An inquiry from Professor Dr. H. Remky of Munich, Germany, calls attention to a small advertisement of "The Curtis Motion Target" that appeared with some regularity in the 1909 issues of The Optical Journal. The caption of the advertisement is NO MORE ATROPINE. The illustration shows what appears to be a black box on the front side of which is a series of transilluminated concentric rings. It was offered for sale by Ethelred Curtis of LaPorte, Indiana, variously at $10 and $8, and was claimed to relax the accommodation fully when fixated during retinoscopy.

Any information at all about this will be appreciated.

Thank You, Mr. Orr:

A brief biographical account and photograph of Mr. Hugh Orr appears in the January 14, 1994, issue of the Opticians, no. 54, vol. 207, p. 11. When he retired from his group of five practices 20 years ago he decided to collect antique spectacles, frames, cases, and ophthalmic instruments with the help of Mrs. Orr, amassing over 2,000 pieces and a wealth of knowledge. In 1985 he published the "Illustrated History of Early Antique Spectacles" now in its fourth printing. In 1989 the British College of Optometrists asked him to organize the British Optical Association Foundation museum's huge spectacle collection. He devotes two to three days a week to preparing an acquisition account of each item and scouring the old records of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers for its historical documentation.

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