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Optometric Historical Society

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O.H.S. Meeting at American Academy of Optometry meetings:

The Optometric Historical Society will meet from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, December 11, at the American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting '98 in San Francisco, California. The meeting is tentatively assigned to Union Square Room 19 in the Academy Meeting hotel; please confirm the location upon your arrival. OHS President Walter Chase has arranged for a presentation by Joe Bruneni. The presentation is: Charles F. Prentice, Opticist, the man behind "Prentice's Rule." Bruneni is a Fellow of the National Academy of Opticianry and has more than forty years of experience in the ophthalmic eyewear industry. Among his many consultant and service positions, he is Director of Training and Education for the Optical Laboratories Association and Executive Director of the Polycarbonate Lens Council. He has been on the faculty at the Southern California College of Optometry since 1994, teaching courses in ophthalmic optics. In 1994 he published a book entitled *Looking Back—History of the Ophthalmic Industry*.

Book on the history of the Illinois College of Optometry:

Optometry in America: A History of the Illinois College of Optometry 1872-1997, by Anistasia R. Miller and Jared M. Brown, Chicago: Illinois College of Optometry, 1996 (ISBN 0-9652759-1-4), 128 pages of text and photographs plus 18 pages of appendices plus a 3-page index, \$45.

This book presents a history of the Illinois College of Optometry (ICO) and its predecessor institutions. ICO traces its origins to the Chicago College of Ophthalmology and Otology started in 1872 by Dr. Henry Olin. After Olin's death in 1891, Dr. James McFatrigh took over the school and changed its name to Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology. Later James McFatrigh's brother George joined him as a partner in the school. In 1897, James McFatrigh started the Murine Eye Remedy Company. As he got more involved with his Murine eyedrop company, James turned over most of the school's administrative duties to George.

In 1898, the school started admitting persons without medical training. Typically these were persons with some optical experience, including jewelers, refracting opticians, and dispensing opticians. Around the turn of the century, a Doctor of Optics diploma could be earned through a four-week attendance program

or a six-week correspondence course. The tuition was \$25. Another two-week attendance program or six-week correspondence course led to a Bachelor of Ophthalmology degree. Other programs were the Master of Ophthalmology and the Doctor of Ophthalmology programs.

Another of ICO's predecessor schools was the Needles Institute of Optometry. William B. Needles learned optometry at the McCormick Optical College in Chicago in 1899. He set up practice in Kansas City, Missouri, and taught at the Kansas City School of Optometry. In 1907 Needles started the Needles Institute of Optometry. By the early 1920s, its matriculants could attend a two-thousand-clock-hour program over two years or a one-thousand-clock-hour program over one year.

In 1922 Needles purchased the Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otolology. In 1926, it and the Needles Institute merged to become the Northern Illinois College of Optometry. The Doctor of Optometry degree for the students entering the school in 1933 constituted 3,312 clock hours of study over a three-year period, with an annual tuition of \$300. That year marked the largest graduating class up to that point, 178 students. In the 1930s, the faculty included Carl F. Shepard, W.D. Zoethout, Thomas G. Atkinson, and Irvin M. Borish.

Enrollment decreased during World War II, so that there were only 60 students at Northern Illinois College of Optometry in 1944. After the war, there was a dramatic increase in the number of students, with 2,100 students attending in 1947. Many of these students, however, did not complete the program. In 1951, Richard Feinberg took over as President of Northern Illinois College of Optometry from Richard Needles, son of William Needles. Feinberg had been Dean of the Pacific University College of Optometry.

Another of ICO's predecessor institutions was started by University of Illinois medical school graduate Reuben Seid in 1936. Initially calling it the Midwestern College of Optometry, Seid changed its name to the Monroe College of Optometry in 1937. That year he hired Carl Shepard as dean of his school. In the late 1940s, the name of the school was changed to Chicago College of Optometry. Faculty members included Eugene Freeman, Ernest S. Takahashi, Richard Tennant, and Julius Brodnax, the first African American optometrist to become a faculty member at an accredited American optometry school. In 1949, the Chicago College of Optometry initiated a five-year curriculum, with the first two years transferrable from colleges and universities with a standard liberal arts curriculum.

In the early 1950s, the post-war boom in enrollments ended. Northern Illinois College of Optometry entered 80 new students in the fall of 1950. Meanwhile, the Chicago College of Optometry had a decline in the number of graduates from 480 in 1947 to 94 in 1954. This may have been the main factor that led to the merger of the two institutions in 1955. After the merger, the new institution became known as the Illinois College of Optometry. Eugene Strawn became the first President of the

Illinois College of Optometry, a position he held until his death in 1971. Alfred Rosenbloom became the President of ICO in 1972 and held that post until 1981.

Academic requirements continued to increase in the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1960s, a third of beginning students had bachelor's degrees. In the 1970s, additions to the optometry curriculum included ophthalmic pharmacology, developmental psychology, developmental vision, public and community health optometry, and increased coverage of strabismus and amblyopia.

This book was written by two lay persons. It contains numerous black-and-white and some color photographs. The book is organized into six chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of some of the antecedents of eye and vision care prior to the mid-19th century. The second chapter starts the story of the schools that led up to the formation of the Illinois College of Optometry. The last chapter covers the activities of ICO from the 1980s to the time of the writing of the book. Appendices include a chronology, a listing of various officials, a listing of recipients of honorary degrees and alumni awards, and reference citations.

D.A.G.

Optics in court:

Largely oblivious to the rank and file optometrists during the middle third of this century were three legal actions which shaped the optical industry. These are described in vivid detail by Joe Bruneni under the title "Industry Goliaths Topple" in the July 1998 issue of *Lab Talk*, vol. 26, no. 24, pp. 22-23.

The first was a federal action filed in 1940 under the Sherman Antitrust Act and Clayton Antitrust Act charging that 13 manufacturers of eyeglass frames and mountings, et al., had conspired to fix prices and restrain trade in ophthalmic goods through the control of three major spectacle patents, the FulVue, Numont, and Rimway frames and mountings. In 1948, a Consent Decree stipulated a cancellation of the patents and related licenses and agreements.

The second was a Justice Department complaint filed in 1946 against American Optical and a list of individual medical doctors. The Consent Decree similarly affected Bausch & Lomb in ending the common practice of rebating to oculists who referred patients to dispensers for glasses or contact lenses.

The final blow came from an almost overlooked complaint made by a Wisconsin voter to his U.S. Senator, Alexander Wiley, that B&L and American Optical were conspiring to put his lab, Madison Optical, out of business. The Justice Department filed a complaint in 1961 under the Sherman Act and settled it by a Consent Decree in 1966 which spelled out various business restrictions for a twenty-year period

forcing the two manufacturers to operate wholesale laboratories on the same basis as independents.

H.W H.

A notable collection of articles:

Sol Tannebaum recently donated a bound volume of his publications to the Indiana University Optometry Library. Of particular interest are over 50 articles on the history of optometry, ophthalmology, optics, and vision science published between 1964 and 1997 in the *Journal of the American Optometric Association*. There are also seven articles from the *Journal of the Illinois Optometric Association*, and over 100 newspaper articles on wide ranging topics in optometry and vision care, published primarily in the *Park Forest [Illinois] Star* and the *Park Forest Reporter*.

Tannebaum's optometry history articles were a regular feature in the *Journal of the American Optometric Association* from 1964 to 1971. A recurring theme of some of his articles in the *Journal of the American Optometric Association* (particularly in: The puzzle of our optometric past. 1972; 43(4):443-450; A case [of] history—the development of optometry. 1974; 45(10):1251-1255; and Optometry or ophthalmology? A historical review of our past. 1989; 60(9):690-693) is how the contributions of a wide variety of individuals are part of the "puzzle" of the early development of optometry. In this regard, he noted Bacon, Maurolycus, Daza de Valdes, Kepler, Scheiner, Molyneux, Donders, Prentice, and many others. He makes the point that our heritage can be traced back to ancient Greece.

D.A.G.

O.A.I.C.C.:

As usual, the October 1998 issue of *Ophthalmic Antiques*, no. 65, contains several historical items of optometric interest. On page 4, by Paul Aangenendt, is the story of, "Odilio, Patron Saint of Opticians," a mixture of fact and fiction. Odilio (Othilio, Ottilie, Odilie, Odile) was born blind ca. 660 A.D. near Strasbourg and was placed in a monastery. Baptism miraculously restored her sight.

On page 5, Udo Timm describes the contributions of Richard Greef (1862-1938), a German ophthalmologist whose hobby was optical history and the collection of ophthalmic antiques. He published numerous articles on spectacles and donated his collection of antiques to the Zeiss museum in Jena.

On pages 13-14, Colin Fryer authors "Unorthodox Ophthalmics; the Iridiagnosis Story," some biographical details of the life and claims of an obscure homeopathic physician named Dr. Ignatz von Peczely (1826-?). He published a book on iridiagnosis (iridology) in 1880 and a diagnostic chart of the iris in 1886.

H.W H.

Century old optometry practices:

With the American Optometric Association having celebrated its 100th anniversary recently, the June 15, 1998, issue of the *AOA News* (vol. 36, no. 14, p. 12F) had a feature on some optometry practices which can trace their roots back for over 100 years. The practice of AOA Board member Wesley E. Pittman goes back to his great grandfather William David Pittman who started a jewelry business in Mexia, Texas, in 1893, and learned optometry through apprenticeship and correspondence. Like his father and grandfather, Wesley E. Pittman has served on the Texas Optometry Board. The practice of Saul Polenberg and James G. Cayea of Poughkeepsie, New York, was started by C.H. Perkins in 1892, and maintained for many years by Atherton and Henry Marshall.

Terry H. Wynne, III, of Griffin, Georgia, can trace his practice back to his grandfather's practice started in 1889 in Cochran, Georgia. Terry H. Wynne, I, graduated from the department of optics of Parson's Horological Institute in LaPorte, Indiana. The practice of Koetting Associates in St. Louis had its roots in the jewelry and optical departments of the general merchandise store opened by John Koetting in St. Genevieve, Missouri, in 1887.

Brian Kahn of Atlanta is the fourth generation of his family to practice optometry. His great grandfather, Samuel Kahn, practiced in Birmingham, Alabama, from 1889 to 1929. Brian Kahn's grandfather and two great uncles practiced in Atlanta. Another long-standing family practice is located in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Henry Theodore Prange opened his office there in 1899. All three of his sons as well as two of his grandsons became optometrists. The two grandsons, Donald Prange and Harold T. Prange, practice there today.

The article includes photographs of the interior of the Pittman practice in 1922 and the store fronts where the Wynne practice was located in Griffin, Georgia, in 1904. There is also a picture of the exterior of the practice of optometrist Richard Ryer taken in 1885.

How many other 100-year-old optometry practices are there?

D.A.G.

A book on a remarkable collection:

In the September 1998 issue of *Optometry and Vision Science* (vol. 75, no. 6, p. 634), Jay Enoch authored a review of a book of likely interest to OHS members. The book is *The Bernard Becker Collection in Ophthalmology: An Annotated Catalogue*, compiled by Lilia Wechsler, Christopher Hoolihan, and Mark W. Weimer, and published in 1996 by The Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis.

Enoch describes the book as being a ". . . well illustrated list of historical books (ably and thoughtfully annotated as to content), reference sources, and rare prints (well reproduced, quite a number in color), and it is very well executed and indexed." The items described in the book cover several centuries. As a consequence, Enoch feels that the book allows one ". . . to follow easily the course of development of ophthalmic science in any of quite a number of subjects through the years, through different regional areas, and to obtain an excellent picture of the progress of developments and local interests in our science."

D.A.G.

A reminder:

Contributions to the newsletter and comments on material in the newsletter are welcome and encouraged. Send your submissions or letters to David A. Goss, Managing Editor, at the address below.

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