

HINDSIGHT

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Women Take the Wheel: On the Road to Professional Equality

**SPECIAL ISSUE:
FOCUS ON WOMEN IN OPTOMETRY**

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Editor:

David A. Goss, OD, PhD

School of Optometry

Indiana University

Bloomington, IN 47405

dgoss@indiana.edu

Contributing Editors:

Irving Bennett, OD

5551 Dunrobin Drive, #4208

Sarasota, FL 34238

irvbennett23@gmail.com

Kirsten Pourroy Hébert

The Archives & Museum

of Optometry

243 North Lindbergh Boulevard

St. Louis, MO 63141

khebert@aoa.org

**Optometry Cares® -
The AOA Foundation**

Pete Kehoe, OD

Board of Directors

pete@petekehoe.com

Brittany Broombaugh

Director

bbroombaugh@aoa.org

Kirsten Pourroy Hébert

Heritage Services Specialist

khebert@aoa.org

ON THE COVER



Women Take the Wheel: On the Road to Professional Equality

The cover image captures the spirit of leadership and the professional "drive" of the first women to carve out careers in optometry, as well as their role in paving the way for future generations. This photo of Dr. Gertrude Stanton showing off the 1907 Oldsmobile she won in a popularity contest sponsored by the Minneapolis Star Tribune (HE3.1 r253) is one of a series held by the Minnesota Historical Society in its collection: the Gertrude Stanton Papers, 1890-1931, P1558.

OHS Committee 2019

Chair

Lilien Vogl, OD

drvogl@cox.net

Linda Casser, OD

lcasser@salus.edu

Heather Edmonds, MLIS

edmondsh@neco.edu

Board Liaison

Pete Kehoe, OD

pete@petekehoe.com

W. Howard McAlister, OD, MPH

mcal@umsl.edu

Editor

David A. Goss, OD, PhD

dgoss@indiana.edu

Raymond I. Myers, OD

rimyersod@gmail.com

Jim Sandefur, OD

exec@optla.org

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<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/hindsight/issue/archive>.

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Guest Editorial by Linda Casser, O.D.



Optometry's First Lady, Dr. Gertrude Stanton



The Persistence of Lois Bing, O.D.

HINDSIGHT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL ISSUE: FOCUS ON WOMEN IN OPTOMETRY

News 2

Editorial 3

Articles

**Gertrude Stanton (1863-1931):
The First Woman Licensed to Practice Optometry
in the United States** 5
Viktoria Davis, OD and Lilien Vogl, OD

**Minerva H. Weinstein (1893-1982):
The First Woman Licensed by Exam to
Practice Optometry in New York City** 11
Kirsten Hebert, BA

Biographical Sketches

**Two Visionary Ohio Women:
Lois Black Bing, O.D. and Ruth P. Morris, O.D.** 20
Robert D. Newcomb, OD, MPH

From the Archives

**"Never-the-less, I Was Accepted": Objects from
the Lois Bing Papers, MSS 501.4.12** 22
Kirsten Hebert, BA

Memoirs

In Her Own Words: Libby I. Sukoff, O.D. 23
Libby I. Sukoff, OD and Andrea P. Thau, OD

**Pioneering Women in Indiana Optometry:
Boyd and Metzger —A Family Affair** 28
Kyle W. King, OD

THE OHS NOMINATES KOETTING TO THE NOHF

The Optometric Historical Society has submitted a nomination for Dr. Robert A. Koetting (1925-2011) for induction into the National Optometry Hall of Fame (NOHF) in 2020. Founded in 1998, the NOHF has been a program of Optometry Cares - The AOA Foundation for more than a decade and currently includes 81 members. Those selected for induction this year will be honored at a special ceremony at the American Optometric Association's annual Optometry's Meeting 2020 at the National Harbor, MD/Washington, DC in June. Nominations submitted in 2020 will be considered each year for a period of four years.



AMO SELECTED TO EXHIBIT AT LAMBERT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CENTENNIAL

The Archives & Museum of Optometry has been selected to install an exhibition at the Lambert International Airport in St. Louis, MO June 11-December 10, 2020! Since 2008, the Lambert Art and Culture Exhibition Program's Art Advisory Committee has solicited proposals from cultural heritage organizations and artists throughout the St. Louis region to create exhibits for six high-traffic areas in the Lambert Airport. In response to the request for proposals for 2020-2023, our University of Missouri - St. Louis Museum Studies intern, Taylour Arkfeld, drafted a proposal to celebrate Lambert's centennial anniversary in 2020 with an interpretation of St. Louis' transportation history through the "lens" of optometry. The planned exhibit will feature protective eyewear held in the AMO collections worn by pilots, passengers and workers engaged in travel by water, rail, road, and air. This exhibition coincides with the the American Optometric Association's #2020EyeExam public awareness campaign and we hope our public facing exhibition will not only fascinate visitors to St. Louis, but also help to promote the AOA's message to make 2020 the year to schedule a comprehensive eye exam with a doctor of optometry.



OHS COMMITTEE OF OPTOMETRY CARES WRAPS UP FIRST YEAR

The new Optometric Historical Society Committee under Optometry Cares - The AOA Foundation has completed its first successful year (February 1, 2019-January 31, 2020)! Since officially joining Optometry Cares in 2015, the OHS has slowly evolved into one of our most valued Heritage Services programs.

During this time, OHS leadership has undergone a metamorphosis. Following the Memorandum of Understanding between the OHS and Optometry Cares in 2011, the society's original Board of Directors transitioned into an ad hoc Advisory Committee to Optometry Cares leadership, while maintaining the physical structure and operation of a Board.

This entity was reconfigured in 2019 in order to ensure that the OHS runs efficiently and has the full support of the Optometry Cares Board and staff. The new OHS Committee consists eight appointed members including a Chair (Lilien Vogl, O.D.), a liaison to the Optometry Cares Board of Directors (Pete Kehoe, O.D.), the editor of *Hindsight* (David Goss, O.D., Ph.D.), and five members-at-large representing academia and organized optometry: Linda Casser, O.D. (Salus University), Heather Edmonds, M.L.I.S. (New England College of Optometry), W. Howard McAlister, O.D., M.P.H. (UMSL/AFOS), Raymond I. Myers, O.D. (UMSL), and Jim Sandefur, O.D. (Optometry Association of Louisiana).

We would like to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of this committee in 2019 and, on behalf of Optometry Cares staff and the OHS membership, thank them for their service:

2019 Optometric Historical Society Committee



Dr. Lilien Vogl



Dr. Pete Kehoe



Dr. David A. Goss



Dr. Linda Casser



Ms. Heather Edmonds



Dr. W. Howard McAlister



Dr. Raymond I. Myers



Dr. James Sandefur

GUEST EDITORIAL: ARE WOMEN RUINING OPTOMETRY?

"20/20" on the Snellen chart has a special resonance for Doctors of Optometry—"normal acuity" is how we've explained it to countless numbers of our patients. For many of us in the profession, this is the perfect time for *Hindsight: The Journal of Optometry History* to continue a visionary approach and to launch the year 2020 by publishing two issues on women in optometry.

So, why is the title for this Guest Editorial, "Are Women Ruining Optometry?" In 1983, an article was published entitled "Will Women Ruin Optometry?"¹ I was five years into my career at that time, and, as you might imagine, the article caught my attention, especially since my valued and accomplished colleague, Dr. Susan Oleszewski, was prominently featured in the publication. I've thought about the article many times over the years, but it had been some time since I had actually read it. Thanks to the efforts and interest of Kirsten Hébert, Heritage Services Specialist for the Archives & Museum of Optometry, I had the opportunity to carefully re-read the article very recently.

The subtitle of the article was "Experts ponder the impact of female doctors." In short, the article describes the expected rise of women in the profession of optometry consistent with the emerging feminization of other health professions. I would say that that the article, while posing the question "Will Women Ruin Optometry?", had already seemed to conclude that the answer was "yes," not inconsistent with societal perspectives at the time. The article spoke of women "invading" the profession and the "emotional strain" that would result. It contained quotes from anonymous sources, including one colleague citing an anticipated "flak" in the profession.

Fast forward nearly 40 years. Although much has changed in society, our profession, and the health care arena, concerns remain about continuing gender differences in professional opportunities and advancement.² Many articles have been published about women in optometry, including the

increasing number of female optometry students and practitioners. Women have achieved, and are achieving, leadership positions in all arenas in organized and academic optometry as well as the ophthalmic industry. More recent publications even include an electronic newsletter issuance by the American Optometric Association titled "The Future is Female."³ It is interesting to have seen the transition from "Ruin" to "Future" over the course of my career.

At the personal level, I was at the front end of the substantive shift toward gender diversity in our profession. In my graduating class, the Indiana University School of Optometry Class of 1978, women comprised 23% of the student cohort (15/65). Fortunately, I had wonderful support from family members and friends as I considered my goal of becoming a health care professional. After researching various career options, I purposefully chose to pursue the profession of optometry for reasons consistent with so many others: it is an independent, science-oriented, helping profession that has different demands compared to medicine and dentistry. As my career unfolded, I was fortunate to be part of optometry's expanding scope into the use of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents, which was a very exciting time. As the demographics of our profession were changing, I had the opportunity to accomplish some "female firsts" in optometric education and in the profession. And I am truly fortunate to have wonderful male mentors and supporters: Dr. Daniel Gerstman, Dr. Louis J. Catania, Dr. John Amos, Dr. Murray Fingeret, the late Dr. David Sullins, the late Dr. Irwin Suchoff, and colleagues in the Indiana Optometric Association, to name just a few. Along the way, did I encounter obstacles that I felt were related to my gender? Definitely. Did this substantially discourage or dissuade me? No. Was I also the beneficiary of new opportunities because I was at the front end of changing demographics and male colleagues recognized the importance of broader inclusivity? Absolutely.



Linda Casser, O.D.
Professor, Optometry, Salus University
lcasser@salus.edu

While I have personally not been one to focus on gender issues in optometry, and because, in many ways, I view the presence of more women in our profession to be a natural transition reflective of societal change, I came to realize that the issue of gender in optometry is noticed by many, especially more junior female colleagues. So, as I benefitted from having wonderful mentors, I also found myself, either consciously or subconsciously, having opportunities to serve as a mentor and role model to female optometry students and colleagues as a result of having completed one of the profession's earliest residency programs, by successfully practicing medical optometric care, by visibly providing continuing education lectures, and by serving in organized optometry and academic leadership roles.

Now back to 2020. Are women ruining optometry? The answer, I believe, is a resounding "No." The evidence is all around us and is especially apparent in the wonderful biographies and memoirs of female colleagues that comprise this issue and the coming April issue of *Hindsight*. The memoir submitted by Dr. Libby Sukoff is especially poignant because she was quoted in the 1983 article while serving as chair of the New York board of optometry

at that time. These inspiring stories illustrate their dedication, perseverance, accomplishments, and many “firsts” as female optometry students, practitioners, and leaders despite encountering obstacles inherent in change and as mirrored in our profession. Their efforts and success leave a legacy from which we all benefit and that is contributed to by female colleagues every day.

The submission of this Guest Editorial has provided an opportunity for me to reflect on the issue of women in optometry. If demographic trends continue toward the feminization of entering optometry students and ultimately optometric practitioners, it is interesting to consider that women have the potential of transitioning from the prospect of ruining optometry to the potential of continuing to raise optometry.

Much has been written over the years about the interpersonal styles and leadership attributes of men and women, yet each of us is different irrespective of our gender association. And, the expanding diversity of our profession beyond gender is vitally important. My hope / encouragement is that each current and future optometric student, resident, practitioner, and leader commit to, and actively demonstrate both individually and collectively, the following attributes to help ensure the vitality and stature of the profession of optometry:

- Actively embrace a caring, patient-centered approach
- Project confidence
- Practice strong communication skills, including active listening
- Model a dedication to excellence
- Tell and show who we are and what we do, and our role in the health care arena
- Commit to inclusivity
- Value constructive debate while fostering a culture of unity and civility
- Unlearn stereotypes that interfere with interpersonal skills and interactions
- Collaborate, both intra- and inter-professionally

- Serve as a mentor and positive role model who supports caring and leading
- Foster a sense of community
- Be action-oriented, especially in envisioning / articulating optometry's future
- Always be passionate about the profession
- Celebrate the contributions of the optometric profession throughout its history

If we consider the Snellen chart parallels with the coming calendar years in the 21st century, the risk is that our “acuity” may not improve chronologically since the year “2020” is ultimately followed by 2030, 2040, etc. Let us continue to set the clarity of “2020” in our individual and professional sights.

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2. Encyclopedia.com [Internet]. Women as Health Professionals, Contemporary Issues Of. Encyclopedia of Bioethics; [Updated 2019 Dec 27]. Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/science/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/women-health-professionals-contemporary-issues>.
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Letter to the Editor:

When I saw the photos of Dr. James S. Wahl and Dr. William C. Ezell on the cover of the July, 2019 issue of *Hindsight*, I just had to read it all, because I always looked up to and admired both when I was a young man and now as an old man! This wonderful issue of *Hindsight* made me realize that I am part of optometric history and so proud to have met and known so many of our leaders over the past 55 years that I have practiced optometry.

I graduated in 1964 from Southern College of Optometry (SCO) at age 26. My wife Michele and I arrived in Griffin, Georgia in the summer of my graduation year to do a three month

“internship” with Dr. W. Randolph Gilbert, a prominent optometrist and Georgia optometry board member who I had not known previously. I think the man who fostered my interest in optometry, Dr. Edward H. Shannon, Sr., from my hometown of Gainesville, Georgia, had something to do with it. Dr. Shannon will always be my original sponsor and a person whom I idolized.

I was excited about the internship, but scared, as my wife was pregnant with our first son who was to be born that November. Dr. Gilbert had many interns before me, most of them becoming leaders in our profession and sadly, most of them now deceased. Dr. Gilbert paid me only \$50 per week, minus taxes! My wife and I rented a small apartment which cost more than I was being paid, but our parents were very generous, and we had saved money from Michele's teaching third grade in Memphis where she made a whopping \$240 a month during my years at SCO.

Later in the summer of 1964, I had been seeing patients and learning from both Dr. Gilbert and his optician for several weeks. I must have been doing a pretty good job, because one day Dr. Gilbert asked me if I would like to go up to Spartanburg, South Carolina with him to take the South Carolina Board exam. He picked me up the next morning in his sleek Rolls Royce Silver Cloud.

South Carolina in 1964 had zero applicants to take their optometry board exam. This was surprising because it was common practice back then to take exams in adjoining states. Both Dr. Gilbert and I passed and shortly afterwards received our lovely signed certificates of licensure to practice in the state of South Carolina. I was the only new graduate to be licensed there in 1964 and my license number was 432. All of the members of South Carolina board at that time, including Dr. Bill Ezell, are now deceased. I paid my out-of-state dues for more than 30 years and left that framed license on my office wall the entire time.

—Bill Sharpton, O.D. (GA)
sharpton@windstream.net

GERTRUDE STANTON (1863-1931): THE FIRST WOMAN LICENSED TO PRACTICE OPTOMETRY IN THE UNITED STATES

Viktoria Davis, O.D.

Madelia Optometric, Inc.

drdavis@madeliaeyes.com

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Lilien Vogl, O.D.

Chair, The Optometric Historical Society

drvogl@cox.net

ABSTRACT

Dr. Ella Gertrude Smith Ayer Stanton Jones (1863-1931), better known as Gertrude Stanton, was the first woman licensed to practice optometry in the United States. A native of Iowa, Stanton began her career as a teacher, but eventually moved to Minnesota where she received training and began to work as an itinerant refracting optician or optometrist, building her professional reputation through clever marketing. In 1901, shortly after the passage of the first optometry licensure law in Minnesota, Stanton applied for and received a license by exemption. Stanton went on to become an in-store optometrist at Dayton's Department Store and eventually set up her own storefront where she employed her daughter and ran an optical business run entirely by women. During her career, she participated in optometry and professional associations and public service projects and was active in her community. Thrice married with three children, Stanton's abiding popularity with her patients and the public as well as her financial success despite leading an unconventional life for a woman at the turn of the twentieth century is a testament to her fierce independence, indomitable spirit and impressive business acumen. This article, constructed from meticulous research in archival records, paints a detailed portrait of Stanton's life and career as an optometric pioneer.



Portrait of Gertrude Stanton. From the *Opt J Rev Optom.* 1906;28:368.

KEYWORDS

Gertrude Stanton; Gertrude Smith; Gertrude Ayer; Women's History; History of Medicine; Optometry History; Minnesota; Professional Licensure

Dr. Ella Gertrude Smith Ayer Stanton Jones was the consummate marketer. Better known as Gertrude Stanton, she was the first woman licensed to practice optometry in the United States. In many ways, this was purely due to fortuitous chance – she lived in Minnesota, the first state to license optometrists, and she promptly responded to the request that “all persons practicing optometry in the state of Minnesota are requested to make application to the secretary of the State Board of Examiners in Optometry, accompanied by an affidavit, that they were engaged in the practice of optometry, on or prior to the thirteenth day of April A.D. 1901, remitting their registration fee at the same time.”¹ By June 11, 1901, sixty-five acceptable affidavits had been received. Four of these were from women. The first, number 27, was from Gertrude Ayer.²

Ella Gertrude Smith, called Gertie, was born either February 17 or 26, 1863, in Howard County, Iowa, the second of at least seven children born to John Taylor Smith and Lucy Ann Olmsted.^{3,4,5} On October 30, 1880 she married Roswell Eugene Ayer (called Eugene). Eugene was the son of Darius Ayer and Lydia Tennent.⁶ The union produced three children: Arthur Darius in 1881, Sarah (Sadie) Taylor in 1884 and John Herbert (called Herbert) in 1891.^{7,8,9,10} It appears the marriage was not an altogether pleasant one. In 1890, Gertie received a teaching certificate in Dakota Territory,¹¹ but by 1891 she was back in Iowa for the birth of her third child, John.¹⁰ In October 1895, the local newspaper, *The Twice a Week Plain Dealer*, reported that Eugene Ayer and family were “obliged to vacate” their home.¹² Two months later, they

reported “Eugene Ayer left last week for Dubuque where he will seek employment. If unsuccessful, he expects to continue south.”¹³ Gertrude apparently decided to take matters of earning money into her own hands. By 1899, she had taken some courses and was working as “the Willmar [Minnesota] oculist.”¹⁴ She left her children with her parents in Iowa¹⁵ and started traveling around southern Minnesota, advertising herself as “Gertrude Ayer, M.O. – Expert Refractionist.” She would place advertisements in local newspapers and distribute handbills announcing her imminent arrival. She advertised free eye exams,¹⁶ including phrases such as “this is your opportunity to correct your visual defects and preserve your eyes.” She strongly believed in educating patients properly, distributing circulars with descriptions of refractive errors and muscle imbalances. However, she also believed in the power of dramatic marketing, as the circular ended with “In order to avoid any of the above deviations, lay aside your false pride and have your visual defects properly corrected by a competent optician. The longer you allow your natural prejudices to delay this correction, the longer will be the score you will have to settle, at some day, with abused natural laws.” At the time, optometry was a bit of the Wild West—with no licensing or registration required, many peddlers sold eyeglasses from their wagons. Gertrude met this allegation head-on, frankly stating “Madam Ayer is not a spectacle peddler, but a finished and competent optician...”^{17, 18} She traveled by horse and buggy and drew attention by providing straw hats for her horses—something that had never been seen in many small towns.¹⁹

By 1900, Gertrude had met and started working with Dr. Charles Stanton in Redwood Falls, Minnesota.^{20,21} Dr. Stanton was one of the first to bring x-rays to Minnesota, and continually fought allegations of being a “quack.” He fought this with testimonials from cured patients as well as offering “large volumes” on loan. He frequently used the phrase “Dr. Stanton don’t care a rap ... whether he treats your case or not.”^{21,22} At some point, Gertrude and Eugene were divorced. She later claimed that he had died, leaving her a young single mother (taking several years off her age) with three young children. In fact, Eugene did not die until 1937 and their children stayed with her parents.^{15,23} However, she realized that a young widow would tug at the heartstrings more than a divorcee with help from her former in-laws.

Optometry was a profession on the brink of professionalism in 1900. Many states were considering licensing and registration as a way of regulating optometrists and safeguarding the public from unscrupulous peddlers. Drs. J.W. Grainger, H.M. Hitchcock, F.A. Upham, C.A. Snell, and Alexander Swening were instrumental in the passage of the nation’s first Optometry Practice Law in Minnesota in 1901. The law defined optometry as “the employment of subjective and objective means to determine the accommodative and refractive states of the eye and the scope of its functions in general.” The law further stated that every person beginning to practice optometry in the state would have to pass an examination before the Board of Optometry. There was a stipulation written into the law that allowed for anyone currently practicing optometry at the time the law was passed to be exempt from the examination so long as an affidavit was filed within six months. There were 363 people who filed acceptable affidavits.^{1,2, 24, 25}

The aforementioned doctors debated at length about the scope and breadth of the examination. They decided upon a combination of a written and practical examination, covering “such several subjects as are applicable to the practice of optometry.” The examination proved to be quite challenging, with an average pass rate of about 50%. The doctors were, in fact, so disappointed with the quality of some of the candidates that in 1909 they instituted a “preliminary examination,” which was comprised of seven questions including definitions, arithmetic, and a short essay. If candidates did not receive at least 75% on the preliminary examination, they were not permitted to sit for the comprehensive examination.²⁶ Many doctors who had originally been licensed by affidavit later chose to prove their competence by taking the practical examination. Dr. Ayer was not among them, and never did attempt to prove her competence by sitting for the examination.²⁷ However, in most of her early marketing materials she did refer to herself as the “expert optician” and promoted the fact that she was “thoroughly educated and competent.”²⁸

On December 4, 1901, Dr. Ayer married Dr. Charles Stanton, the “famous electromagnetic healer” in Estherville, Iowa.^{29,30} At the time, he had a new practice in St. James, Minnesota and Gertrude joined him there while still traveling throughout southern Minnesota. He was also an optometrist, as Minnesota license number 16 was issued to “C.M. Stanton” of Minneapolis.^{2,28} It is likely that, during this time, the couple would have had business or social involvement with George Dayton, a prominent banker and merchant in Worthington, Minnesota. Although no proof of this relationship can be found, in 1902 Mr. Dayton moved his

business to Minneapolis and purchased a dry good store which would become Dayton’s Department Store.

Mr. Dayton was a very forward-thinking entrepreneur and had promised his customers to expand the store in space and services. In 1903, space on the second floor of the new addition to Dayton’s Dry Goods, on Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis, was leased to Mrs. Gertrude Stanton for her optical service.³¹ The office opened to patients on Wednesday, March 18, 1903.³² Gertrude Stanton then became one of the nation’s first commercial optometrists. (P. 7, Figs. 1 and 4) Her husband, Dr. Charles Stanton, may have practiced with her, but virtually all the advertising was in her name only.

She had a particular interest in treating women and children. She—and Dayton’s Department Store—promoted her as “the only woman optician in the Twin Cities.” She frequently advertised “Children’s Day,” offering a 25% discount for children on Saturdays. Less commonly the same discount was offered on “Old Folks’ Day.” All work was guaranteed, and examinations were free. Advertising was usually presented as coming from Dayton’s—“there is no better place in the city to have your eyes examined than at our Optical Department.”²⁸

Dr. Gertrude Stanton soon became involved in organized optometry. She served as a founding member of the Northwestern Optical Association and was also involved in the Minnesota State Association of Optometrists.²⁸ By 1905, she had risen to first vice president of the Northwestern Optical Association.³³ She had attended Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology, receiving her first degree around 1893, and in 1905 was honored for being the first female graduate and received a Doctor of Optics degree.^{28,34,35}

Her husband, Dr. Charles Stanton, succumbed after a battle with tuberculosis and died on January 3, 1906, but Gertrude continued to practice and remained active.^{36,37} She was extremely popular in the community and, in 1907, she won the grand prize in the Minneapolis Tribune’s “popular vote contest.” In order to vote, readers had to pay for a newspaper subscription or classified ad coupon book. Dr. Stanton won by thousands of votes and generated over \$90,000 for the newspaper.³⁸⁻⁴⁰ Her prize: a 1907 Oldsmobile. (Figure 6) Perhaps not coincidentally, Dr. Stanton had been the subject of a very favorable article in the same newspaper just a few months before calling her “loquacious” and “charming,” giving us an insight into her personality.⁴¹



Figure 6. Dr. Gertrude Stanton in her 1907 Oldsmobile, won in a Minneapolis Tribune popularity contest. Image courtesy the Minnesota Historical Society. HE3.1r285

3

Sure Signs of Success

In less than one year Dr. Gertrude Stanton, our woman optician, has on file more than 1,000 prescriptions that she has written and filled for her patrons—this signifies satisfactory work. Examination free. Bring your repair work. Glasses tightened and adjusted free. Second Floor, New Part.

SILK LEADERS OF THE NORTHWEST

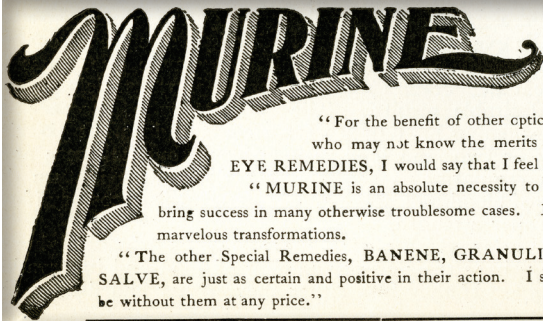
Dayton's Daylight Store

Formerly Goodfellow's.

Seventh St. and Nicollet Av.

Geo. D. Dayton, Pres. J. B. Mosher, Vice-Pres. D. D. Dayton, Treas. R. E. Esterly, Credit Man, Frank H. Carleton, Director.

2



Dr. Gertrude Stanton, in charge of Dayton's Optical Parlors, Minneapolis, Minn., says

"For the benefit of other opticians and the general public who may not know the merits of the various MURINE EYE REMEDIES, I would say that I feel that they are indispensable.

"MURINE is an absolute necessity to the busy optician, and will bring success in many otherwise troublesome cases. I have seen it work many marvelous transformations.

"The other Special Remedies, BANENE, GRANULINE and MURINE EYE SALVE, are just as certain and positive in their action. I sell them all and would not be without them at any price."

SHE WINS SUCCESS AS AN OPTICIAN

Dr. Stanton of Minneapolis Is the Only Woman Practicing Her Profession in the Twin Cities.

"SHE first talks people blind and then they have to buy glasses that they may see." This is the way the father of Dr. Gertrude Ayer Stanton, the only woman optician in the twin-cities, laughingly describes his daughter's methods. There is no doubt that Dr. Stanton is a talker—she is too much of a woman not to enjoy the sound of her own voice—but she is an interesting talker and her varied life has given her a fund of experiences and anecdotes to draw upon. One cannot spend seven or eight years in the small towns of Iowa or Minnesota without

different courses offered at the optical schools, she entered the office of an oculist and learned the mechanism of the eye in a practical way. In the same manner she became an assistant to one of the well known opticians in Chicago, that she might learn something of the practice while she was still studying the theory. The harder a problem was, the more interesting Dr. Stanton found it, and she confesses now that a difficult, compound case sets her nerves quivering with pleasure. Dr. Stanton does not consider her studies finished, now that she is a successful practitioner, and she often slips away from her work to carry some experiment farther or to learn what some of the masters of her profession can teach her.

"Isn't it strange that more women do not take up the work of an optician?" she said the other day. "There are only three registered with the state association, Miss Margaret Little of Rochester, Miss Helen Hitchcock of Redwood Falls, and Mrs. A. M. Petri, formerly of St. Paul, who has now gone to California. You know an optician has to be licensed just as a physician does to practice in Minnesota. The work of an optician is so interesting, her chances of helping others are so unlimited and her opportunity of making a financial success so assured that I cannot but wonder why more do not take it up."

The financial part of a question is always the most interesting to the majority of people, for it is the measure by which success is gauged. Dr. Stanton counts that day poor which does not find her with \$25 on the credit side of her books, and when she was traveling she occasionally made over \$100 a day. Such an income means work and hard work, for in every dollar there are 100 cents' worth of labor, either mental or physical.



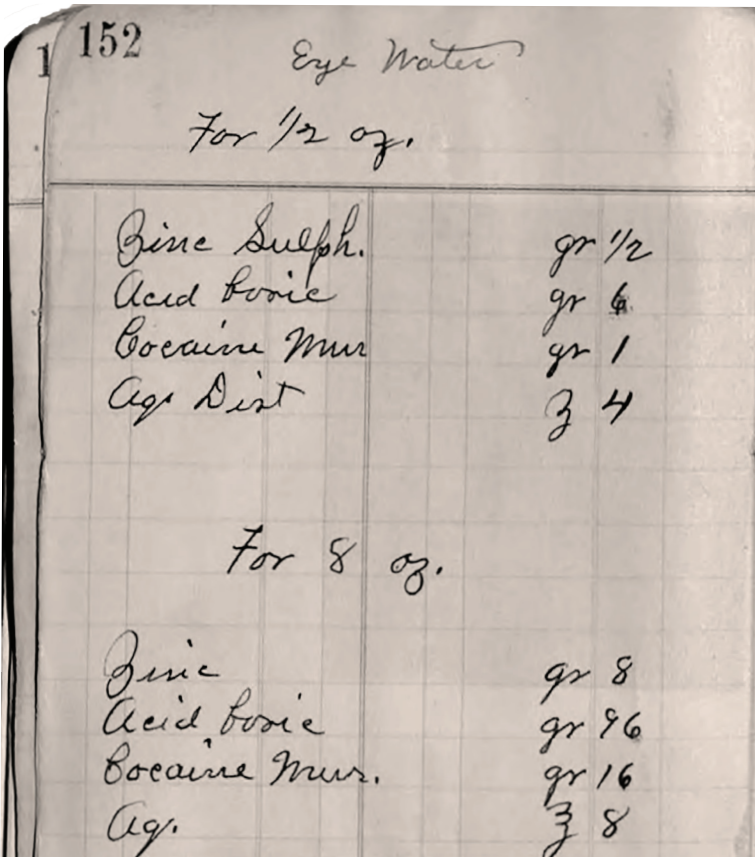
DR. GERTRUDE AYER STANTON.

meeting characters who belong between the covers of a book, and there are more David Harums and Mrs. Wiggses than one might think.

Dr. Stanton did not take up the work of an optician until she was left a widow with three small children. She had always been fond of books, a student for the love of study, and as she had spent much time in the family of a prominent optician it was natural for her to turn to that profession when it became necessary to do something. She entered upon her studies with the persevering thoroughness that has brought her success, and when she failed to find what she wanted in the

Dr. Stanton came to Minneapolis early in the summer and she has almost abandoned traveling, altho there are times when she yearns for the feel of the reins be-

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Marketing was one of Stanton's great strengths and she found every opportunity to engage with the press, turning her unique status as a woman practitioner into a professional advantage. Her journal is filled with newspaper clippings and detailed notes: 1. Page 152 of the journal held at the Minnesota Historical Society features a recipe for "eye water" containing cocaine, often used as a mydriatic. 2. Murine ad featuring Stanton testimonial, from the Optical Journal, 1905;26(7):360. 3. Dayton's Department Store ad, featuring special callout for Stanton's optical department, Minneapolis Star, Friday, 12 Feb 1904, p. 3. and 4. Profile in the "Women's Section", Saturday, 2 Jan 1904, p.5, and 5. Stanton's portrait after her election as fourth vice president of the AOA in 1918, the Optical Journal, 1918;42(1): 37.



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She also continued her involvement with organized optometry. In 1908 alone, she served on the Reception Committee for Minnesota State Association of Optometrists and the Membership Committee for the Northwestern Optical Association,²⁸ and was elected President of the Alumni Association of the Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology.⁴² She also presented a paper on "Indications in Retinal Fatigue" at the joint annual meeting of the Northwestern Optical Association and Minnesota State Association of Optometrists. This paper was also published in *Optical Review*, a periodical publication of the time.⁴³ In 1909, she prepared the souvenir programme for the joint meeting of the two organizations.²⁸

Dr. Stanton married again, on December 8, 1909, to a Swedish immigrant, Joseph Jones.⁴⁴ According to census records, he was employed as an "optician and repairer." Dr. Stanton's youngest son, Herbert Ayer, continued to live with them and work with his mother.^{45,46} During this time, Dr. Stanton's daughter, Sadie, got married to Edward Amesbury.⁴⁷ Sadie also pursued a study of optometry, attending DeMars Optical School and the Northern Illinois College of Optometry.⁴⁸ As well as being active in optometric associations, Dr. Stanton was active in community organizations. She was a member of the Automobile Club, the Zuhrah Ladies' Club (associated with the Shrine Club), and the Order of the Eastern Star.⁴⁹ In 1911, she was also a charter member of the Minneapolis Women's Rotary—the first all-female Rotary club in the country. After Rotary International refused them admission because of their sex, they separately incorporated and are still active today.⁵⁰ Dr. Stanton bought the records of prominent Minneapolis optometrist C.A. Snell in 1913. Dr. Snell placed a large advertisement in the newspaper informing his patients of his retirement and the transfer of his records to Dr. Stanton. The advertisement states "The former patrons of Dr. Snell are assured they will receive that courteous and careful treatment at the hands of Dr. Stanton which he bespeaks for her."⁵¹

Between her optometric commitments, social engagements, and charitable work—not to mention her practice—her life must have been very busy. Her daughter Sadie passed the Minnesota Examination for Licensure in 1915 on her first try with a very respectable 79%. The new Dr. Amesbury joined her mother in practice at Dayton's.^{28,52}

The pair moved to a new, larger location within Dayton's on April 12, 1917.⁴⁸ In 1918, the American Optometric Association (AOA) Congress was held in St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Stanton served as chair of the Ladies' Reception Committee and planned a very ambitious social program for all the women (primarily wives) attending the Congress. She used her connections and resources, such as the Women's Rotary Club, to assist in entertaining the women. At this meeting, she was also elected fourth vice-president of the AOA.²⁸ (P. 7, Fig. 5)

During World War I, Drs. Stanton and Amesbury provided services as consulting optometrists in the examination of applicants for commissions into the United States Army Medical Corps and training camps. For such service, in 1919 they received a letter of thanks from Ralph Perry, President of the Board of Examiners for the Medical Corps. It is unlikely that there were many other women who were able to provide such service.²⁸

Although not involved in the women's suffrage movement in the United States, Drs. Stanton and Amesbury were vocal about

the opportunities that optometry provided for women. In 1912, she wrote an article entitled "Qualities Required of a Woman in Optometry" for the *Optical Journal and Review*. Some of her statements in the article are remarkable for the time: "Women have entered such extraordinary pursuits that seemingly there is no field where men succeed that a woman may not achieve success also." In the article, she points out certain traits that are required of optometrists: "It is the young woman who has a fondness for tools and who can readily repair a sewing machine or typewriter when it gets somewhat out of gear, who will take up optometry and acquire with ease the basic knowledge of the profession." She continues, "one must be alert and alive to what is going on in the world." She also mentions those traits that are more common in women, stating: "sympathy, tact and magnetism are usually present to a greater degree in women than in men. If a woman has these qualities, and also a ready good humor and a naturally cordial manner, she is eminently fitted for success, always providing she has had the proper training for her work. The one big stumbling-block in her pathway, probably, is the lack of confidence which people generally have in a woman in any line of work that requires brains, skill and experience. A woman is obliged to build up confidence often, whereas a man finds it given him readily."⁵³

It is hard to believe that the article was written over 100 years ago, as she continues, "Another thing, they do not know how to charge for their work. It is a woman's failing to underestimate the value in dollars and cents of what she does, and I presume it is attributable to her lack of experience and natural diffidence. It is essential, of course, that not only the actual cost of an article, but that one's experience, one's expenses and one's brains should enter into the fixing of prices for whatever one puts on the market. When women learn to put a fair price, neither exorbitant nor too low, upon their work they will have made progress toward establishing themselves substantially in business."⁵³ One can only wonder what Dr. Stanton would have thought of vision plans and their impact on the profession—for both women and men.

By 1920, both Dr. Stanton and Dr. Amesbury were divorced from their husbands.⁵⁴ Their optical shop was known and recognized for employing only women, even including women grinding the lenses. In 1923, Drs. Stanton and Amesbury left Dayton's and moved into new offices across the street, in the Wilmac Building.⁵⁵ (Figure 7). It is unclear what precipitated the move—perhaps space issues, or perhaps the growing disagreement within optometry about ethical practice. In 1923, the AOA proposed a radical new code of ethics. The code was not adopted, but its very proposal indicates the degree of discontent and disagreement within optometry at the time. Some of the statements of the proposed code directly contradicted many of the common avenues previously practiced by Drs. Stanton and Amesbury: "We agree... to make examination of the eyes the paramount feature, not the sale of glasses. ... To charge for, and to collect, a reasonable fee for eye examinations. ... We believe that organized optometry can best be served by group publicity, as also by magazine and newspaper articles in which the author does not seek to present his own personality. ... We agree to discontinue the use of handbills, billboard advertising, billposter advertising, ... and signs reading, 'Eyes Examined (or tested) Free.'"⁵⁶ Dr. Stanton was always very proud of her ethical practices—she frequently advertised that she only recommended glasses when there was actually

a need—so she was undoubtedly concerned about remaining professionally ethical in all respects given the changing climate.

Between 1925 and 1930, Dr. Stanton gradually started to retire. She would visit her son Herbert in California for extended periods of time and had a summer home on Lake Minnetonka. She continued to participate in an active social and community life and advocate for optometry, including making presentations to California Optical Societies and organizations when she was visiting her son.^{28,57,58} On March 25, 1931, during a visit with her son in Atascadero, California, Dr. Stanton passed away. The official cause of death on the death certificate was “mitral regurgitation and chronic interstitial nephritis,” with a contributory condition of hypertension.^{3,59} News of her death was printed in several journals and newspapers. Nearly all of them portrayed her life as she had created it—married at age seventeen, widowed with three children before age 25, and stumbling upon optometry as a means for supporting herself. Even her death certificate portrays only part



Figure 7. Office of Dr. Gertrude Stanton, Optometrist, 301 Wilmac Building, 719 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis. Image courtesy the Minnesota Historical Society. R5 r1.

of the story, as she is listed as the wife of Charles M. Stanton—the one of her three husbands to whom she was married the shortest amount of time, but perhaps the one she was closest to, as she retained his name both professionally and socially.⁶⁰⁻⁶² Dr. Stanton was truly a trailblazer in optometry. She was never willing to allow her gender to be an excuse. In her words from 1912, “Optometry needs women, and women, in my opinion, who can make themselves successful in it, will find a substantial and satisfying profession to follow.”⁵³

Acknowledgements

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MINERVA H. WEINSTEIN (1893-1982): THE FIRST WOMAN LICENSED BY EXAM TO PRACTICE OPTOMETRY IN NEW YORK CITY

Kirsten Pourroy Hébert

Heritage Services Specialist
Optometry Cares – The AOA Foundation

khebert@aoa.org

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Minerva H. Weinstein (1893-1982), was the first woman licensed by examination to practice optometry in New York City and the fourth woman licensed in the State of New York. In 1915, Dr. Weinstein graduated from the American Institute of Optometry, becoming the third generation in her family to forge a career in applied optics. She began her practice at one of three family-owned optical shops in the Bronx, where she remained for more than 40 years, diligently serving the needs of her community's most vulnerable members and tirelessly researching new techniques to improve care for the most difficult vision problems. During her career, she founded the Bronx County Optometric Society and organized the local Woman's Auxiliary for the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as the New York state affiliate of the national organization. She was a founding member of the Bronx County Optometric Service, the first free optometry clinic in New York, and went on to expand the service to two additional locations. She also participated in professional women's organizations, charitable foundations and civic clubs, and represented optometry at community events. Dr. Weinstein's narrative is unique, but in many ways her family's story was typical of many immigrants arriving in the U.S. during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were successful in improving their lot and passing on a professional legacy to the younger generation—and it is a story that is particularly common among optometry's founders, and one that resonates in the first two decades of the twenty first century. The story of her career, and the personal details that serve as its backdrop, are also representative of the many challenges faced by the generation of professional women who helped establish the profession of optometry during the inter-war years. This biographical sketch, made possible through research in Minerva Weinstein Papers (MSS 501.4.11) held at the Archives & Museum of Optometry, sheds light on the tremendous debt optometry owes to its founding mothers and highlights the work that remains to complete the narrative of optometry history through new scholarship in hidden collections.



Minerva Weinstein, 1915. From *Representative Optometrists of New York, 1895-1915*. Print. MSS 501.4.11.

KEYWORDS

Minerva Weinstein; Minerva Remaud; Minerva Abramowitz; Minerva Yurman; optometry history; New York State Optometric Association; Bronx County Optometric Society; women's history; immigrant history; Jewish history; history of medicine; history of optometry; history of profession

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Minerva Weinstein was proud of the many “firsts” she achieved during her long career in optometry: a first-generation American,¹ the first woman in her family to run her own business, and the first to take and pass the examination to become a licensed optometrist in New York City. She was also often the first—and only—woman in overwhelmingly male-dominated professional organizations, a challenge she met with confidence in her abilities and an uncompromising attitude that she deserved the same respect afforded to her male peers. Her biography, constructed from research in materials donated to the International Library, Archives and Museum of Optometry (ILAMO), not only reveals not only a story of perseverance and success in the face of personal and professional trials, but also paints a remarkably intimate portrait of a professional woman in early-twentieth-century New York. In this way, Dr. Weinstein's story demonstrates how the narratives of those rarely featured in historical research—women, the disabled, ethnic minorities and immigrants—are often hidden gems languishing in archival collections, and shows how uncovering these stories can add new

perspectives, insights and voices to the evolving body of scholarship in optometry history.

The Weinstein Family in New York: A New American Optometry Legacy

Minerva H. Weinstein was born on April 1, 1893 in College Point, Long Island, New York to Abraham and Anna Bertha Sobel Weinstein, the first member of her nuclear family to be a native-born American citizen.^{2,3,4} The elder Weinsteins had immigrated to New York from Russia in 1890 with their infant son Morris—part of a wave of more than two million Jews seeking both refuge from persecution and the opportunity to prosper in the burgeoning industrial centers of the United States in last few decades of the nineteenth century.^{5,6} According to family lore, Abraham was the second generation to practice opticianry, but like many new immigrants it would take time to rebuild and reclaim the family legacy in his new home.^{2,7}

By 1892, the Weinsteins had settled in Queens where Abraham found work in a factory producing “hard” rubber, also known as Vulcanite, that was used for consumer goods such as hair combs, pipes and eyeglass frames.^{3,8,9} Situated in the northwest corner of Queens County in the vicinity of Flushing, College Point was

a fortuitous place for the industrious and intellectually curious Weinstens to land. The thriving village was home not only to rubber factories, silk mills and marine works,¹⁰ but also a strong tradition of public education. The town itself was designed by benevolent rubber magnate Conrad Poppenhusen in 1854. Poppenhusen's model community was one of several constructed by forward-thinking industrialists who hoped to protect their workers from the desperate conditions in New York's tenements and, in turn, insulate their profit margins from unions and labor strikes. In 1870, Poppenhusen founded the United States' first free community kindergarten, "The Poppenhusen Institute," to serve the families under his patronage.^{9,10,11,12} Although little Minerva had contracted polio at the age of 18 months,² she recovered well enough to attend the Institute, which later expanded to include an elementary school. Meanwhile, her father sought to better the Weinstein family circumstances.

In 1895, the three immigrant members of the Weinstein family became naturalized citizens and Abraham found employment as a jeweler.⁵ He took another step toward reclaiming his birthright in 1897, completing a correspondence course in optometry from the South Bend College of Optics.^{2,13,14} The following year the family relocated to the Dutch Kills neighborhood of Queens near the current Roosevelt Island Bridge and,¹⁵ in 1904, they crossed the East River and resettled in a rented apartment near extended family in the Jewish enclave in central Harlem.^{16,17,18,19} Shortly thereafter, the Weinstens relocated to the lower Bronx where Minerva enrolled at Morris High School, the state's first co-educational secondary school housed in a new state-of-the-art building at the corner of East 166th Street and Boston Road.^{2,20,21} Firmly established in the Bronx, Abraham and Anna began to expand the American branch of the family's optometry practice: Weinstein's Optical Parlors.

On May 21, 1908, just shy of the tenth anniversary of the first meeting of the American Optometric Association (AOA),²² New York passed a law regulating the practice of optometry. In 1909, Abraham was granted a license by exemption,²³ easily meeting the law's requirement to have been in practice at least two years prior to May of 1908.²⁴ In the 1910 census the Weinstens are listed for the first time as owner-operators of their own store.²⁵

The First Woman Optometrist Licensed by Examination in New York City

While 18-year-old Minerva assisted at the shops, she had not yet settled on optometry and was instead studying at the prestigious four-year women's institution Hunter College.^{2,25,26,27} Hunter was originally a "normal" school specializing in teacher training, but by the time Minerva matriculated the curriculum had shifted toward educating women interested in advanced degrees in the arts and sciences.^{27,28} By 1914, she had made her decision, enrolling in the American Institute of Optometry (AIO), established in that same year by Dr. Joseph I. Pascal, a recent graduate of the Rochester School of Optometry.^{29,30} Pascal's optometry school, situated in the Flatiron District of Manhattan, demanded a strong academic and financial commitment. The program ran between six and eight months and required students to attend 8-hour days at a total cost of \$300—the equivalent of \$8,000 in 2019.^{31,32} At the AIO, Minerva found her niche, beginning her studies in earnest in January 1915. She showed an early interest in participating in collegial activities

as well as an artistic and literary bent, contributing the cover design and one of many poems she would write throughout her life to the undergraduate paper "The Institute Record."^{29,33} (P. 15, Fig. 1) She earned her certificate of completion on June 25³⁴ and four days later she walked into New York's Grand Central Palace—the only woman in a class of 30—and sat for the examination on Practical Optics.^{2,26,35} Later that year she became the first woman licensed by examination to practice optometry in New York City and one of only four licensed in the entire state.³⁶

In 1915 the Weinstens were managing three locations.^{2,37,38} The first two were in the Claremont Village neighborhood: the main store at 3814 Third Avenue at Claremont Parkway, and another at 1311 Boston Road at McKinley Square near 169th Street. A third store was located about two miles north at 252 East Fordham Road at Valentine Avenue (Webster). Abraham managed the main store with Morris, and Minerva and her mother took over the management of the Boston Road store a ten-minute walk away. Under Abraham's watchful eye, Morris and later his younger brother, Gottfried, took turns managing the Fordham Road store.³⁹ With three stores and family members to run them, the Weinstens were now ready to invest in their business. In 1915, they spent over \$4,000 outfitting all three locations with new instruments, equipment and furniture, and an additional \$1,000 on lenses and hardware, to equip each store with an examination room, in-house optical laboratory, mercantile display and signage.³⁷ (P. 15, Figs. 2 and 4)

Minerva's store was probably the most exciting of the three. She shared her block with two millinery shops and a delicatessen and from her storefront she could walk a few paces to bustling McKinley Square. The Boston Road office also shared a wall with the famous Yiddish McKinley Square Theatre—a cultural landmark for the Bronx's large Hebrew and Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrant population.^{38,40,41} Dr. Weinstein's clientele was well-served by a doctor who shared their linguistic and cultural background; among her belongings donated to the ILAMO in 1970 was a set of vision test cards with Italian and Hebrew on either side, demonstrating her dedication to meeting the needs of a community comprised largely of new and first-generation Americans.⁴² In 1916, her neighborhood at 169th and Boston Road was described by one contemporary source as "a very good section of the Bronx ... [with] good stores and modern apartment buildings. While stores are not very large, they are clean and well kept. Grocers, butchers and delicatessen stores are numerous. The inhabitants of this section represent a substantial class of people of moderate means who live comfortably."³⁸ By contrast, the same publication described the environs of her father's store on Third Avenue as "rather poor" with "cheap stores, which cater to the daily household needs of the poorer class."

Heartaches and Obstacles: Personal and Professional Trials and Accomplishments

In choosing Boston Road for Minerva, Abraham and Anna had wisely placed their ferociously bright, diminutive daughter, still plagued with a slight limp and a fragile constitution from her childhood illness, in the safest possible place while also allowing her to explore her professional horizons. They appear to have had good reason for keeping a close eye. In 1918, she was swept off her feet by a dashing young Frenchman, John A. Remaud,

reputedly a World War I aviator—or “flying ace”—in the employ of the French High Command in Washington, D.C.⁴³ The couple married a few months after the end of the war on January 26, 1919.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Remaud, whose given name was Joseph R. Abramowitz, was not all he appeared to be, and the union marked the beginning of a relatively dark period in Dr. Weinstein’s story that she later described as a time punctuated by “... many heartaches and obstacles which beset me because I was a woman.”⁴⁵

Abramowitz was the eldest son of a very successful family of Parisian furriers headed by Scholom and Amalia Abramowitz (aka Remaud).^{45,46} Like the Weinsteins, the Abramowitzes were Russian Jewish immigrants, but they had initially settled in France where they were living at the outbreak of the war. Twice per year they visited New York for business and after the end of the conflict, they emigrated again, moving to New York where they established the family residence in Kingston upstate and opened an outlet on Central Avenue near several Manhattan fashion houses under the direction of Joseph’s younger brother Armand.^{46,47} At the outset of his courtship of Minerva, Joseph was estranged from his father, apparently having developed an addiction to “dope” and run up significant debt in the family name.⁴⁸ Perhaps as a result of the drugs or an underlying condition, his behavior throughout his marriage would soon become erratic and often dangerous, characterized by emotional extremes including bouts of mania accompanied by episodes of abuse, followed by deep remorse and thoughts of suicide.^{18, 48, 49, 50, 51}

In January of 1920, all seemed to be going well enough. Minerva and Joseph were living with the Weinsteins in the family home at 689 East 170th Street and Joseph was working alongside his wife and father-in-law in the shops.⁴ By June, however, Abramowitz had absconded.⁵² For the next several years he wandered the state, treating himself to fine clothes, throwing lavish parties, taking lovers, staying in expensive lodgings and, occasionally, landing himself jail due to his excesses.^{18,43} For a short time early on, he reconciled with his father who put him in business with Armand. During this brief period of reform, he sent a string of long, rambling letters to both Abraham and Minerva filled with protestations of love for them both, expressions of regret and grand plans for subsequent success.⁴⁹ The couple reunited long enough to produce a child, Quentin Howard, who was born in the Bronx on August 12, 1923.^{53,54} Eventually, however, Joseph drifted away again leaving Minerva and young Quentin on their own.

Dr. Weinstein did not let her personal troubles keep her from continuing to improve her skills and education. By the end of 1920, she had completed the course at Columbia University’s School of Optometry.¹³ After Quentin’s birth, she spent “more than a year” in Europe, beginning in England and travelling to Germany and then France where she reportedly was engaged in “research studies and study of the mechanics involved in the manufacture of various types of optical glass.”⁵⁵ She may have had an additional reason for going abroad. In New York, divorce was virtually impossible to acquire prior to 1966 except in proven cases of adultery.⁵⁶ Couples were grudgingly granted separations in cases of abandonment or extreme cruelty, but even well-founded cases could drag on for years and the penny-press exploited the situation by printing the proceedings in excruciating and humiliating detail. Many desperate spouses hired actors to

play “the other woman” (or man) or orchestrated elaborate sting operations to catch and document philanderers in the act. Those with means would go abroad, specifically to France.^{57, 58} In 1923 alone, hundreds of Americans seeking divorce and were granted relief by French courts.⁵⁹

Whatever the case for Minerva, she returned from Europe more well-educated but still married under New York law. In 1929, the police arrested Remaud on other charges and Minerva’s attorney had him hauled into court.⁶⁰ After a trial which included the testimony of a Pennsylvania hotel clerk who was a witness to Remaud’s infidelity and carousing, the judge awarded Minerva a decree of divorce and alimony, although she “never saw a penny” of the latter and claimed Abramowitz “never so much as bought a ten cent rattle” for Quentin.^{43,61,62} Although Dr. Weinstein told the court she had to borrow money initially to make ends meet, she also boasted proudly that she was eventually able to provide for her family through optometry practice and earnings of “\$2,500 per year”—an impressive sum for a woman at the time.⁶³ Immediately following the divorce, Remaud attempted suicide by extinguishing the gaslights in his Greenwich Village brownstone but was rescued by his brother and a police officer by the name of Porco. The entire saga was documented in a series of news articles, one sensationally entitled “Ace Tries to Die for Love.”⁴⁶ After this incident Minerva was mostly free of her ex-husband, but she approached future relationships with an abundance of caution, not marrying again until after his death over three decades later.^{2,64}

Despite—or perhaps because of—her domestic difficulties, Dr. Weinstein threw herself into her career, not only continuing to improve her education by taking courses on optics and optometry at the New York City College,² but also representing optometry in both professional and civic organizations and working to improve eye care for New Yorkers from all walks of life. She and her father were longtime members of the AOA and the New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA), and in 1925 she organized the Bronx County Optometric Society (BCOS), recruiting its first 13 members and serving as Secretary until 1931.⁶⁵ When the society grew to 50 members, Weinstein ascended to the position as Second Vice President and three men were appointed to take over her secretarial duties. At the same time, she served as the Chair of the Publicity Committee where she successfully lobbied the NYSOA to hold its annual convention in the Bronx.⁶⁶

In almost all of these organizations, Dr. Weinstein maintained distinction as the only woman member and while optometry was relatively inclusive of women compared to many healthcare professions, women were still a minority and individual men were not always well-disposed toward women without a male champion—particularly one who demonstrated such unapologetic ambition. Dr. Weinstein had never been shy about expressing pride in her accomplishments and her correspondence with her contemporaries often bristled with indignation when she felt the sting of disrespect. In 1931, her successor to the office of Secretary of the BCOS omitted her name in the list of officers submitted for publication in the *Optical Journal and Review of Optometry*⁶⁷ and she wasted no time in calling out the slight with strongly worded letter: “What’s the idea of intentionally forgetting the Second Vice-President’s name? If you are ashamed of a woman’s name in the organization, be man enough to admit it! I am only too glad to resign. My activities will depend on a retraction...unless you rectify the omission.”⁶⁸ She signed the letter

with her title in all capital letters. In response to Dr. Weinstein's threat, Secretary Milton Friedlander corrected his error in a hastily written note to the editor and a curt apology to her.

While she continued to enjoy the favor of the New York state leadership, conflict with her colleagues in the local she had chartered grew worse over time. The Bronx County's "Vigilance Committee," designed to ferret out spectacle-by-mail fraud, began to harass her about her signage and her "research work" which included alternative therapies.⁶⁹ The Boston Road storefront of which she was once so proud (P 15, Fig.2), with its beautiful window displays, electric signage and lush parlor, was now a point of contention under organized optometry's new obsession with "ethics" which it articulated as a stay on certain kinds of advertising.^{70,71} Weinstein was appalled that members of the BCOS were employing "underhanded" techniques, such as calling to make appointments they never intended to keep in order to try to catch her making false claims.⁶⁹ Here again, she did not surrender easily, at one point threatening legal action against rival who called her a "quack" and spread a rumor that she was "not allowed to practice," eventually extracting an apology and retraction in writing from him through her lawyer.⁷² By 1932, she had had enough. In her resignation letter, she described her work at the BCOS as one in which she "accomplished that which no other woman dared," and communicated that she was mentally and physically drained from the effort of working against the grain: "[I have] carried a handicap from infancy, and lifted myself over hurdles of obstructions, pushed myself against a world of bigotry, and finally have given every ounce of my strength."⁶⁵

In view of all her other activities, it is no wonder she was exhausted. Even with her fragile health, she maintained a private practice and raised a young child alone all the while participating in her many extracurriculars. In 1929 she organized the Bronx County Ladies Auxiliary and went on to help set up the Manhattan and Brooklyn chapters.^{73,74} Her success earned her praise, but also more work. In 1931 she was appointed by NYSOA President John Jarvis as chair of the association's Ladies Auxiliary Committee, the body created to organize the national auxiliary affiliate.⁷⁵ She was then elected as its first president.⁷⁶ At the same time, she worked with Jarvis to establish a "junior auxiliary" which they both hoped would organize lay people to promote optometry in schools and liaison with other community organizations as had been done on behalf of dentistry and medicine.^{77,78,79,80} In her quest to spread "the Gospel of good sight thru Optometry"⁶⁵ to the public, Dr. Weinstein gave or arranged many speeches and presentations to community organizations during the following two decades.

Dr. Weinstein also worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor and underserved, launching some of optometry's earliest charitable programs. She was a founding member of the Bronx Optometric Service, a free clinic inaugurated in 1928 at the Mott Haven Methodist Episcopal Church at 157 East 150th Street⁸⁰ (P. 15, Fig. 3) and she was instrumental in the expansion of the program to Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as coordinating fundraising activities through the local auxiliaries.⁶⁵ In the 1929-1930 fiscal year, the Service's Chief Director, Lester Beacher, O.D., reported to Weinstein that the clinic had treated 400 people at the Bronx location alone,⁸¹ where minority communities were most impacted by the economic downturn at the beginning of the Great Depression.⁸² Dr. Weinstein was also a charter member,

Secretary and then Vice President of the Bronx Chapter of the Women's Auxiliary for the Aid of Crippled Children (AACCP), an organization founded to assist children "regardless of race or creed"^{83,2} who, like Minerva herself, survived polio but suffered lifelong disabilities and other health problems. Even after retiring from leadership positions, she continued to serve on the organization's Welfare Committee for a decade more, resigning her duties just after the end of World War II.

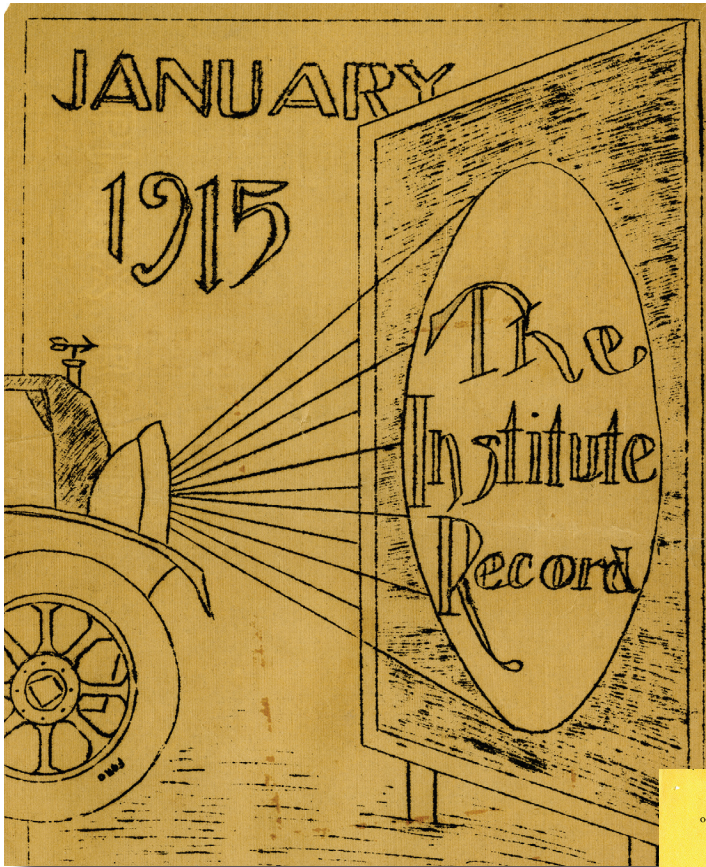
In addition to her optometric work, Dr. Weinstein was active in organizations that supported women professionals, political causes and human rights. She was a charter member of the Bronx Soroptimist Club and served for years as the organization's Chairman of Health.^{2,84} (Figure 1) She belonged to the Jackson Democratic Club for two decades and joined the American Legion Optometry Auxiliary in 1925, marching every year in the Legion's annual parade down 5th Avenue for a decade.² For her public service, she was nominated and won inclusion on the list of the "20 most distinguished citizens of the Bronx" and received a write-up in *The Bronx Home News* where she used her platform to promote optometry as a "good field for women with professional ambitions... both considering remuneration and the character of the work" but cautioned "the studies necessary for a would-be optometrist are so difficult to pursue that only women with a certain scientific talent can hope to succeed."^{55,85}



Figure 1: The Bronx Professional Women's Club (Soroptimists), 1931. Weinstein is standing at left. MSS 504.1.11..

Dr. Weinstein's commitment to serve the needy was stalwart. She moved her practice and her residence several times between 1930 and 1955, largely due to changes in both the physical and demographic constitution of the Bronx, always remaining near the free clinic at Mott Haven.⁸⁶ Whereas Jews and Irish immigrants were the dominant groups in this area in the early twentieth century, by mid-century Puerto Rican and African-American migrants from neighboring Harlem and other points south comprised 30% of the population with more arriving every year. Just as Jewish immigrants moved from factory towns across the East River into Harlem and then to the Bronx chasing economic prosperity, so did other groups follow along beginning in 1930. As one demographer reported: "the story of the lower Bronx... has been for most of its history... a story of shifting people. ... a way stop on the social and economic ladder" and "... a surprisingly faithful mirror of the immigration patterns for the entire middle Atlantic seaboard."⁸⁵ To meet the rapid influx of migrants, the government began to erect housing

1



1. Cover design of the American Optometric Institute student publication by Minerva Weinstein.

2. Photograph of Dr. Weinstein and her dog in front of her store at 1311 Boston Road, 1915.

2



3



3. Bronx County Optometric Service prescription slip and photo of the Mott Haven free clinic, Minerva Weinstein at center, 1929.

4. Inventory and price list for Weinstein's Optical Parlors, 1915.

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1 " Heater	12 00
3 " Signs	300 00
2 Wooden "	10 00
2 Stoves and coal	30 00
Toreyl machine	175 00
1- 2 HP motor	150 00
1# - 1/2" " "	75 00
1 - 1/4" " "	35 00
1 - 1/4" " "	40 00
2 Test cabinets	30 00
Green Test cabinet & extra glass	10 00

All images courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry, MSS 501.4.11

projects in residential neighborhoods and faced mounting opposition from homeowners. As projects fell into disrepair and the ravages of poverty took hold, the area suffered from tension among the more established residents. The resulting “white flight” further destabilized the neighborhoods in the southern part of the County. Soon, the Bronx began to fracture along racial and economic lines, and residents of the wealthy, white neighborhoods in the north would “wear a lorgnette” to “[look] down...and shudder” at their “less affluent cousins in a welter of apartments”⁸⁵ to the south. While Dr. Weinstein resisted this urge to move either her residence or her practice out of the lower Bronx where the need for her services was greatest—even after her father died in 1939⁸⁶—by 1956 her age and declining health combined with a frightening encounter with “hold-up men” forced her hand.²

A Second Chance

Even after she moved north to 1504 Sheridan Street, Dr. Weinstein did not entirely give up her practice or her dedication to helping those that others could not. She specialized early on in more difficult patients, particularly those she called “medical rejects” including migraine sufferers, those with undiagnosed vision-related maladies and children with learning problems that traditional treatments had failed.² For these individuals, Dr. Weinstein engaged in experimental methods including vision therapy, even developing her own system of color therapy using tinted lenses. Whatever her colleagues in the BCOS thought of her practice, her files were full of patient testimonials lauding her treatments and listing the positive impact they had on their quality of life, and she received referrals from physicians who knew her work.⁸⁷ In 1962, alternative medicine advocate Lesley Kuhn published a book on Weinstein’s color therapy technique entitled *Vision and the Magic of Color: A Concise Guide to Minerva Weinstein’s Color Lens Therapy*.⁸⁸ It was through her activities in non-optometric organizations that Dr. Weinstein met her second husband, Dr. Louis Arthur Yurman. Dr. Yurman was a Manhattan-based chiropractor and physio-therapist associated with the AACP whom Dr. Weinstein also invited to speak at the Soroptimist Club and the BCOS in the early 1930s.⁸⁹ They maintained a warm acquaintance for many years and, in 1965 at the age of 72, Dr. Weinstein became Mrs. Minerva Weinstein Yurman.⁹⁰ The Weinstein-Yurmans remained in practice for at least another decade.

CONCLUSION

Like so many other “firsts” on her resume, Dr. Weinstein was a charter member of the Optometric Historical Society (OHS).⁹¹ Between 1968 and 1973, AOA Librarian and OHS Secretary Maria Dablemont, on a search for optometry’s “firsts” to document in the OHS newsletter, began a correspondence with Dr. Weinstein.⁹² Weinstein sent Dablemont a series of long letters detailing her biography in tiny, immaculate script. Her letters were accompanied by objects, photographs, newspaper articles, correspondence and other records carefully annotated as evidence of her long career and active life. They also included proud descriptions of her son Quentin’s success as a maritime engineer, listed the accomplishments of her two grandchildren,

and remarkably frank and poignant recollections of more painful episodes.

Unfortunately, the collection was never processed and, over the years, was split among donor records, biographical and subject files, unprocessed collections and unattributed museum objects—her story fractured by its disassembly. In 1982 at the age of 89, Dr. Minerva Weinstein Yurman died and was laid to rest Sinai Memorial Park in Springfield, Massachusetts.⁹³ Dablemont retired in 1988⁹⁴ and the ILAMO staff dwindled and, finally, the library was closed in 2009. In 2019, the Archives & Museum of Optometry staff took up telling the stories still hidden in our collections once again, and reassembled Dr. Weinstein’s accessions. The reconstruction and preservation of the Minerva Weinstein Papers (MSS 501.4.11) not only allows us to share the story of Dr. Weinstein’s “firsts” but also to craft a richer narrative of how a woman optometrist navigated a less-liberated time to make an impact on optometry and on society. In this way, the story of an individual woman, unearthed in forgotten files, adds another dimension to a story we thought we knew.

Acknowledgements

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 36. Weinstein was the second woman to be licensed by examination in the state of New York (license #91) and one of only four to be licensed at all by October 1916. The first license issued to a woman in New York by exemption was awarded to Cora May Hanson of 276 Carolina Street in Buffalo on December 30, 1902 (license #32) and the second was issued to Minnie Black at 170 East 78th Street, New York City on January 28, 1909 (license #510). The claim to “first” by examination belongs to Rae L. Carlson, a Russian immigrant living in Rochester who graduated from the Rochester School of Optometry in 1915 and sat for the exam on Practical Optometry in June. Carlson received her certificate on July 1. [List of firsts documented in: Uttal D.K.(Secretary, New York State Optometric Association). Letter to: Minerva Weinstein. 1928 Apr 17. 1 leaf. Located at: The Archives & Museum of Optometry, St. Louis, MO; MSS 501.4.11, Minerva Weinstein Papers. Box 1.; See footnote 30 for documentation of Carlson’s licensure; Carlson’s background and subsequent practice documented at: Ancestry.com.1915 New York State Census. Monroe County, Rochester, NY. Line 70. Carlson, Rae.] Weinstein sat for the exam on Practical Optics on June 1 and she later requested a review of her paper written on that day to be considered as a submission for the October exam in Practical Optometry. Charles Prentice, President of the State Board of Examiners, forwarded the paper for re-evaluation in September and she was granted a license in October, scoring 94%. [Bissel W (Secretary, University of the State of New York, State Board of Examiners in Optometry). Letter to Minerva Weinstein. 1915 Sep 10. 1 leaf. Located at: The Archives & Museum of Optometry, St. Louis, MO; MSS 501.4.11, Minerva Weinstein Papers. Box 1; Hamilton H. (Assistant, Professional Examinations, University of the State of New York State Department of Education, Examinations Division). Letter to Minerva Weinstein. 1915 July 28. 1

- leaf and attachment (23D Practical Optometry Exam, The University of the state of New York, October 6, 1915 scored 94:100). Located at: The Archives & Museum of Optometry, St. Louis, MO; MSS 501.4.11, Minerva Weinstein Papers. Box 1.] Almost half (42%) of all applicants for licenses in 1915 were rejected. [For statistics on examination success rates, see footnote 30, page 148].
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47. The Abramowitz family sent emissaries to New York twice per year to attend fur auctions. On one such trip in 1915, Scholom, Amalia and Joseph all traveled to New York together [Familysearch.org. [Internet]. New York Passenger Arrival Lists (Ellis Island), 1892-1924. 26 Sep 1915. S.S. Rochambeau, Bordeaux France to New York. List of Manifest of Alien Passengers. Page 1, Line 5. Abramowitz, Joseph. Digitized from Roll 2434, Volume 5626-5628, 1 Oct 1915]. Scholom fatefully chose to return to France separately, boarding the doomed Lusitania. He later gained momentary fame as the commander of Lifeboat 13 and the savior of an infant thrown from the sinking ship by her desperate caregiver. More of his story can be found here: Poirier M and Jossa M. Mr. Samuel Abramowitz: The Lusitania Resource [Internet]. Rmslusitania.info. 2015 [cited 2019 Dec 1]. Available from: <http://www.rmslusitania.info/people/second-cabin/samuel-abramowitz/>; here: People's stories - Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool museums [Internet]. Samuel Abramowitz. [cited 2019 Dec 24]. Available from: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/visit/floor-plan/lusitania/people/peoples-stories.aspx?id=14424>; and here: The Lusitania : Part 16 : Appendices - Page 3 of 4 - Gare Maritime [Internet]. Abramowitz Shalom. 1915 Mar 16. [cited 2019 Dec 24]. Available from: <https://www.garemaritime.com/lusitania-part-16-appendices/3/>.
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TWO VISIONARY OHIO WOMEN: LOIS BLACK BING, O.D. AND RUTH P. MORRIS, O.D.

Robert D. Newcomb, O.D., M.P.H.

Emeritus Professor of Optometry
The Ohio State University

newcomb.2@osu.edu

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Lois Black Bing, O.D.,



Ruth P. Morris, O.D.,

ABSTRACT

This article profiles the careers of the Ohio State University College of Optometry's most prominent mid-century women graduates: Dr. Lois Black Bing (1909-2009) and Dr. Ruth P. Morris (1920-2011). The author highlights Drs. Morris' and Bing's contributions to the profession, including Dr. Bing's leadership role in bringing together the fields of education, psychology and optometry to advance children's vision., and Dr. Morris' business model as a family practice serving the vision care needs of patients in all stages of their lives, and her role as a mentor for optometry students at the OSU.

KEYWORDS

Lois Black Bing; Ruth P. Morris; The Ohio State University; women's history; optometry history; private optometry practice; children's vision

Dr. Lois Black Bing (1909-2009)

After receiving her A.B. and teaching credential in 1931 from the College of Wooster in Ohio, Dr. Bing earned her optometry degree in 1948 from The Ohio State University (OSU). She continued her interest in education through graduate studies at Ohio State, Pittsburgh, and Case Western Reserve universities after becoming an optometrist.

Dr. Bing chaired the Visual Problems of Children and Youth Committee of the American Optometric Association (AOA) for a period of 12 years, 1951-1963. During that time, she represented the AOA at the 1950 and 1960 White House Conferences on Children and Youth. She wrote many articles on vision and reading for Reading Teacher, The Journal of Learning Disabilities and Clinical Reading, and many optometric publications. She also collaborated with Drs. Lillian R. Hines and George D. Spache in writing and illustrating a book titled Vision and School Success. In 1995, she contributed a chapter, "The Role of Vision in Reading Disabilities," in a new book published that year titled How to be a Better Teacher.

Beginning in 1951, and continuing for the next 45 years, she chaired the annual School Vision Forum and Reading Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. This interdisciplinary conference, which has been held at the OSU College of Optometry since 1997, always presents nationally prominent speakers in the fields of optometry, education and psychology. Her groundbreaking leadership in bringing these three independent and diverse professions together in 1951 set a very high standard for formal communication and collaboration that did not previously exist. When the conference was moved to Columbus in 1997, Dr. Bing said it was to stimulate interprofessional understanding and cooperation among the colleges of the university concerned with children's learning.

At the 50th annual Forum and Conference in 1997, Dr. Paulette Schmidt (OSU O.D. Class of 1973, MS Class of 1976) briefly

summarized the history of this interdisciplinary meeting. She said: "I believe Dr. Bing's vision was born here at Ohio State, in great part through the legacy of two giants: Professor Charles Sheard and Regents Professor Glenn A. Fry. ... Dr. Sheard is credited with saying '80% of what we learn in a lifetime is processed through the visual system... [And] Professor Fry developed ways of investigating vision and visual performance to answer both research and clinical questions. ... Eyesight (20/20 visual acuity in each eye) does not equal vision. Indeed, 20/20 vision alone is an inadequate measure of the ability of the visual system to meet the visual performance needs of our children. Dr. Bing has gone on to refine vision for optometrists, educators and others in terms of the visual performance demands on children in the classroom."

In recognition of her work in the areas of vision and reading, Dr. Bing received the Apollo Award for her distinguished service from the American Optometric Association; she also was named an Honorary Life Member of three prestigious professional organizations: the American Academy of Optometry, the Ohio Council of the International Reading Association, and the Ohio School Psychologists Association, as well as receiving many other accolades during her practice career of five decades. In December 1997, she received the prestigious Carel C. Koch Memorial Medal Award from the American Academy of Optometry at its annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. This award was established in 1974 by the Academy to recognize a person who has made outstanding contributions to the enhancement and development of relationships between optometry and other professions. In 2002, she was inducted into the National Optometry Hall of Fame when the ceremony was held at the annual EastWest Eye Conference in Cleveland. And in 2006, she was honored by The Ohio State University Alumni Association with its Alumni Citizenship Award.

In 2006, when asked about her long-term interest in, and commitment to, working with other health care professionals, Dr. Bing said: "... two factors have led me to my involvement in

interprofessional activity. I felt that my license to practice carried with it the concept that we each are responsible for the public's concept of our profession. We each could add good, nothing in particular, or a negative concept. This led me to be willing to take time out of my practice to represent optometry in healthcare programs which included vision The second factor which led to my being involved with interprofessional activity was my professional interest in seeking answers as to why a child with normal or superior intelligence goes to school and finds it difficult to learn what others find it easy to learn. Vision is involved in many ways There is no more important matter with which we can concern ourselves than the essential need for a multi-professional approach to the problems of children."

In 2002, Dr. Bing and her son, Dr. James D. Bing (OSU BS-Optometry Class of 1960), established the Bing Pediatric Vision Library at the college, which provides students and faculty both historically-important and "cutting-edge" knowledge in the field. Dr. Bing died in 2009 at the age of 99.

Dr. Ruth P. Morris (1920-2011)

While a student at Ohio State, Ruth Penrod funded her optometric education by working for 25 cents an hour at the White Haines Optical Company in Columbus. In her last year of optometry school, she married Warren G. Morris. While her new husband was in the Army, she began her practice of optometry in Toledo with an established optometrist who, unfortunately, passed away only nine weeks after her arrival. For the next three years, Dr. Ruth Morris worked hard to learn the business side of an optometric practice; and her efforts were so successful that her husband was able to join her after he returned from WWII and later earned his optometry degree from Ohio State in 1949.

Drs. Ruth (affectionately known to all as "Ruthie") and Warren Morris practiced together for 37 years, until his sudden death in 1986. They served five generations of patients in northwest Ohio. Their division of labor and love in the office was to have Dr. Ruth care for the vision needs of adolescent and adult patients—including contact lenses—while Dr. Warren cared for the children. Both emphasized visual performance and said many times: "Our patients must be able to use their vision comfortably and effectively at work and play or we have not done our jobs as optometrists." Together, they assured that each child received vision care regardless of his or her parents' finances. And they educated their patients, as well as the teachers in their community, about the importance of eye safety, vision care, and reading performance.

They also "adopted" many optometry students who visited their office and provided invaluable counsel and resources to assure that each of their "optometry kids" achieved his or her own professional goals. Dr. Kevin Alexander, OSU OD Class of 1976, who was an OSU faculty member and then went on to become president of both the Ohio Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association, dean at the Michigan College of Optometry, and president of the Marshall B. Ketchum University in Fullerton, California, said the Morrises loaned him some money to open his private practice in Columbus. And he was told at the time, "just pay us back whenever you can."

Dr. Ruth served her community as well as her profession by being on the boards of Toledo civic and performing arts

HINDSIGHT: Journal of Optometry History

organizations. She participated vigorously at local, state, and national levels in Business and Professional Women (BPW). And in her early BPW years, she developed a program to educate the public about seat belts and driver safety. In her later years, she established a vision clinic for indigent patients in Toledo. And in optometry, she chaired the education committee of the Ohio Optometric Association for many years and established the Optometric Recognition Award (ORA) at the state and national levels for optometrists who attend a higher number of continuing education courses than the minimum necessary for annual licensure renewal. She also served on the American Optometric Association's Council on Clinical Optometric Care, during which time she helped to establish quality assurance measurements for the profession.



Figure 1: Dr. Ruth P. Morris and Dean Richard M. Hill, 1991.

One of The Ohio State University College of Optometry's most distinguished alumni, Dr. Ruth gave the convocation address on June 13, 1991, to that year's graduating class. She said: " . . . FOLLOW YOUR DREAM . . . Be prepared to take some risks . . . Risk and change will be with you all your life. Both are synonymous with opportunity. Only you can know, shape, and control the dream you have in your heart tonight . . ." (Figure 1).

Also in 1991, Drs. Ruth and Warren Morris were posthumously awarded the H. Ward Ewalt Medal for Service to Optometry by The Ohio State University College of Optometry. Due to the enduring legacy that Ruth and her beloved husband, Warren, gave to Ohio optometry, the Ohio Optometric Association's highest annual award is titled "The Warren G. and Ruth P. Morris Optometrist of the Year" for outstanding contributions to the profession of optometry and public service. The recipient of this high honor has the privilege of keeping Dr. Warren Morris' mounted spot retinoscope for one year, and then presenting it to the next year's honoree at the OOA annual convention. Dr. Ruth Morris died in 2011 at the age of 92.

Editor's Note

This article was previously published by Dr. Newcomb in 2014 as a portion of his book entitled *Our History in Focus: The First 100 Years of The Ohio State University College of Optometry*.

“NEVER-THE-LESS, I WAS ACCEPTED.”

Dr. Lois Bing wrote this hashtag-worthy phrase in a 1999 letter to the Archives staff recounting her successful application to the Ohio State University's School of Optometry, despite a less-than-encouraging interview with the program's director. As these artifacts demonstrate, Dr. Bing approached this and all other challenges with equal parts persistence, excellence, and wit—traits she held in common with many of the women profiled in the this issue of *Hindsight*.



Pronouns matter! Figure 1. Dr. Bing's original certificate of licensure, issued by the Ohio State Board of Optometry in 1948 referred to her as "him" and "he." Figure 2. In the letter she sent to the Archives with her donation, she says she "kept after" the members of the Board to re-issue her license with the correct pronouns. After several years of her bemused needling, the board relented. Images courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry, MSS 501.4.12, Lois Bing Papers.

2



Figure 3. Lois Bing, O.D., circa 1950. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry, MSS 501.4.12, Lois Bing Papers

1

DR. LOIS B. BING

VISION THERAPY

7054 WEST 130TH ST. BOX 30243
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44130 0243
PHONE (216) 845-5210

At the time of my husband's death in 1945 I was president of the Women's Auxiliary to the A.O.A. and very much involved in Optometry. My husband had been president of the Ohio Optometric Association and had just served as chairman of the Resolutions committee of the A.O.A. My family and close friends urged me to go back to school to study to be an optometrist.

When I conferred with the Dean of the College of Optometry I was told that they were not anxious to accept women students. Their experience had been that most often women got married and did not continue to practice Optometry. They felt their time was wasted in training women. Never-the-less I was accepted.

Upon graduating and taking the Ohio State Board of Optometry examination I received this certificate of licensure which as you see referred to me as "him" or "he".

I kept after the members of the State Board of Optometry for several years before they finally gave me a new certificate of licensure referring to me as "her" or "she". I teased the Board of Optometry saying: "you are confusing my patients. They think I am a she."

Now as you know half of the students are women.

IN HER OWN WORDS: LIBBY I. SUKOFF, O.D.

Libby I. Sukoff, O.D.

Brooklyn, NY
sukoffle@gmail.com

Andrea P. Thau, O.D.

Past-President, American Optometric Association
 Diplomate, American Board of Optometry
 Associate Clinical Professor Emerita, SUNY Optometry
 New York, NY
drthauandassoc@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This memoir, written by Libby I. Sukoff, O.D. and edited by Andrea P. Thau, O.D., both of New York, chronicles Dr. Sukoff's life and more than six-decade career in optometry. Dr. Thau has included an introduction describing the personal and professional relationship she has with the author. This article has been annotated by Kirsten Hébert, contributing editor.

KEYWORDS

Andrea Thau; Libby Sukoff; Abraham Applebaum; Edward Sukoff; Columbia University; Optometric Center of New York; Cumberland Hospital; Harold Solan; optometry history; professionalization; history of medicine

INTRODUCTION

When I was asked to suggest a woman to be profiled in *Hindsight: Journal of Optometry History*, the first person who came to mind was Dr. Libby Sukoff. Libby is the original "Energizer Bunny." A five-foot-tall spitfire, she is a paramount professional, high energy, happy, and an athlete who exhibits true *joie de vivre*. I don't know many other O.D.'s who are still so excited to practice optometry after 63 years. Despite the fact that she was often the only woman in the room, Libby was treated respectfully by all who knew her, including her male colleagues. She did not expect any special treatment, but desired and earned the same respect and consideration afforded her male colleagues.



Andrea P. Thau, O.D., 2016. Image courtesy the AOA.

My late father, Dr. Edwin C. Thau, met Libby's husband Edward and later Libby at the Columbia University School of Optometry in the 1950's. Although they weren't classmates, they overlapped; Ed Sukoff graduated from Columbia in 1952, Ed Thau in 1954, and Libby Sukoff in Columbia's last class in 1956.¹ The two Eds were on the staff of the Brooklyn Cumberland hospital for many years. After my father passed away, Ed Sukoff continued at Cumberland and became the longest serving medical professional on the hospital staff.² All three of them worked at the Optometric Center of New York. My father was President of the Bronx County Optometric Society and Ed Sukoff was President of the Brooklyn Optometric Society,³ both local societies of the New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA). My father, like Libby, worked for Dr. Harold Solan⁴ at the beginning of his career and I was honored to be Dr. Solan's first second-generation student.

HINDSIGHT: Journal of Optometry History

The Sukoffs and my father built private professional practices, scheduling examinations by appointment only and their income was derived mainly by professional fees rather than material sales. This was an enormous change from providing eye examinations for free in order to "sell" glasses. They each conducted themselves as true professionals—they always dressed as medical professionals, treated their patients with the utmost respect, and provided the finest care. They were lifelong friends and they all helped elevate optometry at a time when it was transforming into a respected profession.

I recall as a child that the Sukoffs attended all of our family events. This was my first introduction into the American Optometric Association (AOA)/NYSOA family of optometry. Like my father, Libby loved the profession and the practice of optometry. Libby and I have much in common—we both had fathers whose love of optometry inspired us to become optometrists. We both love to dance and met our husbands dancing. During my interview of Libby for the article that follows, I learned that although Libby never dated a classmate, she did date my father!

I hope that you will be inspired by Dr. Libby Sukoff's professional life story and that you too will feel the need to pay it forward and thank the wonderful optometrists like Libby and Ed Sukoff and my father who helped advance the profession by volunteering your time and energy to your state association and the AOA to benefit future generations of optometrists and their patients.

LIBBY I. SUKOFF, O.D. (1933-)

I, Libby I. Sukoff, O.D., F.A.A.O., formerly Libby Applebaum, am in my 63rd year of lovingly practicing optometry. I am currently in solo practice in Brooklyn, NY, at the office of Dr. Leon Reich two days per week, generally spending one hour with each patient.

Thinking back to my childhood, my father Dr. Abraham Applebaum was an optometrist as were his brother and nephew.



Libby I. Sukoff, O.D., 1988

My Dad was born in Belarus and came to the United States at age 18. He completed his pre-optometry courses in high school in one year and then entered the Massachusetts College of Optometry, graduating in 1927. (P. 27, Fig. 1) At that time optometry was a two-year post-high school program. He loved his work and his patients and practiced until he was 80 years old. He practiced in a storefront in partnership with an optician. My father's love for optometry was an inspiration. He loved his work and helping patients. I wanted to become an optometrist, but I knew that I wanted to have my own private professional practice and not practice in a storefront. Optometry was advancing and becoming a recognized profession and I wanted to help.

As a child, I spent time in his office observing him examining patients and providing vision therapy which I greatly enjoyed. Many careers were not open to women at that time. Even if you completed a professional program in architecture or law for example, you could not find a job. I knew of several female doctors practicing in Brooklyn and knew that you could be self-employed in optometry. My father's love for his work motivated me to apply to Columbia University School of Optometry. I raced through Thomas Jefferson High School and Brooklyn College, taking as many courses each year as possible, graduating from college at age 20. My interview at Columbia for optometry school was with the dean, Professor Treleaven,⁵ and two staff optometrists. Professor Treleaven did not want women as students, even suggesting that my sole reason for planning to study optometry was a way to meet and marry a man. Ironically, I had already met the man who would later become my husband and soul mate, Dr. Edward Sukoff, but I had rejected his proposal because Ed did not want me to go to optometry school and nothing and no one was going to stop me from becoming an optometrist. I was only interested in a career, not marriage. Fortunately, the two staff doctors approved my application. Thus, I entered the three-year program wearing man-tailored suits and high heels as the only woman in the school. My classmates accepted me well. I was thrilled to attend classes and study every free moment except for a Saturday evening date (but never with any of my fellow classmates!!!) Our first exam was a surprise test in anatomy given by Dr. Sivak, M.D.⁶ Fortunately, I was well prepared and aced it, unlike my fellow classmates. At the end of the first year, one-third of my class flunked out, including some men with advanced degrees.

I was invited to join Omega Epsilon Phi,⁷ the national optometric fraternity, as its first female member. I was also invited to work with Dr. Harold Solan, O.D., M.A., F.A.A.O., F.C.O.V.D.⁴ a member of the staff in his developmental vision and vision therapy practice in the Bronx. On Saturday mornings, I would hop on the subway to the Bronx and spend the day aiding and learning from him. During this year, I accidentally re-met the wonderful optometrist I had given up for my career: Edward Sukoff. Edward was a veteran of World War II who had served as a lieutenant in hospital administration in Germany. He came back to the United States and attended New York University for pre-optometry. He graduated with a M.S. in optometry from Columbia University in 1952.

We first met when I was a Brooklyn College student and my sorority invited the Columbia University School of Optometry's fraternity to a party. It was just like in the movies. Our eyes locked from across the room and we danced the entire night. Regrettably, we broke up because he didn't want to marry a future optometrist;

he wanted a stay-at-home wife. We accidentally crossed paths a few years later when we were both standing in line at the same hotel, I to check out and he to check-in. This time, he accepted that I was to be an optometrist and I accepted his proposal of marriage. Our wedding was on May 29, 1955 several days after my finals. I was so happy I almost ran down the aisle to greet him! He had made all the plans while I studied. Our honeymoon was three weeks island hopping in the Caribbean—my first time on an airplane. The first stop was St. Thomas. The water was unbelievably blue and warm and calm—great for swimming and snorkeling. I considered practicing there until I found out that for children to get a good education, they were sent to school on the mainland in the United States at age 12.

The following year was filled with advanced courses or clinical practice, then studying for the New York State Board written and practical examinations and, later for the National Board which had been newly developed.⁸ We lived with my parents so that I could devote my full energies to studying. Ed worked in my father's office every day starting at 10:00 a.m. I left for school at 7:00 a.m., putting on my lipstick, kissing him in his sleep, leaving my mark. When my newly-divorced professor Dr. Alfred Lit⁹ heard that I was engaged, he offered marital advice only to me and not to any of my male classmates. He told me to talk a lot to the one that I love. My class—the Class of 1956—was the last graduating class from Columbia University. Only 22 of us completed the program. Columbia University shut down the optometry program under pressure from the M.D.'s.¹⁰ They were one of the last programs offering an M.S. in optometry rather than an O.D. degree and the M.D.'s would not allow an O.D. degree to be granted. Immediately after I graduated, Ed and I traveled to Boston to study at the Massachusetts College of Optometry for our Doctor of Optometry degrees. The program was summer and fall, followed by an original thesis. We enjoyed the Boston area and finished our joint thesis, along with Dr. Oberstein¹¹ on hard contact lenses in 1958 back in NY.

In 1957, we purchased a home with an office from an M.D. who was a general practitioner. This is what I dreamed of—combining home with office. Ed and I were true partners in life and in work. The front entrance opened into a large reception room which we filled with children's books and toys, including a large toy horse that children could ride on and puzzles. The next room was our consultation room, which had a large professional desk. Our two examination rooms had examination chairs and equipment; one was also for vision therapy, and the other for visual fields, contact lens and subnormal vision (later called low-vision) work. It was a truly professional office with examinations by appointment only. We only dispensed glasses to our own patients. No frames were on display. We kept them in the drawers of the same consultation desk that we used for case histories and took them out to show patients as needed. The first three months of practice together were challenging. Ed acted as the boss of the practice and treated me as a nurse and not as an equal. It took me three months to get up the courage to confront him about this. I was successful and we became lifelong equals and partners in work and in all aspects of our family life.

Since we were opening "cold," we needed extra support. Ed continued to work part-time with my father, and I at the Optometric Center of New York (the clinic that had served the Columbia University School of Optometry, would be kept running

by optometrists after Columbia closed and would later become the clinic for SUNY Optometry).¹ I worked with Dr. Harold Solan, at Dr. Taylor's Reading and Study Skills Center¹² in Greenwich Village, New York, and at the Optometric Center of New York. Ed and I each had different hours in our office to accommodate our patients.

We joined the Brooklyn Optometric Society, a local society of the New York State Optometric Association and Ed quickly became president. I celebrated his presidency with a large cocktail party in our home office for all the optometric members and their wives. He later went on to become president of the Vision Conservation Institute,¹³ an organization for the advancement of vision care. I wanted to acquaint women with what a great profession optometry was, and thus became chairman of an American Optometric Association committee to encourage people to enter the optometric profession. I lectured throughout New York state to young women in college urging them to consider a career in optometry, winning a national award for my work. When the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Optometry opened,¹ women started applying. Ed and I both joined the staff teaching clinical practice. We purposely taught on Wednesday mornings so that we could stay in Manhattan and attend Broadway matinees and concerts. (P. 27, Figs. 2 and 3)

Our practice grew and developed. The one problem I had as a woman, was calling a male M.D. for information or to discuss a problem. They treated me like a nurse, not a doctor. If Ed called, the attitude of the doctor was totally different, thus I had Ed call for many years. This now is not a problem.

My daughter was born in 1958, and I had my son in 1961. We had a full-time, live-in housekeeper/nanny. I could walk through the office door into our home. If ever there was a problem, I was available. Nursery school became a problem. Our daughter Marla insisted I stay with her for one month until she knew the name of every child in the class and had analyzed their personalities. Of course, we adjusted our appointments to accommodate the situation. Two years later my son, Neil, was just the opposite: "Do not come in. I'm okay." Dinner time was a family affair—no appointments for that hour. Then, one of us would return to the office and the other would tell the children a story and kiss them good night. It worked amazingly well. (Figure 1)

In 1964 we purchased a lakefront retreat on Upper Greenwood Lake, New Jersey, two hours from our home/office and near skiing. Between day camp counselors, nannies, grandparents, and a good station wagon, it enabled great family time. Ed and I were great athletes. We played tennis, swam (I was a lifeguard as a teenager), water and snow skied, walked 5.5 miles around our lake, boated on our five boats—motor, kayak, canoe, paddle and sail boat—ice skated on the lake in winter and bicycled on the Palisades in New Jersey and on Hilton Head. We danced every opportunity that we could and sought out restaurants that had dancing with dinner.

My parents had allowed me to go skiing with my friends but when Eddie (who learned to ski in the military) asked to take me skiing they gave permission. I only gave up skiing when I saw that Eddie wasn't skiing well at 86. I told him that I didn't want to ski anymore but it was out of concern for him. I now exercise 30-60 minutes every single morning (including on the days when I commute to work) and for 5 minutes every single night. I do a combination of yoga, Pilates, calisthenics, weight lifting, throwing

IN HER OWN WORDS

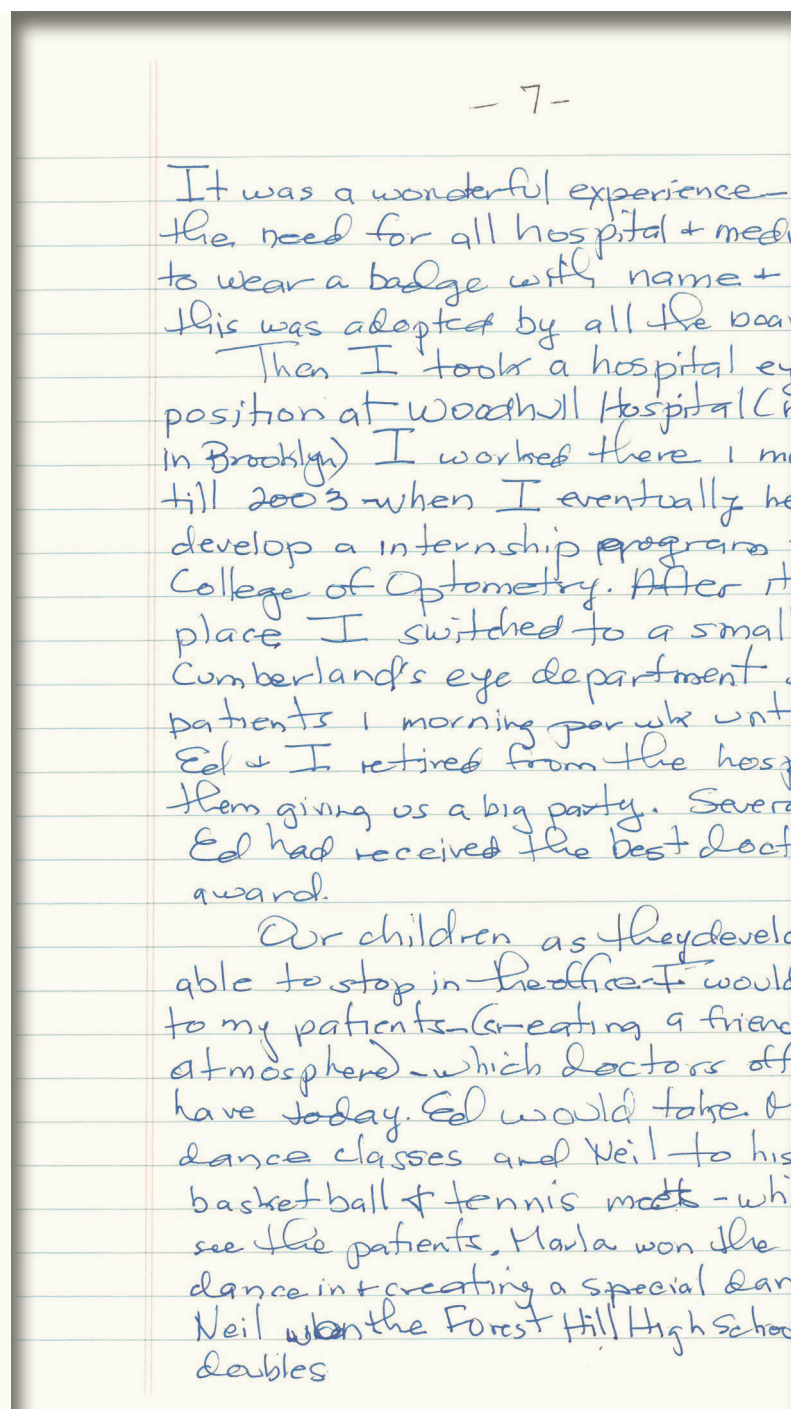


Figure 1. Libby Sukoff recounts her experience working at Cumberland Hospital and negotiating family life. Maintaining and growing a career while also raising children and accommodating the career of a spouse is a challenge faced by most women professionals at mid-century. Libby Sukoff memoir, page 7, August 2019.

and catching large and small balls, stretch bands and jumping. I still love to swim and spend my summers on the lake swimming, canoeing and kayaking. In the winter I work out at the spa. I am no longer five feet tall, but I am still size 2!

Ten years later, in 1974, I became the first female to be appointed to the New York State Board of Optometry, which only had five members. I was well-accepted by the male members of the board, though I occasionally differed in opinion on some of the malpractice cases that came before us. I wrote the Vision Therapy portion of the New York State licensing examination and appointed an optometric team to give the exam. Since we officiated the exam for doctors who graduated from all programs, I resigned from SUNY to avoid any conflicts of interests. After 10 years, I became Chair of the New York State Board of Optometry which expanded to 10 members and two consumer members. It was a wonderful experience. I introduced the need for all hospital and medical staff to wear a badge with their name and position, and this was adopted by all the boards and fields and is still the law in New York.

I then took a hospital position in the eye department of the newly opened Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn.² I worked there one morning per week until 2003, when I eventually helped develop an internship program for the SUNY College of Optometry. After it was in place, I switched to a smaller hospital, Brooklyn-Cumberland's eye department, seeing patients one morning per week. Ed was awarded best doctor of the year from Cumberland Hospital; the first optometrist in the New York City hospital system to ever receive that honor. When Ed and I retired in 2012 from Brooklyn-Cumberland hospital they gave us a big party.

As our children developed, they were always able to stop in the office. I would introduce them to my patients, creating a friendly office atmosphere, which doctors' offices do not have today. Ed would take Marla to her art and dance classes, and Neil to his organ, basketball and tennis meets, while I would see the patients. It was important to both Ed and I that he develop a close relationship to our children. Marla won the New York City award for dance for creating a special dance performance. Neil won the Forest Hills High School tennis matches playing doubles.

The years flew by and Marla was off to Bowdoin College, and then Pomona College in California. She graduated from New York Medical College and is a M.D. Neil attended Middlebury College, spent his junior year at Tel Aviv University in Israel, attended Sterling University in Scotland and then went on to earn an M.B.A. at Duke University, with one year at the London School of Economics and Cardozo Law School. Both Marla and Neil married, and now I have 2 wonderful grandchildren: Zachary, 27, who earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering in aerodynamics, and Ari who is in his second year at Downstate Medical School. I often wonder if neither of our children went into optometry because we discussed it so much at home!

Later we practiced three days per week. We loved to travel. Our favorite place was Israel. In lieu of retiring we spent every December in Florida and every February in Mexico until Ed fell and broke his hip in Mexico, requiring immediate surgery and return to New York for rehabilitation. He eventually required a second operation but had a heart attack on our 62nd anniversary and left this world a week later at 90 years of age. I continue to practice but sold our home/office one year after Ed's death. I live at my lake

home, and moved my office in with Dr. Leon Reich, whom I knew from Columbia. Despite the two-hour commute each way, I still want to practice. I do it purely for the love of optometry.

Optometry has been a challenging, stimulating and rewarding career. It has changed greatly since I started 62 years ago. My husband and I and our contemporaries helped to advance the profession. My only regret is that I listened to my husband who did not want to achieve the last increase in our scope of license. I should have done it. May all the wonderful women entering the profession appreciate how far optometry has come in scope and recognition and strive to provide the best professional care and continue to help advance our wonderful profession, optometry.

Annotations

1. For more on the demise of the Columbia University optometry program, the Optometric Center of New York, and the SUNY optometry program see: Sunyopt.edu. Our Mission, Values and History [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2020 Jan 09]. Available from: <https://www.sunyopt.edu/about/history-and-mission>, and Goss DA. One hundred years ago: Start of the Optometry School at Columbia University. *Hindsight*. 2010 Oct;41(4):129-32.
2. Cumberland Hospital in Brooklyn, which began as the Brooklyn City Dispensary in 1847, served low-income communities in its vicinity for more than a century before agreeing to an affiliation with nearby Brooklyn Hospital in 1963. Cumberland was closed in 1983, moving staff and patients to nearby, modern Woodhull Hospital. Cumberland Brooklyn eventually became part of the Brooklyn Hospital Center in 1990. Brooklyn was also home to Brooklyn Eye and Ear, a charity hospital established in 1868 (closed in 1976). Dr. Ed Sukoff had interactions with staff of both Cumberland and Brooklyn Eye and Ear hospitals early in his career. For more on the history on the hospitals see: Sullivan R. A City Hospital in Fort Green will be Closed. *New York Times* [Internet]. 1983 Aug 11 [cited 2020 Jan 09]. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/11/nyregion/a-city-hospital-in-fort-greene-will-be-closed.html>; Brooklyn Historical Society. Guide to the Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital records 1985.005. [Internet]. 2011 Nov 18 [cited 2020 Jan 09]. Available from: http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/bhs/arms_1985_005_eye_ear_hospital/arms_1985_005_eye_ear_hospital.html; Spellman S. Past and Present: Decades of Change for Fort Green's Cumberland Street Hospital. *Brownstoner.com* [Internet]. 2015 Jul 14. [cited 2020 Jan 09]. Available from: <https://www.brownstoner.com/history/fort-greene-cumberland-street-hospital/>.
3. For more early history on the Bronx and Brooklyn County Optometric Society's, see the biography of Dr. Minerva Weinstein in this issue (Hebert K. Minerva H. Weinstein (1893-1982): The First Woman Licensed to Practice Optometry in New York City. *Hindsight* 2020;51(1).
4. Dr. Harold A. Solan was a lecturer at Columbia's school of optometry 1950-1956, subsequently served as a consultant at the Optometric Center of New York, and finally as faculty at the State University of New York College of Optometry. He also held positions as Director of Orthoptics at Harlem Eye and Ear Hospital from 1956-1960 and was a faculty member in Farleigh Dickinson University's education and psychology departments where he combined his education as an optometrist and his master's in remedial reading and developmental psychology to treat children with learning disabilities. To learn more about Dr. Solan, see: Goss DA. Biographical Note on Harold Solan (1921-2012), Optometrist and Learning Disabilities Researcher. *Hindsight* 2014;45: 62-4.
5. Clifford Leroy Treleaven received his B.A. (1914) and M.A. (1915) in physics in Toronto, Canada. He joined the faculty at Columbia University in 1922 as a professor in the Department of Physics. He

3. Women in Optometry Panel, SUNY, 1988. (L-R) Drs. Ellen Richter Ettinger, Libby Sukoff, Marcie Welsch, Madeline Romeu, and Monique Picard-Root. Image courtesy The Archives & Museum of Optometry.

3



1

1. Stereograph made from family photo by Abraham Applebaum. Daughter Libby is an infant in her mother's arms, circa 1933. Image courtesy the author.

2

2. Dinner at the 1964 New York State Optometric Association meeting. Drs. Ed and Libby Sukoff seated at center. A young Dr. Alden N. Haffner in a white suit and bow tie is standing behind Dr. Libby Sukoff. Image courtesy the author.



6. No record of Dr. Sivak could be found to provide biographical profile.
7. Omega Epsilon Phi's Alpha Chapter was founded at Columbia University in 1919, the fourth oldest collegiate optometry fraternity in the country, growing to 11 chapters across the country by 1953. RG 547.3 Omega Epsilon Phi Fraternity, Box 1, Folder 1. Located at: The Archives & Museum of Optometry, St. Louis, MO.
8. The NBEQ was organized in June 1951 in New Orleans, LA at the 42nd convention of the International Board of Boards, held in conjunction with the 54th American Optometric Congress. The first national exams were administered in 1952. Convention of the I.B.B. J Am Optom Assoc 1951;23(1): 57.
9. Alfred Lit, O.D. (1914-2000) earned a Ph.D. in Psychology at Columbia University in 1948 specializing in visual sensation and perception. His research at Columbia focused on stereoscopic vision and the visual latent period. He was part of the optometry faculty at Columbia for a decade (1946-1956). Lit was active in organized optometry, serving as a member and officer in the NYSOA, ASCO, AAO and the AOA. In 1959, he took a position at the University of Michigan's Psychology Department and ended his career in 1983 as a Professor Emeritus at Southern Illinois University. For a complete biography see: Alfred Lit Obituary. The Pulfrich Effect. [Internet]. 2003 May 10. [cited 2020 Jan 10]. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University. Available from: https://pulfrich.siu.edu/Pulfrich_Pages/awards/LitObit.htm.
10. Columbia announced it its remaining class of 22 students will be the last to graduate in June 1956. Columbia. Report from the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry. J Am Optom Assoc 1955;27(5): 271.
11. Oberstein S, Sukoff E and Sukoff LI. An analysis of the various grid positions in dynamic cross cylinder testing. [master's thesis]. [Boston]: Massachusetts College of Optometry, 1957 Dec. Located at: New England College of Optometry Archives, Boston, MA.
12. Dr. Earl A. Taylor was the Director of the Reading and Study Skills Center in New York, Amackassin, Blairstown, New Jersey. He published widely on education, reading and the relationship of eye movements to literacy. For more works see: Worldcat.org. [Internet]. Taylor, Earl A. Available at: <https://www.worldcat.org/wcidentities/lccn-no97067304#identitiesassociates>.
13. The Vision Conservation Institutes were non-profit state organized entities that disseminated information on vision and eye care to the public in cooperation with the American Optometric Association. The VCI had a particular focus on children's vision and schools..

PIONEERING WOMEN IN INDIANA OPTOMETRY: BOYD AND METZGER—A FAMILY AFFAIR

Kyle W. King, O.D.

Evansville Eyecare Associates
Evansville, IN

kywking@indiana.edu

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Drs. Virlee Metzger (left) and Dr. Miriam Boyd (right). Image courtesy the author.

ABSTRACT

This memoir is a summary of an oral interview conducted by Kyle W. King, O.D. with fellow Indiana-based optometrist Miriam Boyd, O.D. about her career in optometry and the career of her mother, Virlee Metzger, O.D. Dr. David Goss performed historical research to supplement Dr. Boyd's memoir. Taken together, the Metzger and Boyd's careers spanned 80 years (1933-2015) and represent an impressive professional legacy that endured changes both in society and in the scope and nature of optometric practice.

KEYWORDS

Virlee Metzger; Miriam Boyd; women's history; optometry history; Indiana University; Richard Tubesing; Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary; Illinois College of Optometry

INTRODUCTION

I was recently asked to contribute an article on two pioneering women in optometry, Drs. Virlee Metzger and Miriam Boyd. I first met Dr. Boyd ten years ago at a local optometric society meeting. The following is based on a phone interview I conducted with her in mid-August 2019.

Indiana Trailblazers: Metzger and Boyd

Healthcare was in Dr. Miriam Boyd's genes. Her mother, Dr. Virlee Metzger, was an optometrist in Jasper, Indiana, sharing office space with Boyd's grandfather and uncle, who were dentists. By the second grade, Boyd knew that she wanted to become an optometrist. She credits her mother as the inspiration for this choice, watching her practice during her childhood, and notes that Dr. Metzger was supportive of her decision to go into optometry. Dr. Metzger was on a committee at the Indiana University (IU) School of Optometry at the time and helped to recruit students into the profession. Boyd recalls that her mother often used her as a test subject for new technologies and innovations, especially in contact lenses.

Both Metzger and Boyd were trailblazers in the world of optometry. Dr. Metzger was one of the first women to practice optometry in the state of Indiana. She attended what is now the Illinois College of Optometry and began her practice in Jasper in 1933. (Figure 1) She continued her practice there for the next 56 years. Dr. Metzger was a longtime member of the Indiana Optometric Association (IOA) and American Optometric Association (AOA). When Dr. Boyd decided to go into optometry, she applied and was accepted into the fledgling program at Indiana University. Boyd was the first woman to enroll at the IU Division of Optometry, later the School of Optometry, where she also served as president of her class. After five years of study, she received a Master of Optometry degree in 1962, which was the terminal professional optometry degree at IU at the time.

After graduation, Dr. Boyd moved to Indianapolis and began practicing with Dr. Richard Tubesing. In the mid-1960s she and her husband moved to Boston, where he had been accepted into a didactic year of oral surgery at Boston University. Dr. Boyd had the good fortune to land a job at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary (MEEI). She credits a connection with her friend, Joan Exford, O.D., who was the second woman to graduate from the IU School of Optometry, for this position.¹



Fig. 1 Virlee Metzger, NICO, June 1933.

Dr. Boyd worked in the Cornea Service Department at MEEI, where she fit scleral contact lenses and took pictures of corneal pathology. During this time, she co-authored two articles on scleral lenses in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*.^{2,3} "I learned a lot and saw many interesting things," Boyd said of her time at MEEI. After her employment at MEEI, Boyd returned to the Indianapolis area, where she returned to work with Dr. Richard Tubesing in his office in Speedway, Indiana. Dr. Tubesing was heavily involved with the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), and during this time both Dr. Boyd and Dr. Metzger also became fellows in the AAO.

Boyd and her husband were from southwestern Indiana and decided to start their respective practices there. At the time, Vincennes, Indiana had no oral surgeons, and so they chose to settle there, only 50 miles from their hometowns. "I thought about joining mother in her practice, but it just didn't work out." Her husband opened his oral surgery practice in 1969 and during this year, Dr. Boyd worked in his office to help it get off the ground. In 1970, she opened her practice, which she maintained until 2015. She did not sell her practice when she retired, but instead donated much of her office equipment to missionaries working in Ukraine.

When asked what she enjoyed most about optometry, Dr. Boyd said, "It gave me a great sense of contributing to the welfare of my community." She greatly enjoyed fitting contact lenses, especially hard bifocal lenses. "Things are a lot different now than when I started, especially diagnosing and treating eye diseases," Boyd remembers. "I was not able to dilate or treat anything when I first started." Optometry was a male-dominated profession during the careers of both Dr. Metzger and Dr. Boyd, but Boyd says neither of them faced any discrimination from men in the profession, "I never had any problems with my male colleagues."

CONCLUSION

Dr. Boyd was active for many years in the IOA and is a lifetime member of both the IOA and AOA. On a personal note, I can recall seeing Dr. Boyd at almost every local society meeting until her retirement. At a spry 80 years young, Dr. Boyd remains active in her community of Vincennes. She currently volunteers with the United Way of Knox County and the League of Women Voters. Joining friends to watch Indiana Hoosier basketball is also favorite pastime of hers in the winter months. Dr. Boyd is active in her

church community of St. Francis Xavier—the first Catholic Parish established in Indiana—which seems to be fitting. To close my interview, I asked Dr. Boyd if she had any final thoughts on her career and the legacy of both she and her mother and she simply stated, "I loved optometry, and I know mother did too."

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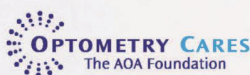
1. Dr. Joan Exford would become the first woman president of the American Academy of Optometry and is the subject of an article scheduled for publication in *Hindsight* 2020;51(2).
2. Miller D, Holmberg A, Carroll J, Boyd M. Comparison of two methods in molding scleral contact shells. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1966; 76:422-425.
3. Miller D, Holmberg A, Carroll J, Exford J, Boyd M. Effect of impression taking on the shape of the cornea in scleral lens fitting. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1967;78:331-333.

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St. Louis, MO 63141
Toll Free: 800.365.2219, ext. 4200
Phone: 314.983.4200 | Fax: 314.991.4101
foundation@aoa.org
aoafoundation.org