



PROFILES IN HISTORY

Fifty Years of Optometric Education The Continuing Education Program of the Saskatchewan Optometric Association**

W.A. Forsyth*

Abstract

This paper reviews the history of the origin, development and progress of the Saskatchewan Graduate Summer Courses. It reveals the responsible attitude of those pioneer optometrists towards the need for education in the discharging of their professional responsibilities, and this prior to the acceptance of continuing education by optometry and other disciplines.

Abrégé

Ce travail est un exposé historique des origines du développement et progrès du programme d'éducation continu des optométristes de la Saskatchewan. Il révèle la prévoyance de ces pionniers sur la nécessité d'une bonne formation dans l'accomplissement de leurs tâches professionnelles et ça, avant même que le principe de l'éducation continu aie gain de cause parmi les professionnels de la santé.

As optometry matures and moves toward a full acceptance of its role as a provider of primary health care, its practitioners should remind themselves of the traditions which they have inherited. One of the finest of these traditions had its origin, of all places, in the sparsely populated mid continental province of Saskatchewan. During this year of 1983 we celebrate the 50th session of the Saskatchewan Optometric Association's Continuing Education Course . . . a North American record holder for educational presentations of this kind!

(To set the statistically minded at ease, it should be explained that while the first Saskatchewan Summer Course was held in 1930, the 1983 session is labelled as number 50 because the 1935 course was cancelled following the sudden death of the principal lecturer, the 1940 and 45 sessions were victims of World War II, and the 1951 version was fused with the C.A.O. Congress in Winnipeg.)

Of course longevity alone is no measure of the value of the educational program; in this case the high standard of academic content that has existed from its inception is the key factor in its success. The level of excellence that has been achieved is almost entirely due to the co-operation of the University of Saskatchewan, the faculty members of its College of Medicine, the dedicated work of fifty organizing committees, and the unselfish contributions of many pioneers of optometric education in the United States and Canada.

For the background leading up to the beginning of Saskatchewan's program of continuing education I have drawn on the archives of the S.O.A., and to certain recollections of conversations with my father, whose name first appears on the register in 1911. It has been difficult to avoid over dependence on his anecdotes concerning friends and colleagues in the early days of optometry.

To fully appreciate the significance of their interest in professional education we must remember that our optometric forbearers were recruited mostly from the ranks of pharmacists and jewellers. In order to receive an exempt licence under the Optometry Act of 1911, one had only to produce evidence of having practised spectacle fitting with a trial frame and lenses. Most of these "Grandfather Clause" exemptions later sat for their professional examinations, and their interest in improving their level of education indicated a genuine desire to better serve those who consulted them.

Typical efforts at continuing education are indicated in some excerpts from early minutes of the Saskatchewan Optometric Association. At the

*B.A., O.D.

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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annual meeting of May 22, 1913 it was moved by Chas McDonald, seconded by T.S.J. Ivay, 'that the executive committee provide an educational programme, and that the executive have power to add for this purpose'. At the annual meeting in 1914 it was moved by Mr. Wheatley, seconded by Mr. Culp, 'that 8 meetings, (2 in each city) be held by the education committee in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Regina'. At the same meeting it was agreed that the following books be approved for use by members attending these meetings; Thorington "Refraction", Lewis "Optical Dictionary", Talbot "Diseases of the Eye", and Cross "Dynamic Skiametry". At a meeting in 1917 it was moved by Mr. Culp, seconded by Mr. Wheatley, 'that the Education Committee provide lectures in trigonometry', and it was explained that the reason for the motion was to allow members to study properly Lionel Laurance's book on Optics.

During the 1920's optometrists were becoming more aware of their professional responsibilities and also of their educational deficiencies. In January 1920 the president of the association was authorized to contact every member with a recommendation to write the Education Department of the American Optometric Association for enrollment in their "complete course". Tuition fees were four dollars and fifty cents! Later in the same year members enjoyed their first medical lecturer, Dr. G.R. Morse, at the annual meeting in Saskatoon. That meeting also suggested that a 4 day post graduate course be arranged, with W.G. Maybee as lecturer. It was March 1922 when this event took place, with lectures on Subjective Testing, Ophthalmometry, Ocular Muscles, Prisms and their Uses, and Dynamic and Static Skiametry.

At this point in time the University of Saskatchewan was well into the second decade of its life, and was offering a partial medical course which took students to the end of their second pre-clinical year. There was some question concerning optometrists becoming recipients of knowledge from such an august institution, but President Walter C. Murray held very strong views regarding the duties of a fledgling university to its constituents. With his help, and a good deal of tolerance from the Dean of Medicine, W.S. Lindsay, a two week summer program for optometrists was scheduled for August 1930. At a luncheon held to mark the 25th anniversary of the course, Dr. Lindsay made a brief speech in which he admitted that he had not expected it to survive the spartan environment into which it was born.

Sole lecturer for the first session was R.T. McGibbon, M.B., ChB., who was in effect the entire Department of Anatomy. His fiefdom was a section of the university greenhouses which had been pre-empted from the College of Agriculture. The

experience of meeting their first cadaver on a sultry August day with the sun beating down through the glass must have provided an impressive initiation for students. Lectures were held from 9:00 a.m. to noon each day, with demonstrations from 1.30 to 4.00 p.m. The ten days of work provided Dr. McGibbon with an honorarium of \$125.00, while optometrists had board and room in Qu'appelle Hall for about ten dollars a week. Reports state that levels of scholarship and fellowship were both very high.

The format of a two week program in basic health sciences was continued in 1931 and 1932, with Dr. John Fiddes instructing in the elements of physiology, and Dr. Lindsay introducing the subject of pathology. Attendance was not large, though it represented almost half of the registered optometrists in the province.

It was decided to reduce the 1933 course to six days, and to allot half of the lecture time to an optometric educator. Dr. McGibbon agreed to spend four hours daily on the anatomy of the eye and the central nervous system, while Dr. Julius Neumeuller came from the Pennsylvania State College of Optometry to lecture on aniseikonia, campimetry, and orthoptics. It was at this time that the American Optical Company was funding an extensive program of physiological optics at Dartmouth College from which men like Neumeuller benefitted greatly. The distinguished optical scientist Dr. Charles Sheard received assistance from the same company for his work on the accommodation-convergence relationship, and he too was a guest lecturer in these early days of Saskatchewan optometry.

The untimely death of Dr. McGibbon caused cancellation of the 1935 course, but it was resumed the following year with his successor, Dr. J. Jackson delivering what was to be the first of a number of presentations in anatomy and neurology. 1936 was also the first appearance of Edwin Bind, who was an instructor in optics at the Toronto Technical School, and editor of the Canadian Journal of Optometry.

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In the decade commencing around 1935 the Optometric Extension Program became a major force in continuing education. Its gospel of a 21 point examination spread far and wide, and was reflected in Saskatchewan by the appearance of O.J. Melvin, A.M. Skeffington, Carl Shepherd, and Louis Jacques. However during the same period a balanced diet of scientific content was maintained by lectures from U. of S. faculty members, and visitors such as Charles Sheard, Glenn Fry, E.J. Fisher, and Kenneth Stoddard. Throughout most of this period the S.O.A. Education Committee was co-chaired by F.C. Culp and W.W. Forsyth.

Lest our predecessors be accused of all work and no play, it should be recorded that in 1939 an attempt was made to combine holiday spirit with continuing education, and the course was moved to Prince Albert National Park. Unfortunately the weather was excellent, and attendance at the golf course and on the beach outnumbered that in the lecture hall. Physiologist John Fiddes was reported to have enjoyed the fellowship immensely, but seemed less impressed by the educational impact of his teaching.

Because of difficulties in travel arrangements during wartime the 1940 and 1945 sessions were cancelled, while changes in campus activities caused a shift in dates from August to May.

For many years the format of the summer course remained virtually unchanged: usually one visiting lecturer accompanied by presentations by one of the resident faculty. However in 1954 Murray Bauer and his committee decided to offer a more varied program with Henry Hofstetter of Indiana University as visitor, and two lecture appearances each by an anatomist, a pathologist, an internist, two psychiatrists, an illumination engineer, and a College of Education reading specialist.

In his first year as chairman R.C. Campbell showed that he was not to be outdone in the field of innovation when in addition to a very solid core program he presented Professor Paton from the Department of Philosophy in twin lectures entitled "Science as Method", and "Science as Morality".

Although the transition to a full medical college on the Saskatchewan campus had begun a few years earlier, the Department of Ophthalmology was not inaugurated until 1955, when Robert G. Murray returned to his Alma Mater to organize the facility. By 1958 the effect of this addition was evident in the continuing education program. In that year Meredith Morgan of the University of California at Berkeley was the featured visitor, with practising ophthalmologists C.H. Andrew and Lloyd Probert lecturing on "Vision and Driving", and "Squint Surgery", respectively. Stephen Drance, Director of

the Glaucoma Clinic, spoke on his sub-specialty, while Dr. Murray chaired a symposium on "Headache" with the participants from neurology, internal medicine, ophthalmology, optometry, and otolaryngology.

In the years 1951, 55 and 69 the Saskatchewan program was modified to fit in with biennial congresses of the Canadian Association of Optometrists, an adjustment that is likely to re-occur in 1985 when Regina is host city for the annual meeting.

Throughout its history the continuing education program has reflected changes in optometric practise. For example, the widespread acceptance of contact lenses has resulted in an increased number of lectures and demonstrations concerning their use and abuse, demographic trends have aroused more interest in geriatric optometry, the so called electronic revolution has drawn attention to new possibilities in clinical measurement of visual functions, and the use of diagnostic drugs has received a good deal more attention, as have the ocular effects of an ever broadening spectrum of prescribed medications.

In recent years the absorption of the College of Optometry of Ontario into the University of Waterloo has brought greater stability to optometric education in Canada, with a corresponding increase in the potential for inter-reaction between academics and practitioners. A sampling of opinions of recent graduates appears to indicate increased interest in programs of continuing education, albeit with some differences in course content.

A less tangible but important benefit of the annual continuing education courses has been the friendships that have developed between students and faculty alike. It has long been the policy of committee chairmen to avoid the creation of a convention type atmosphere, though they have usually provided one or two social functions for deserted spouses. The tradition of the Common Room was begun during the time of two week sessions in Campus residences, and has been continued with happy consequences. The relaxation of an afternoon on the golf course was apparently required in the 1930's, abandoned in the 1950's and revived by popular demand in the 1970's.

One traditional gathering that can never be fully revived is the chicken barbeque that for many years constituted the closing ceremony of the lecture week. It was hosted by the late Newton McGregor and his wife Irma at their "Ranchette" which was located a few miles from Saskatoon. This occasion is referred to as having featured the longest cocktail hour and the latest late night sing song of any

annual optometric gathering. One visiting lecturer was kind enough to describe it as an invaluable post graduate course in the sociology of a northern ophthalmic community.

The Saskatchewan program has carried several official titles during its lifetime, amongst them being "Summer Course", "Summer Extension Course", "Post Graduate Course", and "Continuing Education Program". Probably the reasons for its success are even more varied than its titles. Certainly a key factor in that success has been the development of a tolerant and stable relationship between administration and faculty of the University of Saskatchewan and successive Optometric Education Committees; the continued desire of practitioners to consume the educational "product" that has been offered must also rate high on the list, as does the dedication of educators of many academic disciplines who have shared their knowledge, sometimes at the cost of great personal inconvenience.

Almost from the beginning details and planning for the annual educational program have been a responsibility of members of the Saskatoon Optometric community, and a succession of committee chairmen have served their colleagues with dedication. While the number of Saskatchewan optometrists in attendance has varied greatly, members of neighbouring associations, especially Alberta, have filled the gap. There has been registration from all of the western provinces, as well as from western Ontario and the north central United States. Since there is no evidence of failure on the part of any of its life support systems, we can expect the Saskatchewan program of Continuing Education to serve the profession for at least another 50 years.

Acknowledgement

The author wishes to thank the staff of Saskatchewan Archives for their generous assistance.

Lecturers at Saskatchewan Optometric Association Program of Continuing Education 1930 to 1982.

University of Saskatchewan, College of Arts and Science

Department of Chemistry	Joseph Angel, 1979
Department of Physics	Balfour Currie, 1946
Department of Philosophy	D. Paton, 1957

Department of Psychology

B.M. Springbett, 1948;
R. Rees, 1949
G.M. McMurray, 1953.

University of Saskatchewan, College of Education
A.F. Deverell, 1954, Jean H. Catterson, 1967, John McLeod, 1969, 1973.

University of Saskatchewan, College of Engineering
W.E. Lovell, 1954, Eric R. Thrun, 1964

University of Saskatchewan, College of Law
I. Saunders

University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine
Anatomy R.T. McGibbon, 1930, 31, 33; J. Jackson, 1936, 37, 41, 42, 43; W. Fritsche, 1956; F.B. Cookson, 1965; M. Groenendijk, 1957; Stanley Mercer, 1954; N.G. Ferrer, 1971.

Cancer Research R.W. Begg, 1959.

Ophthalmology C.H. Andrews, 1958; I.A. Chisholm, 1976; A.P. Cullen, 1971; Stephen Drance, 1958, 59, 61, 62; C.C. Ewing, 1968, 72, 73, 74; C. Howden, 1960; R.G. Murray, 1958, 59, 61, 62, 69; E. Ross, 1973, 74; R.J. Schneider, 1968, 72, 73, 74, 81.

Otolaryngology E. Stark, 1958.

Psychiatry Frank Cowburn, 1966; Eloise Jones, 1970; D.L. Deegan, 1972; P. Matthews, 1974; Ian MacDonald, 1961, 66, 67; Jessie McGeachy, 1954; D. McKerracher, 1954; Colin Smith, 1964; E.B. Wiltshire, 1967.

Pathology W.S. Lindsay, 1932, 35; Jack Newell, 1954.

Medicine R. Altschul, 1941, 42, 43, 44; J. Dundee, 1958; L.B. Jacques; L. Horlick, 1954, 55.

Physiology J. Fiddes, 1932, 38, 39; J. Miller, 1947, 64; L. Hamilton, 1955; D. Johnson, 1966; R. Hickey, 1967.

Neurology and Neurosurgery E.M. Ashenhurst, 1964; A.A. Bailey, 1955; C. Bolton, 1966; D. Baxter, 1958, 61; D.J. McFadyen, 1965; J. Stratford, 1957.

University of Alabama J.B. Eskridge, 1973.

University of California Berkeley Campus: D. Carter, 1967; M. Hirsch, 1959; M. Flom, 1963; R. Mandell, 1975; M. Morgan, 1955, 58, 69; K. Stoddard, 1949; G. Walls, 1960.

University of Houston D. Carter, 1964; A. Cullen, 1976; D. Levi, 1976; J. Rosner, 1979.

Indiana University M. Allan, 1961; I. Borish, 1971; N. Bailey, 1957; G. Heath, 1962; H. Hofstetter, 1954, 69.

Ferris State University G.E. Lowther, 1979.

University of California Los Angeles Campus, L.A. May, 1979.

The Ohio State University V. Ellerbock; Glenn Fry, 1946; F. Hebbard, 1965; R.M. Hill, 1978; H. Hofstetter, 1947.

University of Montreal C. Beaulne, 1969.

New England College of Optometry J. Rosner, 1977.

Northern Illinois College of Optometry C. Shepherd, 1943.

Pennsylvania State College of Optometry J. Neumueller, 1933.

Pacific University Harold Haynes, 1953.

University of Waterloo (Including College of Optometry of Ontario) M. Callender, 1974; A. Cullen, 1980; D. Egan, 1982; E.J. Fisher, 1948, 55, 62, 66, 69; T. Grosvenor, 1973; W. Long, 1977; W. Lyle, 1971, 80; J. Lovasik, 1981; S. Riome, 1978; T.D. Williams, 1981; G. Woo, 1975; E. Woodruff, 1970, 82.

Clinical Lecturers without specific academic affiliation H.C. Arnold, Saskatoon, 1974; R. Bannon, Southbridge, Mass. 1959; E. Bind, Toronto, Ont., 1936; T.E. Blackwell, Saskatoon, 1982; P. Blais, Ottawa, 1982; L. Brand, Saskatoon, 1978; J. Copeland, Rochester, N.Y., 1958; R. Drew, Murray Hill, N.J., 1964, 73; D.A. Frantz, DeKalb, Ill., 1964; R.S. Gulka, Saskatoon, 1979; J.E. Josephson, Toronto, 1980; G.N. Getman, Luverne, Minn, 1972; H.W. Jervis, Vancouver, 1961; I.M. Lane, Woodbury, N.Y., 1981; F.H. McWilliams, Moose Jaw, 1978; O.J. Melvin, Omaha, Neb. 1938, 39; T.R. Murroughs, Santa Barbara, Calif., 1974; R.M. O'Donnell, Kindersley, 1976; Edna Osborne, Saskatoon; L. Probert, Moose Jaw, 1958; G. Renier, Fargo, N.C. 1982; H.J. Renpenning, Saskatoon, 1978; J. Rowand, Edmonton, 1964; Charles Sheard, Rochester, Minn. 1932, 44; G.

Sheridon, Toronto, 1965; G.L. Skinner, Chicago; G. Sheasby, Yorkton, 1978; E.W. Smith, Saskatoon, 1977; J.B. Turnbull, Regina, 1979; Newton Wesley, Chicago.

Chairmen of Continuing Education Summer Course for Saskatchewan Optometric Association

Frank C. Culp, Prince Albert	1930 to 1935
Frank C. Culp	
W.W. Forsyth co-chairmen	1936 to 1949
Newton C. McGregor	1950 to 1953
Murray Bauer	1954 to 1956
R.C. Campbell	1957 to 1959
W. Austin Forsyth	1960
M.F. Stadnyk	1961 and 1962
Jack F. Chaplin	1963
M.F. Stadnyk	1964 and 1965
G. Greenblat	1966 to 1968
Brent Beaton	1969 to 1971
M.F. Stadnyk	1972
R.S. Gulka	1973 and 1974
O.E. Panchuk	1975 to 1977
O.E. Panchuk	
D.J. Kerr co-chairmen	1978
D.J. Kerr	1979 to 1981
Garry W. Hayes	1982 and 1983

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