

BOOK REVIEW: OPTOMETRY IN MISSISSIPPI 1920-2020

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Optometry in Mississippi 1920-2020. William E. Cochran. Madison, Mississippi: Mississippi Optometric Association, 2021. ISBN 978-0-578-98115-4. 115 pages. Hardcover.

This book gives a brief look at the history of the Mississippi Optometric Association and the Mississippi State Board of Optometry. It started with the first meeting of the Mississippi Optical Society in May 1906 at which officers were elected. At an October 1906 meeting, the society passed a regulation that applicants would be tested on ocular anatomy, refraction, optics, and practical experience. At its next meeting in 1907, the society approved a version of an optometry practice bill, but it wouldn't be until 1920 that an optometry practice act was passed. In 1909, the name of the society was changed to Mississippi Association of Optometrists.

In 1947, the Mississippi Optometric Association (MOA) was incorporated. In 1948, Irvin Mauldin, OD, became the second editor and publisher of the Mississippi Optometrist, following J. W. Rothchild, OD. In 1950, the MOA adopted a code of ethics which excluded "nonprofessional" optometrists from membership. In 1951, Dr. David W. White became the first African American optometrist licensed in Mississippi. Relations with ophthalmology were very contentious through much of the history of the MOA, an example being the Mississippi State Medical Association asking the University of Mississippi in 1958 to not allow optometrists from having meetings on the university campus. In 1964, Mississippi adopted a regulation of 20 hours of continuing education for optometry license renewal.



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Legislation for diagnostic pharmaceutical agent use by optometrists was introduced in 1974, and after a long struggle was passed in 1982. Therapeutic pharmaceutical agent legislation was introduced in 1990 and finally passed in 1994. The book also discusses updates to the optometry law in the present century.

Following the passage of the optometry practice act in 1920, the Mississippi State Board of Optometry issued 147 licenses that year. In 1929, the license renewal fee was \$2. After World War II many military veterans attended optometry school on the G. I. Bill. Consequently, the state board saw an increase in applicants – 91 from 1947 to 1951. In 1989, the board voted to require the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) examinations and the NBEO Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease examination. The 2015 year ended with 388 optometrists licensed in Mississippi.

The author included a chapter describing his personal experiences in optometry. His maternal grandfather, his mother, and his father were all optometrists, and he recalls going with them to optometry meetings as a child. After graduating from Southern College of Optometry in 1968, he served as an Army optometrist for two years, after which he joined his mother in practice. He was MOA president in 1977-78. He later served as president of Southern College of Optometry for more than two decades.

The book has 30 pages of photographs, most in color, and an appendix with copies of documents, clippings from periodicals, and lists, including a list of MOA presidents.