

THE AMERICAN
OPHTHALMOLOGICAL
SOCIETY 1864-1989

*A Continuation of Wheeler's
First Hundred Years*



EDWARD DELAFIELD (1795-1875)

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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OPHTHALMOLOGICAL
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*A Continuation of Wheeler's
First Hundred Years*

Frank W. Newell

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DEDICATION

To Maynard Wheeler, 11th secretary-treasurer and author of "The American Ophthalmological Society. The First Hundred Years," and all others who have served the Society as secretary-treasurer, editor, or both, without whom the Society would have no recorded history.

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PREFACE

MAYNARD WHEELER presided at the centenary meeting of the Society in 1964. At the conclusion of the executive session he distributed autographed copies of "The American Ophthalmological Society, The First Hundred Years" to those at the meeting. The book, published by the University of Toronto Press, related the history of the Society from its founding to 1964. The Society was Wheeler's principal concern for many years (he was secretary-treasurer from 1949 to 1961), and his book provided much detail that was available only in the unpublished minutes of the secretary and the Council.

At the 1986 Council meeting (which I attended as vice-president) discussion concerned an appropriate celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Society at the 1989 meeting. Wheeler's history had been out of print for many years so that many members were not familiar with it, and the initial suggestion was that the volume be reprinted. It then seemed appropriate that the history of the Society during the past 25 years be added. Finally the discussion ended with a decision to build on Wheeler's history of the first century of the Society and publish an entirely new book in 1989. This is the result.

In the preparation of this volume I relied considerably upon Wheeler's history. The chapter headings are similar and the general outline he used has been followed. I regret that I have not been able to locate Wheeler's manuscript or notes. Since I have never been secretary of the Society I have not consulted the unpublished secretary's notes or the Council minutes. My chief resource has been the Society Transactions and the minutes of the annual meetings.

Many individuals and institutions have provided much assistance for which I am most grateful. Many are mentioned in the acknowledgment section but particular thanks must go to the library staffs of the Crear Library of the University of Chicago, the New York Academy of Medicine, the National Library of Medicine, Section on Medical History, and the staff of *The American Journal of Ophthalmology*. Thomas P. Kearns, secretary of the Society, has been exceptionally helpful. Each member of the Society has assisted when requested. In preparing biographies of recent members I have relied upon the curriculum vitae provided by those involved. Space has not permitted mention of all the honors, positions, and contributions to medical literature and organizations of several members who have played major roles in ophthalmology in recent decades. It has been necessary also to follow Wheeler's

PREFACE

policy of providing biographies of only a small number of the members. A book telling of all members would be of much interest.

Preparation of this book has given me renewed respect for historians, the many sources woven into accounts of past events, and the possibility for error. Dates are easily altered in the many transcriptions between rough notes and the printed page. Names may be misspelled and the importance of events distorted. I hope the errors that appear will be recognized as those of the typing fingers, the head, and not the heart.

FRANK W. NEWELL
January 1989