

George Mayerle's Eye Test Chart (ca. 1907)

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<html> <p><img src=„https://farm5.staticflickr.com/4560/24144418457_451b169334_h.jpg“
width=„1600“ height=„498“ alt=„mayerle-banner“/></p> <p class=„books“>This fantastic eye
chart &#8212; measuring 22 by 28 inches with a positive version on one side and negative on the
other &#8212; is the work of German optometrist and American Optometric Association member
George Mayerle, who was working in San Francisco at end of the nineteenth century, just when
optometry was beginning to professionalise. The chart was a culmination of his many years of
practice and, according to Mayerle, its distinctive international angle served also to reflect the
diversity and immigration which lay at the heart of the city in which he worked. At the time it was
advertised as &#8220;the only chart published that can be used by people of any
nationality&#8221;. Stephen P. Rice, from the National Library of Medicine (who house this copy
presented here), <a href=„https://circulatingnow.nlm.nih.gov/2013/08/02/seeing-is-believing/“
rel=„noopener“ target=„_blank“>explains</a> just how thoroughly thought through the different
aspects of the chart were as regards the aim to be as inclusive as possible:</p> <blockquote>
<p>Running through the middle of the chart, the seven vertical panels test for acuity of vision with
characters in the Roman alphabet (for English, German, and other European readers) and also in
Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Hebrew. A panel in the center replaces the alphabetic characters
with symbols for children and adults who were illiterate or who could not read any of the other writing
systems offered. Directly above the center panel is a version of the radiant dial that tests for
astigmatism. On either side of that are lines that test the muscular strength of the eyes. Finally,
across the bottom, boxes test for color vision, a feature intended especially (according to one
advertisement) for those working on railroads and steamboats.</p> </blockquote> <p
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