



John R. Graham and the Graham Headache Center: Pioneers in Headache Medicine

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BACKGROUND AND METHODS

This poster reviews the accomplishments of Dr. John Graham and the history of the headache center that bears his name. We reviewed Dr. Graham's writings, performed a computer search, and spoke with his colleagues and friends to compile this record.

A SUMMARY OF DR. GRAHAM'S LIFE

John Ruskin Graham was born in Boston on February 13, 1909. He attended Roxbury Latin School, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude. After graduation from Harvard Medical School, he trained in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. At MGH, Dr. Graham worked in a new outpatient headache service, then traveled to New York City to spend a year performing research with Harold Wolff. He returned to Boston and the MGH but soon was called to active duty as a major in the Army Medical Corps.

In 1950 Dr. Graham became Chief of Medicine at the Faulkner Hospital in Boston, a post he held until 1974. He continued to work in the headache field and see patients. With money from a grateful patient, he established the Headache Research Foundation and organized Headache Associates, a consortium of physicians who were interested in providing clinical care to headache patients. Records of their case conferences were often published in the journal of this Society.

In 1976 the Patient Care Division of the Headache Research Foundation was formed, succeeded in 1987 by a dedicated headache clinic. Named in honor of Dr. Graham, the John R. Graham Headache Centre at the Faulkner Hospital has been in continuous operation since. Over the years, Dr. Graham and his colleagues at the Center were involved in many important developments in the developing field of headache medicine.

In addition to his professional prominence in the headache world, Dr. Graham was beloved by his many devoted patients and the colleagues to whom he was a friend and mentor. His interests outside headache were wide-ranging.

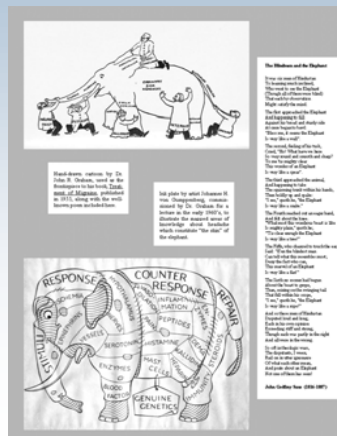
The John R. Graham Headache Center at Faulkner Hospital has been in continuous operation since its opening in 1987 as a successor to the Patient Care Division of the Headache Research Foundation. The clinic is now under the auspices of the Division of Headache and Pain in the Department of Neurology at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, and is the site of a headache fellowship.



Dr Egilius L.H. Spierings, Dr Marcia Wilkinson, Derek Robinson and Dr John R. Graham (from left to right) celebrating the official opening of the John R. Graham Headache Center at the Faulkner Hospital in Boston, 2nd November 1987

Some achievements of Dr. Graham and his colleagues

- With Harold Wolff, did early work on ergotamine and its effects in migraine
- Lead investigator in the first trials of propranolol for migraine prevention
- Characterized the headache of hemodialysis
- Described the physiognomy of cluster headache sufferers
- Pioneered the use of steroids in cluster headache



DR. GRAHAM'S WAR EXPERIENCES

At age 33, Dr. Graham was sent overseas during WWII as part of the Massachusetts General Hospital Army Base No. 6. He left home in May 1942, going first for training to Camp Blanding in Florida. After being shipped in a convoy to the British Isles, he spent his first months in Ireland, and the remaining time in England, with trips to Wales and Scotland, often employed in establishing new camp hospitals, and otherwise caring for the sick and wounded from the front.

During the years until he returned in March of 1945 he wrote the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to the adults back home, and also wrote and illustrated a series of charming books for his two young daughters. He spent much of his spare time riding his bicycle through the countryside surrounding his places of duty, drawing and sketching. Excerpts from his writings convey a vivid impression of the war and his experiences:

September 1944: "Our work here has been intense and varied. At first we had 1000 or so American battle casualties of a more or less convalescent sort. They had received definitive treatment at hospitals further along the line and, although there was still plenty to do for them, it was rather second-hand stuff. It was naturally fascinating to talk with men who had been present on the initial landings, paratroopers who had been behind the enemy lines for thirty-eight days, breaking up communications, living from hand to mouth, dodging, shooting, and fighting. The great problem was to set up proper convalescent facilities for them. This fell into my lap...when a phone call from HQ changed our whole purpose as a hospital. All our Americans were taken away and they began pouring patients of another type in on us by the trainload. Within a week we had six to eight hundred of this new variety and they were a much sicker lot. They were all very badly shot up, showing the effect of our American weapons on the other side of the Channel, and some not in a very good state of nutrition. A sicker bunch of people dropped on a doorstep in one great mass, I never hope to see again. Bearded, covered with dirt, with and without clothes, with and without lice, pale, grim, and in pain. They were carried silently into our wards, human beings for whom one could not help but feel a deep sympathy."



Left: The cover illustration of a book of Dr. Graham's wartime drawings and letters published by his children and available, along with his children's books, at www.Lulu.com

Right: A photograph of Dr. Graham in uniform, dated August, 1943, bearing the caption "A gargoyles I made for the Dental Clinic from local clay and real teeth."



NOTEWORTHY

"...my concept is that migraine is intimately interwoven into the psychology, physiology, and behavior of the patient himself...I am inclined to believe the origin of the disturbance in migraine is in the monitoring system itself, resulting most frequently from overloading - by malfunction due to poor repair after excessive activity or necessity for prolonged overuse. Heightened tone and physiological irritability of the central monitoring system may result in an overreaction to emotional conflicts and life situations. Such changes may also render the patient easy prey to ingested chemicals that act as artificial neurotransmitters or uncontrollable changes in weather or lighting, or sudden changes, by plane, in altitude. Underlying all these variables are genetic factors which determine the degree of delicacy..."

John Graham, *Migraine: Quo Vadis? Headache* 1988.

A recognized leader in the field of Headache Medicine

- President of the American Association for the Study of Headache

- Editor of *Cephalgia*

- Served on the editorial board of *Headache*

- Received the National Headache Foundation Lectureship

- Received the Distinguished Clinician Award of the American Association for the Study of Headache

- Remembered yearly as the inspiration for the annual John R. Graham Senior Clinicians Award, sponsored by the Graham Headache Center at Faulkner Hospital in Boston.



CONCLUSIONS

Writing in a 1988 issue of *Headache*, Leonard Lovshin, MD summed it up well: "If Jack Graham was a basketball player he would, of course, have made it to the Boston Celtics. Furthermore, he would have won the award of Rookie of the Year and beside that he would have been declared the MVP... that fits exactly with Dr. Graham's accomplishments, somewhat simplified, in the field of headache."