

John Bruce Hamilton

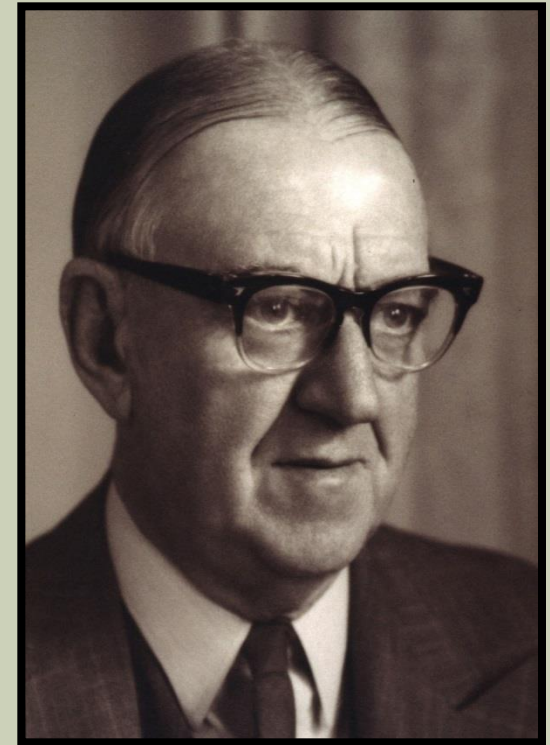
an outstanding tasmanian ophthalmologist

RANZCO
Museum

J Goh
DV Kaufman

John Bruce Hamilton

- Born in Hobart 1901, John Bruce Hamilton studied medicine in Sydney and pursued postgraduate studies at Oxford 1929.
- He returned to Hobart becoming one of Australia's most respected ophthalmologists marrying Dora Grant in 1943. They had two children, John and Elizabeth.
- During his career he made a significant contribution to genetics and the medical literature while also serving in the army.



Dr John Bruce Hamilton C1960

Bruce Hamilton School

SIGHT-SAVING SCHOOL

First in Australia

HOBART, Tuesday. — The official opening to-day at the Elizabeth-street school of the first sight-saving class in Australasia marks a further important advance in education in Tasmania. Provision has been made at the new school for 25 pupils and of that number seven are from Northern Tasmania.

The establishment of a special class for short-sighted and defective-sighted children was first visualised by Dr. Bruce Hamilton, of Hobart, after a recent visit to Europe and America. The co-operation of the Education Department, eye specialists and the executive of the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Institution was obtained and the school commenced partial operation in March this year.

Dr. Hamilton said at the opening of the school to-day, that it would be the means of preventing many children with defective eyesight from going totally blind. The school already was overflowing.

After the war he hoped a similar institution would be provided at Launceston.

Declaring the school open, the Premier (Mr. R. Cosgrove) said the establishment was an attempt to make it possible for children with defective eyesight to enter into the life of the community without any sense of handicap.

The Minister for Education (Mr. E. J. Ogilvie) expressed appreciation of the community effort which had made the school possible. He was supported by the Treasurer (Mr. E. Dwyer-Gray).

Included amongst the innovations at the school is the provision of indirect electric illumination which varies automatically with the daylight. Primrose chalk on special boards is used for illustration and tuition and other unusual facilities include a "talking book" and radio instruction.

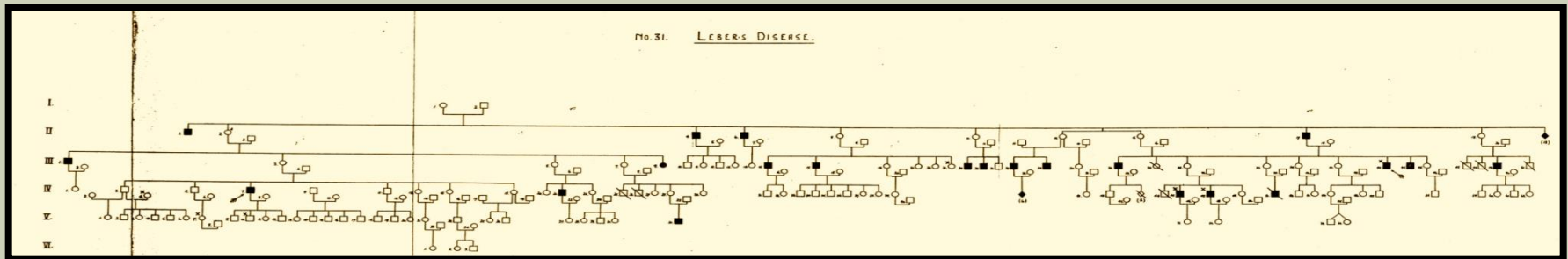
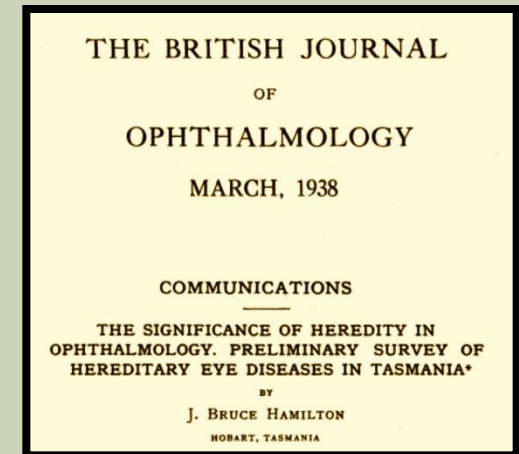
- In 1931 JBH was appointed honorary ophthalmologist to the Tasmanian Institute for the Blind and Deaf and in 1932 he set up the first sight-saving class in Australia
- In 1940 it became Australia's first Sight-Saving School.
- After his passing in 1968, the school was renamed the Bruce Hamilton School.



Students wood burning at the Sight Saving School

Genetic Eye disease

- In 1951 he published his landmark paper: “The Significance of Heredity in Ophthalmology – A Tasmanian Survey” documenting 111 pedigrees of 16 familial eye disease earning him his Doctorate of Medicine.
- This impressive database formed the basis of modern genetic work still being carried out today.



Family Pedigree of Leber's Disease, The Significance of Heredity in Ophthalmology – A Tasmanian Survey

Publications

- Throughout his career, JBH made a significant contribution to the medical literature between 1930 to 1960.
- Some of his more notable findings include the importance of sarcoidosis and toxoplasmosis in ophthalmology, the first report of the benign retinopathy caused by maternal rubella, the incidences of eye disease and the importance of genetics.
- In 1943 he published “A new Conception of Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca”, a translation of an original monograph by Sjogren.
- His book, “A Guide to Ophthalmic Surgery”, was considered the gold standard of its time.

PUBLICATIONS

J. BRUCE HAMILTON

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6. (with Crowther WL) Eclampsia with amaurosis due to the detachment of the retinae. Med J Aust 1932; 2:177.
7. Idiopathic detachment of the retina and Larsson's operation. Med J Aust 1934; 1: 231.
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10. A case of chlorosis with ocular complications. Brit J Ophthal 1936; 20: 18.
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14. A post graduate holiday. Med J Aust 1938; 2: 599.
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33. (with Sjogren H) A new conception of kerato-conjunctivitis sicca. Aust. Med. Publishing Co., Sydney, 1943.
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50. Zoonoses in ophthalmology. Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1955; 15: 72.
51. Eyes and scurvy. Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1958; 18: 83.
52. Toxoplasmosis. Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1960; 20: 46.
53. Diabetic retinopathy and blindness. Trans 1st Congress, Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology 1960; 99.
54. Whose chromosomes shall we count? Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1960; 20: 110.
55. A genius for the genes. Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1961; 21: 118.
56. Megalocornea or is it incipient congenital glaucoma? Trans Ophthal Soc Aust 1963; 23: 100.

Books

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The Significance of Heredity in Ophthalmology: a Tasmanian Survey. Massina and Co., Melbourne, 1951.

World War II

- In 1941 JBH was appointed major in the Australian Imperial Force. He served in the Middle East as ophthalmic surgeon in the 2nd/7th Australian General Hospital Australian Imperial Forces for three years.
- He earned the nickname “Lookie” after saying “look to me” during examinations and was famously known for keeping a wardrobe in his tent in the midst of war.
- During the war he wrote “The War and Ophthalmology” and “The Incidence of Eye Disease in the Australian Imperial Forces, Middle East”. He oddly found a lower prevalence of eye disease, including traumatic, in the war population.

Bligh Museum

- In 1954, with his wife, JBH constructed the Bligh Museum of Pacific Exploration.
- The foundation stone was laid on the 200th anniversary of Captain William Bligh's birth on the 9th of September.
- To this day it remains open as a private museum showcasing artefacts, maps and articles relating to Pacific exploration.



Opening of the Bligh Museum 1954

The Late JBH

- John Bruce Hamilton became ill in Rome while traveling with his wife in Europe and Asia from cardiovascular disease.
- He returned home and passed away on Thursday, 11th of April 1968.