



# Andrew Sexton Gray

Founder of Australian Ophthalmology

By Ebrar Al-Yasery

# Early Years

- Born in Limerick, Ireland in 1826 to Captain George Blanchard Grey and Mary Ann Sexton
- Early childhood filled with loss and tragedy



# Medical Training



- Medically trained in Dublin
- Completed general medical training in 1846
- Assistant to Dr William Wilde from ~ 1847 to 1850
- Admission to Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons of England on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1852
- Appointed Surgeon-Superintendent to the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners

# Emigration to Victoria



- Left England 10<sup>th</sup> November 1858 with his wife aboard the Hornet heading to Sydney
- Sea journey of 113 days before arriving in Sydney 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1859
- Shortly after Gray left on the coastal ship Wonga Wonga to reach Melbourne 15<sup>th</sup> April 1859
- Gray registered with the Medical Board in Victoria on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1859

# Railway Surgeon



- Obtained employment as the Resident Surgeon to the railway company
- Well regarded by his workmen patients for the skill and care provided
- Attended to private patients and calls in the bush
- Decline in the work-force in 1862 after the completion of the railway works

# Establishment of the Eye and Ear Hospitals

- Gray opened a practice as a surgeon and ophthalmologist at 29 Russell Street in 1862 offering free treatment for diseases of the eye and ear to the less fortunate
- Similar to Wilde's example, Gray then founded the Eye and Ear Infirmary in 1863 – a charitable hospital
- Gray covered majority of the expenses of the Eye and Ear Institution
- Increased demand required greater resources



Cottage rented from 1863 to 1866 by Gray for his Eye and Ear Infirmary

# The Melbourne Institution for Diseases of the Eye and Ear

- Formation of management committee and a public charity status in 1866
- Gray was Honorary Life Surgeon and a member of the Committee of Management for 44 years
- Comprised of three surgeons in 1870
- On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1873, name changed to The Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital for 'the treatment of diseases of the eyes and ears of the poor'



# Later Years

- Devoted to The Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital attending the hospital even two weeks before he died
- Lived majority of his life around the Collins Street area with his growing family
- The Gray family had 14 children, 11 whom survived (ten daughters and one son)
- Gray died at his home on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1907 at the age of 81 years. He had been suffering from cystitis, bronchopneumonia and exhaustion.





# Legacy in Ophthalmology

- Active and devoted surgeon mainly to the field of Ophthalmology
- Wrote ten papers on ophthalmic surgery
- Teacher and mentor
- The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital



# References

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