

The Grog Ration

FROM THE PAPERS OF RADM CARY GRAYSON, MC *THE ROLE OF A PRESIDENT'S PHYSICIAN IN A TIME OF CRISIS —PART II—*



By LCDR Michael Dickens, MC, USNR, (Ret.)

CONTENTS

Grayson took his medical duties very seriously and in early 1913 put Wilson on a regimen of rest, diet, and exercise in an effort to reduce his hypertension and to slow its inevitable sequel. Some have criticized Grayson's approach but it is right out of Osler's textbook of the era. Pharmacologic solutions to hypertension did not yet exist.

It is apparent that Wilson, very quickly, came to value Grayson's medical expertise. The beneficial effect of Grayson's program was evident to Wilson and he noted in February 1919 that in comparison to his health in 1913 there had been beneficial changes "not only in the fact that

my chest has increased in size, but when I speak I never get out of breath." He also noted that his frequency of upper respiratory illness had declined from about twice per month when he took office in 1913 to only once in the preceding three years.

During the summer months of 1913, when Mrs. Ellen Wilson left Washington, Grayson slept at the White House to give Wilson company in the evenings but also to insure compliance with his prescribed regimen. That this required Grayson to play golf with Wilson or other enjoyable pursuits did not mean that Grayson was idle. His letters are filled with references to working in various Navy and civilian medical facilities in addition to his White House duties.

In August of 1914—the same week that England and Germany declared war—Wilson's first wife, Ellen Axson Wilson, died of Bright's disease. Wilson was crushed by grief and the burdens of state. During the ensuing months, Grayson was an indispensable presence to help Wilson deal with his grief. Indeed Grayson was certainly present when Wilson met his future second wife Edith Bolling Galt, a wealthy Washington widow, and may have had a hand in arranging the meeting.

Grayson - The Observer of History

It is impossible in the space allotted to mention all of the interesting observations contained in Grayson's correspondence. But a sampling of letters with dates will suffice to give some idea of the many and varied roles that Grayson played in Wilson's life.



RADM Grayson

FROM THE PAPERS OF
RADM GRAYSON
-1-5-

LUXURY MEETS THE
U.S. NAVY: A BRIEF
HISTORY OF NAVAL
HOSPITAL CORONA
-6-7-

NAVY DENTIST AND
SONGWRITER
-8-9-

TOWERS OF SILENCE
-10-

SCUTTLEBUTT
-11-12-

Presidents and their Navy Physicians

Part II

Warren **Harding**

— Joel T. Boone
(1889-1974)

Herbert **Hoover**

— Joel T. Boone
(1889-1974)

John F. **Kennedy**

— George G. Burkley
(1903-1991)
— James M. Young*
(S/L)

Richard **Nixon**

— William Lukash
(1931-1991)*
— M. William Voss
(1924-1991)*

William (Bill) **Clinton**

— E. Connie Mariano
(S/L)
— Robert G. Darling
(S/L)

Calvin **Coolidge**

— Joel T. Boone
(1889-1974)

Franklin **Roosevelt**

— Joel T. Boone
(1889-1974)*
— Howard G. Bruenn
(1905-1995)*
— Paul F. Dickens
(1914-1990)*
— Ross T. McIntire
(1887-1959)

Lyndon **Johnson**

— James M. Young
(S/L)

Gerald **Ford**

— William Lukash
(1931-1998)
— M. William Voss
(1924-1991)*

* Denotes “Consulting
Physician”
S/L = “Still Living

his right hand following his pre-
Presidential mini-strokes.

Grayson the Physician

As a full time Navy doctor, his duties were not strictly limited to the White House. He pulled duty at the Naval Dispensary and the Emergency Hospital in Washington. He apparently was interested in a wide range of medical issues and his care was sought by civilians and uniformed patients alike. The variety of problems he tackled ranged from the serious to the whimsical. For example on 18 August 1915, he writes of a premature boy who is born to the commanding officer of *USS Mayflower*. Grayson visited the child three times in a single day at the Washington Navy Yard but the infant later died. In the very same letter he mentions that “My surgical cases came out all right. One of them paid me enough to buy mutton chops for many days for two!”

On 6 January 1916, Grayson wrote that his care was sought by Thomas Pence, Secretary of the Democratic National Committee, “who is confined to his bed with ‘La Grippe’ and wanted to discharge his previous doctor and have me take charge of his care.” Grayson continued to see Pence, even though he was a civilian, until Pence’s death on 27 March 1916.

On 14 August 1915, Wilson injured his one good eye in an accident at the White House while reviewing a military demonstration. Grayson wrote that the next morning he and Grayson left Washington at 6 a.m. “I think we can make the trip less noticeable that way” and drove to Philadelphia to see Wilson’s ophthalmologist. Grayson relates that the visit was so secret that he and Wilson were able to walk to the Philadelphia train station after Wilson’s eye appointment, catch the next scheduled train to Washington, and on arrival at Union Station take a cab to the White House!

The Grayson papers also revealed that Grayson operated on Wilson in secret at the White House in July and September 1918, and again in February 1920 proba-

Grayson, the Constant Presidential Companion

15 August 1913 – Grayson returns from 11 holes of golf (a tie) with the President followed by dinner with Wilson and Joseph Tumulty on the ‘Western terrace’ at the White House.

16 August 1913 – Grayson plays golf and beats Wilson by 3 holes, showers at the White House, then takes a drive with Wilson alone for an hour in Rock Creek and then goes to the theater with Wilson. After the theater the “President received usual treatment with high frequency given by his physician.” It is probable that this was an attempt to relieve the partial disability Wilson experienced in the use of

bly removing nasal polyps. Grayson wrote to his wife after the first surgery “No one knows anything about it except Miss E. (*Edith*), Miss Hopkins, nurses, - It is one secret that has been kept quiet so far, and I think it is safe all right now.” From several references it is clear that Grayson was involved in post-operative care throughout the summer and fall of 1918.

Space does not permit a full discussion but a careful review of Grayson’s written prescriptions, which are in the Grayson papers, shows that his use of medications was rational and careful though he did follow the custom of the day and prescribe multi-component individually compounded medications.

Grayson the Presidential Friend

By the fall of 1915, both Wilson and Grayson were courting their future wives and Grayson wrote to Altrude: (4 October 1915) “The President and I had breakfast alone this morning... We poured out our hearts to each other. It was a love feast. I never felt so happy, dear; when I awoke this morning I felt that I had had the most refreshing sleep of my life.”

By October 1915, Grayson had become so well known that the Surgeon General of the Navy received a letter from a physician in Detroit proposing that Grayson be the next Vice Presidential candidate on the Wilson ticket in 1916. “Wilson and Grayson would make a strong ticket, especially if the later gentleman would get married within the year.” On 3 October 1915, Woodrow Wilson sent a letter to Altrude Gordon congratulating her on her engagement to Grayson and welcoming her to a “circle of friends we trust and believe in.” By 19 April 1916, Mrs. Edith Wilson had indicated that she would like the Graysons to be married in the White House and the President and Mrs. Wilson helped Grayson pick out the script for the invitations. The Graysons however were married in New York.

Grayson the Observer of History

10 July 1915 – President Wilson received a telephone message relayed through Dr. Grayson about “the reply to the German note.”

1 September 1915 – “Received while at lunch [*with the President*] Germany’s reply conveyed by letter from Ambassador Bernstorm making amends for sinking of the *Lusitania* and promising justice in future for Americans.”

17 July 1918 – “It is too bad about Quentin Roosevelt,” referring to the death in combat in France of President Theodore Roosevelt’s son.

19 July 1918 – “I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt this morning about Quentin.”

20 July 1918 – “The war news continues good.



President Wilson with his second wife, Edith Galt.

The latest bulletin is that the Germans are retreating over the Marne.”

25 July 1918 – “The President read aloud to me until 3:30- most interesting on sovereignty – exploring what he hoped would come after the war for the European countries.”

20 March 1919 – Wilson, after being hailed by millions in the streets of Paris but struggling with negotiations at Versailles, seeks solitude with Grayson as his only companion. “Tonight the President and I went for walk for an hour through the streets [*of Paris*] – no one seemed to recognize him – much to his satisfaction.”

Grayson the Resourceful Naval Officer

15 August 1918 – Grayson got to give operational orders to the Secretary of the Navy. Wilson [and Grayson] was visiting the home of Col. Edward House on the shore in Massachusetts and Grayson was alarmed to find the house right on the beach near deep water. There had been reports of enemy submarines operating close in shore. So

Grayson “thought it was dangerous because it was within firing distance of a submarine [which had deck guns in those days]. I immediately got busy and called Hon. J. Daniels [SECNAV Josephus Daniels] by long distance, as a consequence this afternoon a torpedo boat, destroyer, and 10 submarine chasers are on the job and about thirty seven Marines guard the house.”

1 January 1919 – Grayson complained of having “to smooth and settle all jealousies and quarrels of the thousand and one people there are around the President in various capacities – chief among them the newspaper men.”

3 January 1919 – Palazzo die Quirinale, Rome. “The President talks more and more confidentially than ever. We often have little five minute conferences. He gives me his angle and also what are the impressions I gather, then I talk to three newspapermen, the AP, UP, and International News. These three send the news to nearly 2500 newspapers in America. Miss Margaret is better today. She acts very indiscreetly. These people don’t understand her actions. It is very embarrassing to the President. She runs off alone with George Creel [a newspaperman] sightseeing, fails to show up at important luncheons. My guess is that she is getting on Miss E’s [Mrs. Edith Wilson] nerves.”

4 January 1919 – After being introduced to the Pope at the Vatican by Wilson, Grayson’s good humor shows through– “I never imagined a man could live so far from his front door!”

7 January 1919 – From Rome he gives his wife a prescient and somber insider’s view foreshadowing the Marshall Plan, “The President thinks a delay in the peace settlement is dangerous. Bolshevism is steadily advancing westward, has overwhelmed Poland and is now poisoning Germany. Force cannot stop it but food can. That part of the world is hungry and crazy.”

13 January 1919 – Grayson was not always discreet. “The President told me confidentially that he was going to appoint Hugh Ambassador in place of Sharp. I wrote Hugh on the quiet.”

Wilson’s Stroke and Presidential Disability

During his Western trip to rally public support for the League of Nations in September 1919, Wilson began to show unmistakable signs of an impending stroke. Grayson and Mrs. Wilson forced the President to return to Washington where, in the early morning hours of 2 October 1919, he suffered a major stroke resulting in permanent hemiplegia, clouding of the sensorium, and personality alterations. Grayson’s version of events leading up to

and following the stroke are contained in a detailed account he wrote shortly afterwards and which he requested be made secret. He called in a number of consulting specialists and some of their private correspondence with Grayson is included in the Grayson Papers. Often the doctors apparently were going to some lengths to make sure their correspondence was not intercepted and read by others. While there was little that anyone could do in that era, it is clear that Grayson and the other physicians by 4 October knew how ill the President was and had correctly concluded that it was impossible for him to fully recover.

Much has been said about the extent of the President’s illness being kept a secret. However the fact of the President having had a major stroke was clearly known and had been published in newspapers by February 1920 when Dr. H.W. Young of Johns Hopkins specifically discussed the diagnosis and limited hope for recovery. The Grayson papers add little new information to the controversy about whether there was an attempt to cover-up the extent of Wilson’s disability or who was really making decisions in Wilson’s name. What they do show is Grayson struggling to provide care to a seriously ill patient whom he admired greatly.

In the Grayson papers are vital sign and nursing note charts for this period for the President with occasional clinical notes added. Of note are only three recordings of Wilson’s blood pressure during this post-stroke time and only a single number is recorded in each case, 118, 128, and 132. If these were simply systolic readings which were readily measurable with the technology available to Grayson, then they were normal and therefore invite some discussion about how significant Wilson’s supposed hypertension really was. If these were some sort of average of systolic and diastolic then they were abnormal. Measuring diastolic pressure was more difficult in Grayson’s era.

In a series of comments over many months, Grayson mentions how depressed Wilson appeared to be following his stroke. Saturday, 20 March 1920, “This morning he is very blue. The President said ‘I feel like going to bed and staying there.’ (It was a rainy, cold, and snowy day and Mrs. Wilson had just read Wilson the news of the Senate rejecting the Treaty of Versailles).” Wednesday, 31 March 1920, Grayson reports Wilson saying, “I don’t know whether it is warm or cold. I feel so weak and useless. I feel that I’d like to go to bed and stay there until I either get well or die.”

3 May 1920 “The President is very depressed at times.” 20 May 1920 “Much depressed. ‘this may be my last day’” Grayson records Wilson saying.

In the end Wilson did not recover and was an invalid until his death in 1924.

The Promotion Controversy

In 1798 Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert, wrote of “the avarice of rank.” The “avarice of rank” has stricken all officers and ratings throughout the Navy’s history and Dr. Grayson was no exception. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson proposed to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels that Grayson be promoted to Rear Admiral. In December 1916, Grayson had sat for and passed the examination for promotion to Surgeon (Lieutenant Commander) in the Medical Corps and was promoted to that rank on 18 January 1917. Wilson took full responsibility for the idea of promoting Grayson to flag rank, even though Wilson recognized that it involved promoting Grayson over more than 130 officers in the Medical Corps who were senior to him.

In a few comments Grayson made to his wife and from comments made by Colonel House and other insiders, it is clear that Grayson was not indifferent to being promoted though the idea was entirely Wilson’s. Grayson in private referred to the Selection Board as a “lot of old fossils” (1 August 1918).

As a nominee for flag rank, Grayson had to appear before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and his testimony in January 1917 is preserved in his service jacket. The tone of questioning had a partisan edge to it with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Wilson’s future foe in the fight for the League of Nations, among those questioning Grayson sharply. In addition to testifying to the facts of his early education and career, Grayson spoke about his relationships with Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson. When questioned about his publications, he testified that he had been working on a “thesis” on high blood pressure for almost four years. This would coincide with the time he had been treating Woodrow Wilson for high blood pressure. Since he had been given only one day’s notice to attend the Senate hearing, he did not have a copy of the thesis to present to the Committee at that time. No copy of this thesis has been discovered in the Grayson papers nor in the Grayson files at BUMED. It is hoped that it may be found with further searching at the National Archives and, if so, will be of great interest as a window into Grayson’s understanding of Wilson’s hypertension.

Since Grayson’s eventual promotion to Rear Admiral on 16 March 1917 was retroactively dated to when he was a lieutenant and considering the intervening wartime rank of Commodore he was jumped five grades in one promotion. This, of course, triggered a great deal of commentary and resentment in the Navy which lingered throughout Grayson’s career.

By the next year Grayson had joined the critics of the “avarice of rank” when he wrote his wife on 29 August 1918 about the controversy regarding staff corps officers being given rank designations similar to that of line officers – “The line officers are bitter over this change. One would think their very all had been taken away. Most of them are so petty and small about such matters that it would seem unwise to let them out in town alone without a nurse. This order will interfere with their caste system.” A few months later, in December 1918, when he went with Wilson to Europe, he reported to his wife from London that his new rank “played well over here.”

At the end of World War I, Grayson received the Navy Cross for his services to the President and remained on active duty serving as Commanding Officer of the Naval Dispensary in Washington after Wilson left office. He also continued to care for Wilson after Wilson moved to S Street. He was present at Wilson’s death and signed the death certificate. He eventually wrote a small volume of memoirs about Wilson which is still in print. Grayson remained on active duty until 1928 when he retired from the Navy. In his post Navy years, Grayson assumed the presidency of the American Red Cross and continued to pursue his life long passion for breeding and racing horses.

Grayson died in 1938 of Hodgkin’s disease and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Michael Dickens, M.D., graduated with honors from Princeton in 1968 and received his M.D. degree from Columbia University in 1972. He volunteered for service in the Navy Medical Corps in 1969, and served two years on active duty in the Navy assigned to the Naval Hospital at Guantanamo Bay. He served brief TAD assignments aboard USS *Pensacola* and USS *Nautilus*. He is in private practice in Charlottesville, Virginia.

LUXURY MEETS THE U.S. NAVY

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORCONIAN RESORT SUPREME AND U.S NAVAL HOSPITAL CORONA

By Kevin Bash

Norco, California is known as “Horse Town, USA.” Surrounded by urban sprawl, this rural oasis is fifteen square miles of large land parcels—open space—home to over 20,000 horses. There is, however, another side to this small and genuinely unique town. Two architectural landmarks—the Californian Rehabilitation Center, a medium security prison, and the Naval Surface Warfare Assessment Center—make their home in Norco. Behind barbed wire and Navy security, these structures serve as some of the finest examples of Mediterranean-Mission Style architecture ever constructed. It is hard to believe in the not-too-distant past these buildings served as the a destination point for the greatest Hollywood stars, Olympic Champions, and, later, Pearl Harbor survivors.

Rex's Folly

In 1920, Norco was an unsuccessful agricultural community. Along came Rex Clark, a former stationery salesman turned land developer, with the good fortune to be married to Grace Scripps, daughter of James Scripps, the powerful newspaper publisher. Backed by her money, Clark bought Norco with the idea to develop and sell chicken ranches. The fledgling township flourished as Clark laid roads, created a manufacturing center, and dug wells to supply cheap water. It was in the course of digging just such a well that a plentiful supply of hot mineral water was found and the Norconian Resort was born.

In 1927, Rex Clark began to “build the finest resort and mineral hot springs spa in America.” Two years later, Clark installed a 60-acre lake, a marvelous pavilion/casino and boat-house, a chauffeurs’ quarters, an 100-car garage, a full service laundry, a state-of-the-art power house, airfield, one of the finest golf courses on the west coast, an American Athletic Union (AAU) qualifying diving and swimming pools, indoor swimming pools, riding trails, tennis courts, a fabulous “Tea Room,” and a magnificent 250- room hotel complete with stunning dining

room, lounge, and ballroom. Called “The Norconian,” this facility opened its doors on 2 February 1929. It became an instant success with the rich and famous. Many movie stars flocked to the resort. It was not unusual to see Charlie Chaplin playing tennis, Clark Gable driving to the local gun club, Buster Keaton on the golf links, Norma Shearer riding horseback, or Will Rogers and Wiley Post giving plane rides to local kids. MGM, Fox, and Disney Studios all held annual picnics on the site. The lake was used as a raceway where some of the best speedboat racers in the practiced their craft. The outdoor pools, the only AAU qualifiers in Southern California until the 1932 Olympics, attracted the finest Olympic divers and swimmers and witnessed several National and world records.

Unfortunately, the Norconian Resort Supreme never made a nickel. The Great Depression was devastating to both the resort and the town of Norco. The club struggled into the early 1930s, moving from a year-round club to a seasonal resort, to sporadic openings and closings. Clark’s \$4,500,000 dream soon became known as “Rex’s Folly.” By 1940, the club was suffering labor problems hounded by creditors. Clark secretly put the resort on sale for the asking price of \$2,000,000.

By early 1941, the nation knew it was going to war, the draft was in effect, and military bases were slowly being manned with ill-equipped troops. The United States Army was the first to approach Clark with the idea that his resort would make an outstanding hospital; the offer reportedly was \$1,800,000. Then, in mid December, it was announced that the Navy, also with the intention of converting it to a hospital, had agreed to Clark’s asking price. Unfortunately for Clark, some in congress felt the price tag was too high and instead of payment, the government instituted a condemnation suit to determine the resort’s worth. The new offer was \$850,000. Clark fought the Navy in Federal Court and was ultimately victorious; though his second wife claimed years later that only \$400,000 was received.



Naval Hospital Corona, CA

Naval Hospital Corona is Established

On 2 January 1942, Captain H.L. Jensen, MC, USN, took command of the United States Naval Hospital in Corona. Initially, patients were housed and treated within the former hotel building. The mineral spas were used as hydrotherapy units, hotel rooms became operating and patient rooms, the ballroom a full

ward and the former chauffeurs' quarters home to Navy personnel.



Film star Kay Francis, left, with Constance Bennett, in 1944. As “director of entertainment” at Corona, Francis spent untold hours at the Navy hospital.

By 1 May 1942, it was reported that most of the patients, totaling around 100, were wounded from the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the midst of World War II, massive changes were in progress at the former resort. A three-wing, five-story ward building was opened in April 1942, and prompted a visit by none other than First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The hospital was “designated a respiratory disease center” and “a complex of 15 one-story interconnecting isolation ward buildings” were built on the eastern edge of the golf course.

The wards open porches provided the “fresh air and sunshine” needed to treat rheumatic fever, malaria, polio, and tuberculosis.

Eventually the hospital complex included officers, nurses, waves and corpsman quarters, two theaters, an additional weaving complex of wards (known as “Splinterville”), gymnasium, chapel, and dozens of maintenance and service buildings. Still in use from the old resort were the hotel, power station, garage, laundry, and lake pavilion. By 1945, close to 5,000 patients were being treated at the site.

According to news articles, the naval hospital may well have been the first to have used penicillin to treat tuberculosis complications. Other achievements included groundbreaking advances in the treatment of polio and rheumatic fever, the development of prosthetic devices, occupational and physical therapy, and the first “Atomic powered, hand-held x-ray device.” Wheelchair basketball may or may not have begun at the hospital but most certainly it was given a boost on the wheels by the hospital’s “Rolling Devils.” With an eye toward rehabilitation, Dr. Gerald Gray, known as the “Father of Wheelchair Basketball,” put together teams that took on all comers. The team was described by one fan as “unbeatable” and “Globetrotters on wheels.”

The Hospital’s Patients Receive Community Support

Throughout World War II, Gray Lady Corps and Navy mothers spent countless hours visiting patients, supplying baked goods, and providing transportation.*

Hollywood and the Naval Aid Auxiliary quickly came forward and forgotten star Kay Francis was put in charge of organizing visitations to patients at the Corona Hospital. For the duration, every Thursday, Kay Francis and/or a few of “her friends”

would pay a visit to Corona. Her friends included Cary Grant, James Cagney, Bing Crosby, Marlene Dietrich, Bob Hope, Clark Gable, and The Three Stooges to name a few. Harry James and Jack Benny both broadcast radio programs from the hospital theater.

After the war, the patient load naturally diminished and, in 1949, only weeks after announcing the completion of \$15,000,000 in renovations and improvements, the naval hospital was closed and stripped.

In 1951, during Korean War, the hospital was reopened. The Navy spent \$2,000,000 to replace what had been carted off for pennies only years before. Finally, in 1957, again ignoring widespread pleas that the facility was needed and necessary, the United States Naval Hospital Corona was closed for good.

In 1963, the old hotel/ hospital campus was partitioned. Ninety-four acres was cut away for use as the Naval Surface Warfare Assessment Center; the former hotel, hospital wing, “Splinterville,” chapel, theater, and gymnasium were turned over to the California Rehabilitation Center—a place to “cure those addicted to drugs.” In 2000, 19 buildings of the old hospital complex were placed on the National Registry of Historic Places, but unfortunately that means little with regards to preservation. The main hotel was deemed “too costly” and abandoned in 2002. This “national treasure” has been officially declared a “Black Building,” meaning the structure is sealed up and permitted to die from the inside out.

Remarkably, the old hotel, despite 80 years of service and renovations as a hospital and prison, looks much as it did in 1929; fabulous paintings and murals cover the ceilings, exquisite and colorful tile is everywhere and dozens of priceless chandeliers collect dust. Even the bathroom mirrors still bear the initials LNC- Lake Norconian Club. Unfortunately, rain-water is now working into the interior; the building occupants are feral cats, possums, and raccoons. Already much has been destroyed.

Recently, a group of citizens have banded together with the idea that the state has a legal obligation to maintain this building. The Navy, after years of preservation efforts, is also now abandoning historic buildings and demolitions are being scheduled.

Sadly, it is quite likely that one of the finest examples of 1920’s Mediterranean, California Mission Revival Style Architecture, a site with an unequaled state and military history, will soon be no more, a ghost found only in the pages of a dusty book.

Kevin Bash is a television and theater actor who, in addition to appearing in over 200 commercials, has operated an award winning Los Angeles theater company. Currently, he splits his time managing a production company specializing in commercials, and developing a documentary and two books on the Norconian Hotel/ Naval Hospital Corona.

**Originally begun in 1918 at Walter Reed Army Hospital, the “Gray Ladies” or the Hostess and Hospital Service and Recreation Corps of the Red Cross, were volunteers who provided friendly, personal services of a non-medical nature to sick, injured, and disabled patients in American hospitals, other health-care facilities, and private homes. Their uniforms consisted of gray dresses with gray veils.*

NOT BEATIN' AROUND THE MULBERRY-BUSH

THE LIFE OF CLAY ALOYSIUS BOLAND, NAVY DENTIST AND SONGWRITER

Perhaps the name Clay Boland never reached the peaks of fame as an Irving Berlin or a George Gershwin. But, of Boland, Berlin, and Gershwin, only one could be depended upon to extract your molar, clean your teeth, AND write a hit tune, while serving his country. Dr. Clay Aloysius Boland was the rare case of a military dentist with a musical opus. His songbook was extensive and included such hits as "The Gypsy in My Heart," "I Like it Here," "Midnight on the Trail," and "Stop Beatin' Round the Mulberry Bush." Though not staples on today's radio, these tunes were covered by a veritable who's who of the "swing era," including Count Basie, Bunny Berigan, and Tommy Dorsey.

Born on 25 October 1903, Boland grew up in the anthracite belt of Pennsylvania. He was the youngest of nine children and perhaps the best prepared to escape the grim realities of coal country. His mother was hopeful of this, and being blessed with a predisposition for music, a sister who taught piano, and a desire for the "elsewhere" world, Boland left home for academia in 1920. Following graduation from college in Scranton, PA, he moved to Philadelphia where he spent the next four years attending the University of Pennsylvania Dental School. Between lectures on periodontal disease and the theories of orthodontic extraction, Boland wrote "pop" songs and performed them for local radio programs. During summer breaks, he played piano aboard trans-Atlantic cruise ships and entertained the "smart set" in the cafés and clubs of Europe.

1924 was a pivotal year for the young Boland. The University of Pennsylvania offered a prize for a "prom song" which Boland won with the aptly-named tune, "Dreary Weather," a song that promised sunny days ahead for Boland's songwriting career when it was covered by the "Prince of Pep," Fred Waring (and his Pennsylvanians).

Music was not a full-time commitment for Boland. In the 1930s, Boland established his own dental practice. "Dad loved music but only through dentistry could he have a steady income," recalled Boland's son, Clay, Jr. "He had a child's practice in Ardmore (PA) and an adult practice in Philadelphia,

and on Wednesdays he'd go to New York City to 'sell' his newest songs." In a 1946 *Time* magazine article entitled "Tuneful Dentist," Boland was asked why he never became a full-time songwriter. Dr. Boland stated that he was considering offers to turn "Tin Pan Alley pro" but dentistry was paying him too well.

Even though a dentist first and foremost, his other talent did not go unnoticed by his community. Boland, Jr. related, "Due to my father's ability to write and play music, we were mostly familiar with lesser members of Main Line Society, a number of who were graduates of the University of Pennsylvania. These were people, like my father, who took the Paoli Local (the "main

line") into the city to work and then would return to the suburbs to raise their families. Normally, most of these people here would have nothing to do with Irish Catholic dentists from a coal mining family, but my father's musical talent changed all that."

His popularity among the exclusive "main line" society led to his involvement with Penn's "Mask and Wig" shows.* According to Clay Boland, Jr., "It was natural that they talked his father into writing the scores for almost a dozen shows in the 1930s and 40s." Along the way he developed partnerships with lyricists Eddie De Lange, Moe Jaffe (a Penn Law Graduate), and Bickley Reichner. Moe Jaffe would achieve renown for penning the novelty song, "I'm My Own Gram-paw" as well as writing the "Captain Spaulding song" inimitably sung by Groucho Marx in the film "Animal Crackers." His tune "Collegiate," was later covered by Chico Marx in the movie "Horse Feathers."

In 1942, Clay Boland joined the U.S. Navy Reserve. His son related, "As with all men and many women, my father wanted to join the war effort and so signed up." Boland first served at the Philadelphia Navy Yard and then in 1943 was assigned to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. His talents came into great use while serving in Annapolis. He was very popular with the midshipmen and even wrote a show for them that featured Art Lund and the song



Songsheet of Boland's "Dreary Weather," with ukulele arrangement by May Singhi Breen.

*The Mask and Wig club presents an annual show, semiprofessional in nature, written and staged by graduates, and acted by undergraduates. They are the Penn equivalent of Harvard University's "Hasty Pudding Club" and Princeton's "Triangle Club."



CDR Clay Boland, DC, USNR, being presented the Freedom Foundation Honor Medal Award for 1950 by Reverend John Hart for the song "I like It Here." Boland would retire as a Captain in the U.S. Navy Reserves in 1962.

"Annapolis Memories."* He even wrote a show about John Paul Jones after visiting the crypt where the Navy hero is buried.

In the Navy, Boland's skill on the keyboard was not overlooked by leadership. As Boland, Jr., stated, "He was a definite social asset to his superiors." It has been rumored that one chief of the Dental Corps used Boland's talents at every social occasion. At every Dental Corps soiree one could find Boland singing and playing his songs, sometimes accompanied by the admiral's wife.

Boland retired from the Navy in 1962 while serving at Naval Hospital St. Albans, NY. Sadly, his retirement was short-lived. He died in July 1963, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

In remembering his father, Clay Boland, Jr. stated that "throughout my childhood, I would go to sleep listening to my father writing and playing songs and so learned much hypnotically. He insisted that I practice for an hour every morning before catching the school bus. He taught me how to play in his style. And he also introduced me to the piano parts crafted by George Gershwin for his songs—and I also learned not to try to balance two careers."** ABS

**Art Lund (1915-1990)—An atypical graduate of the Naval Academy, Lund went on to sing in the Benny Goodman and Harry James bands and acted on Broadway. In 1947, he reached the music charts with the song "Mam'selle."*

***Unlike his father, Clay Boland, Jr. decided not to pursue a career in dentistry. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, Boland went on to become a songwriter, arranger, and pianist in New York City before deciding on a career as a teacher. After retiring from his post at Colorado Mountain College, Boland, Jr., refocused his energies on music. He has performed classical and jazz standards in numerous concerts. In 2002, he released an album of interpretations of Ira and George Gershwin songs.*

THE CLAY BOLAND SONGBOOK

ALL AROUND TOWN (310023515)	HIAWATHA (380049769)	MEN OF PENNSYLVANIA (430051142)
ANNAPOLIS MEMORIES (310051520)	HIAWATHA'S MITTENS (380049803)	MIDNIGHT ON THE TRAIL (430061604)
ANY DISTANCE BETWEEN US (310054670)	HOLIDAY (380060344)	THE MORNING AFTER (430091457)
AN APPLE A DAY (310057926)	HOW I CRY (380081992)	MY GAL (430115485)
AS YOU WERE (310068969)	HOW I'D LIKE TO BE WITH YOU (380082259)	MY GREAT UNCLE (430116439)
BE IT EVER SO THRILLING (320023756)	I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS (390011815)	MY KID'S SINGING SWING SONGS (430121790)
BLUES (3200068673)	I LIED TO YOU (390030170)	NASHVILLE (440002677)
BUTTON BUTTON WHO'S GOT THE (330029795)	I LIKE IT HERE (390030563)	NOT SO LONG AGO (440040297)
CAVIAR FOR BREAKFAST (330029795)	I LIVE THE LIFE I LOVE (390031615)	OPEN YOUR HEART (450047342)
CHRIS CROSSES (330053044)	I'LL TAKE YOU ALL (390037842)	PRAY (460067221)
CHRISTMAS EVE (330054981)	I LOVE MY COUNTRY (390040445)	PROVE THAT YOU'RE SORRY (460081474)
COWS IN THE MEADOW DON'T MOO (330105032)	IF LOVE CAN HAPPEN (390097028)	RAINBOW IN THE SKY (480003967)
CUTE AS CHRISTMAS (330118760)	I'M NOTHING BUT A LEMON (390113090)	REASONABLE FACSIMILE (480009907)
DELIGHTFUL DELIRIUM (340026224)	INTERLUDE (390137298)	ROCK A BYE BABY (480038260)
DON'T SAY WE'RE THROUGH (340062695)	IT'S CORNY BUT IT'S FUN (390163947)	RUGGED BUT RIGHT (480059069)
DREAM MAN (340077045)	IT'S SPRING (390165418)	SAY THE WORD (490018478)
ESCAPE ME NEVER (350022772)	I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU (390167381)	THE SHOUT (490055053)
EVERYDAY CUES (058005559)	JAM THAT LICORICE STICK (400002966)	SOMETHING FOR NOTHING (490102386)
FAR BE IT FROM ME TO BE (360009321)	KISSING ME (410014649)	STARS OVER THE SCHOOLHOUSE (490137072)
FIFTY MILLION SWEETHEARTS (360021450)	LAND OF DREAMS (420006031)	STOP BEATIN' ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH (490144153)
FOOLISH FASCINATION (360042795)	LET ME GIVE YOU ONE LAST KISS (420022380)	SWEETER THAN SWEET (490177216)
GIVE ME THIS DAY (370022216)	LET'S TAKE A TRIP TO JAMAICA (420032422)	TALKIN' TO YOUR PICTURE (500008379)
GONE WITH THE WIND (370038423)	LIGHTS OUT, HOLD ME TIGHT (420038864)	WATCH THE FIRST STEP (530015475)
GYPSY IN MY SOUL (370063299)	LIKE A MONKEY LIKES COCONUT (420039103)	WHIRLIGIG (530071075)
HAVANA (380018668)	LITTLE GRAND OPERA (420049978)	YA GOT ME (550000470)
HAWAIIAN MOONLIGHT (380022206)	LITTLE MOUSIE (420053114)	YOU'RE MY BEST BET (550042498)
HE AIN'T NEVER BEEN IN COLLEGE (380023241)	MASK AND WIG TOAST (430036301)	

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FROM THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE U.S. NAVY *MALABAR HILL'S TOWERS OF SILENCE*

In 1882, while serving aboard the cruiser USS Juniata, Surgeon George Woods, MC, USN, made a port call in Bombay (present day Mumbai), India. While there, Woods took great interest in the burial practices of the peoples of this area. The following text is extracted from a report in which he describes the method of corpse disposal used by the Parsees.

Bombay, the capital and chief city of the Bombay Presidency, is situated on the western coast of India,...It occupies a series of islands, bound together and united to the mainland by causeways, bridges, and breakwaters, forming a peninsula, with an area of about 22 square miles.* The island of Salsette is its northern limit, and the rocky point of Colaba its most Southern, giving a water front of great extent, which sweeps along the western shore of the main island to the base of Malabar Hill, forming the Back Bay, or false harbor, accessible only to small craft...

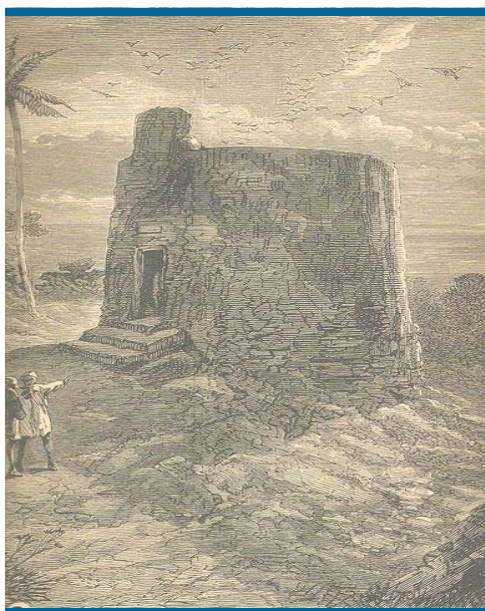
Bombay Island and the other islands forming the peninsula on which the city and suburbs are built are of volcanic origin, the higher land of the principal island consisting of two ranges of basaltic formation, and the lower land of alluvial deposits and tide lands reclaimed by dikes and drainage. The most western of these ridges rises to a height of 180 feet, forming Malabar Hill...

Burial Practices of India

The Mohammedans bury their dead in coffins if of the wealthy class, or in wrappings of the poor if of the poorer. The Hindoos burn their dead, and the Parsees expose theirs upon a sort of tower, where the body is speedily denuded of flesh by a swarm of vultures, leaving only osseous skeleton.**

Malabar Hill is surmounted by five of these towers, known as the Towers of Silence. They are circular, substantially built of stone, the largest being 276 feet in circumference and 25 feet in height, and are surrounded by a beautiful park.

The body, clothed in white, after prayers in the "Fire Temple," is brought to the tower upon a litter, and passed through a small door near the base, the only means of access. Here it is disrobed and then



Engraving of a "Tower of Silence" taken from Cornelius Brown's *True Stories of the Reign of Queen Victoria* (1886).

taken to an open platform forming the roof, where it is exposed. This platform, just below the summit of the circular wall, slopes towards the center, and is divided into three circles, the outer one for the bodies of men, the second for women, and the third or inner circle for children. The surface is further divided into spaces for each body, and grooved to carry off the rain, or any possible product of decomposition, towards a central well. This well is 45 feet in diameter, and its bottom is a filter of charcoal and sand. As soon as the bearers have left the vultures swoop down upon the body, and in a few hours nothing remains but the skeleton. After the lapse of a few days the attendants return, and the bones are shoveled into the central well. Sentiment is horrified at this method of

disposal of the dead, and in Bombay other sects speak earnestly against it. But from a sanitary point of view it approaches perfection.

**Bombay Presidency is a former province of British India.*

***Parsees are adherents to the Zoroastrian faith based primarily in India. Their name is a corruption of "Persia" from which they originated and from where they fled during the Muslim Conquest.*

SCUTTLEBUTT: MARITIME MEDICAL HISTORY HAPPENINGS

MONTREAL BOUND?

3 May 2007 will mark the first official meeting of the Society for the History of Navy Medicine (SHNM). The meeting has been scheduled for 1700 at the Salon Musset in Le Centre Sheraton, Montreal Canada. Photographs and proceedings from this special event will appear in the July-August 2007 edition of *The Grog Ration*. In addition, a booklet containing the papers delivered will be sent to all members of the Society later this summer.



J. Winthrop Taylor served as Surgeon General from 1878-1879

NEW CIVIL WAR EXHIBIT

The Nahant Historical Society, in Nahant, Massachusetts, will be opening a Civil War exhibit this year. Among the displays will be a sword and scabbard donated to the Historical Society in 2003 by Winthrop Donnison Hodges, Jr. This artifact is of particular interest in that it once belonged to the (sixth) Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy, Dr. J. Winthrop Taylor (1817-1880).

The story of Dr. J. Winthrop Taylor’s sword and its journey to the Nahant Historical Society will appear in the next edition of *The Grog Ration*.

NAVY PHYSICIAN’S NAME ADDED TO BOOK OF NOTABLES

Historians from Evergreen Cemetery in Morristown, New Jersey, have recently added the name “Dr. J. Rufus Tryon” to their listing of “notable occupants.”

Medical Director Tryon was of the most dynamic medical leaders of the late nineteenth century. In 1893, 30 years after being appointed an assistant surgeon, Dr. Tryon was chosen by President Cleveland as the tenth Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy. His administration was marked by clear and farsighted policies beneficial to the Navy. Tryon urgently recommended the establishments of hospital ships, the creation of a hospital corps, the increase in the number and rank of naval medical officers, the building of naval hospitals, and the (re) establishment of a medical supply depot. During his tenure, he revived the old Naval Laboratory at Brooklyn and named in the “Naval Laboratory and Department of Instruction.” He also started the practice of sending newly commissioned medical officers there for postgraduate study. He secured the Old Naval Observatory building as a “permanent” home for the Naval Museum of Hygiene. During his administration, hygiene and preventive medicine were given emphasis.

Other notable internees at Evergreen include Revolutionary War heroine Tempe Tuttle, poet Alice Duer Miller, and publishing magnate James H. McGraw.

Do you know of events honoring former Navy medical personnel? Has your archives or library recently accessioned or uncovered a piece of Navy medical history? If so, please let us know. We would like to share your stories with the many history fans in and out of the Navy Medical Department. Send your “news and notes” to André Sobocinski: ABSobocinski@us.med.navy.mil



Portrait of Dr. J. Rufus Tryon from Union College, New York

A LOOK BACK: WOMEN MEDICAL PIONNERS AND THE U.S. NAVY

In the March-April 2007 of *The Grog Ration*, we published a timeline containing a portion of the achievements of Navy medical women. In this list, LTJG Jane Kendeigh, NC, USN, was “acknowledged as the first nurse to serve in a combat theater.” On 6 March 1945, LTJG Kendeigh became the first *Navy flight nurse in an operating theater* when she landed on Iwo Jima. Prior to that, Army nurses had served in combat theaters and as flight nurses in the Guadalcanal campaign. It should, also, be pointed out that Navy nurses serving aboard the USS *Solace*, then docked off of Ford Island, on 7 December 1941 were part of a combat theater when Pearl Harbor was attacked.



LTJG Jane Kendeigh, NC, USN

The timeline was never meant to be comprehensive. Even so, there were notable omissions. We failed to mention that in March 2002, Jacqueline DiRosa was selected as the Director of the Hospital Corps and BUMED Force Master Chief, becoming the first woman to hold this title. Four years later, FORCM DiRosa became the first woman selected as the Navy’s Fleet Master Chief.

***The Grog Ration* is looking for original historical articles to publish in its September-October 2007 edition. As of now, there is an opening for a cover story (1,000-2,500 words) and two feature stories (500-1,000). If you are interested in submitting an article please contact André B. Sobocinski at: (202) 762-3244 or e-mail: ABSobocinski@us.med.navy.mil.**

IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

- ♦ [An Historic First in Montreal: Proceedings of the SHNM Meeting](#)
- ♦ [Dr. Bernard Campbell: Physician of the United Provinces of the Rio De La Plata’s Incipient Fleet](#)
- ♦ [A Surgeon’s Sword](#)
- ♦ [From the Annual Reports of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy](#)

***Disclaimer: Articles and information published in The Grog Ration do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Medical Department, Department of the Navy, or Department of Defense.*