



Harvey Cushing - 1869-1939



Dr. Harvey Cushing was not only the father of neurological surgery in Boston but also the father of neurological surgery in the entire United States. He graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1895 and completed his internship at the Massachusetts General Hospital in 1896. He then became an assistant resident in surgery under Dr. William Halstead at Johns Hopkins where he took some of the first X-rays taken at Hopkins. Cushing developed acute appendicitis and Dr. Halstead performed an appendectomy on Cushing in September 1897. Cushing traveled to Europe for 14 months in 1900-1901 and then returned to Baltimore to join the faculty of surgery at Johns Hopkins. He became particularly interested in neurosurgical cases during his residency and developed this interest even further as a faculty member. He presented a paper at the Academy of Medicine in Cleveland on November 18, 1904 entitled, "The Special Field of Neurological Surgery". This probably could be considered the birth announcement of neurological surgery.

Cushing accepted the Moseley Professorship of Surgery at the Harvard Medical School in 1912 and became Chief of Surgery at the newly created Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. He continued in that position for 21 years or until 1933 when he left Boston for Yale. He continued on the faculty at Yale until 1937 when he retired. He died in October 1939 in New Haven, Connecticut and donated his superb library to Yale. The world will forever owe a debt of gratitude to Cushing for his pioneering contributions to patient care, research and teaching.