

Life and Career

James Ware was born in Portsmouth, England, in 1756 (fig. 1). The son of a prominent shipbuilder in Deptford, after his basic training, he studied with the Royal Court surgeon Ramsay Karr. His service at Haslar Hospitals and later at St. Thomas in London, where he excelled for his care, endowed him with the knowledge that for his time was considered excellent and gave him career opportunities². In the last year of his studies, he served as an assistant in the Laboratory of Anatomy. Leaving St. Thomas worked with Jonathan Wathen, a collaboration that lasted 14 years. Jonathan Wathen (c.1728-1808) was an English surgeon, who specialized in diseases of the eye and practiced in London during the Georgian era. Wathen was an unconventional surgeon, devoting his time mainly to ocular diseases. The enthusiasm with which J. Wathen worked in this field inspired Ware to follow his partner's example and ophthalmic surgery became their passion. In 1791 Ware stopped working with Wathen and began practicing medicine in Portsmouth, initially as a general surgeon but soon turned to eye diseases. His experience as an ophthalmic surgeon was based exclusively on private medicine. There is no evidence of any collaboration with hospitals, or of any academic teachings.

In 1791 he translated the work of Baron Jacob de Wenzel (1755-1810) 'Traite de la cataracte' This treatise was written by the son of the famous baron Michael de Wenzel (fig. 2,3). The latter described his father's methods of cataract surgery and the creation of an artificial iris. The work includes several cases from the experience of Michael de Wenzel. Benjamin Travers (1783-1858), a student of Sir Astley Cooper, a surgeon at St. Thomas Hospital, and Saunders's member of the Royal Society in 1801. He was elected because of his reputation as an ophthalmologist and was the first in this field from Royal Society, and this election proved the selectors' respect to the area of Ophthalmology despite the objections of those who opposed to Medical specialization.'