

Book Reviews

Pamela Hunter, *Veterinary medicine: a guide to historical sources*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, pp. ix, 611, £65.00 (hardback 0-7546-4053-1).

This book provides an original and extensive guide to primary source material within the field of veterinary medicine. Compiled with the support of the Wellcome Trust and Business Archives Council and also available as a database, it aims to facilitate investigations into this neglected area. As Roger Cooter points out in his foreword, animals have never attracted so much attention as at present. Consequently, veterinary history not only illuminates the development of the veterinary field but also, “provides a means to reflect on much of what is crucial to contemporary society, economy, politics and culture” (p. vii). This book will enable new entrants to the field to tackle such issues by allowing projects to be framed in the light of available resources.

The book opens with a 31-page introduction to veterinary history, which reveals just how much work remains to be done before the field reaches a parallel state of development to medical history. Pamela Hunter’s teleological and progressive view of veterinary professional development reflects the nature of her sources, many of which are over twenty years old. Many of the chapter’s claims are ripe for reassessment, while other important subjects receive little mention, having failed to attract historic attention. Unfortunately, Hunter makes no reference to works produced after 1999, a significant omission given that this chapter is designed as a “jumping off point” for researchers.

The remainder of the book provides a “user-friendly” guide to primary source materials. Hunter firstly discusses the types of records available, their nature and potential uses to historians. She is careful to acknowledge the limitations of this material, and also directs the reader towards oral histories and veterinary journals. She goes on to provide a detailed listing of available resources, grouping material according to the following categories: records of practices, individuals, companies, trade bodies and professional associations, national government, local government, education and

research establishments, charities, zoos, and minor collections. A brief summary of each document or file is provided, together with its location. The clarity of these listings is enhanced by the extensive index, which lists sources by name, place, subject and archive repository.

One especially praiseworthy aspect of this book is its scope. Material is not limited to the two-century lifespan of the British veterinary profession, but includes older farriery records and drug recipes. Nor is it devoted entirely to veterinarians and their institutions; indeed the list of records emphasizes the profession’s historic connections with agriculture, medicine and pharmacy. Sources includes the records of agricultural institutions, medical research institutes, and pharmaceutical companies that viewed veterinary medicines as a sideline, while one-third of the listings in the ‘Records of individuals’ chapter relates to medical men. My only quibble is that at no point does Hunter state the principles on which she based her selection. Consequently, it is unclear why certain sources are listed and others not. Why include the Royal Agricultural Society and not the National Farmers’ Union? Why the Department of Agriculture at Newcastle and not Bangor or Wye? Why the Lister Institute and not the Institute for Animal Health?

While researchers should be wary of treating this book as the “final word” on veterinary primary source material, it is nevertheless an essential starting point for existing and prospective veterinary historians. At £65, is it clearly not designed for purchase by individuals, but deserves a place on library shelves.

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Nady S Hakim and Vassilios E Papalois (eds), *History of organ and cell transplantation*, London, Imperial College Press, 2003, pp. xviii, 444, illus., £58.00 (hardback 1-86094-209-1).

This collection of papers deals with specific aspects of the recent history of organ and cell