

Book Reviews

chapters chronicle the emergence of the town's hospital, and the long struggle by local nurses to improve their status and economic position.

The author's detailed studies of physician records and the town's vital statistics give us an insight into medical practice and the general health of the townspeople. They also depict the daily lives of physicians, the number of patients attended, their social activities, and their economic position. Interestingly, while the medical society fought against homoeopaths and other irregulars, the lines were never too sharply drawn. Individual homoeopaths or eclectics were often on friendly terms with the local orthodox practitioners, a fact that tended to blur distinctions. These studies demonstrate, too, that until the twentieth century, surgery in small towns and rural areas consisted largely of dealing with ulcers and abscesses, tooth problems, and fractures, abrasions, and other injuries.

The history of Portsmouth's hospital, showing how it evolved from a charitable institution under lay control in the nineteenth century to becoming part of a proprietary for-profit corporation in 1983, reflects general developments in American hospital history. A series of excellent charts show the steady rise in hospital costs. The resultant budgetary problems forced the hospital to turn first to private patients, later to the Blue Cross and the federal government, and finally to private management.

The combination of topical and chronological organization presents minor problems, and some periods appear to have been treated lightly. Nonetheless, Estes and Goodman have made a fine contribution to American medical history.

John Duffy
Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland

ROBERT H. SHIKES, *Rocky Mountain medicine: doctors, drugs, and disease in early Colorado*, Boulder, Colorado, Johnson Books, 1987, 4to, pp. x, 261, illus., \$34.95.

This volume provides an overview of the health-related problems and medical experience on the Western frontier of the United States, specifically in the geographic area which became the state of Colorado. The author begins his coverage in the early-nineteenth century with early explorations and the fur trade, and concludes his narration in the 1920s. The twenty-two chapters encompass such varied topics as medical problems and practice among the native American population, the frontier army, the Colorado gold rush, the mining communities, and the development of railroad medicine. Colorado's role in the evolution of the field of climatology and the importance of tuberculosis in the economic and medical history of the State are also discussed. The ethical, economic, and social aspects of medical practice and the evolution of organized medicine and medical education, as well as alternative modes of medical practice, are included in the overview.

Because of the all-encompassing nature of this text, none of the topics is covered in great depth; however, the author, who is a professor and vice-chairman of the Department of Pathology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, has made good use of the primary sources to develop an authoritative narration which certainly hits the high points (and the low points!) of this regional medical history and places it within the context of the transitions and evolution of medicine in the United States during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The text is profusely illustrated and is rich in relevant quotations, which clearly give the flavour of the times. As an example, when the editor of the *Denver Medical Times* in 1884 received an enquiry from a Denver physician who specialized in the treatment of venereal disease requesting guidance in the type and content of a sign advertising his speciality, he responded as follows: "Procure from Paris a large wax model, flesh colored, representing the organ of choice, about five or six feet long, and protrude this from his [office] window. Have painted on either side of this—'Diseases of . . .' and on a flag floated from the end of this modest little sign, have printed—'A Speciality'."

Dr Shikes has provided a substantial amount of information in a style both understandable to the layman and informative to the physician and historian of medicine. He has used an

Book Reviews

impressive range of graphics, pictorial and otherwise, pertaining to Colorado medicine to illustrate this book. Even though much of the illustrative material may have come from the author's personal collection, it would have been useful to other historians if the sources of the graphic material had been provided.

Peter D. Olch
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda

E. H. BURROWS, *Pioneers and early years. A history of British radiology*, Alderney, Colophon, 1986, 4to, pp. viii, 264, illus., £32.50.

E. H. Burrows sets out to describe the history of diagnostic radiology from its birth in the late-nineteenth century to 1930. He begins by documenting the discovery of X-rays and its British reception. Outlining the early history of British experimentation on X-rays, Burrows goes on to chronicle the establishment of hospital X-ray departments and the professional structure of radiology—journals, diplomas, and so on. He concludes with descriptions of the use of X-rays in war, and a history of radiation injury and protection. The text is pitted with short biographies of major radiologists and others associated with X-rays, which unhappily interrupt the narrative. (It would have been easier to read if they had been marshalled together as an appendix.) However, Burrows has uncovered a wealth of useful information on the early history of British radiology.

Unfortunately, Burrows' discussion is flawed by the lack of an explanatory framework. He is unfamiliar with the literature on the medical division of labour. His story flows onward, seemingly interrupted only by technical difficulties easily or quickly resolved. But even his own narrative later hints that the difficulties might have been more than technical. For instance, he quotes the Liverpool radiologist, Thurstan Holland, who stated that deplorably few teaching hospitals accepted radiologists as full members of staff. However, the preceding discussion on the formation of radiological departments in teaching hospitals provides no indication of this. Again, Burrows quotes Holland to show that radiologists wanted to exclude other doctors and radiographers from the interpretation of X-ray images. However, the earlier narrative gives no hint of any local discussion on the matter.

Burrows never makes his criteria clear for deciding what contributes to the birth and growth of clinical radiology. What forces moulded the discipline? Central to his discussion is the emergence of a self-styled specialist élite of medical radiologists, but Burrows largely accepts their own account. Sadly, a number of other voices are lost. Burrows generally echoes the radiologists' own claims that they provided the best interpretation of X-ray images. This was a common claim, but is largely unsubstantiated. There is ample evidence to show that other medical practitioners were happy enough to interpret their own plates, films, or screens, or even rely on the lay radiographer's interpretation. Were these practitioners wrong? How do we decide where the legitimate claims of radiologists ended and their professional aspirations began? How do we determine who should have been excluded from interpretation of radiographic images when what counted as expertise in this field was defined by radiologists as an incommunicable "art"? These are not questions of determining the sincerity of radiologists, but are ones of historical methodology. What significance should be attached to texts? Of course radiologists claimed to be better than their competitors, but how are we to assess this claim? Disappointingly, Burrows does not escape the mire of contemporary rhetoric, and the mud sticks.

David Cantor
ARC Epidemiology Research Unit, University of Manchester

MICHAEL M. SOKAL (editor), *Psychological testing and American society 1890-1930*, New Brunswick and London, Rutgers University Press, 1987, 8vo, pp. ix, 205, \$28.00.

This is an excellent and unusually unified collection of essays, extending the literature linking professional social science to the transformation of American society into its modern urban, meritocratic, and technocratic form. It is a happy choice to dedicate the volume to John C.