

Book Reviews

there is a statistically-based portrait, but the author's findings are largely negative. The group was older (a natural consequence of their training and careers before politics) and initially they were more likely to identify with political parties of the left, until the whole character of the legislature itself shifted in that direction by the end of the century. But for the most part, the physician-legislators were more the representatives of their local constituencies than of their profession. This was especially the case with questions of food and drink regulation, health insurance, or industrial hygiene and housing which doctors usually viewed more from the perspective of local economic interests than that of health professionals.

To emphasize the exceptions to this rule, the author concludes with an examination of medical and health related legislation that the doctors generally supported. Utilizing the work of Jacques Leonard and Margaret Hildreth to establish the setting, he makes his case that the physicians in parliament not only supported but also played an important role in shaping such legislation as the 1892 law on the practice of medicine and the 1902 public health law.

The faults of the book are few. Methodologically, the author could have been more rigorous in his collective description of the physician-legislators to show which characteristics were typical of all legislators as opposed to just those who were doctors. Also, the descriptions of the legislative campaigns sometimes read like a chronological list of bills presented, which only touch the surface of complex movements (tuberculosis, mental illness, etc.) whose main thrust lay outside parliament. Finally, to those who might ask whether the main question posed by the author warrants a whole book to answer it, it must be admitted that the topic may be a relatively small niche in the history of modern medicine and politics, but the author fills it well.

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CAROL TROWBRIDGE, *Andrew Taylor Still, 1828–1917*, Kirksville, Missouri, The Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1991, pp. xiv, 233, illus., \$50.00 (0–943549–06–X).

Biographies of the “founding fathers” of “the fringe” are typically more hagiographic than historical, more celebratory than critical. Although the publication of this biography of the inventor of osteopathy has been timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first school of osteopathy, in Kirksville, Missouri, the author manages to avoid the deification of her subject. Instead, she provides an understanding of the world that shaped his thinking. Drawing effectively on recent work in the history of popular science and medicine, as well as on the local history of society, politics and religion in the “bled” frontier states of Kansas and Missouri, Carol Trowbridge illuminates how Still's peculiar therapeutic achievement was fully a product of its phrenological, mesmeric, Thomsonian, Eclectic, spiritualist and, above all, Spencerian evolutionary times.

On the whole, Trowbridge is far more successful at elaborating the mind of Still, than at accomplishing her book's other main mission, to fill in the narrative gaps left in Still's autobiography of 1897. Particularly in relation to the practical realization of osteopathy, Trowbridge fails to deliver the “new and important facts” promised on her dust-jacket. On the seemingly central question of how Still came by his practice of bone-setting, for example, Trowbridge has regrettably little to say—less in fact than Norman Gevitz in his much broader history of osteopathy. It seems a pity that in a study of this kind the opportunity was not seized to inquire into either the local or the national practice of bone-setting during the 1880s and 1890s when Still was advertising himself as the “Lightning Bone Setter”. Nor is it made clear why Still's popularity should have “surged” at this point through this conceit. Some attempt at a systematic study of the “hundreds of patients [who] now awaited Still's arrival in various towns” (p. 137) would not have come amiss. One is left still wondering how the cognitive and therapeutic worlds actually folded together in the invention of osteopathy.

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