

Diaries and Doctors: Elizabeth Drinker and Philadelphia Medical Practice, 1760-1810

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Responding to the cry of "History from the Bottom Up" of the 1960s, historians of medicine have also crafted a history of medicine drawn from the bottom up – that is, from the recipient's or patient's point of view. Using correspondence, diaries, medical records, church records, institutional and vital records, many historians, particularly of English towns and cities, have attempted to reconstruct not only the individual experience of the patient, but also the medical health of communities in the past. Some of the more noted efforts along these lines, include Elborg Foster's essay on Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orléans, the essays in *Patients and Practitioners*, edited by Roy Porter, Mary Fissel's work on eighteenth-century Bristol, Jaclyn Duffin's work on James Langstaff, his medical practice and community outside of Toronto, Canada, in the late nineteenth century and in the United States, Worth Estes's and David Goodman's study of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.¹

The publication of the complete diary of Elizabeth Drinker, running from 1758 to 1807 presents another valuable source for a study of medical practice in America's largest and most dynamic city of the era, Philadelphia. Clearly it was a period of great ferment politically, opening with the Seven Years War and ending after the Louisiana Purchase. The country underwent a revolution, Philadelphia experienced many

1. Elborg Foster, "From the Patient's Point of View: Illness and Health in the Letters of Liselotte Von Der Pfalz (1675-1722)," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 60 (1986), 297-325. Roy Porter, ed., *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Mary E. Fissel, *Patients, Power, and the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Bristol* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jaclyn Duffin, *Langstaff: A Nineteenth-Century Medical Life* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993); J. Worth Estes, and David M. Goodman, *The Changing Humours of Portsmouth: The Medical Biography of an American Town, 1623-1983* (Boston: Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1986).

changes in both local and national governments, and the Drinker family suffered through the exile of their husband and father for many months during the Revolutionary War. On a personal level, the diary opens with Elizabeth Sandwith as a lively, spirited, young Quaker woman with a full social calendar. Her activities included a feather importing business.² The last pages of the journal show Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker as the matriarch of a large family, a member of the Quaker elite, and an aging woman who rarely stepped more than a few feet from her front door.

This half century was also a time of significant change in medical practice, particularly as it concerned the relationship between physician and family. The years witnessed a dramatic evolution in medical procedures. When Elizabeth Drinker was born, there were no means to prevent smallpox, the major epidemic disease of the period, although by the first years of the journal inoculation was gaining favor.³ By the end of Drinker's life, inoculation had been superseded by vaccination, and at least in Philadelphia and other urban environments, both inoculation and vaccination had become widely accepted. Smallpox no longer posed an epidemic threat, having been replaced by yellow fever as the most feared of the infectious and epidemic diseases.

Few professionally trained physicians plied their trade in Philadelphia when Drinker was born nor were there any professional institutions or associations related to the practice of medicine. Only a few existed when the diary opened. At Drinker's death, her husband had his personal physician, Benjamin Rush, and she had another, Adam Kuhn, who had replaced John Redman after his retirement. Two of her daughters and her daughter-in-law had other physicians: William Shippen, Jr. attended them for childbirth, and if someone in the Drinker extended family needed surgery, Philip Syng Physick was the surgeon of choice. By the time Elizabeth Drinker penned her last entry, Philadelphia possessed a hospital, a dispensary or clinic, a medical school, a professional medical society and decades of experience with special quarantine hospitals and

2. Elaine Forman Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* 3 vols. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 1:xi. (Henceforth cited as *Drinker Diary*).

3. Roslyn Stone Wolman, "Some Aspects of Community Health in Colonial Philadelphia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974), chapter 3; Susan E. Klepp, "Demography in Early Philadelphia, 1690-1860," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 133, no. 2 (1989), 96-99; Billy G. Smith, "Death and Life in a Colonial Immigrant City: A Demographic Analysis of Philadelphia," *Journal of Economic History* 37 (1977), 863-883.

mass inoculations for smallpox. The fifty-year span of the diary chronicled a sea change in the practice and delivery of medicine to at least some segment of Philadelphia's population. By 1807, with the help of sources like Drinker's diary, it is possible to glimpse the outlines of the "modern" practice of medicine.

Although an abbreviated version of Elizabeth Drinker's diary was published in 1889, the unabridged edition of the diary, used in tandem with other archival sources, has allowed for a much fuller study and interpretation of medical practice and public health in eighteenth-century Philadelphia.⁴ The publication of the complete diary has revealed information about doctor patient relationships initiated by the practice of inoculation. Use of the diary has permitted students to become familiar with the wide array of medical services available in Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth-century and to consider the implications of the choices the Drinkers made in a discussion of medical practitioners and their marketplace. It has also led to the discovery of some of Shippen's Jr. patient records and investigation into his obstetrical career.⁵ Before Shippen's practice records were located, most of what we knew about his obstetric practice depended on entries made by Elizabeth Drinker in her journal.⁶ This opportunity to revisit the Drinker diary, which is an unparalleled source for the study of the history of medicine in the colonial and early national period, allows us to reconsider the rise of inoculation and physician-attended childbirth, and investigate the links between them and other cultural and medical developments of the

4. Henry Drinker Biddle, ed., *Extracts from the Journal of Elizabeth Drinker* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1889). Drinker's diary also played key roles in these two works: Cecil K. Drinker, *Not So Long Ago: A Chronicle of Medicine and Doctors in Colonial Philadelphia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937) and J. H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949, reprinted, 1970, 1993).

5. Sarah Blank Dine, "Inoculation, Patients, and Physicians: The Transformation of Medical Practice in Philadelphia, 1730-1810," *Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*. Series 5, Vol. 20 (1998), 67-93. Sarah Blank Dine, "Male Midwifery and the Origins of American Obstetrical Practice: The Patient Ledgers of William Shippen Jr.," paper given at the American Association for the History of Medicine Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, May, 1998. See also John Harley Warner and Janet A. Tighe, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), chapter 3: "The Medical Marketplace in the Early Republic" which includes a selection from the Drinker diary.

6. Betsy Copping Corner, "William Shippen Jr., Pioneer in American Medical Education," *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia: 1951), 28:118. Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750 to 1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 39-44.

period. Drinker's embodiment of the numerate and literate consumer depicts for us the contours of the lay knowledge of medicine of the era, and can direct us to other valuable avenues of research inspired by her diary.

Elizabeth Drinker's diary begins in 1758. Even in the early years of the diary, physicians, medical practitioners, epidemics, and medical procedures played significant roles in her young life. Sandwith, in the years before her marriage, revealed an interest in smallpox, and the preventive measures adopted by physicians to curb its mortality and curtail its spread. She also called upon nurses to treat her other ailments. In the early pages of the diary, Elizabeth Sandwith was in her twenties and living with her sister, Mary, as a boarder in the home of Ann Warner. At this time Sandwith participated in the rounds of visiting, sewing circles, and Quaker meetings typical of her age and status. A keen observer, Sandwith watched the inoculation of James Steel, son of her friend Henry Steel on September 13, 1759. Two months later, she visited her friends Francis and Rebecca Warner Rawle the evening after two of their children had been inoculated for smallpox by Dr. John Redman. Between these two visits to witness inoculation, Sandwith also called on Thomas Say, another Quaker friend. She wrote that Say's daughter, Becky, "lays ill, in Small Pox, which she has taken in the Natural way; and to most that take it Naturally (at this time) it proves mortal."⁷ Sandwith's interest in this subject reveals that inoculation was sufficiently novel to invite comments and spectators, and, more important, beginning to be widely practiced. Sandwith herself reveals a "modern" sensibility in her knowledge of the differing mortality between those inoculated and those who were not. Smallpox was again on her mind at the end of 1762 when her diary entries for December consisted of newspaper stories and accounts of those who died from smallpox. She included lists of those who caught it naturally and died as well as deaths caused by a mistake made by an apothecary in the medication used to prepare children for inoculation. The newspaper article she copied about that incident ended with the admonition to apothecaries that "none but discreet and intelligent Persons [should be] suffer'd to attend and serve in

their Shops.”⁸

Drinker's concern with demography and “numeracy” (the collection, use and understanding of factual numerical data) was a hallmark of her reading and writing. Her interest first became evident during the Seven Years War when smallpox once again became epidemic in Philadelphia. She was among the literate and leisured upper class who became a market of readers for both medical self-help books and compilations of weather, epidemics, and statistics. Drinker both absorbed these books and created her own lists and statistics. An avid reader and buyer of books, she owned William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, and read Erastus Darwin's *Zoonomia*, and Noah Webster's *A Brief History of Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases*.⁹ She copied newspaper statistics on yellow fever and kept track of the weather. While it often seems in discussions of the rise in lay readership and medical publishing that men compiled and read the statistical guides and women owned the self-help books, Drinker did both.¹⁰ The long list of books she mentions reading in her diary could lead to a revealing discussion of the literate and

8. *Drinker Diary* 1:98 (Dec. 2, 11, 13, 15, 24, 1762); Susan E. Klepp, “Revolutionary Bodies: Women and the Fertility Transition in the Mid-Atlantic Region 1760-1820,” *Journal of American History* 85 (1998), 910-946, commented on Drinker's “numeracy” or interest in numerical statistics in matters of demography. See pp. 944-45. Patricia Cline Cohen, “Statistics and the State: Changing Social Thought and the Emergence of a Quantitative Mentality in America,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series 38 (1981), 35-55.

9. *Drinker Diary* 2: 880, 890, 895, 1377-1378, 1559 (Jan. 15, Feb. 17, March 3, 1797, Jan. 11, 1801, Sept. 2, 1802). William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine; or, The Family Physician* (Edinburgh: Balfour, Auld and Smellie, 1769); Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia; or, The Laws of Organic Life* 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1794-6); Noah Webster, *A Brief History of Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases* 2 vols. (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1799). On the importance of William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, see Charles E. Rosenberg, “Medical Text and Social Context: Explaining William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 57 (1983), 22-42.

10. Many historians have noted the rise of a literate and lay class of readers and consumers of medical information. Some examples are Roy Porter, “Laymen, Doctors and Medical Knowledge in the Eighteenth Century: The Evidence of the Gentleman's Magazine,” in Porter, ed. *Patients and Practitioners*, 283-314; first chapter of Lamar Riley Murphy, *Enter the Physician: The Transformation of Domestic Medicine 1760-1860* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991). Roy Porter, “The Rise of Medical Journalism in Britain to 1800,” in W. F. Bynum, Stephen Lock and Roy Porter, eds., *Medical Journals and Medical Knowledge: Historical Essays* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6-29; Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patients' Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1760-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 185, 188-89. Norman Gevitz, “But all those authors are foreigners’: American Literary Nationalism and Domestic Guides,” in Roy Porter, ed. *The Popularization of Medicine 1650-1850* (London: Routledge, 1992), 232-51. James H. Cassedy, *Demography in Early America: The Beginnings of the Statistical Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) and Cassedy, *American Medicine and Statistical Thinking 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), chapters 1 and 5. Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

numerate female mind in eighteenth-century America.¹¹ At the same time, her interest in smallpox and inoculation allows us to view western medicine's first successful attempt to combat a dreaded scourge.

Many physicians and commentators believed that the smallpox virus had become more virulent and fatal during the seventeenth century. In England, the disease was endemic in many areas, thus exposing many young children who experienced the "speckled monster" as a childhood illness. In North American urban centers, however, there was a large pool of unexposed children and transients from rural areas.¹² As a result, colonists in Boston and Philadelphia were particularly fearful of an outbreak. After an interval of almost twenty years, smallpox appeared in Boston in 1721, and it was there and then that American physicians began to experiment with a successful, albeit controversial, procedure that had become known in England during the first two decades of the eighteenth-century. Inoculation involved the injection of live smallpox virus, usually into the arm, of a previously unexposed person in the expectation that someone who contracted the disease in this manner would experience a milder and nonfatal form of the disorder.

Philadelphia's five practicing physicians experimented with inoculation in the 1730s, but it was not until troop and population movements during the Seven Years' War precipitated an epidemic outbreak of smallpox, that inoculation was adopted on a larger scale.¹³ Drinker's diary sheds light on the earliest widespread practice of inoculation in Philadelphia.

Most commentators date the start of widespread inoculation to 1759-1760 in Philadelphia, but the records of Doctors Phineas and Thomas Bond confirm information gleaned from Drinker's entries that the adoption of inoculation began a few years sooner. The Bonds' wealthier patients began requesting the procedure for their children and members of their households in 1756, and Drinker, after witnessing inocula-

11. Drinker's fondness for novels is commented on by Elaine F. Crane in her introduction to the diary and by Linda K. Kerber. See *Drinker Diary 1*: pp.ix-x and Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 237-39.

12. Ann G. Carmichael and A. Silverstein, "Smallpox in Europe before the Seventeenth Century: Virulent Killer or Benign Disease?" *Journal of the History of Medicine* 42 (1987), 147-68. Mary J. Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 477-83, 513-14, 528; J. R. Smith, *The Speckled Monster* (Chelmsford: Chelmsford Record Office, 1987).

13. Wolman, "Community Health," chapter 3; John B. Blake, *Public Health in the Town of Boston 1630-1822* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), chapter 2.

tions in 1759 and 1760, continued this trend by arranging for the inoculation of her children in the 1760s and 1770s. The practice became widespread and affordable even for middle-class and poorer Philadelphians within a decade. Among the Bond patients in the latter part of the 1760s were barbers and shoemakers. Inoculation played a large role in establishing and building Benjamin Rush's practice, which started in 1769 and catered to few wealthy patients, and is evident to a considerable degree in the medical records of other pre-Revolutionary War physicians, William Shippen, Sr. and Jr.¹⁴

Inoculation created a major change in the delivery of health care by providing immunity against the serious and sometimes fatal disease of smallpox. Most inoculated persons experienced the disease as a mild illness usually in childhood. Drinker commented after her son William was inoculated, "the Child pritty well tho weak."¹⁵ Thereafter inoculated persons possessed lifelong immunity from the disease. While inoculation gave individuals immunity, however, the only effective way to prevent the spread of the disease was to promote mass inoculations in all susceptible populations. George Washington promoted this policy for the American army in 1777.¹⁶ Thus smallpox inoculation became the first successful procedure offered by Western medicine to combat epidemic disease. Families, mothers, fathers, masters, and mistresses could contract with a physician, rather than a midwife, a nurse, or a bleeder, to try to guarantee a good outcome for their children and other household members. Physicians could offer contracts, set fees based on a pro-

14. The Co-Partnership Ledgers of Phineas and Thomas Bond, six volumes owned by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, hereafter cited as Bond, Ledger # CPP. The six volumes are actually four ledgers or account books and two daybooks. They run from 1752 to 1772. Four of the volumes seem to be exclusively the practice of Phineas Bond; volume 6, a daybook, seems to be the practice of Thomas Bond, and volume 1, which is a ledger, might be a joint ledger or one of Phineas Bond's account books. For Benjamin Rush see George W. Corner, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society)*, 25 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 80. Benjamin Rush's patient accounts are part of the Rush Collection owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia on deposit at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. They include nine account books, called journals, that run from 1769 to 1813, five day books from 1772-1796 and five rough ledgers. Hereafter cited as Rush, Journal #, PPL. The Shippen Records are in the Shippen Family Collection at the Library of Congress, hereafter cited as DLC. William Shippen (Sr.) Day Book, DLC and William Shippen, Jr., Document Book, DLC. For a fuller discussion of this point see Dine "Inoculation".

15. *Drinker Diary* 1:147 (Feb. 16, 1769).

16. Richard L. Blanco, *Physician of the American Revolution, Jonathan Potts* (New York: Garland STPM Press, 1979), 102-106, 133-35. Hugh Thursfield, "Smallpox in the American War of Independence," *Annals of Medical History*, 3rd Series, 2 (1940), 312-18.

cedure, not the number of visits or medicine prescribed, and consumers could pick and choose doctors, the method of inoculation, and the timing of the procedure. Doctors could usually promise success, a guarantee of a positive outcome without the lifelong scars of those who survived smallpox. Institutions such as city governments and armed forces could create facilities for mass inoculations. All these changes were evident in medical practice in Philadelphia from the 1760s onward. Mortality rates dropped in the city, and inoculation is credited with playing a role in that drop.¹⁷ Doctors could rely on inoculation to provide 10 per cent to 20 per cent of their fees in any given year, and in the spring months, March, April, May, when inoculation was recommended, it could supply 50 per cent of their fees and income. Benjamin Rush in the 1790s also experimented with contracts for inoculation. Many physicians offered group rates for the inoculations of several members of a household.¹⁸ The widespread availability of inoculation also created choice. Parents could choose a physician in advance and were not limited to seeking the nearest practitioner in the dead of night.

It is perhaps in the area of choice that Drinker's diary is such a unique source for Philadelphia medical practice. Before her marriage, Elizabeth Sandwith singled out Dr. John Redman whom she observed inoculating the children of friends. Both Sandwith's parents and the relatives and business partners of her future husband, Henry Drinker, had been cared for by the Bonds who were the leading physicians of mid eighteenth-century. Once Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker was a mother, however, she sought out John Redman to treat her children and inoculate them. Redman was considered Philadelphia's most ardent defender of inoculation. John Redman was a frequent visitor to the household, as noted by Drinker's comment, "Dr. Redman called as usual" in April 1799. Often just called "Doctor" as Drinker noted, "Doctor, likewise call'd to see us," Redman made regular social calls long after his retirement from active practice. In 1806, Drinker wrote "Doctr. Redman was here yesterday morning. I am always pleas'd to see him, he appears to be full of love and good will to all." Redman and Elizabeth Drinker remained friends

17. Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), appendix A; Klepp, "Demography in Early Philadelphia, 1690-1860," 96-99; Susan E. Klepp, "Fragmented Knowledge: Questions in Regional Demographic History," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 no. 2 (1989), 230.

18. Rush, Journal 7, pp. 54, 61, 62, PPL.

throughout their long lives. Sharing birthdays, they exchanged annual greetings into their seventies and eighties. Redman exemplified the courtly model of the physician. He was an example of decorum to his female patients, with whom he was quite popular, but Redman also had a strong religious streak and urged his students to value their patients' religious beliefs and to lead moral lives.¹⁹

Henry Drinker did not always agree with his wife on the choice of a physician, for he and his children turn up in Bond records, but the Bonds do not appear in a medical capacity in the diary. The mentions of the Bonds are limited to Thomas Bond's death and Phineas Bond's activities during the Revolutionary War.²⁰ Henry Drinker's physician of choice, who began practice about a decade after the start of the diary, was Benjamin Rush. Rush and Elizabeth Drinker seemed to have had a rather testy relationship but Rush and Henry Drinker got along famously. In 1799, in treating Henry Drinker for what Rush termed the "dumb gout" Elizabeth Drinker questioned some of Rush's recommended treatments. She wrote on April 25th "my husbands leg worse to day than it has been at any time, the pain not removed, the blister very sore, it does not discharge, 'tho I have, again, to day, renew'd the fly plaster, I am rather uneasy about it, 'tho the Doctor does not appear so in any wise, he has not been hear to day." Henry Drinker apparently did not object to Rush's remedies. He engaged him to inoculate his ward Thomas Potts and two African-American servants in the 1790s. Henry Drinker formed a deep friendship with Rush, who had been a student of John Redman's in the 1760s, and may have been recom-

19. "John Redman (1722-1808)—Champion of Inoculation," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 192 (June 14, 1965), 153-54. The inoculations of the Drinker children carried out by Dr. John Redman are mentioned in *Drinker Diary* 1:107, 125, 147, 188, 345-46, (Feb 4, 1763 but recorded later, Dec. 16, 1765, Mar. 29, 1769, Feb. 28, 1773, May 9, 1779). Dr. Redman's visits are in *Drinker Diary* 1: 237, 2: 1153 and 3: 1926 (Sept. 30, 1777, April 8, 1799, May 6, 1806). The birthday greetings are in *Drinker Diary* 3: 1810 (Feb. 26-27, 1805); Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. "John Redman, Medical Preceptor 1722-1808" in Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. *The Colonial Physician & Other Essays* (New York: Science History Publications, 1975), 22.

20. On the Bonds' attendance to the Sandwiths see Bond, Ledger 2, p. 55 CPP; to members of the Drinker family, see Bond, Ledger 2, p. 121, CPP. On [Thomas] Bond's visit to the children of Henry and Elizabeth Drinker see entries in Ledger 6 for Dec. 7, 1763, Aug. 16, 19, 23, Oct. 8, 16, Dec. 6, 1765; Jan. 31, Nov. 25, 27, Dec. 2, 3, 1766; Feb. 1, 6, 10, March 17, 19, May 26, 28, June 20, 23, July 16, 1767, CPP. Two of the visits in February, 1767 were for Elizabeth and the last visit in July 1767 was for Henry and Elizabeth. Phineas Bond was a loyalist who was arrested the same day as Henry Drinker. For Phineas Bond's appearance in the diary see *Drinker Diary* 1: 227, 237 (Sept. 2, 29, 1777). Thomas Bond's death is noted in *Drinker Diary* 1: 420 (March 26, 1784).

mended to the Drinkers by Redman when he was retiring from active practice in the 1780s. Following Henry Drinker's death in 1809, Rush wrote: "This evening died in the 76th year of his age my excellent friend and *patient*, Henry Drinker. He was a man of uncommon understanding and great suavity and correctness of manners. He was an Elder in the Society of Friends, by whom he was universally esteemed and beloved. His life was peaceable and his death equally so. Dear friend Adieu."²¹

There are many secondary and several primary sources that disclose information about inoculation in Philadelphia. But it is only through sources like the Drinker diary, that we can understand the significance of its adoption for family life and medical practice. Through Drinker's eyes we gain an understanding of the procedure that was becoming commonplace among her contemporaries. With her we see its novelty and how its acceptance spread among networks of friends, particularly parents of young children. Once Drinker understood its effectiveness, we see her as a young mother preparing her children for inoculation, and choosing a physician. We understand the economic efficiency of engaging physicians to inoculate not only children, but servants, boarders, or visiting relatives all at once. So thoroughly did Drinker both support the adoption of inoculation and understand its benefits, that when vaccination became available she did not hesitate to urge her son-in-law to vaccinate her grandchildren, rather than inoculate them. She wrote to her daughter Molly "endeavouring to preswade them [Molly and Samuel Rhoads, her daughter and son-in-law] to have their children Vaccinated instead of inoculated for smallpox." Her attempt at persuasion was unsuccessful as Samuel Rhoads preferred inoculation, despite Drinker's correct understanding from the newspaper accounts she read that vaccination was safer and more effective.²² This journey from spectator to participant, becoming a consumer making conscious choices, and then advancing to advocate also characterized her approach to the other great change in medical practice in eighteenth-century Philadel-

21. Elizabeth Drinker's relationship with Benjamin Rush can be gleaned from *Drinker Diary* 2: 1159-1161 (April 22-26, 1799) and *Drinker Diary* 3: 1692 (Oct. 4, 1803). The inoculation of Thomas Potts, Henry Drinker's ward, is in Rush, *Journal* 6, p. 345 (May 14, 1794) PPL and the inoculation of the two African-American boys is in Rush, *Journal* 7, p. 39 (April 29, 1795), PPL. For Rush's relationship with Henry Drinker see Rush, *Autobiography*, p. 316.

22. Her attempt to persuade the Rhoads to vaccinate their child is in *Drinker Diary* 3: 1819, (Mar. 23, 1805). Drinker followed the newspaper accounts of vaccination. See *Drinker Diary* 2: 1232 and 3:1644 (Oct. 3, 1799, April 20, 1803).

phia, that of the rise of the male midwife, or accoucheur, or as we would call it today, the obstetrician.

Elizabeth Drinker was characteristically reticent about her own pregnancies and deliveries. The period of young motherhood is the sparsest in the diary. Two miscarriages, nine births, six children who survived past their first year, and five who achieved adulthood, took their toll on her physically and on her time for reflection and writing. We do not know who her birth attendants were, male or female, midwife, physician, or gossip. Only during one of her daughter's deliveries did she comment on her own, indicating that she had experienced difficulty during childbirth. In 1801 when William Shippen, Jr. was attending her daughter Mary Rhoads during the birth of her son Samuel, Drinker noted "the matter was brought about, as it always has been with me and mine: 'the Child was ready for the birth, but there was not strength to bring fourth,' The doctor supply'd the place of Nature."²³ The wording of Drinker's comment is sufficiently opaque as to leave one guessing as to whether the doctor's intervention was manual, a form of version, of turning a baby facing the wrong way, or instrumental, using forceps to deliver a live baby. Fortunately, for Molly as Mary Rhoads was known, Shippen was skilled at both.

Elizabeth Sandwith married Henry Drinker on January 16, 1761. Ten months later, on October 23, 1761, her first child, Sarah or Sally was born. Her last child, Charles, was born on August 16, 1781, with a seven-year interval between Mary's birth in 1774 and Charles's. When Drinker began her childbearing years most Philadelphia women were not attended by male physicians for routine childbirths. Caspar Wistar, a student of William Shippen, Jr., wrote that in this period there were few occasions where medical men were employed in the "first instance" for childbirth. In the approximately twenty year span of the records of Phineas and Thomas Bond, from 1752-1772, there are fifteen instances of them attending childbirths, only one of which seems to have been a routine presentation, with their attendance pre-arranged. We have some patient accounts of William Shippen, Sr., for the late 1760s and early 1770s, in which he attended one childbirth. Benjamin Rush who left the most complete records, had no regular patients call him to deliver infants either before or after the Revolutionary War, although his day

23. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1452 (Oct. 7, 1801).

books reveal that he was summoned in emergency situations. John Redman, Drinker's chosen physician, was esteemed by his contemporaries as a gifted accoucheur, but he gave up the practice. There are also no surviving patient accounts for Redman and no literary or diary evidence that has surfaced indicating whom he attended as an accoucheur and whether it was pre-arranged, routine, or an emergency call.²⁴

As Elizabeth Drinker was entering her childbearing years, William Shippen, Jr. was beginning his medical practice in Philadelphia. Shippen, Jr. had specialized in his studies in England in anatomy and obstetrics, studying with the two leading accoucheurs of the period, Colin McKenzie, a student of William Smellie's who had popularized and refined forceps, and with William Hunter, a less enthusiastic advocate of forceps, but the first London physician to build a lucrative and successful obstetrical practice based on pre-arranged or "booked" calls for routine childbirths.²⁵ Hunter was also a renown anatomist. When Shippen returned to Philadelphia, he bought several pairs of forceps, including one "Smellie" set.²⁶ In 1765 he advertised a course in obstetrics open to both male medical students and female midwives. His stated goal was to have better trained midwives, so that physicians would not be called too late to save the mother or baby. This was a desired if not yet standard London practice. Physicians, at least initially, sought to ally themselves with midwives, not to supplant them. There is also some fragmentary demographic evidence that better obstetrical training for both doctors and midwives was successful in bringing down infant and maternal mortality rates in London. Shippen also sought to open a lying-in hospital for poor women where they could be attended by midwives and physicians. Unfortunately, other than the newspaper advertisements, we have no evidence Shippen accomplished this objective.²⁷

24. Caspar Wistar, *Eulogium on Doctor William Shippen Delivered before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, March, 1809* (Philadelphia: 1818), 30. William Shippen (Sr.) Day Book, Shippen Family Papers, DLC, entry for Bryan Wilkinson, June 2, 1773; Bond Ledgers, CPP, vol. 1, pp. 197, 212, 335, 501; vol. 2, pp. 113, 247, 292, 294; vol. 3, pp. 32, 66, 97, 396; vol. 5, pp. 285, 299; vol. 6, entry for Charles Jenkins, June 19, 1766; Bell, "Redman, Medical Preceptor," p. 30.

25. Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 164, 175.

26. On Smellie's forceps, see Wilson, *Man-Midwifery*, 125-130. Shippen's purchase of a pair of Smellie's forceps is recorded William Shippen Day Book, DLC.

27. On Shippen's career see Elan Daniel Louis, "William Shippen's Unsuccessful Attempt to Establish the First 'School for Physick' in the American Colonies in 1762," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 44 (1989), 218-39; Corner, *William Shippen Jr. and Dine*, "The Patient Ledgers of William Shippen Jr." On events in London see, Wilson, *Man-Midwifery*, 123-82; Dobson, *Contours of Death*, 529; John Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1670-1830* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 140.

Caspar Wistar, who was a student of Shippen's and his eulogist, remarked that within the first decade of Shippen's return from England, he had erased the prejudice against males attending childbirth in the "first instance" and was busily employed in that capacity.²⁸

For many years historians of medicine, childbirth, and women have utilized the Drinker diary to depict Shippen's practice, with the understanding that he left no records. Two record books of William Shippen's have recently been uncovered, however: a ledger and a day-book.²⁹ The ledger starts in 1775, and ends in 1792 (approximately), and must have been his third one, since it is labeled "C". The few records from 1775-76, before Shippen's wartime-service, suggest that he may have been more involved than other physicians in delivering babies, but not to a degree of specialization that is apparent in the late 1780s and 90s. Shippen did not have a regular medical practice in Philadelphia again until the end of 1781. If he did attend Drinker during her travails, we have no record. The day book, an appointment book, runs from 1789-1791.

Shippen's fame and most active years as an accoucheur coincided with the period in which Drinker became a grandmother. Between 1789 and 1804, Shippen was sought for the births of ten of Drinker's grandchildren and was present for seven. All seven were born alive and survived their infancies. Drinker's first grandchild was born in 1788 and died shortly after birth. The diary is missing for 1788, and the parents, Jacob Downing and Sarah Drinker Downing are not in Shippen's ledger. They do appear in his day book in 1789 for the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth. Shippen delivered Elizabeth Downing and all her four siblings between 1789 and 1799. Hannah Smith Drinker, daughter-in-law of the diarist, hoped to have Shippen attend the birth of her first child, but it seems that neither she nor her husband, Henry Sandwith Drinker, had a pre-arranged understanding with Shippen and he was unavailable. Hannah may have been following her mother-in-law's advice, her sister-in-law's example, or her own mother's experience, since her mother had been attended by Shippen for the births of her ninth and tenth chil-

28. Wistar, *Eulogium*, 30-31.

29. William Shippen, Document Book, DLC; William Shippen Recipe Book, PPAmP (American Philosophical Society).

dren.³⁰ Thereafter Hannah Smith Drinker, a fertile and prolific woman, who seemingly had uneventful labors, always attempted to have a male physician present, even when she resided on farms outside of Philadelphia. The youngest Drinker daughter, Mary, had physicians present for all her pregnancies in the diary. Nicholas Way, a student of Shippen's and presumably less skilled and experienced, attended Molly in 1797 for her first pregnancy. Way was unable to deliver a live child with a footling presentation (a breech). Shippen was attending Sally Downing at the time. Shippen attended Mary for her next two births with successful outcomes.³¹

Drinker actively sought out William Shippen to attend her daughters. When Rhoads became pregnant again in 1798, after the stillborn incident of the previous year, Elizabeth Drinker went to confer with Shippen three months before the birth of Mary's daughter.³² In 1799 and 1801 when Shippen was attending Sarah Downing and Mary Rhoads respectively, the Drinkers worried about Shippen's timely appearance in the countryside while yellow fever was raging in Philadelphia. Shippen's preference may have been to stay in Germantown, approximately 30 miles from the Downings' country home near Downingtown, but a nervous family made arrangements with Shippen for him to take up residence with them. In discussing Sally's last confinement in 1799, Drinker wrote, "Dr. Shippen has agreed to come here [Downingtown] if she stays—but as it is near 30 miles to Germantown, it will take several days to get him here. We will hope for the best." For this delivery in 1799 he stayed with Sally for two days and nights during a difficult childbirth and in 1801 only two hours of sleep separated the delivery of Shippen's niece in Germantown and his attendance at Molly's confinement in Philadelphia. The scenes in the diary of Drinker family members riding back and forth with Shippen between

30. William Shippen Recipe Book, October 11, 1789; Shippen Document Book, Accounts Reckoning, October, 1789, p. 167, Midwifery Engagements, Dec. 1791, p. 168; *Drinker Diary* 1:666; 2: 931, 1228 (April 6, 1795, June 17, 1797, Oct. 24, 1799) for the Downing records. For Hannah Smith Drinker, see *Drinker Diary* 1: 741-42, (Oct. 24, 1795) and the entries for James Smith, 2nd Street in Shippen, Document Book, Midwifery Engagements, p. 168, and entries in Shippen Recipe Book for Aug. 25, 1790. Hannah Smith was her mother's first child, born in 1774. See John W. Jordan, *Colonial Families of Philadelphia* 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1911), 1: 38.

31. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1096, 1103, 1452 (Oct. 10, 28, 1798, Oct. 7, 1801).

32. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1051 (July 7, 1798).

Germantown and Chester County are a reminder of the ways in which the doctor/patient relationship has changed over time.³³

Together, the Drinker diary and William Shippen's ledger reveal the growing popularity of contracting or booking a physician in advance of a pregnancy, a trend that started in the mid-eighteenth century in London. Women had previously arranged for midwives and nurses in advance of a childbirth; now they transferred this practice to physicians. Starting in 1789, in the back of his ledger Shippen started a list called "Midwifery Engagements." These are double-columned entries, presumably for when he was first engaged and when the child was delivered. Combining these entries with either entries from his day book with actual delivery dates or church records indicates that Shippen was usually formally booked about six weeks in advance of the actual birth. Between 1788 and 1792, Shippen's advice or presence for childbirth was requested 105 times. All told, the ledger book, day book, and literary evidence from such published sources as *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* and *The Letters of Charles Willson Peale and Family*, denote Shippen's presence or requested presence by 120 clients for 179 pregnancies between 1775 and 1804. Although the ledger and day book evidence ends in 1792, it is certain that he continued to have a flourishing specialty in obstetrics through the 1790s. As more sources like Drinker's diary appear, they will amplify our knowledge of Shippen's career and the careers of others. They will also help reveal the political, cultural and societal shifts in women's literacy and leisure, women's views about their bodies, their interests in science and medicine, which combined with changes in medical technology, training and understanding of anatomy allowed obstetrics to become one of the first professional (male) medical specialties.³⁴

Drinker's diary is a very valuable source in this regard because it confirms the practice of booking and perhaps is the first evidence of this practice in colonial and post-Revolutionary America. It also quite graphically depicts a very skillful Shippen successfully delivering large and malpresented babies. Shippen was skilled with forceps but used them sparingly, much to Drinker's relief. She had been present in 1794, when the wife of their gardener, John Courtney, had to be delivered by

33. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1213, 1221, 1226-1229, 1452 (Sept. 21, Oct. 9, 23-25, 1799, Oct. 7, 1801).

34. Dine, "Patient Ledgers of William Shippen;" Wilson, *Man-Midwifery*, 185-192; Klepp, "Revolutionary Bodies."

forceps dismembering a dead fetus. Drinker, writing in her schoolgirl French, said "the mid-wife informed me that le enfant est fort grand, et la mere bien pitit, it was her oppinion que l'enfant [sont] mort, that she wish'd I would send for a Doctor." The midwife informed Drinker that the baby was very large, the mother very small and in her opinion the baby was dead. Drinker returned an hour later with Dr. Bensal of Germantown who confirmed the midwife's diagnosis and who had great difficulty delivering a dead infant using instruments "et avec ses instruments et beacoup deficility, ill la delivera d'enfant mort". Her account of that incident makes her relief all the more palpable that Shippen, who rattled his forceps in his pocket, did not use them in 1799 on Sally.³⁵

Only one of Drinker's daughters did not use a physician for childbirth. Her daughter, Ann, known as Nancy, was the mother of three daughters. The evidence from the diary indicates that she was attended by nurses and/or midwives, much to the consternation of her mother, who wrote in 1801 when a nurse gave her laudanum during her labor, that "I should prefer the advice of Dr. Kuhn, rather than take a portian (sic) from a Nurse and not know what I take—this is one of the disadvantages of townswomen lying in in the Country."³⁶ Her granddaughter Mary Skyrin, who was born in 1801, was observed to be "cross" and to lean her head towards her right shoulder, an injury that may have been caused in childbirth.³⁷ The Skyrin marriage was an unhappy one, and Drinker often recorded her opinions on the conduct of the household for posterity in the diary, but seems to have been less vocal in her opinions face-to-face with her daughter and son-in-law, than she was with Molly and Sammy Rhoads. She was unhappy with Nancy lying-in in the countryside, a situation caused, perhaps, by the financial difficulties her husband was experiencing. Drinker was dissatisfied with the nurses and very relieved that her granddaughters were born alive.

Shippen's popularity within the extended Drinker, Downing, Smith and Rhoads families was replicated in other family groups. In his patient roster we see other extended families, be they Quaker, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian clans using his services.³⁸ Women who attended a birth spread word of his skill and deportment within their family and

35. *Drinker Diary* 1: 594-95, 2: 1228 (Sept. 17, 1794, Oct. 24, 1799).

36. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1437 (Aug. 21, 1801).

37. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1451, 1469 (Oct. 4, 1801, Dec. 6, 1801).

38. Dine, "Patient Ledgers of William Shippen."

social circles.³⁹ The practice of having a male physician attend routine childbirths grew rapidly in Philadelphia and even its surrounding suburbs. By 1830 it was reported “no woman of any social position in Philadelphia considered herself safe if she could not have [William Potts] Dewees (Philadelphia’s leading obstetrical practitioner) in her confinement.”⁴⁰

The Drinkers also solicited professional advice from a specialist and sought the most advanced medical treatment in 1806 when dealing with another blight, cancer.⁴¹ The family cared for Susannah Swett, who in 1806 was the elderly widow of Henry Drinker’s first father-in-law. Drinker had been briefly married to Ann Swett before he married Elizabeth Sandwith. Swett died within a year of the marriage. Her father, Benjamin, had remained friendly with Drinker, and the Drinkers eventually became responsible for his second wife’s care.

Swett had a malignancy on her face. The Drinkers engaged Philip Syng Physick, known as “the father of American surgery” and his cousin John Syng Dorsey to remove the tumor. Drinker recorded on July 24, 1806 that Swett bore the operation “with great fortitude” as Dr. Physick and Dr. Dorsey removed the cancer, which Drinker described as the size of a “very large garden bean” from her face. While Swett survived the surgery, it did not provide a cure. After the operation, Swett pursued a number of other alternative remedies. In December 1806, Swett and the Drinkers sought out Samuel Wilson, an African-American noted for his cancer cures, and shortly before Swett’s death, Drinker reported that “a Methodist Doctor is sent for, as it is best, I think, to continue doing something for her, tho’ I think twill be of no effect.”⁴² Drinker’s analysis was correct. All the remedies proved futile and Swett died in March 1807. A similar pattern played out later that year when Drinker’s

39. Ann Warder, a British-born Quaker and diarist, commented on Shippen’s deportment at the birth of Sarah Fisher’s child in December, 1788 and a year later had Shippen attend the birth of her first child in Philadelphia. See diary of Ann Warder, vol. 14, entry for December 14, 1788, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, (hereafter Phi); Shippen, Document Book, DLC, pp. 153, 168, 169, and Shippen Recipe Book, PPAmP.

40. Paul Berman, “The Practice of Obstetrics in Rural America, 1810-1860,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 50 (1995), 178. Amalie M. Kass, “Called to Her at Three O’Clock AM,” *Obstetrical Practice in Physician Case Notes*, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 50 (1995), 194-229, and Stefan C. Schatzke, “Dr. Dewees,” *American Journal of Roentgenology* 159 (1992), 932.

41. *Drinker Diary* 3: 1951 (July 24, 1806).

42. *Drinker Diary* 3: 1993, 2009, 2013 (Dec. 31, 1806, Feb. 12, 1807, Mar. 1, 1807).

daughter, Sally, lay dying from what was probably lymphatic cancer. Sally traveled to Trenton to seek treatment with hemlock poultices from a Dr. Bellville. She also was treated by many of the physicians used by the Drinkers: Adam Kuhn, Benjamin Rush, and Philip Syng Physick. They also tried hemlock in pill form and recommended a variety of blisters, including one made of oak galls. Drinker noted on September 24, a day before her daughter's death, "how many blisters, cupings, and leaching she has had, a patient sufferer." All the treatments employed by the Drinker and Downing families proved to no avail and Sally predeceased her mother on September 25, 1807. A grief-stricken mother wrote a few days later in her diary, "Oh! What a loss! to a mother near 72 years of age, My first born darling,—My first, my 3d. my 5th, 7th and 9th are in their graves." The next day she wrote, "Oh my dear Sally! I trust and believe thou art accepted: May it be my case when it pleases the Lord to call me hence."⁴³ Two months later the Lord called her to join Sally. Elizabeth Drinker died on November 24, 1807, age 72.

Although this essay has focused on the individual choices that produced major changes in doctor-patient relationships, there are other areas where the diary is a very rich source for viewing Philadelphia's medical landscape. When Elizabeth Sandwith was born there were no formal medical institutions in Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania Hospital opened its doors in 1752 before she began keeping a journal. The second half of the eighteenth century, however, saw the rise of several medical institutions. Pennsylvania Hospital is mentioned only sparingly in the diary, but it became the first psychiatric facility in the United States. The medical institution that the Drinkers actively supported was the Dispensary, a pharmacy clinic that filled prescriptions for the "worthy" poor who obtained recommendations from its subscribers. At least one of the Drinkers' former servants took advantage of this institution. Polly Noble, who had served four years in the Drinker household, requested a recommendation to draw on the Dispensary for her mother. Drinker was favorably disposed since Nugent looked well and had married an "industrious" husband.⁴⁴ The Dispensary was the forerunner of modern-day clinics. Other medical institutions that paralleled the life of the

43. *Drinker Diary* 3: 2059, 2079-2080, 2081 (July 27, Sept. 24, 28, 29, 1807).

44. *Drinker Diary* 1: 655, 2: 898n. (Mar. 4, 1795, Mar. 14, 1797).

diary were the College of Physicians, the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, and a variety of special hospitals established during epidemics, such as smallpox in 1774, and yellow fever in the 1790s. Philadelphians who served in the Revolutionary War would have also experienced the mass inoculation camps set up by the army.⁴⁵ While contemporary historians view the period between 1775 and 1820 as an "embryonic" one in the rise of the "culture of medicine" or the "discovery of the asylum" it is worth noting how even the fleeting experiences with medical institutions in this era, or mass inoculations and quarantines played a role in the rise of communal institutions.⁴⁶

The best known medical event of the diary, was the first great yellow fever epidemic of 1793. Drinker, at a safe distance from the city along with hundreds if not thousands of other elite Philadelphians, read the newspapers voraciously and recorded the debates and mortality figures included in the newspapers, once again demonstrating her "numeracy." Drinker's diary also shows the class divisions in Philadelphia and how they resulted in different treatments and outcomes. Her daughter Nancy may have had yellow fever in 1795, but was treated outside of the city by Adam Kuhn, who opposed the more heroic (and probably more fatal) treatment advocated by Benjamin Rush. Sally Dawson, on the other hand, a well-liked servant in the Drinker household, was stricken with yellow fever when they were leaving the city in 1803, and died at the hospital.⁴⁷

Yellow fever in 1793 was the first great national American epidemic. It dwarfed previous outbreaks of the disease and its precursor, smallpox. The national government and city services all ground to a halt. Different opinions about its origins and treatment mirrored and exacerbated political party differences. It shattered whatever professional congeniality existed among Philadelphia's leading physicians. Rush resigned from the College of Physicians. Philadelphians who relied on both Adam Kuhn (as Elizabeth Drinker did after Redman retired) and Benjamin Rush had to tread carefully between them as did their students who were also forced to make unpalatable choices between the two doctors. The

45. Blanco, *Jonathan Potts*, 133-35.

46. Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America's Hospital System* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 3-22; David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1971).

47. *Drinker Diary* 1:608, 658; 3: 1687-1691 (Oct. 22, 1794, Mar. 15, 1795, Sept. 28-Oct. 3, 1803).

epidemic served as a backdrop for one of the earliest American novels by Charles Brockden Brown, *Arthur Mervyn, or, Memoirs of the Year 1793*, which Drinker read.⁴⁸ It continues to do so today in the works of John Wildman and even in children's historical fiction by writers like Paul Fleischman (*Path of the Pale Horse*). Drinker's diary conveys the frenzy of the period, in its increasingly anxious but methodical reporting of death in the city.⁴⁹

During Drinker's childhood, there were generally about five physicians working in Philadelphia. The index of her diary contains over 110 physicians, and lists twenty-two nurses. There are also numerous "bleeders," and at least one practicing dentist, Dr. Gardette. Some of the nurses' and birth attendants' names can be found in other published sources such as Benjamin Rush's letters and autobiography, and *The Letters of Charles Willson Peale and Family*. For researchers with access to vital records and the family letters and diaries of Philadelphia residents, there are fruitful opportunities to learn more about the lives of these practitioners, as Whitfield Bell did for Martha Brand, a Quaker woman, listed in city directories as a "doctress". Brand appears to have experimented with cancer treatments. Indeed, someone may uncover information about the career of Samuel Wilson, the African-American cancer doctor.⁵⁰ For researchers interested in information about pharmacology and therapeutics the Drinker diary illustrates the prevalence of "poly-pharmacy," drug preparations of many ingredients, characteristic of the pre-modern era. Interestingly, Drinker's journal does not show the use of magical or astrological potions common in Philadelphia a generation earlier.⁵¹ Drinker mixed many of the compounds mentioned in the diary. She would prepare her own oil of St. John's wort once the plant reached maturity in the summer. The leaves, flowers, and seeds of the hypericum plant were crushed, strained, and mixed into

48. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1256 (May 21, 1799).

49. For the difficulties in dealing with Kuhn and Rush together see the letter of Lambert Cadwallader to Margaret Cadwallader Meredith, March 9, 1798 in the manuscript collection of the Cadwallader Papers, PPAmp. More generally on yellow fever, see Powell, "Bring Out Your Dead." See also Mark A. Smith, "Andrew Brown's 'Earnest Endeavor': The Federal Gazette's Role in Philadelphia's Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 120 (1996), 321-43; Martin Pernick, "Epidemic Yellow Fever in Philadelphia and the Rise of the First Party System," *William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 29 (1972), 559-86.

50. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "Martha Brand (1755?-1814): An Early American Physician," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 33 (1978), 218-19. See also Lisa Rosner, "Thistle on the Delaware: Edinburgh Medical Education and Philadelphia Practice, 1800-1825," *Social History of Medicine* 5 (1992), 19-42.

51. Ellen G. Gartrell, "Women Healers and Domestic Remedies in 18th Century America: The Recipe Book of Elizabeth Coates Paschall," *New York State Journal of Medicine* 87 (1987), 23-29.

olive oil. The remedy was used for bruises.⁵² But within the diary's pages there is also a hint of the movement towards professionally written and prepared prescriptions, as evidenced by Drinker's search for a prescription by Abraham Chovet at a local pharmacy. This was an advance that was strongly if unsuccessfully advocated by John Morgan, a contemporary of Shippen and Rush. It became standard practice only in the next century. In the nineteenth century the apothecary and physician also became professionally distinct, and large wholesale and retail pharmacies were established.⁵³

When Elizabeth Sandwith was born, Philadelphia was small city, numbering fewer than ten thousand people. During the 1730s through the 1750s generally five "professional" physicians served the populace along with an unknown number of bleeders, teeth pullers, nurses, midwives, and quacks. Philadelphia's rapid population growth, starting with the Seven Years War, transformed the city into a metropolis. Philadelphia became America's largest city during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the center for arts and sciences. When Drinker died in 1807, approximately eighty physicians practiced their trade along with twenty three midwives, approximately forty nurses, and an untold number of others in associated medical pursuits.⁵⁴ Advances in technology, medical education, and literacy encouraged the spread of inoculation, vaccination, and obstetrics. There were many choices available to Philadelphia residents of means. People could contract with physicians for a number of services, for inoculation, for childbirth, and even for annual care for a family, similar in rudimentary form to HMOs of today. When Drinker was a child, smallpox was a dreaded visitor, physicians present at childbirth were an omen of death, and the choice of physicians was limited. Throughout Drinker's lifetime and into the nineteenth century consumers purchased varieties of medical expertise, along with quackery, homeopathy, and any number of questionable cures and treatments. Moreover, some of the innovations adopted by Drinker were not unequivocally accepted. While male physicians attending childbirth

52. *Drinker Diary* 1:490, 490n, 516 (July 22, Oct. 11, 1793).

53. *Drinker Diary* 2: 1513, 1513n, (May 1, 1802). Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., *John Morgan Continental Doctor* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 151-54. See also Toby Gelfand, "The Origins of a Modern Concept of Medical Specialization: John Morgan's *Discourse* of 1765," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 50 (1976), 511-535.

54. James G. Robinson, *The Philadelphia City Directory*, 1805, 1808 (Philadelphia: 1805, 1808). See also Rosner, "Thistle on the Delaware."

became fairly standard in urban areas, vaccination waxed and waned, because the science behind it was not yet fully understood. Surgery had limited success and utility until the discovery of ether and the germ theory. Yet the late eighteenth century offered Drinker choices. She sought out the best practitioners as they began to specialize, and the best procedures to protect her family. Her choices benefited her children and grandchildren. Her ability to choose and the choices she made continue to shape our national debate on health care today