

deeply religious believer in “the active God of the Israelites, the prophets, and the apostles.” His laborious fashioning of an ideology and network for virtue had no conflict at all with contemporary religious structures, and “Franklin’s life was a monument to virtue tempered by pragmatism and ambition tempered by prudence.” Those who are looking to see Franklin’s career as a “call to serve God and humanity” may enjoy this denouement. Others will see it unworthy of Franklin’s winning skepticism, self-mockery, and sense of irony.

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Dr. Franklin’s Medicine. By STANLEY FINGER. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. xiii, 379 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

Kudos to Stanley Finger and to the University of Pennsylvania Press—they have produced an attractive, readable, and well-researched account of Benjamin Franklin and medicine. The text is comprehensive, the endnotes are clear, the index is usable, and the illustrations are generous in number. Because Franklin is of tremendous interest to general readers, this volume would be a clever way to introduce eighteenth-century medicine to people who will follow the Franklin name into subjects they might not otherwise read about. For that reason, as well, the book would be a welcome addition to undergraduate courses on the history of medicine.

The book surveys, in roughly chronological order, the major topics in medicine that interested Franklin. These included inoculation against smallpox, the value of hospitals, medical uses for electricity, lead poisoning, medical self-help guides, gout, medical quackery (featuring Mesmerism), bifocals, and the education of doctors. Franklin’s range of interests was astonishing and Finger seems to have identified nearly all of them.

Scholars would have appreciated more analysis of Franklin’s contributions to medical thinking. Finger occasionally suggests that Franklin was ahead of his time, as with his writings that hint at a germ theory of disease long before Louis Pasteur formulated that theory. But it is impossible to tell what Franklin would really have thought about Pasteur. Nor is it clear what he thought about his contemporaries’ theories. Since his young adulthood, Franklin was determined to avoid argument and controversy, even over his own concepts of electricity. Bland to a fault, he can be assimilated to many points of view. That meant that most of his ideas about health did not propose or solve any medical debate at the time—they were almost designed not to do so. The exceptions would be inoculation and demography, though Finger gives those topics no more attention than he does any of the others.

Finger admits that his is a descriptive study, but points out the value of focusing on “a side of Franklin that has not been examined sufficiently” (p. xi). It is true that there has not been a recent study. The most recent were William Pepper,

The Medical Side of Benjamin Franklin (1911) and Theodore Diller, *Franklin's Contribution to Medicine* (1912). Ninety-four years is a long gap—may Finger's study inspire further work on Franklin and medicine, rather than another near-century of inattention.

Any future work should investigate whether there was any pattern among Franklin's medical interests. True, he commented on a great many medical topics—but he commented on a range of topics anyway. That he was prolific in his interests is no measure of his special devotion to medicine. Did he choose topics of a certain nature? Or was he merely led to them by related interests, as was the case with medical applications of electricity? Or did his many friends and colleagues solicit his attention, leading him to topics he might not otherwise have addressed? To address any of these questions, a scholar would be well-advised to start with Finger's book.

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The Pennsylvania German Broadside: A History and Guide. By DON YODER. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, copublished with the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania German Society, 2005. xvii, 366 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$49.95.)

The Pennsylvania German Broadside: A History and Guide is, as its title describes, both a history of a broad spectrum of ephemeral materials, as well as a guide to understanding their significance within Pennsylvania German or Pennsylvania Dutch (a term Don Yoder prefers, p. xiv) culture. Importantly, it is also a guide for studying American folklife, especially ephemeral material culture, by unlocking the everyday lives of individuals of every conceivable social standing, creedal perspective, and economic condition. This volume, while addressing such topics as the history of printing in Pennsylvania and the bibliographic lineage of such study, is centered on how these printed objects invite collectors, scholars, or indeed any interested person, to consider the multitude of ways printing technology allowed Pennsylvania's German immigrants to express themselves and develop a unique culture of their own. The book itself emerges from the donation to the Library Company of Philadelphia of an enormous collection of choice Pennsylvania broadsides in the form of both prints and printed texts that Don Yoder, emeritus professor of folklore and folklife and religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania, had collected for over fifty years. To Yoder, these pieces of paper, printed on one side and sold or distributed to interested individuals, are not simply static museum or archival pieces, but rather the material evidence of the worldviews of both the church and sectarian communities among the Pennsylvania Germans. Such paper ephemera contain invaluable expressions of Pennsylvania Dutch ideas and practices relating to spiritual beliefs, aesthetics,