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## **Years of Change and Suffering: Modern Perspectives on Civil War Medicine**

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James M. Schmidt and Guy R. Hasegawa, eds. *Years of Change and Suffering: Modern Perspectives on Civil War Medicine*. Roseville, Minn.: Edinborough Press, 2009. x + 182 pp. Ill. \$29.95 (978-1-8890-2035-8).

Taking their title from Emily Brontë's poem "Remembrance," James Schmidt and Guy Hasegawa have collected eight essays that indeed recall the horrors and the triumphs that characterized medicine in the American Civil War. Jodi Koste leads off, with a useful and informative paper on Richmond's Medical College of Virginia (MCV) and its extraordinary growth during the war. With all other southern medical schools either closed or in cities under Union control, MCV remained the only school producing the physicians so urgently needed by the Confederate army. Only in Richmond did the Confederacy achieve the sort of medical system more common in northern cities, wherein professors offered sage advice on the wards and medical students acquired firsthand experience of disease and surgical experience.

James Schmidt's essay offers something completely different, a look at Yankee ingenuity as reflected in the pages of *Scientific American* during the war. He finds all sorts of implements fashioned to maim the enemy and in turn to respond to war injuries, including prosthetic limbs. Most memorable was a device for the filtration of drinking water, so the thirsty soldier would not gulp tadpoles along with his stream water.

Jay Bollet takes up the subject of Civil War amputations and refutes the charge that surgeons were too quick to amputate. He makes the cogent point that while successful amputees were visible everywhere in postbellum society, those men who had died because their fractured limbs were not severed became invisible. Most surgeries were done under anesthesia, and teams of experienced surgeons oversaw the decisions about when it was proper to amputate.

Terry Hambrecht explicates two newly discovered letter books written by major Confederate surgeon J. J. Chisolm. In addition to providing much detail regarding Confederate medical practice, these letters reveal that Chisolm acquired much of his knowledge from observation of European military surgeons in the decade leading up to the Civil War. Harry Herr describes the horrors of urological injuries that resulted from minié balls tearing through the perineum and damaging the urethra, genitals, and rectum. While admitting that surgeons at the time had little to offer such men, he does find that twice as many men recovered from gunshot wounds to the pelvis in the last two years of the war as in the first two and attributes this to surgeons learning the proper use of catheters in such cases.

Guy Hasegawa explores the southern fascination with indigenous remedies, a research plan promoted strongly by Surgeon General S. P. Moore. Hasegawa points out the tension in promoting such botanic drugs at a time when regular medicine was waging sectarian fights against botanic practitioners but recognizes that Moore's campaign grew out of desperation in facing a shortage of drugs, especially quinine. Hasegawa concludes that in spite of Moore's effort and extensive testing, no new, effective medications emerged from the wartime research.

D. J. Canale reviews the story of neurology and the war, one specialty that clearly benefited from a specialized hospital and an unfortunately large number of cases with every imaginable nerve injury available for study. He notes that concepts such as phantom limb pain originated from the war and that one of the chief difficulties for physicians treating neurological conditions was to distinguish the truly injured from those who were faking it. The last essay, by Judith Andersen, adds to the growing literature on the emotional toll the war took on some men. Dubbed posttraumatic stress disorder most recently, this syndrome reflects the psychological trauma that years of exposure to death and disease could have on men who otherwise emerged from the war with bodies intact.

A useful bibliography ends the text, revealing how rich the body of literature about the war and medicine has become.

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John Harley Warner and James M. Edmonson. *Dissection: Photographs of a Rite of Passage in American Medicine: 1880–1930*. New York: Blast Books, 2009. 208 pp. Ill. \$50.00 (978-0-9222-3334-2).

At first glance, this handsome volume may seem destined only for the shelves of libraries and the private collections of students and practitioners of history, medicine, and sociology. Presented in coffee-table-like size and style, however, and in light of contemporary society's fascination with anatomy and the human body, I suspect it will find a much wider readership. After all, the *Body Worlds* exhibits of Gunther von Hagens have been seen by millions of people worldwide and have spawned at least eight copycat traveling shows. My focus here, though, is not on the public but on what *Dissection* has to offer folks involved with the study and practice of medicine.

Anchored by nearly seventy photographs from the Dittrick Medical History Center at Case Western Reserve University and almost twenty from the private collection of John Harley Warner, this remarkable book presents images relevant to the dissection experience at medical (and a few other) schools throughout the United States from 1872 to 1950 with a focus on the period 1880–1930. The carefully posed photographs are of predominantly male students in small groups around one or more cadavers—"table mates," if you will. Occasional images reveal a student individually at work or the dissection scene as an entire class portrait. In one, more than one hundred dissectors sit for the camera with their cadavers, books, and instruments. Many photographs are the amateur efforts of the students themselves, while others were taken by noted photographers of the day, skillfully posed and lighted. Since identifying information is often evident, these images