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Review of *The Notorious Dr. Flippin: Abortion and Consequence in the Early Twentieth Century* by Jamie Q. Tallman

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The Notorious Dr. Flippin: Abortion and Consequence in the Early Twentieth Century. By Jamie Q. Tallman. Foreword by Harriet A. Washington. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011. xx + 195 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.

Born into slavery, the child of Hugh Flippin and one of his slaves, Vera Denipplf, the teenage Charles Flippin joined the 14th United States Colored Troops Company A in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1864. While enlisted, he learned to read. Following the war, he married, had two children, and, following his wife's death, moved to Kansas to start a farm. In the 1880s, Flippin apprenticed with an eclectic physician in Kansas and traveled to the Bennett College of Medicine in Chicago for further study. The local newspaper announced his return as "the only colored medical graduate in the state of Kansas."

While researching Dr. Flippin's son George, the first African American to play football for the University of Nebraska, Jamie Tallman came across newspaper articles about his father. But while newspapers often heralded the physician, they were not always supportive. Dr. Flippin, who practiced in largely rural and largely white Kansas and Nebraska from the 1880s through the 1920s, specialized in gynecology and obstetrics, and, as such, performed abortions, then illegal. Tallman does a solid job of weaving throughout his narrative the politics of medical practice (eclectic versus regular practitioners) and the politics of abortion, mindful throughout of the added complexity and centrality of race and economics. Dr. Flippin's lucrative practice enabled him to have a higher income than many whites, and he was not averse to showcasing his wealth, nor was he above treating patients unable to pay. Dr. Flippin actively cultivated his image and status within the several communities where he lived, both by his personal relationships and through writing letters to the editor explaining his position when an issue around his practice came to the fore. From 1910 until 1926, when

Dr. Flippin was forced to give up his medical license and practice, he fended off, sometimes successfully, ultimately not, the charge that he was performing abortions on young white women.

Though Tallman's writing is sometimes awkward, with odd transitions and occasionally confusing paragraphs, and he sometimes reads too much into a document, Dr. Flippin's story does, as Tallman rightly asserts, provide unique information about the practice not only of an African American physician in two overwhelmingly white and rural states during this time, but also one who performed abortions. As such, the story of Dr. Flippin is a valuable addition to the history of race, reproduction, and medicine in the Great Plains.

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