

The Tradition of Excellence: Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania, 1870-1985. By Herman Beerman, A.B., M.D., ScD.(Med), F.A.C.P, and Gerald Sylvan Lazarus, B.S., M.D., M.A.(Hon), F.A.C.P. Beerman and Lazarus, Inc., Philadelphia, 1986 (280 pp, \$49.00)

In February of 1988, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of The Society for Investigative Dermatology, Inc., and of The Journal of Investigative Dermatology. On the threshold of our 50th anniversary celebration, we are truly fortunate in the publication of a book that documents the development of American dermatology through the history and example of the department(s) of dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania. *The Tradition of Excellence* by Beerman and Lazarus provides an entertaining and informative perspective on the growth of American dermatology from the descriptive, unorganized and confused practice of the mid-nineteenth century to the science-based specialty practice of the late twentieth century, as seen through the microcosm of dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania.

This book is divided into chapters on the history of dermatology in America, on the major figures in the department of dermatology in the school of medicine and in the graduate school at Penn, on research and teaching at Penn, on the societies founded or influenced by Penn, and on the physical plant. There is a chapter on the Duhring associates that provides anecdotal information on the department, especially during the past fifty years.

The University of Pennsylvania occupies a unique position in American medicine and dermatology. Penn can be cited as the "grand old father of medical institutions" in the United States. Into that dynamic environment in the last quarter of the nineteenth century came Louis A. Duhring to establish the first great American department of dermatology, based on the lessons that he had learned while studying in Europe. Duhring's influence was so great that most historians simply divide the time line of dermatology at Penn into before, during, and after Duhring!

But this is more than a story of one man and his influence. A great strength of *The Tradition of Excellence* is that it provides a balanced perspective of the entire history of dermatology in Philadelphia and at Penn. Herman Beerman is able to blend history with anecdote and personality, providing a truly interesting story of the men who built dermatology at Penn. We follow the growth of dermatology from a disorganized "non-specialty," through the development of prescientific dermatology, to a sophisticated specialty based on scientific background.

The history of conflict, change, and discovery that occurred over this 115-year period will fascinate those interested in the institutional growth of American medicine and dermatology. This book is also compelling as a personal story of great chairmen and the men and women that they trained. We meet Louis A. Duhring, who disposed of a considerable personal fortune in establishing his department, and others of "The Big Six" of Philadelphia dermatology of the era. Duhring's successor, Milton B. Hartzell, founded the laboratories of dermatologic research at

Penn, applying Duhring's philosophy of research and original thought mixed with clinical dermatology. We observe the interesting "stand off" between John Hinchman Stokes as chairman and professor of dermatologic research and head of the dermatology laboratories, which, in a sense created two departments at Penn. The emergence of Donald Pillsbury as the major figure in American dermatology after World War II, and its effect on the influence of the department of Penn are also presented.

The fluctuation of fortunes and conflicts in this major academic department are truly educational. John Stokes' influence was undetermined when his academic interest—traditional syphilology—was eradicated by penicillin. The conflict between the traditional "prescientific" dermatology of Stokes and the new research-based approach of Weidman was not to be resolved until Pillsbury emerged to fill the laboratories at Penn with young, inquisitive minds and inaugurate a "golden era" of dermatology at Penn. The tradition of clinical dermatology mixed with research was continued by Beerman in the Graduate School and by the irreplaceable Albert Kligman and Walter Shelley in the Duhring Laboratories. The interviews of the Duhring associates presented in this book do much to develop the character of the postwar years at Penn.

Dr. Kligman's description of his experiences at Holmesburg Prison are typical of the anecdotes in this book and exemplify this period:

"I began to go to the prison regularly, although I had no authorization. It was years before the authorities knew that I was conducting various studies on prison volunteers. Things were simpler then. Informed consent was unheard of. No one asked me what I was doing. It was a wonderful time."

The final chapters and appendices of *The Tradition of Excellence* cite the improvements in physical plant and clinical, laboratory, and teaching facilities that have recently occurred at Penn under the leadership of Gerald S. Lazarus, and the outline of the training programs at Penn.

The Society for Investigative Dermatology was founded in John Stokes' office in Philadelphia, and this book provides a unique and fortuitous documentation of the environment in which the SID and The Journal of Investigative Dermatology were conceived fifty years ago. This book will be of interest, not just to the trainees of the University of Pennsylvania, but to many readers interested in the development of medical institutions and to the development of American dermatology.

Funds from the sale of *The Tradition of Excellence* will be placed in the Beerman Scholar Fund to support research in dermatopathology.

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