

Books about Disease in History

***618.909 / FAR**

Invisible Enemies: Stories of Infectious Disease by Jeanette Farrell. 1998. 246 p.

From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up-Seven infectious diseases (smallpox, leprosy, plague, tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, and AIDS) are covered in this excellent book. For each one, the author highlights the causes of the affliction, the history of its treatment or lack thereof, popular notions and fears that have often led to additional suffering beyond the trauma caused by the illness, and the story of how breakthroughs came about (or what still needs to be done).

***614.49 / GIB**

When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Smallpox, AIDS by James Cross Giblin. 1995. 212 p.

From Publishers Weekly

Grade 6 and Up - The devastating spread of three epidemic diseases, and the many responses they have evoked, are ably and insightfully covered in this illuminating book. Discussing the bubonic plague that killed about half the population of 14th-century Europe and smallpox epidemics that ravaged, among other sites, ancient China and the Americas during the Age of Exploration, Giblin (Chimney Sweeps) sets the stage for the final section, devoted to AIDS.

J614.4 / ALT

Plague and Pestilence: A History of Infectious Disease by Linda Jacobs Altman. 1998. 127 p.

614.4 / HOF

Mapping Epidemics: A Historical Atlas of Disease by Brent Hoff and Carter Smith. 2002. 122 p.

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up-More than 30 potentially deadly human illnesses are profiled in this volume. Ancient scourges such as leprosy, smallpox, and cholera are joined by more contemporary infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS and dengue hemorrhagic fever.... The clear role that specific epidemics have played in changing the course of history is particularly intriguing... Anyone studying the history of human civilization or epidemiology will find this information-rich compilation fascinating and useful for reports. (Includes a fascinating international chronology of infectious disease)

614.5732 / BLA

The Black Death (Great Disasters series) edited by Jordan McMullin. 2003. 111 p.

J616.912 / PET

***Smallpox in the New World by Stephanie True Peters. 2005. 70 p.** (from the series *Epidemic!*)

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9 - Offering riveting information on frightening epidemics, these attractive volumes are exemplary information sources. Each one begins with a discussion of the cause of the disease and the infection process. Subsequent chapters then treat its history and search for a cure, the course it took during a particular time and in a

particular place (1492-1800 in the New World in Smallpox)... Peters makes superb and frequent use of primary sources. The selection of period reproductions and photographs is also outstanding, and the illustrations extend the texts perfectly. Each book also includes an annotated list for further reading and a detailed, accurate index. The author's prose is exceptionally lucid, interesting, and graceful.

J614.521 / BIO / Jenner

***Dr. Jenner and the Speckled Monster: The Search for the Smallpox Vaccine. 2002. 120 p.**

From Booklist

Gr. 4-8. Marrin's latest offering is a fascinating, eminently readable social history of smallpox, with an emphasis on Dr. Edward Jenner's contributions to eradicate the disease. Beginning with a description of the role smallpox played in the decimation of the Aztec empire, Marrin makes clear that infectious disease began to take hold and spread once people started living in settled groups and that smallpox probably crossed over to humans from a farm animal host. He explains how the virus works within the body, describes several well-known outbreaks, and recounts how Jenner, an English country surgeon, using a combination of observation and experimentation, developed what we now call the smallpox vaccine. Marrin's writing is direct and succinct, and his scientific explanations are lucid and well detailed. Numerous black-and-white period illustrations (some appropriately gruesome) appear in most chapters, adding interest to the text. A final chapter on smallpox as a weapon of mass destruction makes this title particularly current. Appended with bibliographies of books and Internet sites, the book is a great choice for both science and history classes as well as a solid read for science buffs.

303.4 / DIA

***Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies by Jared Diamond. 1997. 480 p.**

Includes an exceptional chapter on the role of small pox in the conquest of the Americas (pp. 67-81).

J614.541 / MUR

An American Plague: The True Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 by Jim Murphy. 2003. 165 p.

From Booklist

Gr. 6-12. History, science, politics, and public health come together in this dramatic account of the disastrous yellow fever epidemic that hit the nation's capital more than 200 years ago. Drawing on firsthand accounts, medical and non-medical, Murphy re-creates the fear and panic in the infected city, the social conditions that caused the disease to spread, and the arguments about causes and cures.

***Y / Anderson, Laurie Halse**

Fever, 1793. 2000. 251 p.

Grade 6-10 In 1793 Philadelphia, sixteen-year-old Matilda Cook, separated from her sick mother, learns about perseverance and self-reliance when she is forced to cope with the horrors of a yellow fever epidemic.

***J / Fleischman, Paul**

Path of the Pale Horse. 1983. 147 p.

Grade 3-5 Lep, an apprentice to a doctor, helps his master take care of yellow fever victims in Philadelphia during the epidemic of 1793.

***J614.518 / PET**

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic by Stephanie True Peters. 2005. 70 p. (from the series *Epidemic!*)

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9 - Offering riveting information on frightening epidemics, these attractive volumes are exemplary information sources. Each one begins with a discussion of the cause of the disease and the infection process. Subsequent chapters then treat its history and search for a cure, the course it took during a particular time and in a particular place (worldwide in 1918-1919 in Influenza)... Peters makes superb and frequent use of primary sources. The selection of period reproductions and photographs is also outstanding, and the illustrations extend the texts perfectly. Each book also includes an annotated list for further reading and a detailed, accurate index. The author's prose is exceptionally lucid, interesting, and graceful.

***VCV / 614.518 / INF**

Influenza 1918. A Robert Kenner Films production for the American Experience. 1998. 60 minutes.

A PBS American Experience documentary which tells the story of America's worst health crisis using archival photographs, film footage, and interviews with survivors and medical historians.

E / Reynolds, Marilyn

The Name of the Child. 2002.

Grade 1-4 Lloyd is afraid of dogs, lightning, and the dark, but after his parents send him to live in the Canadian countryside to escape the 1918 influenza epidemic, he must confront his fears to rescue his newborn cousin from illness and starvation.

***J614.549 / PET**

The Battle Against Polio by Stephanie True Peters. 2005. 70 p. (from the series *Epidemic!*)

From Booklist

Gr. 6-10. Peters makes both the science and the social history compelling in this title in the new five-book Epidemic! set, which will be welcomed by teachers across the curriculum. In her wide-ranging presentation, the author discusses everything from polio's early history and the demographics of the illness to research, the vaccines developed by Salk and Sabin, and the facts about the disease as it exists today. Franklin Roosevelt is part of the story, as is Olympic runner Wilma Rudolph. The book design is appealing, with wide margins and well-placed, mostly two-tone, photos. The exemplary back matter, as spaciouly laid out as the text, includes an annotated bibliography, Web sites, and full notes for quotes.

***J796.42 / BIO / Rudolph**

Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman by Kathleen Krull. 1996.

Grade 2-6 A biography of the African-American woman who overcame crippling polio as a child to become the first woman to win three gold medals in track in a single Olympics.

J362.1968 / BIO / Kehret

Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio by Peg Kehret.

From Booklist

Gr. 3-5. This heartfelt memoir takes readers back to 1949 when the author, at age

12, contracted polio. Using fictionalized dialogue, she describes her seven-month ordeal--her diagnosis and quarantine, her terrifying paralysis, her slow and difficult recuperation--and the people she encountered along the way.

J / Giff, Patricia Reilly

All the Way Home. 2001. 169 p.

Ages 8-12 In 1941, circumstances bring together Brick, a boy from New York's apple country, and Mariel, a young girl made shy by her bout with polio, and the two make a journey from Brooklyn back to help Brick's elderly neighbors save their apple crop and to help Mariel learn about her past.

J614.549 / SHE

Polio Epidemic: Crippling Virus Outbreak by Victoria Sherrow. 2001. 48 p.

***B / White, Ryan**

Ryan White: My Own Story. 1991. 271 p.

Grade 8 and up Ryan White describes how he got AIDS, engaged in a legal battle to return to school, and became a celebrity and spokesman for issues concerning the deadly disease.

History of Medical Treatments, Technologies, and Invention

***Q610.9 / GIL**

Medicine by Daniel Gilpin. 2004. 96 p.

Reviews the development of medicine and medical technology from the dawn of civilization to the present, including instruments, diagnostic tools, medicines, and alternative care.

***VCV / 617.89 / SOU**

Sound and Fury directed by Josh Aronson. 2000. 80 minutes.

If you could make your deaf child hear, would you? Sound and fury is the intimate, heart-rending tale of the Artinians, an extended family with deaf and hearing members across three generations. Together they confront a technological device that can help the deaf to hear but may also threaten deaf culture, and their bonds with each other.

***J610.28 / BIO / MUL**

Medical Technology: Inventing the Instruments by Robert Mulcahy. 1997. 144 p.

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8. This collection of short biographies focuses on seven scientists who were responsible for inventions such as the stethoscope, thermometer, and electrocardiograph. The well-written text is filled with details that will appeal to young readers, such as the accidental discovery of X rays and how false teeth were made in the early days of dentistry.

J610.28 / NIC

Medical Marvels: A Chapter Book by Catherine Nichols. 2004. 48 p.

From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 2-4. True Tales--Science chapter books use the experiences of real people and events to introduce subjects within the realms of sports, biology, and history. Here, in separate chapters, are five inspiring accounts--including the stories of Christopher Reeve and Phineas Gage, who survived having an iron spike in his brain. Nichols

includes brief background on each individual as well as interesting, age-appropriate explanations of how their conditions led to advancements in modern medical practice.

***610.28 / WIN**

Superhuman: The Awesome Power Within by Robert Winston and Lori Oliwenstein. 2000. 256 p.

*Grade 7 -12 Based on the BBC production of the same name, the book explores with considerable depth and clarity the response of the human body to various ills, and the science behind medical efforts to intervene when our bodies go wrong. Like the series, the book deals with six major themes: trauma, transplantation, regeneration, cancer, infection, and fertility. Includes fascinating historical context to medical technology and treatments. See also the companion video, **Superhuman Body**.*

***617.481 / FLE**

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story of Brain Science by John Fleischman. 2002. 86 p.

From Publishers Weekly

Science writer John Fleischman uses a clipped, engaging expository style to tell the incredible story of the railroad worker who, in 1848, survived the piercing blast of a 13-pound iron rod as it entered below his cheekbone and exited the front of his skull... Photographs, glossary, a resource listing and index lend this textbook case the same sense of immediacy as do the words.

*(For first hand accounts about medical care during war see the powerful volume produced by the *Library of Congress Veterans History Project: **Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and the Front Lines** edited by Tom Wiener in 2004.* Call number: 355.0092/VOI)

*(For compelling accounts of medical treatment given to presidents who were the victims of assassination or assassination attempts, see **In the Line of Fire: President's Lives at Stake** by Judith St George, 1999. Call number: 364.1524/ST)

***616.89 / KEN**

Snakepits, Talking Cures and Magic Bullets: A History of Mental Illness by Deborah Kent. 2003. 160 p.

From Booklist

Gr. 6-12. In a thoroughly researched, well-paced history, Kent focuses on the major advances and bizarre setbacks in the diagnosis and treatment of the mentally ill... There are descriptions of barbaric treatments in the past as well as compelling positive discussions of current drug treatments and debates about psychoanalysis and other psychotherapy... Includes chapter notes, a bibliography (fiction, nonfiction, and online sources), and a chronology.

(For more information on a distressing chapter in the history of the treatment of mental illness, see **The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness** by Jack El-Hai. 2005. This recently released book offers a complex view of the man who championed the lobotomy to relieve psychiatric symptoms, a practice now viewed as a barbaric. Call number: 617.48/EL)

***393.1 / COL**

Corpses, Coffins, and Crypts: A History of Burial by Penny Colman. 1997. 212 p.

From School Library Journal

*Grade 6 Up. Death, the last stage of the human condition, has been underreported and mostly avoided in writing for young people. Colman takes on the task with just the right mix of unblinking realism and sensitivity to varieties of beliefs and practices. The eight chapters explain decomposition, cremation, and burials; describe rituals and ceremonies from many times and places; and show the impact of death and loss on those still living. See also Colman's unusual book, **Toilets, Bathtubs, Sinks, and Sewers: A History of the Bathroom, 70 p.**)*

J / Hathaway, Barbara

Missy Violet and Me. 2004. 100 p.

From Publishers Weekly

Grade 3-6 Hathaway's debut book takes its inspiration from the experiences of the author's grandmother, who worked as a midwife in the rural south during the 1930s. Written in the ingenuous voice of an 11-year-old African-American girl, the novel chronicles her summer apprenticeship to Missy Violet, a charismatic midwife who was born into slavery.

Significant Figures in Medical History

***J610 / BIO / STI**

Extraordinary Women of Medicine by Darlene R. Stille. 1997. 288 p.

Grade 7 and up Presents biographical sketches highlighting the contributions of women, mostly American, to the field of medicine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

***J610.73 / BIO / Barton**

The Story of Clara Barton by Zachary Kent. 1987. 30 p.

*Grade 4 and up A surprisingly good biography (in spite of appearing a bit dated) of the phenomenal woman who is remembered for establishing the Red Cross in the US. Thrilling stories of Barton's bravery during the Civil War, and a true sense of her importance in establishing a medical system to serve the public during war in times of natural disasters. Unfortunately there are no source notes or photos. **Clara Barton: A Photo-Illustrated Biography by Kathleen W. Deady, 2003** is a basic reader with lovely archival photos, a glossary and timeline. The best-reviewed adult biography is **Woman of Valor: Clara Barton and the Civil War by Stephen B. Oates, 1995.***

J610 / BIO / Blackwell

Elizabeth Blackwell: First Woman Doctor by Carol Greene. 1991. 47 p.

Elizabeth Blackwell: The Story of the First Woman Doctor by Shari Steelsmith. 1987. 24 p.

J610 / BIO / Picotte

Native American Doctor: The Story of Susan LaFlesche Picotte. 1991. 88 p.

*(See also **16 Extraordinary Americans by Nancy Lobb, 2000**, an Adult Education reader which includes vocabulary lists and comprehension questions.)*

J610.73 / BIO / Nightingale

Heart and Soul: The Story of Florence Nightingale by Gena K. Gorrell. 2000. 146 p.

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9-This highly readable and well-researched biography does an excellent job of integrating the social and medical conditions of Nightingale's time.... Gorrell succeeds in separating myth from reality, smoothly crafting a picture of a gifted individual who was also wholly human.

J610 / BIO / Salk

Jonas Salk: Conquering Polio by Stephanie Sammartino McPherson. 2002. 128 p.

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Featuring a foreword by one of Salk's sons, this book balances personal biography and scientific achievement... The bibliography is extensive and includes works by Salk and other authors, periodical articles, interviews, and videos and exhibits. The list of Web sites has major polio links, and an afterword provides more detailed information about a disease unfamiliar to most young readers. ...the writing is a cut above the norm for biographies for this age group. There are numerous black-and-white photos. McPherson's view of Salk is not sugarcoated; she does not shy away from some of the controversy that surrounded this gifted researcher and describes clearly the dispute with Albert Sabin and the deaths of some of the early vaccination recipients.

J610 / BIO / Mayo

The Mayo Brothers: Doctors to the World by Lucile Davis. 1998. 48 p.

J610 / BIO / Chinn

May Chinn: The Best Medicine by Ellen R. Butts and Joyce R. Schwartz. 1995. 48 p.

Biography of May Chinn, an African American and Native American woman who graduated from medical school in 1926.

General Interest

Q610 / SMO

The Power to Heal: Ancient Arts and Modern Medicine by Rick Smolan, Phillip Moffitt, and Matthew Naythons. 1990. 224 p.

The Power to Heal is an extraordinary look at the emotions, the mystery, the faces, and the remarkable diversity of health, healing and medicine around the world. Breathtaking original photographs, detailed captions, and illuminating essays combine to present a unique and hopeful portrait of humanity's age-old fascination with the body and how to keep it healthy.

610.9 /CAM

Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine edted by Roy Porter. 1996. 400 p.

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