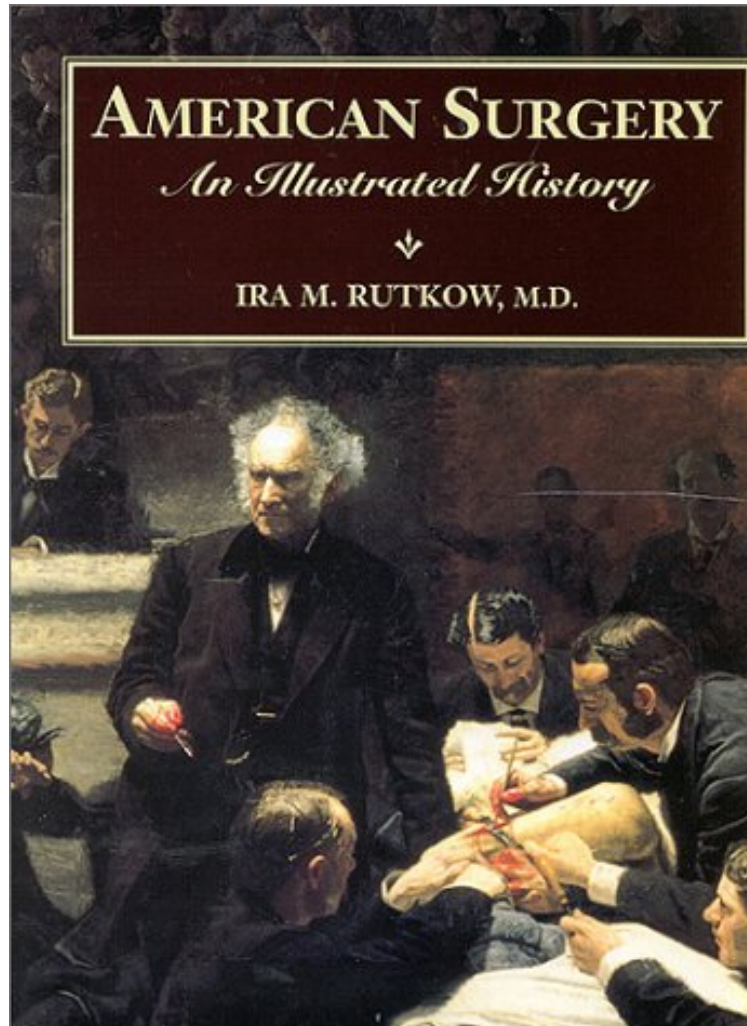


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American Surgery: An Illustrated History (Books)

Ira M. Rutkow MD MPH DrPH

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Ira M. Rutkow MD MPH DrPH : American Surgery: An Illustrated History (Books) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Surgery: An Illustrated History (Books):

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Written by a world-renowned historian of surgery, this volume is a masterful textual and pictorial history of the

evolution of American surgery. Dr. Rutkow draws on his experience as a surgeon and a historian to provide an enlightening account of the development of surgery in the context of American social, economic, and political history. Interspersed with the narrative is an extraordinary collection of archival photographs and drawings, many of which have never before been published. The first section chronicles the history of American surgery from Native American practices and colonial times to the present. Particular attention is given to the professionalization and specialization of surgery, as well as to the influence of wars, technological advances, and other pivotal events on the profession. The second section details the history of specific surgical specialties. More than 1,000 biographical accounts of famous surgeons are deftly woven into the narrative.

From Library Journal The world's leading expert on the history of American surgery, Rutkow (surgery, Univ. of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey) is noted for his two-volume *History of Surgery in the United States, 1775-1900* (Norman Pub., 1988-92) and *Surgery: An Illustrated History* (Mosby Year-Book, 1993). His current work builds on his last, updating the history into the 1990s and focusing on the dramatic leaps forward in surgical technology in the United States. Rutkow has included time lines, linking historic events to developments in surgery, and an excellent bibliography to make this work a useful reference source. The images and the compelling stories he chooses to tell will make the book appeal to everyone from teenagers to adults. Highly recommended for all libraries. —Eric D. Albright, Duke Univ. Medical Ctr. Lib., Durham, N.C. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From The New England Journal of Medicine At the end of the 12th century, King Richard the Lion-Hearted (ruled 1189 to 1199) lay on his deathbed, attended by both physicians and surgeons. This is the first European reference we have to a division between the fields of medical and surgical practice. In subsequent centuries, physicians and surgeons vied with one another for position in the medical marketplace. Eventually, unification, by way of medical education, took place in the modern system. Nevertheless, the difference in the origins and history of these fields is a source of continuing insight into the overall role of medicine in our societies. The surgical story has been well chronicled in histories of European medicine, but not American medicine. Rutkow, a surgeon and prolific historian of surgery, has undertaken the herculean task of assembling a complete history of surgery in the United States. But he does not stop with this labor. Rather, he endeavors to blend the richness of biography with a historically nuanced interpretation of the development of surgery as a profession in the context of social and cultural changes. Rutkow is no novice, nor does he shrink from the huge undertaking. He is aware of a great part of the historian's technical literature and tries to incorporate it in a generally accessible form. He is also aware that the history of surgery has been driven largely by biography. That is what especially interests many surgeons -- the tales of their forebears. To achieve these ends, Rutkow uses four devices to convey the immense amount of material he has assembled. First, he weaves a thoughtful description of the rise of American surgery to international respect and prominence. His presentation is at once chronologic and social in its historiography. Second, he presents abbreviated histories of the individual surgical subspecialties. Wisely, he has found it too difficult to try to interweave these separate tales into his larger narrative. In this section of the book he includes a large portion of the more than 1000 collected biographies of surgeons. Third, he presents, with the able assistance of Dr. Stanley Burns, an extraordinary range of photographic depictions of surgical themes, some never before published. This visual background adds immeasurably to the value of the book. Finally, Rutkow includes historical time lines at the beginning of each of his chronologic chapters, to help the reader place changes in surgery against the framework of contemporary political, social, and cultural events. The numerous strengths of this book stem from Rutkow's experience in clinical surgery, public health, and medical history. Thus, technique, policy, and history are all addressed. Moreover, he is sensitive to other segments of history, including the Native American approach to surgery in the time of the Pilgrims. However, he does not discuss separately the history of women in surgery or that of Canadian or Mexican surgery, to jibe more fully with the book's title. Other notable omissions are a history of pediatric surgery (except in the form of a biography of Robert E. Gross) and comparisons with other surgical cultures around the world, to add further context. Nevertheless, Rutkow has performed a great service for both the surgical and medical historical communities in synthesizing so much material in so palatable a form. This book will be required reading for many a trainee and senior surgeon alike. It reminds us how far we in the New World have come from King Richard's doctors, and yet how similar we still are. ed by Walton O. Schalick, III, M.D., Ph.D. Copyright 1998 Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved. The New England Journal of Medicine is a registered trademark of the MMS. This splendid work marks the completion of Dr. Rutkow's Herculean task, which, since 1988, has produced four unique masterworks: *History of Surgery in the United States, 1775-1900, Vol I: Textbooks, Monographs and Treatises...History of Surgery in the United States, 1775-1900, Vol II: The Periodical and Pamphlet Literature...Surgery and Illustrated History...* Rutkow's fourth major work in this progression, *American Surgery: An Illustrated History* contains within its 638 pages an exhaustively researched and most complete history of US surgery. . . This book, the definitive history of US surgery, should appeal to both professional and laypersons. -- Journal of the American Medical Association, May 13, 1998