

THE JOURNAL *of the* AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

The *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA)* is interested in publishing timely book reviews—especially on books whose authors are members of the osteopathic medical profession.

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Osteopathic Tales

by Arnold Melnick, DO.

Bloomington, IN: Author House; 2013.
161 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4817-3224-6.

"Even though I had some inkling that it existed, I was met by a world of hostility and rejection as an osteopathic physician." So writes Arnold Melnick, DO, in the preface of his 11th book, *Osteopathic Tales: Stories Tracing One DO's Travel Along the Path of the Osteopathic Profession From Rejection and Discrimination to Recognition and Acceptance*.

With *Osteopathic Tales*, Dr Melnick traces a series of his personal experiences as a member of the osteopathic medical profession from 1942 to 2013, when this book was published. His stories, or *tales*, as he calls them, allow the reader to experience the evolution of osteopathic medicine over a 70-year period. It is a very quick and fun read, with every tale connected to create an easy-to-understand story of how osteopathic medicine grew and became an accepted, successful, powerful, and complete medical care system in the United States today. I personally found each tale to be enjoyable and enlightening.

It is obvious that Dr Melnick played an important—if not essential—role in this process as an osteopathic pediatrician, educator, and even founding dean of what is now the Nova Southeastern University

College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I particularly enjoyed that much of the book occurs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Dr Melnick received his DO degree and where I currently live and practice medicine.

Dr Melnick has had an illustrious career in osteopathic medicine. He is a distinguished educator and author of numerous books and articles that have great practicality and value. I have been a fan of his writing for many years, and I have read nearly every book with enjoyment. *Osteopathic Tales* is no exception.

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The Abraham Man: Madness, Malingering, and the Development of Medical Testimony

by R. Gregory Lande, DO.

New York, NY: Algora Publishing; 2012.
262 pp. ISBN: 978-0-87586-936-0.

I read *The Abraham Man* slowly. I took my time because each page was carefully constructed and loaded with information. Each of the 9 chapters is long but designed to maintain attention, beautifully

weaving case histories together to move the story forward. It wasn't long before I was hooked.

What is "the Abraham Man"? I had never heard that term before. Well, now I know: During the US Civil War, some men would feign illness or malady to avoid combat, and these men came to be known as the Abraham men. Military surgeons would try their best to distinguish between soldiers with real illnesses and those skilled actors who purported to have such maladies. From this process, the profession of psychiatry—and the development of medical testimony—evolved.

R. Gregory Lande, DO, methodically tells this story using fascinating cases as his narrative tool. I was particularly immersed in the Vanderbilt will case, in which the death of Cornelius Vanderbilt, with an estate worth \$100 million left primarily to a single son, led many of Vanderbilt's kin to contest the will, claiming that the deceased was incompetent from mental illness. The story of the assassination of President James A. Garfield was also fascinating, discussing both lunacy and competency.

Dr Lande has made an important contribution to US literature. Between the history of medicine, the history of legal medicine and litigation, and innumerable stories of supposed and perhaps legitimate mental illness, many of which were accompanied by incredible drama, *The Abraham Man* has it all. I recommend this historically valuable book without hesitation.

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