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BOOKS NOTED

AMERICAN INDIAN MEDICINE. By Virgil J. Vogel. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press (1970). Pp. xx, 583. \$12.50. This text was originally a doctoral dissertation in the Department of History of the University of Chicago, which was amended and expanded in preparation for publication. The author, writing as a historian rather than as a medical expert, argues that the American Indian, including Latin American and North American Indians, made important achievements in the use of medical remedies, therapeutic procedures and hygienic practices.

Writing under this premise, the author presents accounts of Indian medical knowledge drawn from three sources: (1) the experiences of early explorers, traders, missionaries and travelers; (2) the reports of herbalists, botanists, or botanist-physicians; and (3) the later investigators and reporters on Indian ethnobotany and medical practice.

The author writes that the ethnocentric attitudes of the early white settlers and the exploitation of the image of the Indian as a healer by charlatans have served to obscure the valuable medical discoveries made by the Indians. The author notes that American folk medicine, which borrowed much from the New World natives, served as an intermediate step on the road toward official acceptance of many native remedies. As present day testimony of the American Indians' contribution to medicine, over 200 drugs which were used by the Indians have been or are still officially recorded in the *Pharmacopeia of the United States of America* or the *National Formulary*.

The author concludes that a resurrection of the obscured story of the American Indians' contributions to medicine has practical importance, because a better understanding of what some of these native Americans have contributed to Western culture will create a new and healthier attitude toward them. (RGL)