



AAHM

American
Association *for the*
History of
Medicine

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MARY FISSELL



One hundred. It's a big number! Yes, the AAHM turns 100 in 2025. The association's first conference wasn't until 1927, and the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, founded in 1933, became the AAHM journal in 1938 — so buckle up, there are more centennials to come! 1925... bet you didn't know that the US's first two female governors were both inaugurated in January 1925. And it was in 1925 that Balto became a hero dog, leading a team on the rescue mission bringing diphtheria anti-toxin to Nome, Alaska, covering an astonishing 674 miles in just over 5 days. The image shows Balto and the "musher" who led the team on its final leg of the heroic journey.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our annual meeting in Boston in May, where we will be celebrating and looking towards our next century together. Janet Golden, chair of the birthday celebration committee, has been spearheading a project to pull together memories of the Association by having a younger and an older member interview each other. I enjoyed reminiscing with Sarah Handley-Cousins, our Secretary, last May, and then flipped roles and interviewed her. See [here](#) for a list of interviews already done. We need more! I urge everyone to take a look, and if there's someone you'd like to interview, reach out — you don't have to know them, just email. Janet also asks that you bring any old AAHM totes (remember those? check your closets) to Boston so we can have them on display. You can take them home after, or the LAC has generously offered to donate them, for example to a charity for foster children who move all too frequently.

Registration for Boston: We want as many people as possible to be able to celebrate the AAHM's 100th birthday at the meeting in Boston. Towards that end, we have revamped registration fees this year. All students will pay only \$100 each to register. In order to assist postdocs, contingent faculty, etc, we are adding an additional \$10,000 to the Travel Grants Program. Ordinary member registration will be \$295 (that's unchanged from last year). In order to balance the books, we are adding another tier of registration: Supporting Registration at \$395. We urge members who have research or travel funds upon which to draw to opt for this level of registration; that additional \$100 will directly subsidize the reduction in student registration fees. We will continue to work on finding ways to make the meetings more affordable for all of our members.

Deepest gratitude to the Program Committee, headed up by Johanna Schoen and Becky Kluchin, who have put together a vibrant program, and to David Shumway Jones and Emily Gustainis, who head up the Local Arrangements Committee.

And don't forget Virtual AAHM, on Friday March 7, beginning at 8:45 CST/9:45 am EST. It's free, but you need to register [here](#) to get the Zoom code. Thanks to Carrie Meyer and her team at Nebraska for hosting again!

Boston Welcomes AAHM's 100th Anniversary Celebration in 2025

AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION FOR THE
HISTORY OF
MEDICINE



Love them or hate them, Boston and Bostonians are known for many things --

-- their accent, their sports teams (39 championship trophies!), food (from cod and clam chowder to Dunkin Donuts), movies (e.g., “Good Will Hunting,” “The Departed,” “Fever Pitch”), and television (from a recurring role on SNL to the Simpson’s Boston “hate-cation” turned love fest). Boston will soon be known for something else: hosting the 100th anniversary celebration of AAHM.

Boston will be an especially good site for historical festivities in May 2025. The city will be in the midst of the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, with observances of the Battle of Lexington and Concord in April and the Battle of Bunker Hill in June. Cambridge and Boston are famous for their educational institutions, including the first school (Boston Latin School) and college (Harvard College) in what is now the United States. The Boston metropolitan region now hosts 71 of Massachusetts’s 100 colleges, universities, and technical schools. Its many medical schools and medical centers (a total of 106 hospitals and primary care centers) have long been at the forefront of medical education and research.

Boston also has stains on its history: it witnessed some of the first seizures of Indigenous lands by European settlers and some of the earliest instances of enslaving Indigenous Americans and Africans. In part atoning for these sins, the city would later become a hotbed of abolitionist and suffragist activity.

Boston and Cambridge’s list of medical innovations is long, from the first inoculations for smallpox in British America in 1721 to the Moderna Vaccine in 2020. Along the way local physicians provided the first public demonstration of ether anesthesia. They developed crucial innovations for diabetes management, pediatric cardiac surgery, and childhood leukemia. They performed the first successful human organ transplant. Massachusetts also made important contributions to the professionalization of public health. Boston researchers have continued to push the frontier, recently securing approval for new genetically engineered treatments for cystic fibrosis and sickle cell disease. Cambridge is now the epicenter of the densest and largest biotechnology cluster in the world.

Massachusetts has also hosted important campaigns against medicine, from the development of Christian Science to the anti-vaccination campaigns that gave rise to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Jacobson v Massachusetts* (i.e., “there are manifold restraints to which every person is necessarily subject for the common good”). That decision remains the basis of our government’s public health powers in the United States, at least for the time being.

The meeting itself will take place in the Sheraton Boston Hotel, conveniently situated in the city center. Just a short ride on the subway from the airport, the hotel is near parks (e.g., Boston Common, Boston Public Garden, the Fens, the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park), museums (e.g., the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Bad Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art), walking tours (e.g., The Black Heritage Trail, the Freedom Trail, the Innovation Trail), music (e.g., Symphony Hall, MGM Music Hall at Fenway), theaters, science museums (e.g., Museum of Science, the New England Aquarium, MIT Museum), and sports (the Red Sox host the Minnesota Twins on May 2, 3, 4, and the Celtics will likely be marching once again through the playoffs).

Countless other attractions are just a bit further away, from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library to the USS Constitution, the Harvard museums, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, the Arnold Arboretum (lilacs might be in bloom, though the official “Lilac Sunday” is May 11), and whale-watching. We will have a full list of recommendations available ahead of the meeting.

Early May is also one of the best times of year to be in Boston. Bostonians will finally be celebrating the arrival of spring, which doesn’t come convincingly until late April. The city’s trees and gardens will be in full bloom. Sidewalk dining should be in full swing—Boston’s food scene has something for every palate.

We hope that everyone will be able to come early or stay late so that the city’s many attractions don’t distract you (too much) from the wonderful sessions and celebrations being organized by the Program Committee and the Centennial Committee.



David Shumway Jones, PhD MD is the A. Bernard Ackerman Professor of the Culture of Medicine at Harvard Medical School

BOSTON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS CO-CHAIRS

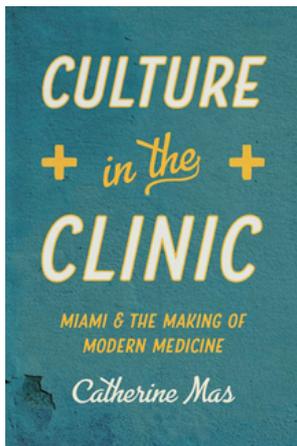
Emily Novak Gustainis, MLS, is the Deputy Director of the Countway Library’s Center for the History of Medicine at Harvard University.



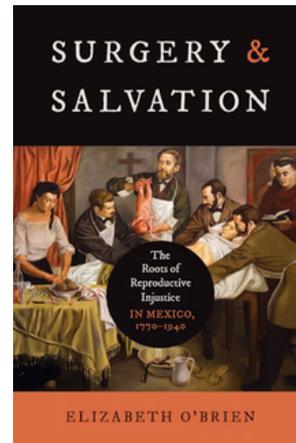


The William H. Welch Medal Shortlist

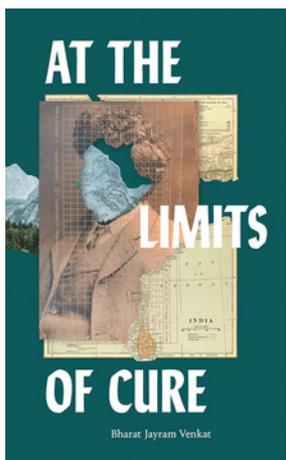
For the first time, the AAHM is celebrating the books shortlisted for the William H. Welch Medal. The winner will be announced at the awards breakfast at the Boston meeting. Thank you to the 2024-2025 Welch Committee!



Catherine Mas, *Culture in the Clinic: Miami & The Making of Modern Medicine*, University of North Carolina Press, 2022



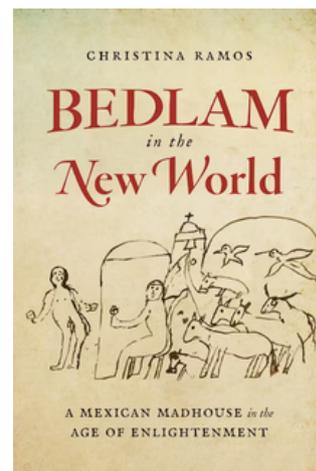
Elizabeth O'Brien, *Surgery & Salvation: The Roots of Reproductive Injustice in Mexico, 1770-1940*, University of North Carolina Press, 2023



Bharat Jayram Venkat, *At the Limits of Cure*, Duke University Press, 2021



Sandra Eder, *How the Clinic Made Gender: The Medical History of a Transformative Idea*, University of Chicago Press, 2022



Christina Ramos, *Bedlam in the New World: A Mexican Madhouse in the Age of the Enlightenment*, University of North Carolina Press, 2021

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Felix E. Rietmann (University of Fribourg/University of Lausanne) has been awarded an SNSF Starting Grant (1.7 Mio) for the research project “Pediatric Dugs since 1945: From Local Practice to Global Politics.” Starting in June 2025, the project will investigate the clinical use, administrative regulation and political economy of pediatric pharmaceuticals in and beyond Switzerland across the second half of the twentieth century.

Margaret DeLacy shares that her open access article on an eighteenth-century British medical researcher: "Dr Richard Davies (1708–1761): Reform, Contagion, Blood and Inflammation" was published in *Notes and Records: the Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*.

Nearly forgotten today, Davies was an innovative medical writer, a controversial educational reformer, and a path-breaking hematologist.

[You can read the article here.](#)

Robert Baker, William D. Williams Professor of Philosophy (Emeritus) at Union College, received the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award. His recent book, *Making Modern Medical Ethics: How African Americans, Anti-Nazis, Feminists, Veterans and Whistleblowing Moralists Created Bioethics*, was singled out for mention during the awards ceremony.



**CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT
THE CENTENNIAL
CAMPAIGN!**



HELP PRESERVE AAHM'S HISTORY!

What was your first annual meeting like? What's your favorite AAHM memory?

Please consider recording an interview with another AAHM member to help us preserve our history as we approach our 100th birthday!

You can record your interview as a Zoom or in a voice memo. When you're done, send an email to Sarah at aahm@histmed.org to get it saved.

We're looking for candid photographs from previous meetings to display at Boston 2025.

Do you have some stashed away? Send them to Jodi Koste at jlkote@vcu.edu.

2025 Officer & Council Nominees

Candidate for Treasurer: Scott Harris Podolsky

Scott Podolsky received his undergraduate and M.D. degrees from Harvard. He has been a primary care physician and internist at Massachusetts General Hospital for over twenty years, and is a Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Since 2006, he has served as the Director of the Center for the History of Medicine at the Countway Medical Library. His research has often focused on the history of therapeutics, and includes such works as *Pneumonia before Antibiotics: Therapeutic Evolution and Evaluation in Twentieth-Century America* (2006) and *The Antibiotic Era: Reform, Resistance, and the Pursuit of a Rational Therapeutics* (2015). He is presently working on a book-length examination of the linked histories of the medical journal and the medical profession in America. He joined the AAHM while a medical student in 1994, has served on council, and has served on numerous AAHM committees, including co-chairing (with Sarah Tracy) the Program Committee for the 2016 annual meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Candidate for Secretary, Sarah Handley-Cousins

Sarah Handley-Cousins is an Associate Teaching Professor of History at the University at Buffalo. She holds a B.A. in American Studies and Creative Writing from Wells College, an M.S.Ed. in Secondary Social Studies Education from Niagara University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University at Buffalo. A scholar of gender, disability, and medicine during the American Civil War era, Handley-Cousins is the author of *Bodies in Blue: Disability in the Civil War North* (UGA, 2019) and co-author of *Spiritualism's Place: A Reflective History of Lily Dale, NY* (Cornell, 2024), among other articles and chapters. She is an editor of two forthcoming volumes: *The Nursing Clio Reader: Histories of Sex, Reproduction and Justice*, from Rutgers University Press, and, with Laurel Daen, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability in America*. She is the executive editor of the digital history publication of *Nursing Clio* and a producer of *Dig: A History Podcast*.

Candidates for Council Member:

Courtney Thompson, PhD is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Mississippi State University. Dr. Thompson's first book, *An Organ of Murder: Crime, Violence, and Phrenology in 19th Century America*, published in 2021, was a finalist for the prestigious Cheiron book prize. She has also published many academic articles in journals including, *Journal of Women's History*, *Medical Humanities*, and the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. Dr. Thompson has been the book review editor for the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* since 2020 and an editor for *Nursing Clio* since 2024. Dr. Thompson has also recently served as the Program Chair for the History of Science Society. In 2023, Dr. Thompson was named a Beverly B. and Gordon W. Gulmon Dean's Eminent Scholar in the Humanities in the College of Arts & Sciences at Mississippi State University. The previous year, she was awarded a Summer Stipend fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

2025 Officer & Council Nominees

Deirdre Cooper Owens, Ph.D. is Associate Professor in the Department of History and the African Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Cooper Owens was previously the Charles and Linda Wilson Professor in the History of Medicine at the University of Nebraska. She has also served as the Director of the Program in African American History at the Library Company of Philadelphia and as an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecturer. Dr. Cooper Owens' first book, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*, was awarded the Darlene Clarke Hine prize by the Organization of American Historians. Her scholarship has been published in numerous popular and academic periodicals, including the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Ms. Magazine*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. Dr. Cooper Owens is a highly regarded public speaker and is actively engaged as a reproductive justice advocate and consultant focused on efforts to dismantle the current Black birthing crisis.

Christoph Gradmann, Ph.D. is Professor in the History of Medicine at the University of Oslo. Dr. Gradmann was previously the Leverhulme Professor in the History of Medicine at the University of Oxford (UK) and Green Templeton College, as well as an invited guest professor at McGill University's Department for Social Studies of Medicine. Since 2016, Dr. Gradmann has been an associate researcher at the Center for Research in Medicine, Science, Health, Mental Health, and Society in Paris (France). He is currently Head of Department at the University of Oslo's Department for Community Medicine and Global Health. Dr. Gradmann is author of multiple academic monographs, including *Laboratory Disease: Robert Koch's Medical Bacteriology*, and most recently *Another Magic Mountain: Kibong-oto Hospital and African Tuberculosis*. His work appears in academic journals such as, *Social Science & Medicine*, *BMJ Global Health*, and *Social History of Medicine*. Dr. Gradmann presently leads a five-country collaborative project on the history of antibiotic drug development funded by the Research Council of Norway.

Raúl Necochea López, Ph.D. is Associate Professor in the School of Social Medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is the author of *A History of Family Planning in Twentieth Century Peru* and co-editor of *Peripheral Nerve: Health and Medicine in Cold War Latin America*. Dr. Necochea López has also published in academic outlets including *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, and the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. His research has been funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health and Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Dr. Necochea López is the current President of the Asociación Peruana de Historia y Estudios Sociales de la Ciencia, Tecnología y Salud and serves as an advisory board member for the Wellcome Collaborative Award, "Connecting Three Worlds: Socialism, Medicine, and Global Health After World War II." He has also served on multiple committees for the American Association for the History of Medicine, including the program committee, Welch Medal, and George Rosen award.

REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE



GOT TOTE BAGS?

Get ready to raid your tote bag stash! We want to celebrate the history of our organization by highlighting one beloved tradition:

*the AAHM
tote bag!*

Bring your old totes with you to Boston to add to our display.



As the United States national delegate, appointed by the AAHM, I am pleased to report that the International Society for the History of Medicine had a successful Congress in Salerno, Italy, from October 8 to 12, 2024. When the ISHM meets in western Europe, we always have a large attendance. There was an election of officers, and Professor Dana Baran of Romania is the new president. I was elected a vice-president. The ISHM journal, delayed because of internal issues, is now available online, with a technologically experienced editor, Dr Francesco M. Galassi. Our next meeting will be held in Madrid, during the week of November 24, 2025. Our meetings are open to all who have an interest in the history of medicine, and we especially welcome new members from the AAHM.

Membership fees are modest and can be paid online.

Please feel free to email (caius@caius.com) or telephone me (650) 697 6975 for more information.

Andrew T. Nadell, M.Sc., M.D.



The Nominating Committee is pleased to provide you with the 2025 slate for Officers and Council, for circulation to the membership through the newsletter in advance of voting at the annual business meeting on May 3, 2025 in Boston, MA.

Officers

Treasurer: Scott Podolsky, 2 year term

Secretary: Sarah Handley-Cousins, 1 year term

Council Members (three year terms beginning after the 2025 annual meeting)

Courtney Thompson

Christoph Gradmann

Raúl Necochea López

Deirdre Cooper-Owens

Respectfully submitted and with our gratitude to all nominees for their willingness to continue to serve AAHM in this way.

Andrew Hogan, chair, Shannon Withycombe, Sharonna Pearl



Registration now open!

Registration is now open for both the in-person and virtual annual meetings!

To register for the meeting in Boston, [please use this link](#) or visit our website.

Don't forget our new registration levels - please consider choosing the sponsorship level to help students attend our meeting.

The Virtual Meeting will be held March 7. To register for this free program, please [visit this link](#) or see our website. Thanks to Carrie Meyer and the McGoogan Library at the University of Nebraska Medical Center!