



Medical Caregiving and Identity in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region, 1880-2000

Karol K. Weaver

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While much has been written about immigrant traditions, music, food culture, folklore, and other aspects of ethnic identity, little attention has been given to the study of medical culture, until now. In *Medical Caregiving and Identity in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region, 1880–2000*, Karol Weaver employs an impressive range of primary sources, including folk songs, patent medicine advertisements, oral history interviews, ghost stories, and jokes, to show how the men and women of the anthracite coal region crafted their gender and ethnic identities via the medical decisions they made. Weaver examines communities' relationships with both biomedically trained physicians and informally trained medical caregivers, and how these relationships reflected a sense of "Americanness." She uses interviews and oral histories to help tell the story of neighborhood healers, midwives, Pennsylvania German powwowers, medical self-help, and the eventual transition to modern-day medicine. Weaver is able to show not only how each of these methods of healing was shaped by its patrons and their backgrounds but also how it helped mold the identities of the new Americans who sought it out.

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