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Peter Renaudet medical apprentice notebook (MSS00143)

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English Library Company of Philadelphia

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Philadelphia, PA 19107

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Summary Information

Repository:	Library Company of Philadelphia
Creator:	Renaudet, Peter
Title:	Peter Renaudet medical apprentice notebook
ID:	MSS00143
ID [aspace_uri]:	/repositories/3/resources/38
Date:	1741
Physical Description:	1.0 volume
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection consists of a medical apprentice notebook containing the observations of a mid-18th century New York apprentice, Peter Renaudet. It is a record of clinical cases, in which Renaudet describes the patient's ailments, treatments prescribed, and the result of those treatments.

Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], Peter Renaudet medical apprentice notebook (MSS00143), 1741, Library Company of Philadelphia.

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Biographical/Historical note

Peter Renaudet was a medical apprentice in New York, in 1741. Although physicians in Great Britain, during the same era, were typically educated in universities and medical programs, very few emigrated to the colonies. Until 1756, there were no medical schools in the colonies. The first, the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) opened in Philadelphia in 1756, and was followed soon after by King's College (now Columbia University) in New York in 1768. Because of the lack of professional physicians, most of the sick were treated in the home by the women of the family, who relied on family and cultural traditions, medicinal herbs and community advice. However, there were physicians who worked outside the family setting as professionals. According to Raffel, "those who aspired to

medical practice apprenticed with established physicians for a number of years, [and] upon completion of the training period, during which time the apprentice would watch and assist his preceptor and read his books, the physician would give the apprentice a signed testimonial that constituted the certificate of proficiency," (Raffel, page 52). Marynita Anderson states that the "medical apprenticeship was an unwieldy, undisciplined, and unregulated institution," in which apprentices were occasionally given the opportunity to see patients, but were more often given tasks such as making pills and mixing powders (Anderson, page 39). The quality of the apprenticeship was reliant upon the physician under whom the apprentice studied.

It appears that Renaudet may have been given opportunities to work with patients. He recorded, in his notebook, patients' illnesses, treatments, and the results of treatment.

Bibliography:

Anderson, Marynita. *Physician Heal Thyself: Medical Practitioners of Eighteenth Century New York*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004.

Raffel, Marshal. W., Norma K. Raffel, and Camille K. Barsukiewicz. *The U.S. Health System: Origins and Functions*. Albany, NY: Delmar/Thomson Learning, 2002.

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Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of a medical apprentice notebook containing the observations of a mid-18th century New York apprentice, Peter Renaudet. It is a record of clinical cases, in which Renaudet describes the patient's ailments, treatments prescribed and the result of those treatments. Common ailments include dropsy (edema) and costiveness (constipation). Purging, letting and herbal remedies are often recommended remedies.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Library Company of Philadelphia

1314 Locust St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

URL: <https://librarycompany.org>

Revision Description

Finding aid prepared 3/12/2012. EAD encoding of finding aid updated by Dana Dorman, Library Company Archivist, after the Library Company took over management of LCP.in.HSP materials. 2/24/2026

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research use. Please contact Library Company of Philadelphia Reference staff for access to this collection.

Conditions Governing Use note

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Controlled Access Headings

- Medical education
- Medicine
- New York (State)
- Notebooks
- Patients
- Renaudet, Peter

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Medical apprentice note book, 1741	Volume 1