Book Review

The History of Anesthesia. Third International Symposium

B.R. Fink, L.E. Morris, C.R. Stephen (Eds.). Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, 1992. pp. 467. ISBN 0-9614932-4-0. \$70.00(US) (Paper), \$80.00(US) (Hard cover).

The Third International Symposium on the History of Anesthesia was held in Atlanta, Georgia in March 1992 to coincide with the sesquicentennial of the use of ether by Crawford Long on March 30, 1842. Rather than dividing these *Proceedings* into chapters, the editors have provided a table of topics that directs the reader to individual papers on apparatus, agents, and techniques; biography; military; and general interest. Two papers are devoted to Crawford Long himself; one describes his medical education and the other the influence of the age of romanticism on the discovery of anaesthesia. The contemporary scene is brought to life by descriptions of the town of Jefferson, Georgia where Long practised in the 1840s and of medical practice in rural Georgia at that time. The variety of other papers reflects the broad spectrum of interests and thoughts of the contributors to the symposium and is not intended to give an overall view of the history of anaesthesia. Many of the contributions are unique and contain information, photographs, and illustrations that are rarely seen in standard anaesthesia texts. The early use of certain anaesthetic agents and techniques are described, some of which entered the mainstream of anaesthetic practice while others were transient. Biographies of Robinson in England, Lwen in Germany, and Ruth in the United States give us insight into the life and contributions of lesser known pioneers. There are also histories of anaesthesia in individual hospitals and countries in North America, Europe and from Guatemala to Zimbabwe.

This is a refreshing book that provides a welcome break from anaesthesia journals and textbooks. The editors are to be congratulated on the speed of its publication, its clear layout and the excellent illustrations. It is highly recommended for libraries and for individual anaesthetists.

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