



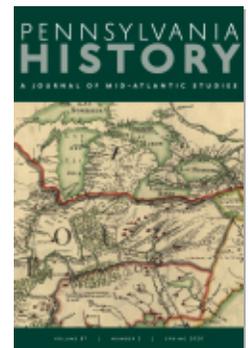
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Rush: Revolution, Madness, and the Visionary Doctor Who Became a Founding Father by Stephen Fried (review)

Eric Vallee

Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies, Volume 87, Number 2, Spring 2020, pp. 415-419 (Review)

Published by Penn State University Press



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mental hospitals” (152). Her current work suggests further research, whether undertaken by her or others. One area of inquiry is how educational facilities function as the latest carceral spaces in Pennsylvania and in other parts of the United States. In what ways are educational institutions relevant to the mental health care of Pennsylvania’s children and young adults? In the wake of gun violence, are schools becoming increasingly restrictive and policed environments? Related to these lines of inquiry are the Kids for Cash scheme in which judges Mark Ciavarella and Michael Conahan participated and the recent debates by the Tamaqua School District to arm its teachers. Another carceral space relevant to the state and to the United States under Donald Trump is the immigrant detention center. Are notions of trauma and criminalization, two ideas central to Parsons’s work, relevant when considering Pennsylvania’s immigration detention center, the Berks County Residential Center? Finally, Parsons states, “Restrictive environments such as prisons and asylums are often inappropriate places to hold human beings, much less individuals with psychiatric disabilities” (154). Her statement suggests that, in some cases, restriction might be appropriate. What worked in mental hospitals and how and when do prisons benefit both those convicted of crimes and the society in which they live?

From Asylum to Prison is a well-researched book. Parsons has written an engaging and thought-provoking social and political history of Pennsylvania’s mental health institutions, the deinstitutionalization they faced, and their replacement by prisons. Historians of psychiatry, scholars interested in the history of incarceration, and students drawn to social and political history in twentieth-century Pennsylvania will appreciate this book.

KAROL KOVALOVICH WEAVER
Susquehanna University

Stephen Fried. *Rush: Revolution, Madness, and the Visionary Doctor Who Became a Founding Father*. New York: Crown, 2018. 597 pp. Notes, bibliography, illustrations, index. Cloth, \$30.00.

Though recognized as the “American Father of Psychiatry” and one of the fifty-six revolutionary signatories of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Rush has largely been compartmentalized within histories of American medicine and biographies of his better-known contemporaries.

In *Rush: Revolution, Madness, and the Visionary Doctor Who Became a Founding Father*, Stephen Fried presents a reassessment of Rush as a Founder in his own right whose understudied work as a political figure and social reformer probed deep-seated issues of the American experiment. However, Fried also addresses the controversies, self-contradictions, and personal struggles that have contributed to Rush's marginalized status in scholarship. What emerges is a profile of a multifaceted humanitarian and political instigator whose diverse works ultimately sought to enhance public care for society's most vulnerable and marginalized members.

As Fried demonstrates, Rush's marginal status was, ironically, a function of his historical significance as a political, medical, and personal correspondent to his fellow Founders. Fried observes, "Adams and Jefferson especially had shared years of confidences [with Rush] about their feelings, their politics, their religion—even their bathroom habits . . . the kind of information men mindful of their legacies might not want entering the historical record" (9). While Rush's intimate correspondence with his contemporaries rendered his writings too politically volatile to publish in the years after his death, these revealing documents prove invaluable resources for Fried, who presents an account encompassing the most public and private dimensions of the nation's founding.

Fried organizes his comprehensive chronology of Rush's development into two overarching sections. The first section is more historically driven and centers on the ascension of Rush's political career through the Revolutionary War, providing an in-depth account of the movement for independence through one of its most vociferous and contentious proponents. The second section follows Rush's life more closely while addressing a wider range of social and political issues of the period, surveying Rush's social reform projects in multiple fields with particular attention to his revolutionary work on mental health.

Born in 1745, Rush experienced the first great loss of his life at the age of five when his father, a gunsmith, died. A precocious youth who graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) at fourteen, Rush began his medical career apprenticed to leading Philadelphia physician John Redman. In 1766 Rush traveled to the University of Edinburgh to work under William Cullen, an emerging medical authority and foundational figure for the Scottish Enlightenment. Rush then toured through London and Paris, where he was hosted by several revolutionary figures, including Benjamin Franklin, historian Catherine Macaulay, and radical politician John Wilkes.

Now a trained physician and aspiring political thinker, Rush returned to Philadelphia in 1769. While developing his medical practice and teaching chemistry at the College of Philadelphia, Rush began his lifelong commitment to public service, becoming a founding member of the Society for Inoculating the Poor. Rush also became increasingly involved in the movement for independence, publishing essays against the 1773 Tea Act that influenced the organizers of the Boston Tea Party and hosting delegates of the First Continental Congress. Informed by his close association with congressional members, Rush recognized the need for a public voice for the movement for independence. Recruiting Thomas Paine for the role, Rush helped Paine edit and publish his foundational pamphlet, *Common Sense*, as well as originating its politically resonant title. Rush's advocacy for independence culminated in his appointment as the youngest member of the Second Continental Congress, becoming one of the fifty-six signatories of the Declaration of Independence on August 2, 1776.

After his short tenure as congressman, Rush shifted to an endeavor better suited to his medical training, administering to the health of the Continental Army. Rush first experienced the war while tending wounded soldiers during the Second Battle of Trenton and the Battle of Princeton. Upon being appointed as surgeon-general of the "Middle Department," a geographic region extending from the Hudson River to the Potomac, Rush fought for better soldier healthcare in hospitals that lacked funding, structure, and oversight. Rush's outspoken disapproval of Continental Army hospitals, however, provoked a flurry of political infighting that led to Rush's resignation and the court-martialing of his former mentor, Stephen Shippen Jr., whom Rush charged with neglecting his duties as director-general of the military hospitals. More recklessly, Rush vented his frustrations in a letter to Patrick Henry attributing the dismal state of the army to George Washington's inadequacies as a general, a letter that haunted Rush's reputation throughout his life.

Despite these controversies, Rush's campaign succeeded in instituting his proposed reforms, many of which were adopted by the Continental Army after his resignation. Rush's position as surgeon-general also allowed him to address soldiers' on-the-ground conditions and daily care in a pamphlet distributed to the Continental Army. The opening statement of the pamphlet would remain strikingly resonant for American wars to come: "Fatal experience has taught the people of America the truth . . . a greater proportion of men perish with sickness in all armies than fall by the sword" (201).

Rush's willful convictions and dedication to humanitarian aid provoked controversy again during Philadelphia's 1793 yellow fever epidemic. As doctors fled the city, Rush worked tirelessly to treat the alarming number of patients affected. Rush's extensive use of purges and bloodletting as treatments, however, was seen by many as extreme, prompting public backlash. In response, Rush publicly attacked practitioners of alternative treatments, fueling controversies that eventually resulted in Rush instigating one of the first major slander suits under the Constitution.

After these controversies, Rush refocused his efforts from politics to a series of visionary social reform projects. Rush recognized the war as merely "the first act in a great drama" (292), transforming the body politic into "republican machines": responsible citizens prepared to apply their new liberties toward sustaining and improving civic relations. While a strong constitutional advocate, Rush recognized that such transformation could only be realized through humanitarian efforts, inclusive social action, and the building of civic institutions. Campaigning for free, universal access to education, Rush advocated for women's education and founded Dickinson College to serve the rural frontier of Pennsylvania. Rush also argued against psychologically damaging forms of criminal punishment, including capital punishment. Additionally, as an advocate for African American rights and a committed abolitionist, Rush published on racial equality while helping African American leaders create Philadelphia's first black church.

As the "American Father of Psychiatry," Rush is best known, especially among medical historians, for his foundational work on mental illness. Fried, however, probes the personal and political struggles beneath this legacy, exploring issues surrounding the social treatment of mental illness that remain resonant today. Rush was among the first to approach "madness" not as evidence of immorality or ineptitude but as a medical issue requiring treatment. To provide better treatment, Rush helped establish the Pennsylvania Hospital's West Wing, which earned international recognition as a landmark institution for the humane treatment of mental illness.

More broadly, Rush worked closely with patients to establish a more comprehensive, empathetic understanding of the sources and experience of mental illness. This work became especially personal when Rush was required to treat his eldest son, John Rush, who was hospitalized following multiple suicide attempts after killing a fellow Navy officer in a duel. John's hospitalization bolstered Rush's conviction that mental illness was a key social issue requiring improved public understanding and care. In writing what would

become the first American treatise on mental illness, Rush addressed not only medical practitioners but also the public at large, seeking to ameliorate stigma and foster care for one of society's least understood and most marginalized populations.

Through *Rush*, Fried offers a strikingly intimate history of the revolutionary period viewed from one of its most underappreciated, influential figures. The first biography to treat the full extent of the Rush's written documents and correspondence, *Rush* foregrounds Rush's fervent, complex, and extensive writings to present a more personal and comprehensive account of Rush's life and development as a Founder. Of particular interest to historians is Fried's afterword, which traces the circulation of Rush's writings and the evolution of his legacy as a political figure and medical reformer from the deaths of Adams and Jefferson in 1826 to the present. Like the afterword, Fried's biography historicizes Rush's multifaceted legacy and reflects a vigorous commitment to building connections among Rush's diverse works and his historical context without oversimplifying his field-crossing contributions.

In building these connections, Fried's biography traces Rush's engagement with a range of formative issues in the nation's founding that remain critically important today, including access to healthcare, education, racial prejudice, partisanship, addiction, incarceration, and mental health. Fried's breadth of perspective on Rush and the array of fields and historical issues in which he worked makes *Rush* a great supplement to courses on early American history, with particular relevance to the history of medicine, social reform and activism, and disability studies. For scholars, Fried offers the first definitive biography on Rush in decades, presenting a multitude of new materials and insights that enrich our understanding of Rush as both an individual and historical figure.

ERIC VALLEE

The Pennsylvania State University

Kenneth Finkel. *Insight Philadelphia: Historical Essays Illustrated*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018. 248 pp. Illustrations and index. Paper, \$39.95.

Insight Philadelphia: Historical Essays Illustrated by Kenneth Finkel provides a compelling and rich narrative of Philadelphia's past. Finkel incorporates a plethora of essays and photographs painting a vivid picture of the