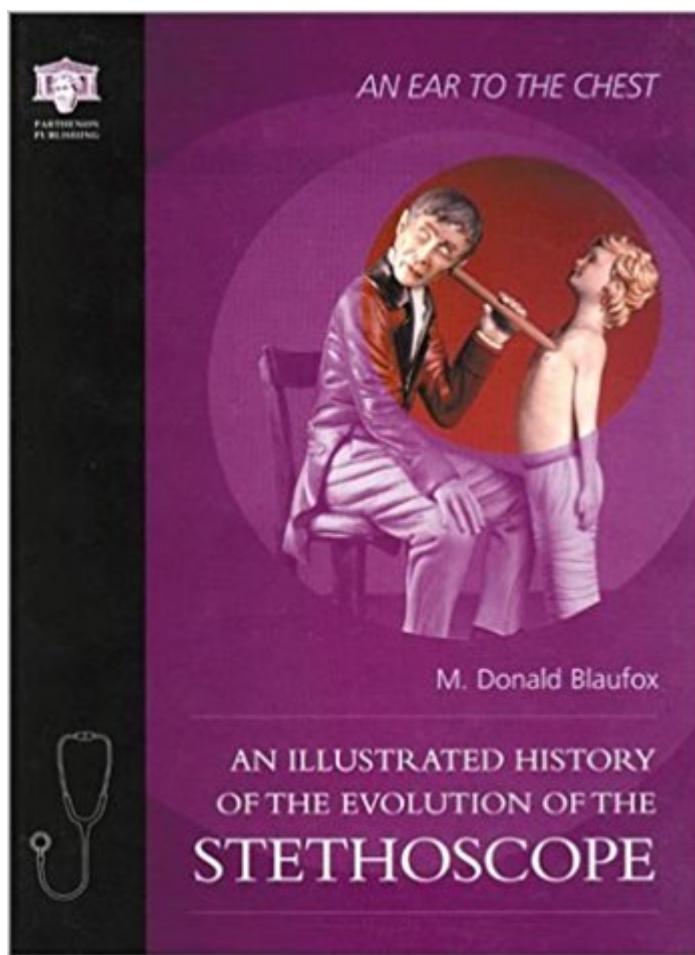


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# An Ear To The Chest: An Illustrated History Of The Evolution Of The Stethoscope



## Synopsis

The stethoscope has come to represent the physician perhaps more than any other symbol save the shaft of Aesculapius. It has had a profound influence on the practice of medicine. Called a "fascinating book" by the New York Times, *An Ear to the Chest: An Illustrated History of the Evolution of the Stethoscope* explores the debate over the value of the stethoscope, its design, and its acceptance by the public and the professionals who used it. The book contains fascinating details about the stethoscope from its beginnings as a simple wooden tube to the complex binaural devices used today. The variety of stethoscopes that have been designed number in the hundreds or more. Providing information about the instrument and insights into its inventors, the author has included truly evolutionary examples of the stethoscope and those that illustrate the wide variety of approaches taken in its development. Written by Dr. M. Donald Blaurock, noted medical historian and co-author with N.H. Naqvi of *Blood Pressure Measurement: An Illustrated History*, this book presents a visual history of the evolution of the instrument that is now universally recognized as a symbol for medicine and healing. It provides diagrams, early photographs and drawings, as well as excerpts from contemporary writings and patents. Informative and entertaining *An Ear to the Chest: An Illustrated History of the Evolution of the Stethoscope* explores the practices used prior to the development of the stethoscope, the early days of its use, and current practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"this well-illustrated monograph is a useful addition to the history of medical diagnosis and

technology." - W. Bruce Fye, Mayo Clinic, in the Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 2003 "a comprehensive collection of references." - Arthur Hollman, Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, December 2002 "Dr. M. Donald Blaurock has written the definitive work about the evolution of the stethoscope. In clear prose he describes the remarkable figures who argued about the stethoscope's superiority over immediate auscultation. The photographs of stethoscopes are arresting. The last chapter of the book 'Current Practice' should be read by everyone who enjoyed reading it." - J. Willis Hurst, MD, Journal of the American Medical Association "This is a fascinating book that would be enjoyed by all physicians." - John F. Moran, MD, Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine, for Doody Review Services Promo Copy

This book is a lot more serious than its cover implies. Although I don't have the background to judge its content, it gives every appearance of being a thoroughly researched piece of scholarship with 12 pages of references for 80 pages of text and photos. There is also a large appendix of images from the author's personal collection of period auscultation equipment. Especially as this seems to be the only book of its kind available, it gets 5 stars. But if you go to a database like ScienceDirect, you will be able to find articles published in medical journals that cover some of the same territory.

This is an excellent reference and makes a wonderful addition to the library of the medical historian or antique collector. Although I imagine the target audience for this book is small, it is virtually indispensable to the collector of antique stethoscopes. There is some informative prose about the inception and development of the stethoscope and its integration to medical practice, but the uniquely valuable part of this book is the 45-page appendix where various stethoscope designs are pictured and described. This is the best single reference for identifying model types of antique stethoscopes that I have encountered. There is also an exhaustive bibliography for those who wish to pursue further research. The book is well worth the investment for the interested reader.

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