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## **G. Rosen. Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953 [photocopie]**

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### **Présentation de la fiche**

Cote**b007\_f0545**

Source**Boite\_007-15-chem | Police médicale anglaise.**

Langue**Français**

TypeFiche**Lecture**

Personnes citées**[Rosen, Georges](#)**

Références bibliographiques

- [\[anonyme ou collectif\] Journal of the history of medicine](#)
- [Rosen, Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953](#)

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

### **Références éditoriales**

Éditeur**équipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).**

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 22/07/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

Britain during the eighteenth century of the need for medical assistance to certain groups in the population. It was this period, particularly the years from 1714 to 1760, which witnessed the creation, in London and the provinces, of dispensaries and general hospitals as well as hospitals for special groups of patients. The dispensary movement as well as the hospital movement found impetus chiefly in private initiative and contributions, although there was some governmental assistance in the form of legislative action. This development of private initiative coupled with co-operative action is characteristic of Britain in the eighteenth century and is to a very considerable degree related to the character of local governmental activity. While the parish officers had to assume considerable responsibilities, generally they had neither the training nor desire to perform their functions. In many ways, this very aspect of the governmental system gave increasingly greater scope to private initiative, making it necessary and possible to deal on an empirical basis with new problems as they presented themselves. Indeed, throughout this period Parliamentary action was generally undertaken on the basis of previously initiated local programs and projects.

The first institutions to provide medical care for the sick poor appeared in London. The metropolis was growing, wages were high, and workers were attracted to the city. Many of them, however, unable to establish the needed residence requirement, were ineligible for parochial relief when sick.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the two older hospitals, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's, were overcrowded and unable to care for all those in need. Recognizing the problem, a group of London laymen and physicians in 1719 organized the Charitable Society in Westminster to provide for such sick persons as were unable to obtain proper care. This was the beginning of the Westminster Hospital, which was soon followed by the establishment of other institutions: Guy's (1724), St. George's (1733), London Hospital (1740).<sup>20</sup> About the middle of the century special hospitals were created. The influence of this

<sup>19</sup> The Act of Settlement of 1662 gave the parish authorities the right to remove within forty days any newcomer unable to rent a dwelling worth £10 if they believed that such a person was likely to be a burden to the parish.

<sup>20</sup> B. Kirkman Gray, *A history of English philanthropy*. London, P. S. King and Son, 1905, pp. 126-131. For Guy's Hospital see Samuel Wilks and G. T. Bettany, *A biographical history of Guy's Hospital*. London, Ward, Lock, Bowden and Co., 1892, pp. 52-53, 56-73. Discussion of analogous developments in Scotland and Ireland may be found in Thomas Ferguson, *The dawn of Scottish social welfare*. London, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948, pp. 255-284, and K. H. Connell, *The population of Ireland 1750-1845*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950, pp. 198-207.



