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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

“Laughing Gas Given” by Brooklyn’s Celebrated and Celebrating Dr. G. E. Travis



For over 30 yr, from 1878 to 1908, Dr. George E. Travis (ca. 1854 to 1931) managed his celebrated dental parlors on Grand Street in Brooklyn, Eastern District, New York. A man who partied heartily, Travis was sued by a neighboring firm whose plate glass window was shattered by one of Travis's firework celebrations. After office hours, along with many German-American businessmen in the Amphion Society and the Home and Hanover Clubs, Travis celebrated from a tallyho (horse-drawn coach) on his way to drink and/or dine in clubs, restaurants, and theaters. Because of the “German dentist in attendance” whom he advertised on his trade card (*top*), Travis hired only bilingual office staff. Rotating and enlarging his card's right border reveals a botanically overgrown notice, “Laughing gas given” (*bottom*). The clipped upper-right corner of the card reinforced the trompe-l'oeil (“trick-the-eye”) effort at convincing viewers that the corner was rolled and pinned down by a sprig. The laughing gas doctor's last laugh? (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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