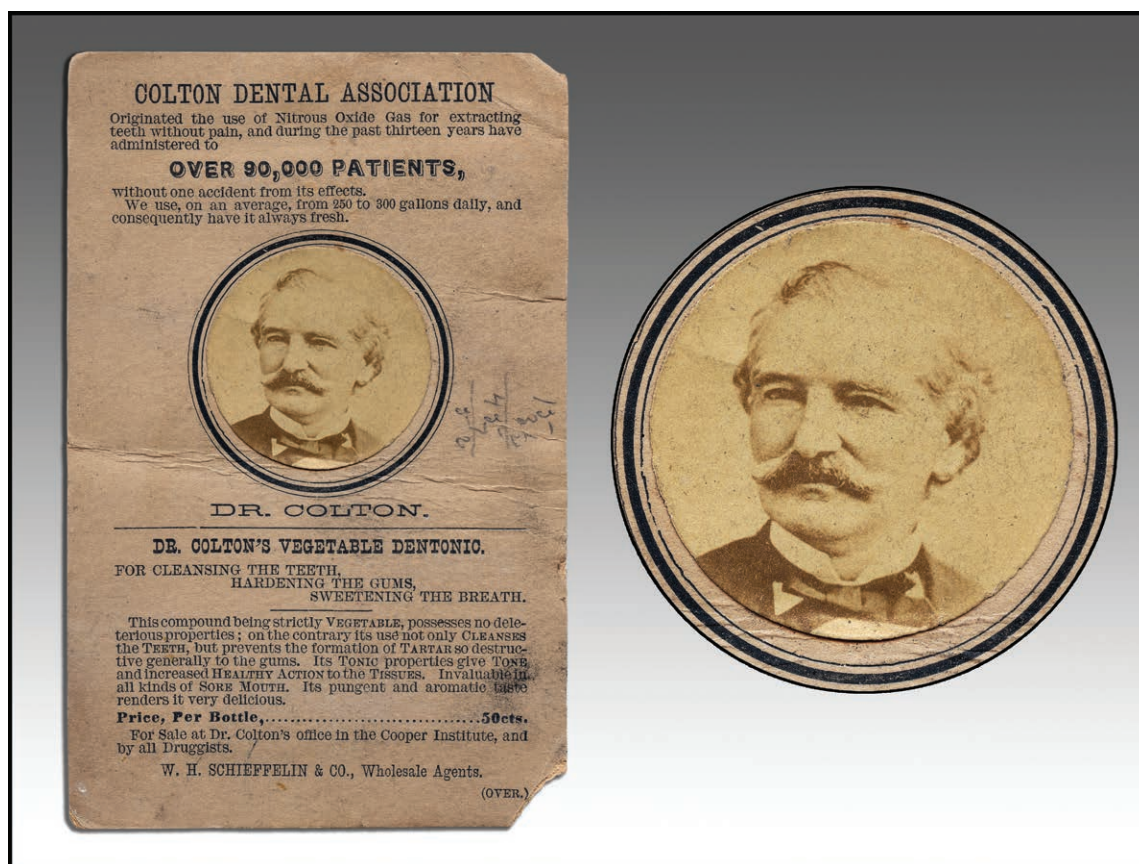


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Picturing “Dr. Colton” at the Cooper Institute: His Honorific Doctorate



The reverse of this trade card (*left*) features a circular photo-portrait of Gardner Q. Colton (1814 to 1898, *right*). A medical school dropout who popularized nitrous-oxide anesthesia for dental extraction, Colton was photographed no longer sporting the Lincoln-esque beard from 1863, when his namesake Colton Dental Association was founded in Manhattan. Rather, Colton now has the beardless but moustached look popularized in the mid-1870s by writer Mark Twain and his contemporaries. Having styled himself with an honorific doctorate, “Dr. Colton” boasts that he “originated the use of Nitrous Oxide Gas for extracting teeth without pain, and during the past 13 years have administered [it] to **OVER 90,000 PATIENTS**, without one accident from its effects.” Because his namesake association was founded in 1863, this trade card (from the Wood Library-Museum’s Ben Z. Swanson Collection) can be dated reliably to the year 1876 or soon after. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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