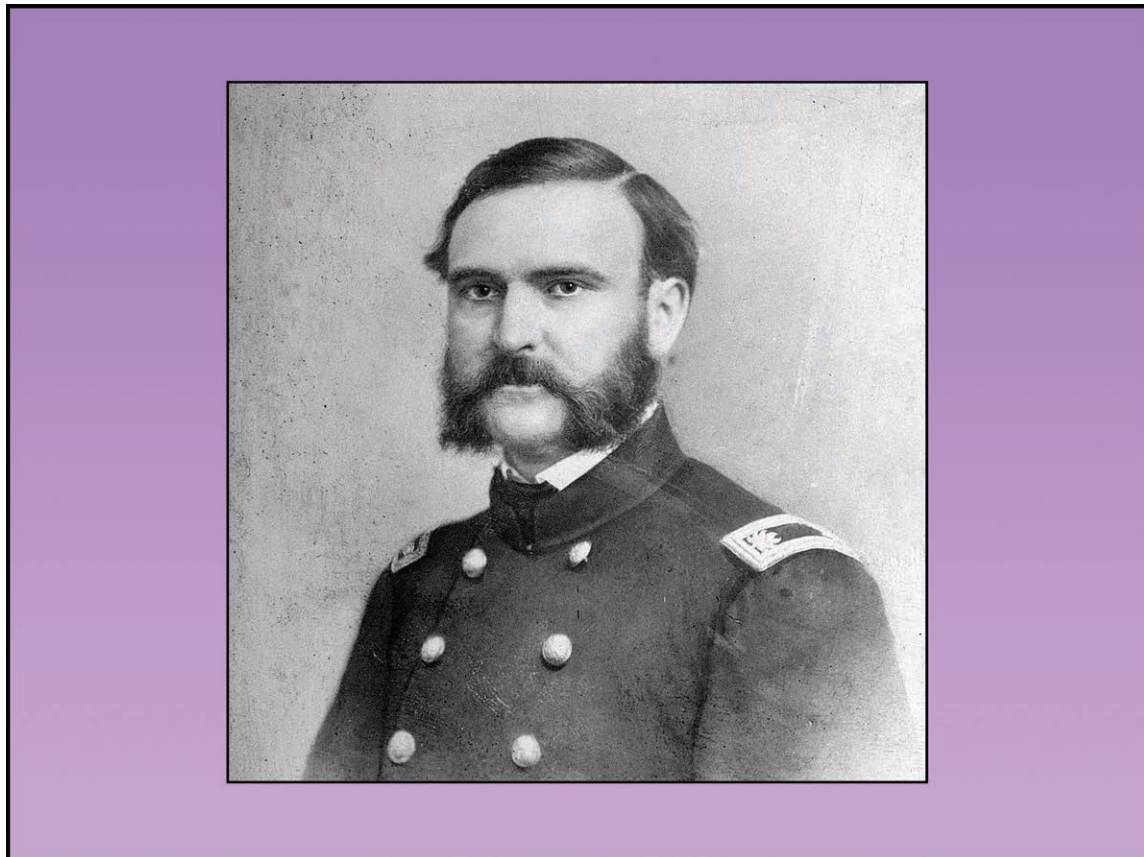


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Charles Halpine or How Chloroform Killed Simultaneously a General and a Private



Born in Oldcastle, County Meath, Ireland, Charles Graham Halpine (1825 to 1868) emigrated to the United States in 1851. He worked as a journalist and editor in Boston, Washington, D.C., and then New York City, before joining the Union's 69th New York Volunteer Infantry. During the Civil War, he penned poetry and prose for periodicals and eventually books under the pseudonym of "Miles O'Reilly," a hapless Irish private in the "47th Regiment New York Volunteers." Progressively reassigned and promoted through the ranks, Halpine was photographed (above) as a lieutenant colonel. By the time Halpine resigned his commission, he had been brevetted to brigadier general for merit. In August of 1868, while self-administering his own remedy for insomnia and migraines, 43-yr-old Halpine accidentally overdosed on undiluted chloroform. And that is how chloroform killed simultaneously a general (Halpine) and a private (O'Reilly). (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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