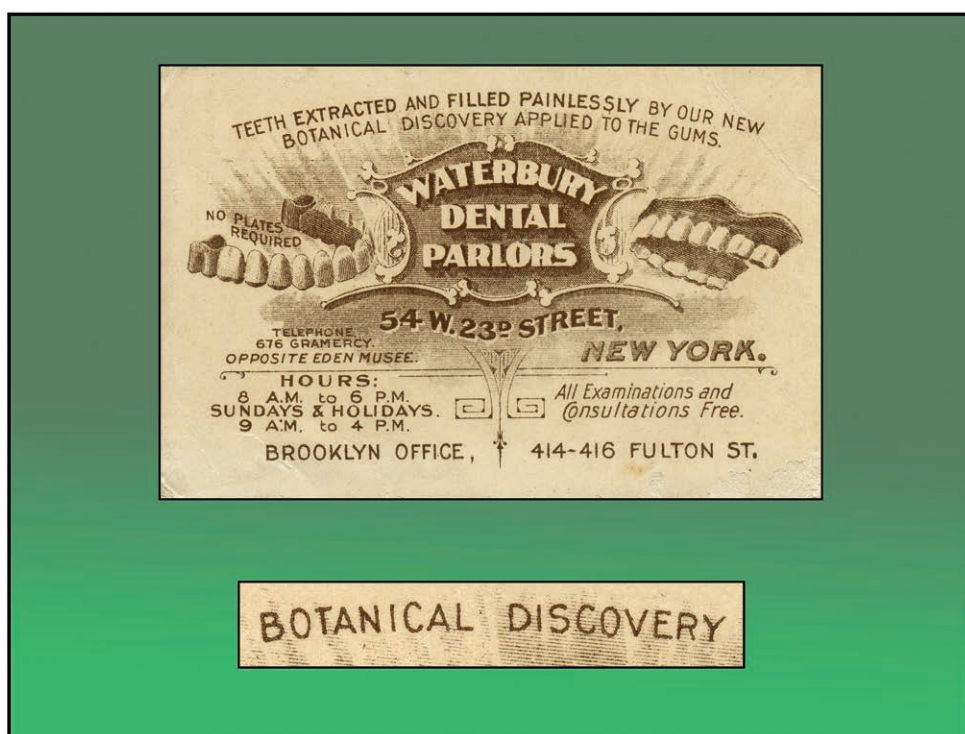


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Numbing a World of Hurt: T. D. Waterbury Cruises from Cocaine to Carbolic Acid



Following the discovery of cocaine's local anesthetic properties, some entrepreneurs began concocting their own proprietary compounds of topical and injectable cocaine, thereby sidestepping the expense of cocaine-laden nostrums and patent medicines. Neither a dentist nor a pharmacist, businessman Thomas D. Waterbury (1866 to 1921) launched his namesake dental chain by 1897 with a "New Botanical Discovery" (*lower*) that was compounded with something not-so-new: cocaine. His Waterbury Dental Parlors (*upper*) in Brooklyn and then Manhattan were successful enough to fund a 2-yr cruise around the world with his wife. Weeks after the global tour ended, Mr. Waterbury confirmed his business affairs were in order and that none of the 40 dentists working for him knew the formulation of his "New Botanical Discovery." Turning from venal to phenol, he checked himself into the Hotel McAlpin and committed suicide by drinking carbolic acid. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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