
ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Nevius’ 1894 Discovery of Modern Anesthesia

From the stacks of the Wood Library-Museum, this elegant volume is awkwardly titled The Discovery of Modern Anesthesia. By Whom It Was Made. A Brief Statement of Facts. Authored by dentist Laird W. Nevius (1845–1915), this book attempted to fairly portray the leading figures behind dental and surgical anesthesia. This was a remarkable effort, particularly since Nevius was a disciple of G. Q. Colton, who clearly backed Horace Wells as the “Discoverer of Anesthesia.” Upon reviewing Nevius’ book in 1894, the journal Dental Cosmos observed that the "whole controversy, from 1847 to the present time, has been no more marked by acrimony than it has been by a disposition to laud those who applied the scientific discoveries more than the original suggestors [sic] of the agents to be employed." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in color in the Anesthesiology Reflections online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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