

“Old Ironsides” through the Holmes Stereoscope



Most anesthesiologists know that physician and writer Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809–1894, *portrayed right*), suggested the word “anaesthesia” to celebrated etherizer W. T. G. Morton. This occurred over 16 yr after Holmes immortalized in verse as “Old Ironsides” the 44-gun warship *Constitution*. Holmes’ poetry prevented “the harpies of the shore” (naval scrapyards) from plucking that “eagle of the sea.” About 29 yr after this intervention, Holmes invented his American hand-held stereoscope for viewing stereographs, which are paired photographs showing the same subjects or scenes from slightly staggered perspectives. To the left is a stereograph of the veteran ship from the War of 1812, the frigate that Holmes rescued—“Old Ironsides.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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