

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Richter's Anchor Pain Expeller: Nondoctor Analgesia from "Doctoring" Chili, Black, and Guinea Peppers



Friedrich Adolf Richter (1846 to 1910) was a German businessman who claimed to have earned an M.D. from the University of Philadelphia, a nonexistent institution. Inside Germany, he flouted the law by peddling his nostrums to consumers by mail order from his company, F. Ad. Richter & Cie, by a nonexistent pharmacy. Featuring the brand's iconic anchor, Richter's advertising to Americans promised pain relief from neuralgia and from "gout, rheumatism, backache, etc." This trade card (above) was issued on behalf of the New York branch of Richter's company. In follow-up newspaper testimonials, a New York County Clerk observed that "universal endorsement [implied that the remedy]...must effect the ends claimed." By 1907, analytical pharmacists had determined that nondoctor Richter had created his Anchor Pain Expeller by "doctoring" chili, black, and Guinea peppers with galangal root, astringent rhatany, and the oils of thyme, clove, rosemary, and lavender. Three years later, Richter passed away as one of Germany's ten wealthiest citizens. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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