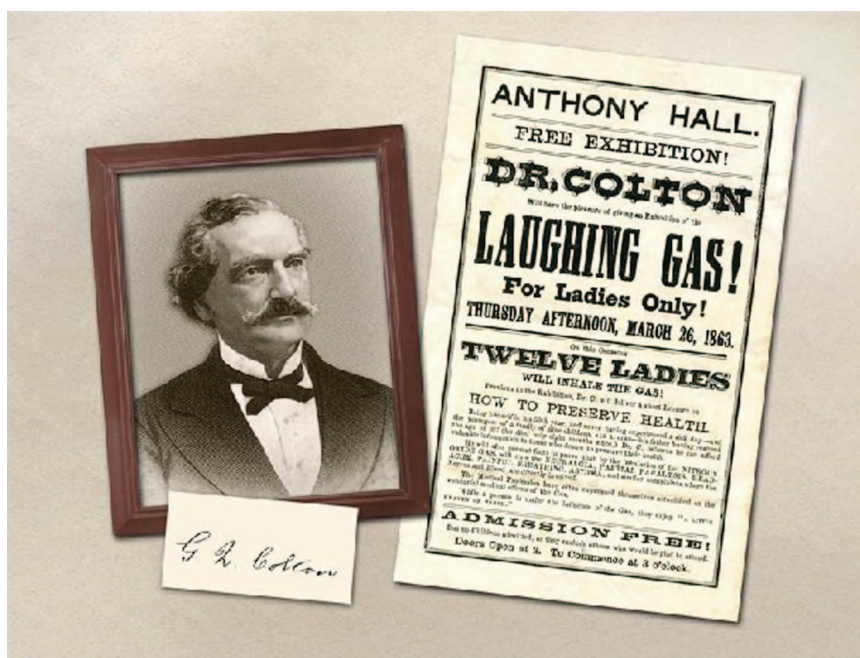


■ ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Colton's Laughing Gas Broadsheet



In Schenectady, New York, by mid-March of 1863, broadsides advertised a free “Exhibition of the LAUGHING GAS” scheduled for the afternoon of March 26, 1863. A traveling showman named “Doctor” Gardner Quincy Colton (1814–1898) promised to gas 12 women recreationally with nitrous oxide, the same gas that he had provided as a dental anesthetic in 1844 for Horace Wells. One of these broadsides was removed, folded in half twice, and inserted as a bookmark into an 1841 edition of Rev. Richard Baxter’s *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest*. As the bookmark settled between the pages, the book moved with its family some 155 miles northwest to Pulaski, New York, just east of Lake Ontario. Generations passed, and the book was purchased at an estate sale and sold by Internet auction in 2004 to the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology. Note that by mid-1863, Colton had revived dentists’ asphyxial use of 100% nitrous oxide, which resulted in sporadic “crazed” and “apoplectic” cases of postoperative cognitive deficit. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA’s Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.