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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Laughing Gas in Baltimore, Hagerstown, and Smithsburg: Maryland's Dr. D. W. Crowther



Son of an English army officer, David William Crowther, D.D.S. (1834 to 1916), was born in Devonshire but relocated as a baby with his family to Drummondville, Canada. As a young man, he subsequently moved to New York and then Alabama to serve from Mobile in the Confederacy's First Alabama Battery. Following the Civil War, he trained in dentistry, earning his D.D.S. in Maryland in 1868 from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery. Around 1874 he moved 74 miles northwest in Maryland to Hagerstown, where he established his dental practice on North Potomac Street. According to this lovely trade card from the Ben Z. Swanson Collection of the Wood Library-Museum, Dr. Crowther extracted teeth "with [laughing] gas" just a "door above Clapp's Junior Hall Store." Never forsaking Maryland professionally, Crowther moved in 1890 about 8 miles east to Smithsburg. He retired from dentistry in 1896 and passed away a decade later. All told, during his 28 yr of practice as a degreed dentist, Crowther administered laughing gas in Baltimore, Hagerstown, and finally Smithsburg, Maryland. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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