


From Horse to Hearse: Tragedy Strikes Laughing-gas Dentist Charles Henry Neall

From the Wood Library-Museum’s Ben Z. Swanson Collection, this trade card’s red rose conceals the drawn bow of Cupid. The young god or at least his bow seems bent on drawing Philadelphians to the Vine Street dental office of Dr. Charles Henry Neall (1834 to 1890), where laughing gas was administered for anesthesia. Unfortunately, Cupid could not rescue the portly Dr. Neall from dying while vacationing on tour. After his carriage had broken an axle and his horse had bolted, Dr. Neall had fallen, “striking on his head.” According to the Altoona Times, the dentist’s massive girth “made his fall all the more severe” and doomed him to a terminal “concussion of the brain.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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