
Gailey’s 1895 Anesthetic Inhaler

After receiving his B.S. from Michigan Agricultural College and then pursuing preliminary medical studies in Michigan, John Knox Gailey earned his M.D. from the City University of New York. Following postgraduate studies in Europe, Gailey eventually became Chairman of Clinical Surgery at the Detroit College of Medicine. In 1895 Gailey filed for a patent on his “Inhaler” (above, courtesy of the Wood Library-Museum) which incorporated a “respirator-hood and anesthetic vessel in a single structure.” Granted one year later, his U.S. Patent No. 552,901 claimed that Gailey’s was an anesthetic inhaler using a turn-key valve to dial in room air to mix with anesthetic vapor such that “the strength . . . or the proportion of anesthetic vapor and air can be varied as desired.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in color 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.