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William Bayard 1814–1907

To the Editor:

Dr. William Bayard¹ was certainly a leader in the medical community in New Brunswick. He was also one of the first to make use of ether anaesthesia, but the claim that he used it in 1844, two years before Morton demonstrated its use in Boston, is not substantiated by contemporary documentation. When McAvenney in 1905² wrote about Bayard's use of ether, he did so sixty years after the event without citing his source: "The first time ether was administered in St. John for extracting teeth was in the office of the Vanbuskirks by Dr. William Bayard. ... This was in 1844, shortly after Dr. Horace Wells, the American dentist, discovered surgical anesthesia." He did not state that this was two years before ether was used in Boston, and Morton's name was not mentioned.

The only occasion on which Bayard and Van Buskirk cooperated in the use of ether, which I have found,³ refers to a hospital operation which took place in March 1847, not in 1844: "Experience in establishing the beneficial effects of Ethereal Vapour during Surgical operations, and the use of it is receiving the highest professional sanction in Europe and the United States. In our own City, the experiments which have been already made, are confirmatory of the advantages of it ... this fact was fully illustrated during an operation recently performed by Dr. Wm. Bayard, in the Hospital of this City and County ... the patient inhaled the Vapour of Ether through a machine made by Mr. Van Buskirk, the dentist, who was present ... as the public are interested in the question of good or evil connected with the use of Ethereal Vapour in Surgical operations, no apology is requisite for making a Newspaper the medium of reports of effects for the benefit of all, who from disease or accident, may have occasion and inclination to resort to it."

My own research⁴ confirms MacDougall's earlier opinion⁵ that the first use of ether in New Brunswick occurred in January 1847.^{6–8} No attempt has previously been made to establish priority for Van Buskirk or Bayard or Morton. Is it possible that McAvenney, writing sixty years after the event and without realizing the significance of the date, simply made an error when he stated that Bayard used ether in 1844?

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- 3 [News item] *The New Brunswick Courier* 1847 Mar 20: 2 (col 5–6).
- 4 Maltby JR. The origins of anaesthesia in Canada. In: Atkinson RS, Boulton TB (Eds.). *The history of Anaesthesia*. London: Royal Society of Medicine Services Limited 1989: 112–9.
- 5 MacDougall JA. The earliest ether anaesthetic in British North America – a first for Saint John, New Brunswick? *Can J Anaesth* 1987; 34: 496–504.
- 6 [News item] *The Weekly Chronicle (St John)* 1847 Jan 22: 2 (col 4).
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- 8 [Anon.] *Surgical operation*. *The New Brunswick Courier* 1847 Jan 23: 2 (col 5).

Octreotide for Carcinoid Syndrome

To the Editor:

Drs. Watson, Badner and Ali reported the use of octreotide, a long-acting somatostatin analogue, in the management of a patient with an ovarian carcinoid tumour who presented for laparotomy and tumour resection.¹ We have recently had experience with octreotide in a patient with carcinoid syndrome undergoing anaesthesia and surgery and we can confirm its efficacy for maintaining perioperative stability.

A 43-year-old female presented to the physicians with a one-year history of palpitations, hot flushes, tiredness and episodes of wheezing. Extensive investigations had failed to reveal the cause of her symptoms. However, she had a marginally raised urinary HIAA and was treated empirically with octreotide 50 µg subcutaneously o.d. Her symptoms improved dramatically on this treatment and the dose of octreotide was subsequently increased to 75 µg o.d. Further investigations were ordered in an