

William Thomas Green Morton

Encyclopedia Article

William Thomas Green Morton

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1819-1868

American dentist who made pioneering contributions to surgical anesthesia. Morton's partner in a successful dental practice, Horace Wells (1815-1848), experimented on the anesthetic properties of nitrous oxide. Charles T. Jackson (1805-1880), Morton's teacher at Harvard Medical School, suggested the use of ether as "toothache drops." After conducting experiments on himself and his dog, Morton publicly demonstrated ether anesthesia at Massachusetts General Hospital on October 16, 1846. He and Jackson became involved in a battle for priority.