

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

King's Oxygen Compound



In his 1887 booklet *Oxygen in Therapeutics*, Chicago physician Clyde Ehinger noted that most proprietary preparations of "Compound Oxygen" contained ammonium nitrate, which was heated and "compounded" to other gases to produce an end-mixture remarkable merely for its dilute concentration of nitrous oxide. Mirroring the alcohol-laden elixirs of that era, these proprietary "compounds" of oxygen were heralded as panaceas for an amazing range of afflictions. Compressed gas cylinders soon permitted distribution of "Oxygen Compound" tanks. Unfortunately, later editions of *Oxygen in Therapeutics* were published by New York's King Oxygen Works to advertise their "King's Oxygen Compound." From the Wood Library-Museum's 1901 edition, photographs depict a seated "invalid" (see above left) inhaling from a King Oxygen apparatus that matches the larger ("150 gallon") compressed gas cylinder of King's Oxygen Compound (see other photograph). (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in color in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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