Parke-Davis Medicated Throat Discs: Chloroforming That Throat “Tickle”

Formulated with capsicum, peppermint, anise, cubeb, licorice, linseed, acacia, and sugar, each Parke-Davis Medicated Throat Disc included 0.5 minnim or roughly 0.03 ml of chloroform (lower right). This half-drop of chloroform provided some topical relief but also served as a solvent for the other “herbs and spices.” Targeting “singers, speakers, and smokers,” the box (upper left) for these throat discs promised relief from “coughs due to colds, hoarseness, and that annoying ‘tick’ in the throat.” By 1976, the Food and Drug Administration was directing that all drugs containing chloroform be removed from sale, so this particular formulation … evaporated. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA’s Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.