

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

“Fac-Simile” Confederate \$10 Bill Advertising Odontunder by Dr. A. B. Cobb



From Richmond, Virginia, on September 2, 1861, the Confederate States of America released a \$10 banknote. Both that original bill and the advertising “Fac-Simile” of it (*top*) feature the same images (from left to right) of John E. Ward, a “Wagon Load of Cotton,” and corn gatherers. On the back of the ersatz banknote (*bottom*), there is an advertisement by Dr. Arthur B. Cobb of Buffalo, New York, touting that he obtunds (numbs) patients’ gums with “Odontunder” (a portmanteau fusing Greek for “tooth” with Latin for “to blunt or dull”). By 1906 chemical analyses of Odontunder revealed that the proprietary local anesthetic mixture contained cocaine, carbolic acid (phenol), and resorcin (a “chemical cousin” of phenol). This facsimile banknote advertisement is part of the Wood Library-Museum’s Ben Z. Swanson Collection. (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.