

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Cocaine in the “Dental Delight” of the Doctors McKinley



Gracing the obverse of this dental trade card (*high*) from the Wood Library-Museum's Ben Z. Swanson Collection, the flowers and greenery exclude the main numbing medicine used by the advertisers, a father-son team of dentists in Salisbury, Pennsylvania. Indeed, on the card's reverse, the father, Daniel O'Connell McKinley, D.D.S. (1836 to 1904), proudly touted that his son, Arthur Oberlin McKinley, M.D. (1867 to 1959), was an alumnus of Baltimore's College of Physician and Surgeons who had made a "specialty of the finer parts of Dentistry." Also on the back of the card, the Doctors McKinley promised (*low*) to use "DENTAL DELIGHT" to guarantee "TEETH EXTRACTED without PAIN." Besides providing local anesthesia, part of the delight may have been the cocaine with which the dental duo heavily laced their proprietary topical anesthetic mixture. Because the McKinleys worked in such a tiny Pennsylvania town (so small that it used the Elm Lick Post Office), they needed more than their dental practice to earn a living. The father also worked making saddles; the son, in the general practice of medicine—and all from the "Dr. McKinley House" on Salisbury's Union Street. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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