

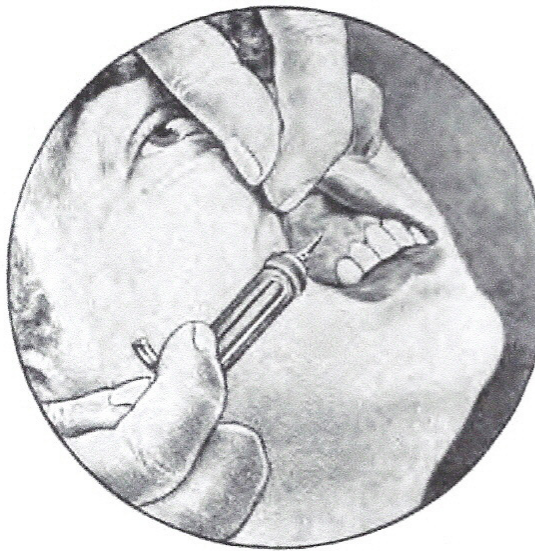
TEETHING PAINS

BY JOE TERRY

Anyone who has ever experienced the pain of a toothache knows that while other pains may be bad, none seems quite so excruciating as an affected molar. Dentistry has been practiced in one form or another for hundreds, if not thousands of years. The one thing the early practitioners lacked was a means of making the process comfortable. It was not until Westerners discovered that coca, and later isolated cocaine, did an effective local anesthetic come to the forefront.

The popularity and prominence of cocaine after it was first isolated in the mid 1880s was meteoric. It was touted as a hair dressing, a cure for the morphine habit, mixed with wine, and constituted one of the ingredients in Coca-Cola. Its use as an effective anesthetic was quickly established. On the heels of that were those men ready to turn that discovery into cold hard cash.

My interest was turned to this



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 == FOR ==
PAINLESS EXTRACTION.

No sloughing of the gums. No bad after effect. Non-secret. Formula with every bottle.

PRICES:
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 3 ounces, **\$2.00**
 10 ounces, **\$5.00**

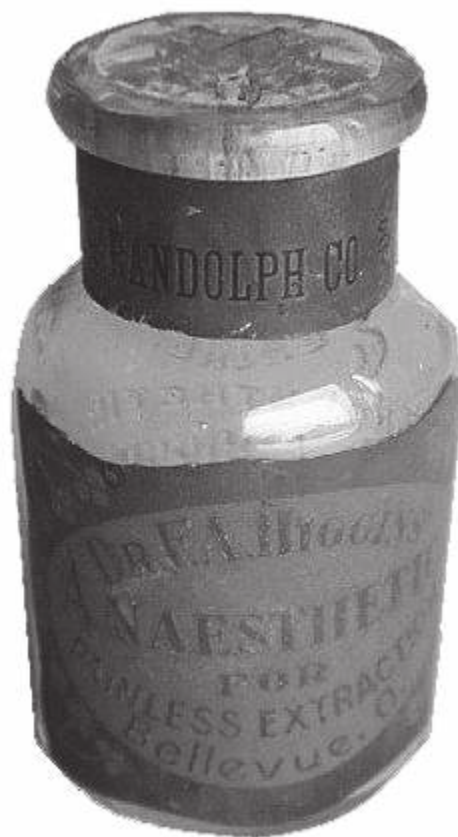
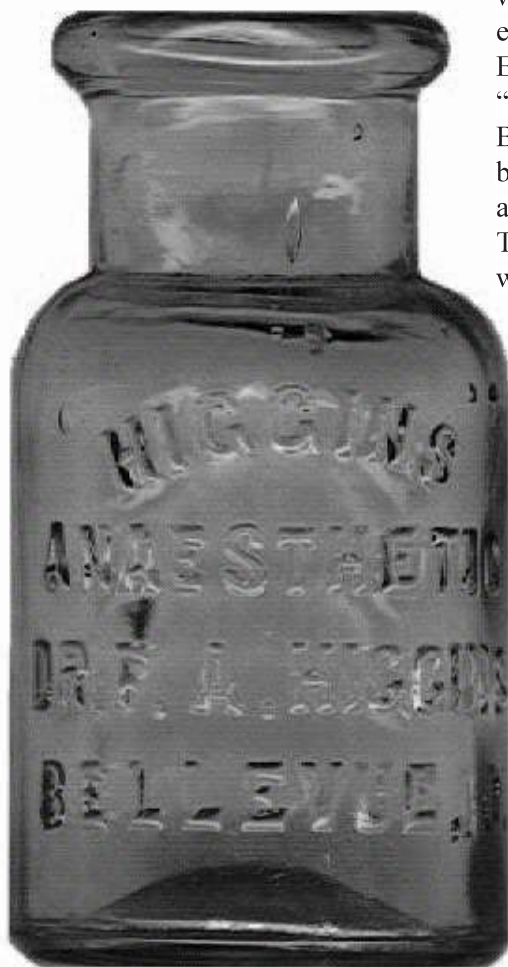
THE HIGGINS DENTAL
 MANUFACTURING CO.
 Bellevue, Ohio

unlikely subject by a small bottle I happened across some 30 years ago. At two inches tall and half again as wide, with a wide mouth and bold embossing, it struck me as a bit odd. Embossed across the face of it was "Higgins Anaesthetic, Dr. F.A. Higgins, Bellevue, O., and in large letters on the base "FAH." Now Bellevue is only about 20 miles from my hometown of Tiffin. Despite this, I could find no one who could shed any light on this bottle or its namesake. In fact, it was only fairly recently that I decided to delve into just who Higgins was. What I stumbled upon was only a small part of a much larger scenario.

Frank Amando Higgins was born in 1860. He graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College in 1882, soon afterward setting up an office in Bellevue. By all indications, he carried on a good practice. His office was at 126 E. Main Street, nestled between Wolf and Sons' Clothing Store and the Gemberling Grocery.

Despite this seeming small town naivete, Frank actually carried on an extensive dental supply business. It was named the Higgins Dental Manufacturing Company, and while

orders were addressed to Bellevue, there really wasn't a company there. Orders were filled through a Toledo, Ohio firm. The Ransom and Randolph Company was a well respected dental supply house, and through them Frank carried out his business.



In the grand scheme of things, Higgins Anesthetic was a late comer to the party, seeing as he didn't develop it until around 1900. By then any number of similar articles had come and gone. It was really no different than most such compounds; a mixture that contained cocaine as its main active ingredient. Not only did he have his own anesthetic, he developed and patented a special syringe in 1904 (#781283). He was also a partner in several other inventions, but these have no direct connection to dentistry. He died in 1931, and the local paper said very little about his life. So much for fame.

As stated previously, cocaine had been around for 15 years before Higgins latched onto it. There were even patents on dental anesthetics to Ohioans. The earliest was to Eugene F. Jaques, of Burton. He was granted patent #418567 on December 31, 1889. It contained cocaine, carbolic acid, oil of wintergreen, oil of mustard, alcohol, boric acid, water, and oil of cajeput. It seems that there was some attempt to market the concoction, but on a limited scope and with questionable success.

The second patent was granted to Robert Graham et al, of Carrollton, Ohio. He was granted patent #420653, which was granted just a little over a month later (Feb 4, 1890). His formula unsurprisingly contained cocaine. It was a mixture of alcohol, glycerin, aconite, menthol, and cocaine.

No information was available on Mr. Graham, or any reports on his ability to market his formula.

This, then, brings forth the interesting difficulty with obtaining a patent on such a thing. Once it was granted no one could legally market a product with your formulation. However, proving it was based on your

patent was close to impossible. This is what likely led to the demise of these anesthetics.

On the other hand, registering a trade mark was enforceable, and it enabled the owner greater protection from encroachment.

In doing trade mark research many years ago I ran across two unusual names from Ohio. The first was something called Odontunder. It was granted as the trade name for a dental anesthetic apparently formulated by the partnership of Merriam and Cobb of Oberlin. Investigation found that these two men were an unlikely pair. Dr. Eurotus Driggs Merriam was a down to earth physician. He was born nearby at Lagrange, and when a young adult attended college at Oberlin. He eventually became part of the teaching staff. Marvin W. Cobb was nothing of the sort. He was the typical patent medicine salesman. He was born in Fredonia, New York. By the late 1880s, he was running the Cobb Medicinal Company at 107 Ottawa

cocaine. The trade mark was issued on February 18, 1890. Cobb wasted little time in promoting it. Instead of doing so in dental journals, as was common practice, he instead allowed local dentists to do the advertising for him. Whatever deal the two men had came to an end in 1897, when Dr. Merriam died. Cobb carried on the business until his death on May 19, 1909. By 1910 the Odontunder Manufacturing Company was located at 32 E. Main Street in Philadelphia.

The other anesthetic that came to my attention was called Alvatunder. I was completely unaware that there were bottles with that embossed on them, and even if I had, I would not have paid attention to them. You see, I collect only Ohio medicine bottles and this one is marked St. Louis. And yet, despite this, the man who compounded it was from Ohio. In fact he was born, raised, practiced dentistry, and died in Ohio.

His name was Charles K. Hisey. Born in Columbiana County, he was the youngest of a large family. His siblings ranged so much in age that when he was born, his oldest brother, Wilson Hisey, was already an adult. His first practice was in St Paris, Ohio.

He relocated within 8 miles of Oberlin in the 1890s. On March 19, 1896, while engaged in practice there at Wellington, Ohio, he was granted the trade mark "Alvatunder." His anesthetic was composed of 1 gram cocaine, 3 drops of phenol, 3 drops tincture of iodine, 10 grams of glycerin and sufficient water to make 100 grams. The compound may well have been based off of Merriam's, seeing the proximity of the two towns and the similarity in names.

Charles was an inventive dentist, which may or may not have been to his patient's benefit. In addition to his

ALVATUNDER
For Painless Extraction

Sold 'round the world by all good dealers at the following prices:

One Ounce,	- - - - -	\$.75
Two Ounces,	- - - - -	1.50
Ten Ounces,	- - - - -	5 00

Manufactured Only by
The Hisey Dental Mfg. Co., - St. Louis

Street in Grand Rapids, Michigan. That firm sold a "female remedy." How the two men came in contact with one another is unknown. The formula was likely Merriam's, but Cobb had the showmanship and know-how to market it.

Thus the Odontunder Manufacturing Company was born. "Odon" is Latin for tooth, and the latter half of the name is derived from the Latin word "to numb," obtundere. Though the formula was never revealed, chemical analysis at the time showed that the primary active ingredient was



anesthetic, he developed a method using tin foil to help anchor the gold in fillings, as well as other methods of making and setting teeth. But the Hisey name survives today embossed in glass. These bottles are similar to Higgins', but are about an inch taller. They are embossed Alvatunder The Hisey Dental Mfg Co. St Louis. So the question then becomes, if Charles was in Wellington, Ohio, who was the Hisey in Missouri? The answer to that took a little investigating.

It would seem that Charles set up his older brother into the dental supply business. Wilson R. Hisey was the proprietor of the Hisey Dental Mfg. Company of St Louis. With him was his son, Homer.

They opened up first in 1899 at 816 Olive street as the Hisey and Son Dental Depot. They "became" the company in 1905 and relocated to 1110 Pine. After his father's death, Homer took over, but he died in 1917. The widow Hisey ran it until around 1926 from 1528

Chestnut Street. Alvatunder was heavily advertised in dental journals, and many other products were sold under the "ALVA" heading.

Another, but more obscure anesthetic was called Arophene. The Arophene Mfg Company was located in Kingsville, Ohio around 1892. They advertised that the name was trade marked, as opposed to the previous two, which never mentioned it in their ads. The fact is, it wasn't. It was said to contain no cocaine; analysis showed it did. Later advertisements (1893) list the company at 29 W. Fifth Street, Cincinnati, some three hundred miles distant. No name has surfaced in connection with this firm.

Before I end this story, I will ask the reader to humor me for a moment as I stray slightly from the point. Bad teeth were caused by poor care and improper diet. Today, we know quite well that sugar is the leading cause of tooth decay. It is especially abundant in candy. While not as bad as some confections, chewing gum still ranks high on the dentist's "avoid" list. Some of you readers out there may already know that chewing gum, though around for centuries, was first

patented by an Ohioan.

That man was not William F. Semple of Mt Vernon, Ohio. He makes for good press because he himself was a dentist. His patent is #98304.

Look up #93141, and you will find it too is for chewing gum. It was granted to Amos H. Tyler of Toledo, Ohio. Tyler, a Michigan native, had only just moved to Toledo when he applied for the patent. It was granted in July 1869, six months before Semple's. It is questionable as to whether or not Semple ever marketed his gum, but it is a fact that Tyler did his. Tyler's mixture of olive oil and rosin hardly seems to fit into our idea of what constitutes gum.

The firm of Morse (Samuel D.) and Tyler was located at 103 Adams Street. They listed themselves as manufacturers of the Celebrated Tolu and White Rose chewing gums, as well as Lorenz's Excelsior Fruit Jar Wax. Its enough to make one wonder if a person could tell the gum from the wax!

This is especially so when you consider that outside of a flavoring, these early gums contained no sugar. It would seem that Tyler gave up on the gum and left Toledo after a few years, moving on to Adrian, Michigan.

Our Local Anesthetic, - "AROPHENE!"

(TRADE MARK.)

NO GAS DANGER † NO CHLOROFORM! † NO ETHER! BAD RESULTS! † NO PAIN!

For Teeth Extracting, Crown Setting, and Minor Surgery, AROPHENE Is Beyond a Doubt the Wonder of the Age.

During the past few months we have placed Arophene in the hands of many of the leaders of our profession, and have not had a single complaint, but all have reported universal success. The time is at hand when the profession want and must have a safe and sure Anesthetic, that they may meet the demands of the people. We say without fear of contradiction, by those competent to judge, that Arophene is the safest, surest and best, for all anesthetic purposes that has ever been found. It has been used in Dental Colleges, and is being used in many of the leading and best offices in the country with the most gratifying results. It causes no sloughing or swelling of the gums, as most preparations do, but is considered perfectly harmless. We will send any dentist a trial bottle of Arophene upon receipt of

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