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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Block-ing Pain with Jiffy Toothache Drops



Founded in Brooklyn, New York, in 1907 by Lithuanian-American pharmacist Alexander Block, the Block Drug Company shifted its headquarters in 1938 to nearby Jersey City, New Jersey. From there it produced or distributed dozens of products, including “Jiffy Toothache Drops” (above) which featured a topical anesthetic blend of benzocaine, eugenol, and menthol. (Of course the accompanying mix of chloroform in “54.2% Alcohol” also helped relieve dental pain in a “Jiffy”) After the founder’s death in 1953, Block Drug was run by his family, then traded publicly from 1971–2001, and finally sold to a pharmaceutical giant. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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