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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

### Labat and the Anglo-French Drug Company’s Neocaine



Manufactured in Paris, France, by the Corbière Laboratories (*lower right*), “PURE FRENCH NÉOCAÏNE” was a brand of the local anesthetic procaine distributed as crystals inside a glass ampoule (*high middle*) from New York City by the Anglo-French Drug Company (AFDC). Following World War I, America’s brief unhappiness with using German products (e.g., Novocaine) and the advocacy for Neocaine by French-trained Louis Gaston Labat, M.D. (1876–1934), combined to propel sales of Neocaine with Labat’s name on the box (*high left*). By 1930 the AFDC was distributing a 22-page publication, *The Safety of Spinal Anesthesia: Labat’s Technique with Neocaine*, which noted that it was “Written by a Registered Physician and Reviewed by an Authority on Spinal Anesthesia.” In a 1936 advertisement, the AFDC characterized Neocaine in the “field of spinal anesthesia” as “unequaled” and compared the product to British Guiana’s Kaieteur Falls, the world’s broadest single-drop waterfall. During World War II as America joined British and French allies, “Anglo-French” trumpeted that “Neocaine has accompanied our armies to all parts of the world.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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