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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

### The French Connection of Somnoforme: Rolland and Rousseau of Bordeaux



For producing analgesia or general anesthesia, the Dental School of Bordeaux's Professor Georges Rolland pioneered the use in 1901 of "Soemnoforme." A 12:7:1 mixture of ethyl chloride, methyl chloride, and ethyl bromide, respectively, this unusual anesthetic was manufactured for worldwide distribution by chemist A. Rousseau, also of Bordeaux. To reassure purchasers and frustrate his competitors, that chemist supplied markets worldwide with a green-colored glass bottle for Rolland's eclectic mixture with raised letters (*middle bottle*) reading: LE SOEMNOFORME / ANESTHESIQUE GENERAL / A. ROUSSEAU DE BORDEAUX. Listing the trademark as Soemnoforme or Somnoforme, the front label (*upper bottle*) cites members of the de Trey family as sales agents worldwide by about 1904. While fairly lauding its contents as "agreeable [*sic*] and sure," the back label (*lower bottle*) listed hyperbolic claims, such as Soemnoforme: (1) could be used on nonfasting patients, (2) allowed an immediate return to consciousness, and (3) presented "none of the dangerous inconveniences...[or risk of] shock by its use." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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