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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

From Benzene Rings to Political Ones: Metz and His Benzocaine, Anaesthesine



As a German-American born in New York, Herman August Metz (1867 to 1934) prospered as a manufacturer of pharmaceuticals and of dyestuffs. He produced a local anesthetic, benzocaine, the ethyl ester of para-aminobenzoic acid, which he trademarked as Anaesthesine (*left*). By embossing a benzene ring logo (*right*) on bottles of his numbing medicine, Metz hoped to frustrate competitors who might try to peddle a knock-off of his proprietary benzocaine. In the political ring, Metz frustrated Republicans by winning as a Democrat in the then largely Republican Tenth Congressional District of New York. As a Representative to the Sixty-third United States Congress (1913 to 1915), Metz favored neutrality toward Germany, a political position that fell out of favor with the start of World War I. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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