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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

From Piles of Fortune to Piles of Wood: Bangor's William E. Mann and "Ko-Kane"



Advocating topical anesthetic use of cocaine, the W. E. Mann City Drug Store of Bangor, Maine, advertised its proprietary "KO-KANE" as curing "instantly...all local pains, headache, toothache, neuralgia, etc., by merely applying to the spot that aches." After he relinquished full control of his drugstore in 1884, the year that Koller discovered cocaine anesthesia, William Edward "Doctor" Mann (1841 to 1926) turned his attention from "instant relief for itching piles" to generating piles of wood. He successfully patented a "reciprocating gang saw mill" for expanding his father-in-law's lumber business. Three decades after following his only child, a banker, to Boston, "Doctor" suffered a "long and painful illness"—apparently unrelieved by his namesake company's "KO-KANE." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator and Laureate of the History of Anesthesia, Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.