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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Planocaine: Procaine by May & Baker Ltd. of Dagenham



With John May (1809 to 1893) directing wholesale operations and William Garrad Baker (1815 to 1902) supervising manufacturing and delivery, the pharmaceutical firm of May & Baker (M&B) was founded in 1839 in London. Three years after M&B's surviving founder had passed away, Germany's Alfred Einhorn synthesized the local anesthetic procaine in 1905. Eventually, M&B became one of several non-German companies whose brands of procaine competed against Novocaine, Germany's leading procaine. The 5ml ampoule (*above*) of 2% procaine solution was branded "Planocaine" by May & Baker Ltd. and manufactured at Dagenham, East London. Planocaine was investigated in 1938 by F. R. Ferguson and K. H. Watkins after cauda equina syndromes complicated 14 spinal anesthetics with "heavy duracaine," a mixture of planocaine and glycerine with either gliadin or gum acacia. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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