
ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Haynes’ Arabian Balsam

One of America’s more unusual “analgesic” remedies, Haynes’ Arabian Balsam (above) was “entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1850, by A. Haynes, M.D.” Whether consumed in small doses internally or larger volumes externally as a liniment, the Balsam was confirmed by federal chemists to be nothing more than “a mixture of cottonseed oil, turpentine and oil of cumin.” In 1916, the company was fined $20 after pleading nolo contendere in court to fraudulently advertising its Balsam as a remedy for blindness, croup, deafness, diphtheria, erysipelas, piles, and rheumatism. So, given its name, was Haynes’ Arabian Balsam originally a Saudi salve? Absolutely not. Rather, consider how Hayes’ analgesic was orally dosed thrice daily for treating common colds: 1) a half teaspoon for men or 2) 1 fluid ounce for horses, or at least for Arabian horses. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image also appears in the Anesthesiology Reflections online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

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