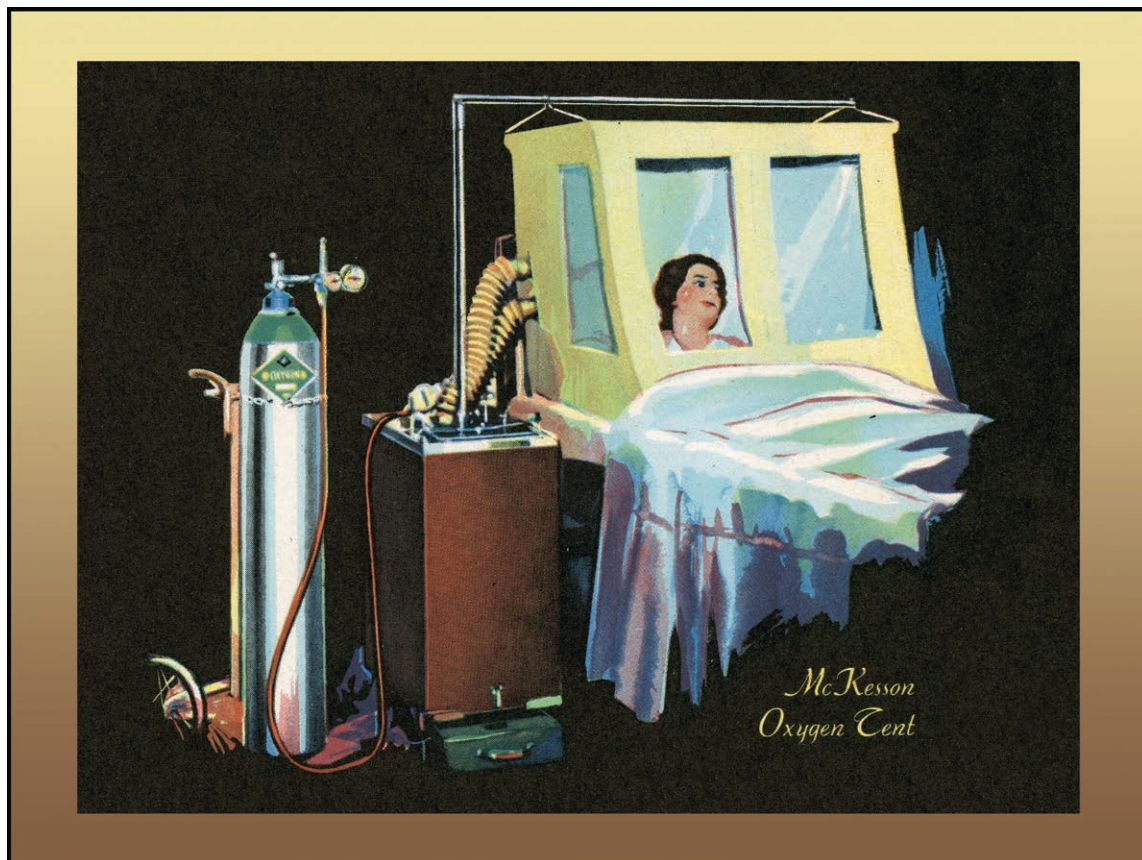


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

The McKesson Oxygen Tent: The Role of the Rubber Sheet



By the early 1930s, physician-anesthetist Elmer Isaac "Ira" McKesson, M.D. (1881 to 1935), was developing the concepts behind his McKesson Oxygen Tent (*above*). To "prevent oxygen from passing through the mattress and escaping from the tent," a rubber sheet was placed underneath the patient's sheets and mattress cover. Through a large door in the cabinet, an ice box was completely filled "with cracked ice, the size of one's fist." Then, through a smaller door in some hospital-model cabinets, the carbon-dioxide absorber was filled with soda lime and returned to the cabinet. In 1935 as he lay dying from cancer, Dr. McKesson helped decide which of his many namesake oxygenating inventions would be used to ease his labored breathing. After McKesson's death, his namesake oxygen tents were rented to hospitals by his onetime competitor, the Ohio Chemical and Manufacturing Company. A few years after Ohio's advertisement *above*, instructions for using McKesson Oxygen Tents would be included in 1943 U.S. Army manuals. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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