

Victorian Era Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry: An Advertising Trade Card Gallery

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ABSTRACT

A chief means of print advertising in the Victorian era was the “trade card.” Innumerable products, companies, and services were highlighted on colorful chromolithographic trade cards, and these became desirable collectible objects which were pasted into scrapbooks and enjoyed by many families. Dentistry- and oral health-related subjects were often depicted on Victorian trade cards, and esthetic and restorative dentistry themes were featured. This review describes the history of advertising trade cards and offers a photographic gallery of dentistry-related cards of the era.

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INTRODUCTION

In 17th and 18th century England, besides word of mouth, the only way to advertise one’s services or product was by printed announcement. Tradesmen provided information about their wares and services and identified their business locations on printed pieces of paper of varying sizes. The smaller “tradesman’s cards” were handed out and passed around while larger printed pieces, termed “broadsides,” were tacked on fences, trees, or posts around town. These early forms were printed using either a combination of letterpress script and

woodcut illustration, or more commonly by copperplate engraving. They were printed in one-color ink, usually black, and because of their ephemeral nature and mundane appearance, few have survived to this day. As engravers set up their shoppes in the colonies, American tradesmen emulated their English counterparts and the printed tradesmen cards and forms became common in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

In 1798, Alois Senefelder of Bavaria invented the lithographic process. Using a special type of smooth

Bavarian limestone rather than copperplates, it was much faster and easier to create transferable images than by the traditional engraving or etching methods of the era. Senefelder’s lithographic process was refined and improved throughout the first half of the 19th century, and commercial printing in America flourished as a result. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia became chief centers of emerging lithographic technology and commerce.

Major advances in lithography in the mid-1800s included the

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development of the “chromolithograph” (popularly called the “chromo”) and the use of steam-powered printing presses. Steam power greatly increased printing efficiency and output and the novel colorful chromos were most appealing to the public. After the American Civil War, massive population growth, Western expansion associated with the railroads, and the Industrial Revolution created an unprecedented need for print advertising.

A proliferation of advertising trade cards occurred in the 1870s, particularly in 1876, when the nation’s Centennial Exposition was held in Philadelphia. Perhaps, the pinnacle of popularity for advertising trade cards coincided with the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. The cards were very popular throughout the 1880s and 1890s; whole families collected the beautiful, colorful keepsakes and special albums were made in which to glue, save, and savor the cards. Children especially enjoyed the hobby, just as modern youngsters enjoy cartoon cards, stickers, sports cards, and cards depicting movie and television characters and stories.

Victorian trade cards were printed on medium stock and while many were smaller than a standard postcard, some were as large as a business letter. Some trade cards had a blank back (reverse), but most

featured a colorful front (obverse) image with printed text on the other side. While most cards were rectangular, embellishments such as embossing (pressed relief), die cut shapes, folding of the cards for effect (metamorphic cards), and see-through images (“hold-to-light” cards) were also important parts of the trade card art. Prang, one of the largest engraving/lithography companies of the age, led the way in selling “stock” cards; these had preprinted images and additional text could be added as the customer desired. Stock cards were produced by the millions and it is not uncommon for today’s trade card collector to see identical images on several cards with advertisements for different, unrelated products or services.

Every imaginable profession, business, trade, product, or commercial idea could be found promoted on an advertising trade card. Thread, sewing machines, fabrics, clipper ships, farm equipment, lawn mowers, tools, axle grease, furniture, hairpins, stoves, clothiers, corsets, shoes, soaps, perfumes, condensed milk, ice cream, candy, maple syrup, buttons, chewing tobacco, cocoa, coffee, tea, pickles, paint, and cures for anything and everything that ailed you could be found on cards. Charles Hires, who manufactured Hires Root Beer and Cough Cure, once bragged that he had printed over four million trade cards for his products in 1 year.

Victorian era trade cards depicting “patent” medicines are especially fascinating. Until the US Congress passed the Pure Food and Drugs Act (June 30, 1906) establishing the Food and Drug Administration, manufacturers had no restrictions on the content of their products and no regulations about what claims could be made in advertising. Opium, ethyl alcohol, cocaine, and other dangerous drugs were routinely used in remedies of the time. Incredible claims for curing abilities of the medicines were pervasive and persuasive, judging by the commercial success of such products. Pond’s Extract was touted as a cure for burns, colds, catarrh, wounds, lameness, hoarseness, piles, boils, scalds, bruises, sunburn, influenza, female complaints, itching, sprains, lame back, rheumatism, sore throat, insect stings, varicose veins, headache, old sores, chilblains, earache, toothache, faceache, nose bleed, prickly heat, inflamed eyes, hemorrhages, and sore feet. Dr. Thomas’ Eclectric Oil claimed to positively cure toothache in 5 minutes, earache in 2 minutes, backache in 2 hours, lameness in 2 days, coughs in 20 minutes, hoarseness in 1 hour, colds in 24 hours, sore throat in 12 hours, deafness in 2 days, and pain of burn or scalds in 5 minutes. Dentifrices, tooth powders, and tooth soaps were touted to preserve the teeth, make them ivory white, purify the breath, harden the gums,

prevent tooth decay, remove tartar, and it also “destroys the parasitical animalcule which neglect may have permitted to collect, and prevents their further accumulation.” Over a century later, manufacturers are still seeking the toothpaste that can live up to such claims!

Today, the preposterous promotional propaganda seen on trade cards is laughable, but in Victorian times it all was generally believed and sold much product. Overblown claims for medicines and toiletries have always represented blatant greed and dishonesty by manufacturers selfishly preying on an ignorant and unsuspecting public.

Undoubtedly, the ethyl alcohol and narcotic content of some remedies did indeed make the patient feel better, regardless whether any ills were cured. What we now call the placebo effect must have also played a role in the success of many patent medicines.

Just like modern advertisers, the printers, merchants, companies, and health professionals of the 19th century knew that colorful images of lovely women, cute animals, beautiful children, and babies attracted attention, pleased the consumer, and sold products and services. Innumerable elegant Victorian trade cards depict attractive young women and adorable healthy babies and children. Such cards were extremely popular to

collect in that era and they are equally prized among today’s collectors.

Dentistry and oral health products were well represented in the Victorian trade card genre. Breath fresheners, chewing gum with dental health claims, toothache remedies, dental parlors and companies, individual dentists, dentifrices, tooth soaps, tooth powders, toothbrushes, electric nerve pencils, teething syrups and lotions, tooth whiteners, gum hardeners, and baby food that made for “strong bones and teeth” all were advertised on trade cards.

Advertising trade cards can be acquired from flea markets, antique shops, Internet sources, or dealers specializing in “old paper.” Many cards, being over 100 years old, have some damage such as creases, stains, or tears. Residue of paper glue, used to paste the cards into albums, is sometimes evident.

Soaking such cards in water, using extreme care as not to damage the delicate paper, can often dissolve the water-soluble glue and improve a card significantly. There is some risk however; certain inks used were water soluble and soaking cards printed with such ink can dissolve the imprint.

The authors have collected dental-related Victorian advertising trade cards for many years. Many of our

favorites feature products and services related to esthetic and restorative dentistry. The text on such cards is oftentimes as remarkable as the colorful image on the card. One who believes that tooth whitening is a modern concept will be surprised to see how many Victorian dentifrices were claimed to “whiten” and preserve the teeth. Illustrations of sophisticated-looking dentures with suction retention and quack promises of comfort are seen. Dental posts and “round-house” crowns and bridges are illustrated on some cards and in some cases are astonishing in their sophistication and similarities to today’s dentistry.

The cards pictured here are representative of Victorian advertising trade cards germane to dentistry. It is impossible to precisely assign a date of production and use to many dental trade cards. However, they all date from between 1876 and 1910, with most being produced in the 1880s and 1890s. Some cards can be more accurately dated, for example, those which display a calendar or a printed date of copyright.

Besides their beauty and artistry, these cards can be appreciated as paper emissaries from the past, teaching us what dentistry and oral healthcare were like over a century ago. They give us delicate glimpses of dentistry’s history made more

endearing and eye-pleasing by the colorful artistic images and thought-provoking words that take us back to the science, art, and business of modern dentistry in its infancy.

TRADE CARD GALLERY

Figure 1 shows DOCTOR J. E. SLEGEL, DENTIST. Dr. Slegel probably never considered that this card, picturing scenes from his dental office in Reading, Pennsylvania, would be viewed and admired as a memento of dental history by his

future counterparts more than a century later.

Figure 2 shows DR. ROSS' TOOTH WASH. For 25 cents, one could purchase this remarkable tooth wash from Dr. Geo. Ross & Co. This product purportedly preserved and whitened teeth, removed tartar, prevented decay, healed sore and bleeding gums, and had no acid or injurious content.

Figure 3 shows a trade card for IVORINE. This beautiful little

cloud-nymph, adorned with butterflies and what appears to be a small sickle and straw broom, assured the card holder that IVORINE was the consummate dental product to use. Besides preserving teeth, purifying the breath, and hardening the gums, the teeth became Ivory White! This was considered a risqué card for the Victorian time.

Figure 4 shows CALVERT'S CARBOLIC TOOTH POWDER. F. C. CALVERT & CO. of Manchester, England, recommended its four different preparations for tooth preservation, breath purification, antiseptic action, and gum strengthening. The company cautioned to "BE CAREFUL OF YOUR TEETH and teach the Children to do so, in order to prevent decay with its consequent trouble and expense. . . ." How surprising it is that such a profound emphasis on preventive dentistry can be seen over a century ago. The

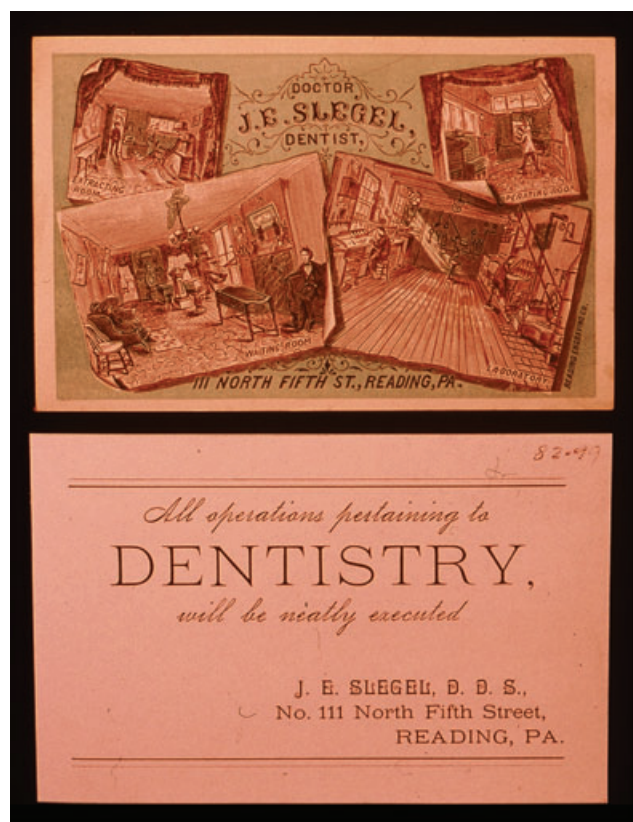


Figure 1. Doctor J. E. Slegel, dentist.

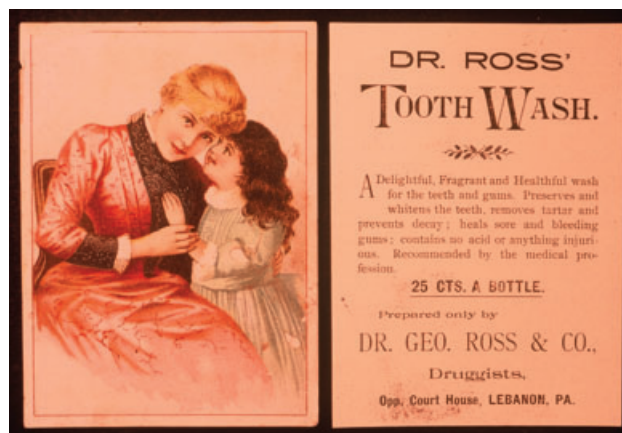


Figure 2. Dr. Ross' Tooth Wash.

artist's portrayal of an ideal smile looks remarkably like the overly bulked, excessively white porcelain veneers sometimes seen today.

Figure 5 shows the trade card for HERBERT, PAINLESS DENTIST. There were "2 Expert Mechanical

Dentists" in this Detroit, Michigan, office who made "a Specialty of Fine Work in ARTIFICIAL TEETH." Materials used were "GOLD, PLATINUM, RUBBER AND CELLULOID" with "*Porcelain Continuous-Gum*." Treatment here was painless, thanks to

HURD'S FAMOUS VITALIZED AIR, which "Positively" was used only in that office! The lovely lady on the front points out her splendid smile, courtesy of Dr. Herbert.

Figure 6 shows RICKSECKER'S DENTAROMA. After the 1885



Figure 3. Ivorine.



Figure 4. Calvert's Carbolic Tooth Powder.



Figure 5. Herbert, painless dentist.



Figure 6. Ricksecker's Dentaroma.

opening of W. S. Gilbert's and Sir Arthur Sullivan's *The Mikado* in London, the three characters, Yum-Yum, Pitty-Sing, and Peep-Bo were featured in many advertising campaigns. These three beautiful women, "can Never be persuaded to use anything for our Teeth but RICKSECKER'S DENTAROMA." This "Most Luscious Liquid For Teeth & Breath" "POSITIVELY CONTAINS NO ACID . . ." and "REPLACES ALL UNPLEASANT MOUTH ODORS AND TASTE WITH A DELICIOUS AROMA." Using DENTAROMA daily gave you "CLEAN SOUND WHITE TEETH, ROSY GUMS AND SWEET BREATH." Trade cards showing people with toothbrushes in hand are rare.

Figure 7 shows Van Buskirk's *Sozodont FOR THE TEETH AND*

BREATH. This "charming and well-known woman" (actress? singer?) is obviously very satisfied after brushing her teeth with Sozodont. For "more than 40 years, Sozodont has been the favorite dentifrice among people of refinement." Supplied in powder or liquid, this wonderful preparation "preserves the teeth, sweetens the breath, hardens the gums, and produces a delightfully refreshing sensation in the mouth."

Figure 8 shows Cressler's Wild Rose Tooth Powder. This "FRAGRANT! HARMLESS! HEALTHFUL!" dentifrice cleansed the teeth and purified, perfumed, and sweetened the breath. In addition, it removed tartar, hardened the gums, and whitened the teeth. It contained nothing harmful and was "used by the principal dentists of the United

States, who unhesitatingly pronounce it one of the finest preparations extant."

Figure 9 shows DENTOLIO. It was not unusual for Victorian advertisers to use poetry in their sales pitch. "Can you tell me, my sweet sister, Why our charming city girls, Have teeth so white and snowy, Shining like the rarest pearls?" "Why yes my dearest brother, Our great secret you shall know, We clean them every morning With the great DENTOLIO."

Figure 10 shows A. HAWLEY'S SOLIDIFIED DENTAL CREAM. "Eminent Dentists (whose testimonials accompany each package)" recommend this marvelous dental cream. It was safe and it cleaned, whitened, and preserved the teeth, neutralized offensive odor from decayed teeth, removed tartar



Figure 7. Van Buskirk's *Sozodont for the Teeth and Breath*.



Figure 8. *Cressler's Wild Rose Tooth Powder*.

gradually, and healed sore gums. It was “a most desirable toilet article.”

Figure 11 shows LYON’S CREME ODONTIQUE (THE ELITE

DENTIFRICE). Chemist George R. Lyon manufactured “This elegant and agreeable preparation” and it was “put up in collapsible tubes, wrapped in old gold foil.” When

used frequently, the dentifrice was claimed to “give a brilliant whiteness to the teeth, prevent decay, and pre-serve the gums in a firm and healthy condition.”

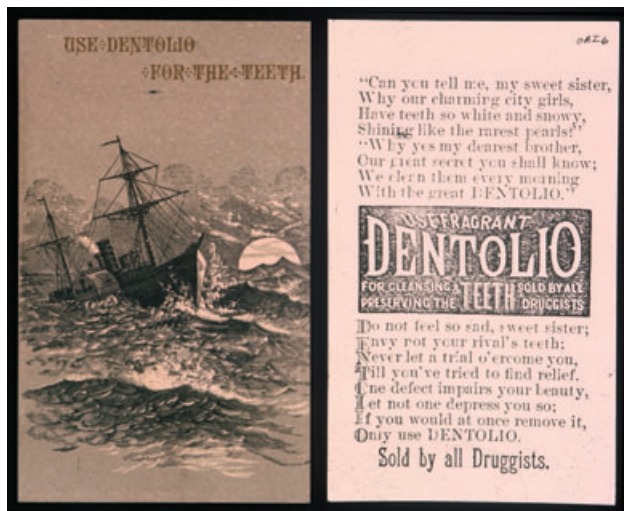


Figure 9. Dentolio.

Figure 12 shows BEAN & PERRY’S CORAL TOOTH POWDER. This remarkable preparation “speedily renders the teeth white and smooth.” It also “destroys the parasitical animalcule which neglect may have permitted to collect, and prevents their further accumulation, thus serving as a complete beautifier and preserver of the teeth.”

Figure 13 shows GRANT L. KEYSER, SURGEON DENTIST. Dr. Keyser apparently knew a lot about the esthetic value of dentistry



Figure 10. A. Hawley's Solidified Dental Cream.



Figure 11. Lyon's Creme Odontique (The Elite Dentifrice).



Figure 13. Grant L. Keyser, surgeon dentist.



Figure 12. Bean & Perry's Coral Tooth Powder.

in marketing his services. The “with” and “without” teeth visages are quite graphic in displaying the esthetic value of teeth. “REMEMBER — 2 Doors above the Post Office” on “Main Street, Jersey Shore, Pa.”

Figure 14 shows a trade card for NEW YORK DENTAL PARLORS.

This “foldover” metamorphic card from the Philadelphia office of the New York Dental Parlors, when bent into its several configurations, dramatically depicts what esthetic dental services could achieve. Emphasis is placed on how diseased teeth can ruin the appearance of an otherwise beautiful female face. Gold fillings were \$1.00 and silver

fillings cost \$0.50. In addition, “PAIN IS UNKNOWN” at this establishment.

Figure 15 shows the PEARLETTO TOOTH POWDER. Topeka, Kansas, druggist Frank Hobart concocted this tooth-cleaning formulation that was deemed a “splendid preparation” by four local dentists.





**WE ARE MAKING A SPECIALTY OF
TEETH WITHOUT PLATES**

this modern, most beautiful, painless and durable of all dental work known to the profession. Our name alone will be a guarantee that your work will be of the best, as no students will be employed by us. We have a specialist in each department.

SEVEN SKILLED OPERATORS IN CONSTANT ATTENDANCE, NO WAITING

NEW YORK DENTAL PARLORS
1208 CHESTNUT STREET,
#PP CHESTNUT ST. THEATRE, PHILADELPHIA



Fold at dotted line and fold over picture on opposite side to see result

SAVE THIS CARD

And bring it with you to

THE NEW YORK DENTAL PARLORS

It will entitle you to the Painless Extraction of One Tooth

FREE OF CHARGE

We make this inducement that you may become acquainted with our Elegant and Modern Dental Parlors, where

PAIN IS UNKNOWN

and everything is arranged for your comfort and convenience

SET OF TEETH	\$5.00
GOLD FILLINGS	1.00
SILVER	.50
GOLD CROWNS	\$3.00 TO 5.00

NO CHARGE FOR PAINLESS EXTRACTING WHEN TEETH ARE ORDERED.

BRING THIS CARD WITH YOU.

NEW YORK DENTAL PARLORS
1208 CHESTNUT STREET,
OPP. CHESTNUT ST. THEATRE, PHILADELPHIA.

Be sure you are in the right place.

Largest Dental Establishment in the World. 18 offices in the United States. Open daily from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M. Sundays from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M.

Figure 14. New York Dental Parlors.



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USE

PEARLETTO TOOTH POWDER

Recommended by Topeka Dentists.

Having examined Pearletto Tooth Powder, we find it to be a splendid preparation for the teeth.

G. F. ASHTON, D. D. S.
F. H. ORBERT, D. D. S.
A. W. CALLAGHAN, D. D. S.
C. B. HERR, D. D. S.

Pearletto Tooth Powder perfumes the breath, removes tartar, cures spongy and bleeding gums; also retraction of gums; preserves and whitens the enamel; does not contain anything that will scratch or injure the teeth.

Prepared by **FRANK HOBART, Druggist.**
500 W. TENTH STREET, TOPEKA, KAS.

Figure 15. Pearletto Tooth Powder.

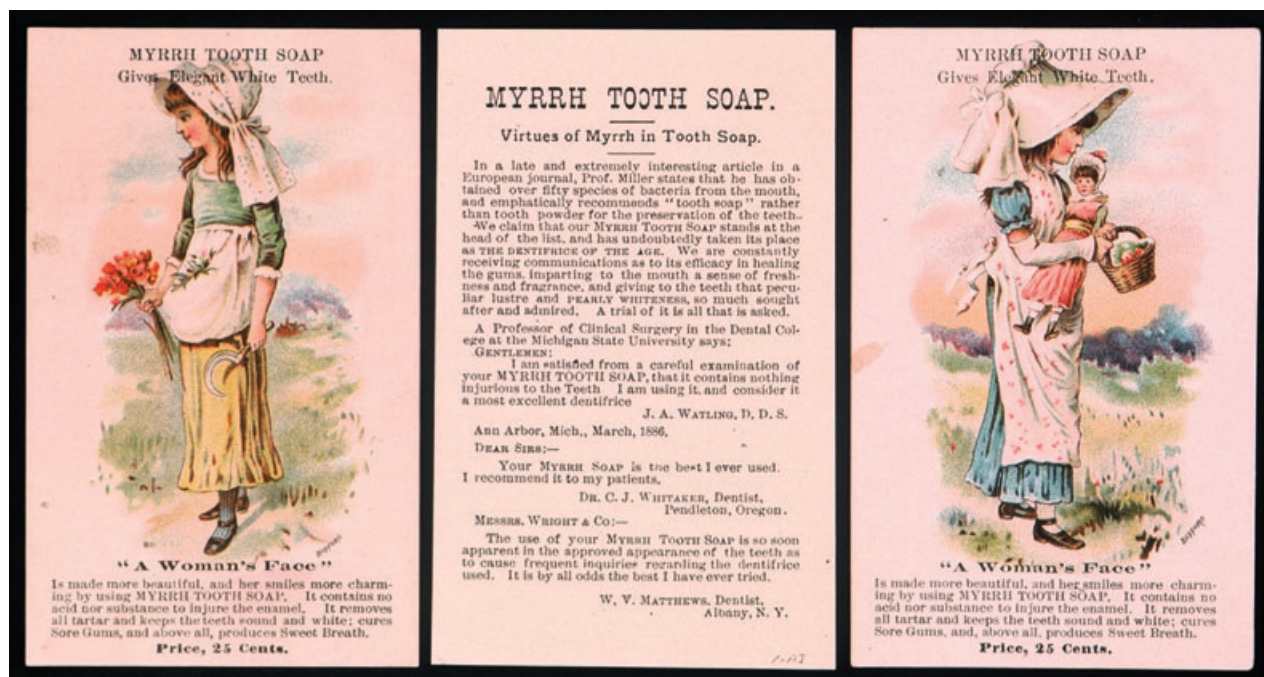


Figure 16. Myrrh Tooth Soap.



Figure 17. Urling Bros.

Containing nothing to injure or scratch the teeth, Pearletto perfumed the breath, removed tarter, cured and "retracted" spongy and "bleedy" gums, and preserved and whitened the enamel.

Figure 16 shows the MYRRH TOOTH SOAP. For only \$0.25, one could purchase this tooth soap, which gave "the teeth that peculiar lustre and PEARLY WHITENESS, so much sought after and

admired." Three prominent dentists endorsed the product that claimed "A Woman's Face Is made more beautiful, and her smiles more charming by using MYRRH TOOTH SOAP." "It removes all tartar and keeps the teeth sound and white; cures Sore Gums, and, above all, produces, Sweet Breath."

Figure 17 shows a trade card of the URLING BROS. In three large offices, the Urling Brothers offered a variety of services. "GOOD TEETH" could be had for \$5.00 and \$8.00 would buy the "BEST TEETH." "GOLD FILLING" cost \$1.00 up and "SILVER" was half as much. Today, one wonders why those Class II restorations (lesions?)

were pictured in the maxillary denture.

Figure 18 shows G. S. COURTRIGHT, DDS. Dr. Courtright's office was "The only place in the County where you can get Teeth Without Plates, by the PERFECT CROWNING SYSTEM." The front of this card pictures Machinery Hall at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Dr. Courtright is known to have attended the World's Columbian Dental Congress held in conjunction with the exposition.

Figure 19 shows DR. HOWARD EMERY ADAMS, POPULAR-

PRICED DENTIST. Dr. Adams chose the "bookmark" format for his trade card. His portrait and one of his "ANCHOR DENTURE PLATES," with "-NO ROOF-" are shown. The "Dr. Adams Alveolar Method of naturally and painlessly replacing your lost teeth" made "Your restored teeth seem to grow out of your gums, just as do your own natural teeth." Dr. Adams claimed his fees to be one half of those of other dentists and he even offered Sunday hours!

Figure 20 shows J. B. MCCASKEY, DENTIST. Dr. McCaskey artistically illustrated the type of crown

and bridge dentistry offered in his Lancaster, Pennsylvania, office. The similarities to modern fixed prostheses is remarkable, considering the dentistry pictured is 115 years old.

Figure 21 shows a trade card of the ALBANY DENTAL ASSOCIATION. This dental company had offices in many cities in the United States. They claimed that "With modern methods Dentistry has no terrors." The tooth models, picturing full crowns and posts, suggest that today's concepts of "modern" may have had their start over a century ago.

Figure 22 shows another trade card of the ALBANY DENTAL ASSOCIATION. Two other cards from the Allentown, Pennsylvania, office depict beautiful children in colorful garb. "REASONABLE CHARGES"

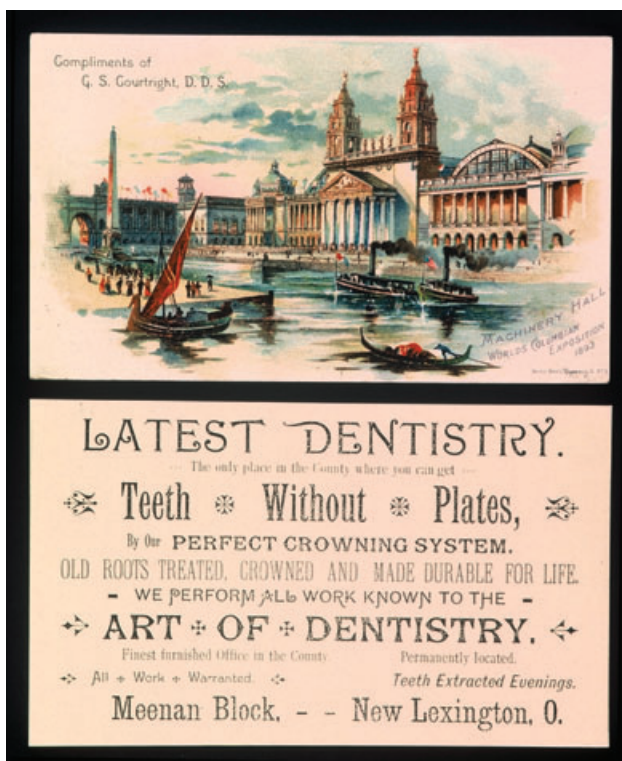


Figure 18. G. S. Courtright, DDS.



Figure 19. Dr. Howard Emery Adams, popular-priced dentist.



Figure 20. J. B. McCaskey, dentist.



Figure 22. Albany Dental Association.

included extractions without pain for \$0.25, silver fillings for \$0.50 and up, gold fillings for \$1.00 and up, "Set Teeth" for \$5.00, and the "Best Red Rubber Set" for \$8.00.

Figure 23 shows the PHILADELPHIA DENTAL PARLORS. Dr. B. H. Pearce of York, Pennsylvania, offered "Natural life-like Teeth that fit and last a life time at Prices to



Figure 21. Albany Dental Association.

suite you." The maxillary prosthesis pictured on this card demonstrates the complexity and sophistication of prosthetic dental care in the Victorian era.

Figure 24 shows ALBANY DENTISTS. Puzzle cards were popular in Victorian times. Hidden in the illustration are Robinson Crusoe, his gun, a cat, a dog, a monkey, a parrot, a chicken, and a clown. The Albany Dentists in this Ohio office had much concern about esthetic dentistry, as evidenced by their observation: "WE CAN'T TALK Without showing our Teeth. In order not be ashamed of them go to



Figure 23. Philadelphia Dental Parlors.

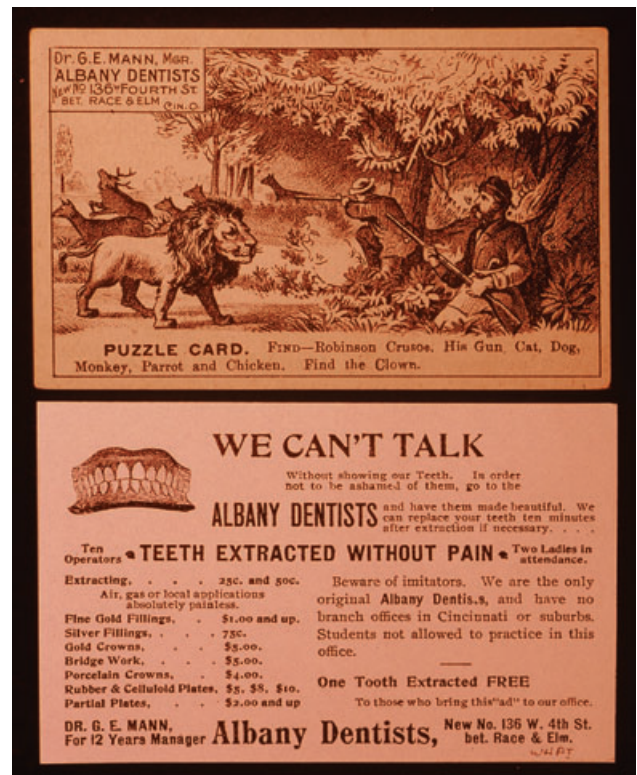


Figure 24. Albany Dentists.

the ALBANY DENTISTS and have them made beautiful. We can replace your teeth in ten minutes after extraction if necessary. . . . In addition, one extraction would be 'FREE' To those who bring this 'ad' to our office." What a deal!


Figure 25 shows the ALBANY DENTAL ASSOCIATION. This puzzle card challenged the observer to find a camel, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, three dogs, a frog, owl, two hogs, an alligator, a kid, and the office of Albany Dentists in Detroit! Artificial teeth could be made "on Gold, Rubber

and Celluloid." Addresses for 15 Albany Dental offices are listed.

Figure 26 shows ALBANY DENTIST. The cantilevered lateral incisor and post structure portray the crown and bridge capabilities of this Chicago dental office. Dr. James M. Burke's establishment was "open at all hours" and could provide painless dentistry with the use of "DR. HILL'S vitalized air," which anyone could "take it with perfect safety, young or old." Note the beautiful color and lovely Victorian outfit worn by the girl.

Figure 27 shows NEW YORK DENTISTS. This Buffalo, New York, office pictured bridge work that was as good as natural teeth. They also guaranteed painless extracting my use of "VITALIZED AIR" or by application of "OBTUNDER to the gums." The message on the front of the card has a double meaning; in Victorian times "to draw a tooth" meant to extract it.

Figure 28 shows a trade card for the NEW YORK DENTAL CO. Anthropomorphic "vegetable people" cards were quite popular, and



PUZZLE CARD.—Find Camel, Elephant, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, Three Dogs, Frog, Owl, Calf, Two Hogs, Alligator, Kid and the **Office of the Albany Dentists, 166 Woodward Ave., cor. Gratiot, Detroit, Mich.** (OVER)

LATEST DENTISTRY

Full Gum, Elegant Sets of Teeth, \$4, \$6 and \$8.
(Old Time Prices for Same, \$10, \$20 and \$30.)
Artificial Teeth on Gold, Rubber and Celluloid.

Teeth filled with Gold a Specialty.	\$1.00 and upwards
Teeth filled with White Enamelled Filling.	.50 and 75c.
Teeth Cleaned.	.75 and upwards
Teeth Extracted.	.25
Vitalized Air Administered.	.50

Temporary Sets, which look well, and can be worn with comfort, inserted in ten minutes after teeth have been extracted.

OFFICES:
166 Woodward Ave., cor. Gratiot, Detroit, Mich.
124 W. Fourth St., Cincinnati, O.
2124 Penn Square, Reading, Pa.
118 N. Salina St., Syracuse, N. Y.
148 Market St., Paterson, N. J.
Over 1st Nat. Bank, Binghamton, N. Y.
Over 1st Nat. Bank, Scranton, Pa.
State and Warren Sts., Trenton, N. J.

Branches of the Albany Dental Association, the Largest Dental Establishment in the World.
These Offices are Permanently Located. All Work Warranted. Office Open All Hours. Lady in Attendance.

Figure 25. Albany Dental Association.



The Latest Style in Dentistry

GOLD TEETH CAPPED WITH GOLD
No Teeth Without Plates
By the Latest Capping System.
—No Pains—
Durable, Comfortable and Beautiful.
Fine Gold Filling a Specialty.

Teeth filed and extracted without pain by the use of Dr. Hill's vitalized air, made fresh every day and perfectly harmless. As you can take it with perfect safety, young or old.

—One of Teeth on Gold Plate at \$10.00 at \$20.00—
Beautiful Sets of Teeth on Rubber Plate ranging in price from \$5.00 to \$15.00.


Fine Gold Fillings, \$1.00 and upwards.
Fine Silver Filling, 75 cents and upwards.
Vitalized Air Administered, 50 cents.

ALL WORK WARRANTED.
Teeth examined by first class operators and advice given free. By leaving your name for Artificial Teeth in the morning you can get them the same day.

CHARGE IN THREE INSTANT CENTS.
Chicago Office—
127 S. STATE STREET.
Between Monroe and Madison.
JAMES S. DECKER, D. D. S.
Manager of this Office.
On calling please bring this card.

Figure 26. Albany Dentist.


this “Peaches & Cream” card is a good example. The evening hours and dividing payments over time as “Dental Inducements” are reminders that some business aspects of modern dentistry also had their roots in the 1800s.



NEW YORK DENTISTS

384 Main St., BUFFALO, N. Y.

BRIDGE WORK



When one or more teeth need replacing the best way to do it is to have what dentists call a bridge. In appearance and usefulness, teeth put in by this method are as good as natural ones.

TALK TO US ABOUT IT.

PAINLESS EXTRACTING

A special feature with us by applying OBTUNDER to the gums, or by using VITALIZED AIR, which we make fresh every day and guarantee to be absolutely safe.

OUR PRICES

TEETH / A Good Set.	\$5.00	Platina Fillings.	1.00
Best Set.	8.00	Gold Fillings.	1.00 up.
Teeth Extracted.	.25	Teeth Cleaned.	.75
Vitalized Air.	.50	Gold Crowns.	5.00 and up.
Silver Fillings.	.75		

All work done by operators of experience and ability.

Figure 27. New York Dentists.

Figure 29 shows DR. DECKER'S DENTAL ROOMS. Colorful illustrations of children, flowers, and pretty women were frequently pictured on trade cards. Such images were eye-catching and pleasant and brought attention to the message on the card. Not only could you have “Teeth put in without plates by our perfect Crowning System, most beautiful, substantial and lasting” but Dr. Decker's office would “pay car fare one way when \$5.00 worth of work is done.”

Figure 30 shows DR. HARRY C. WEBB. This beautiful woman beckoned patients to the office of this

Syracuse, New York, dentist. Dr. Webb offered not only free consultation and examination, but "Teeth that Last a Lifetime." Like in many

offices of the time, women could feel secure because there was a "LADY ATTENDANT" on the premises.



Figure 28. New York Dental Co.

Figure 31 shows the KING DENTAL CO. A 10-year guarantee was promised for full sets of teeth in this Hartford, Connecticut, office. Dr. King claimed to "Restore Teeth that are broken down to beauty and usefulness with crowns of Porcelain and Gold. The teeth are prepared and the Crown or Bridge-work inserted without a particle of pain." Dr. King offered "Painless Extraction Free" and Sunday hours and also had a Lady Attendant.

Figure 32 shows L. T. SHEFFIELD, DMD. This New York dentist offered sophisticated crown and bridge work and also his "Dr. Sheffield's Creme Dentifrice," "the best ever produced for the purpose

Compliments of
Dr. Decker's Dental Rooms
39 COURT STREET
BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

ROSE *BEAUTY*

Specialists in Crown and Bridge Work

DR. DECKER'S
Dental Rooms
39 Court St., Binghamton, N. Y.

BRIDGE WORK **Gold Crowns**
...AND... **Bridge Work**
PER TOOTH \$5.

Teeth put in without plates by our perfect Crowning System, most beautiful, substantial and lasting. We especially call the attention of the nervous and delicate, also children, to our Painless System of Dentistry in all its branches.

PRICES

Best Set of Teeth on Rubber Base	\$8.00
A Good Set at	5.00
Partial Sets of Teeth	\$2.00 and up

NOTE—Our best sets are the best that can be made on rubber, and there are no better made, no matter what you pay.

Teeth Extracted, Painless	25 cents
Vitalized Air for Painless Extracting	50 cents
Teeth Cleaned	75 cents
Teeth Filled with Amalgam	50 cents
Teeth Filled with Silver	75 cents
Teeth Filled with Gold	\$1.00 and up
Broken Plates Repaired	\$1.00

EXPERIENCED DENTISTS
LADY IN ATTENDANCE
Open Evenings—Sundays 10 to 1

We are the Painless Dentists and can Extract and Fill your Teeth without the least pain
We pay car fare one way when \$5.00 worth of work is done

Compliments of
Dr. Decker's Dental Rooms
39 COURT STREET
BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

HYACINTH *JEALOUSY*

Specialists in Crown and Bridge Work

Figure 29. Dr. Decker's Dental Rooms.



Figure 30. Dr. Harry C. Webb.



Figure 31. King Dental Co.



Figure 32. L. T. Sheffield, DMD.

of cleaning the teeth.” The dentifrice was “especially intended to prevent deposits of tartar from accumulating around the teeth and upon their roots.” Lucius T. Sheffield, an 1877 graduate of Harvard University Dental School (the first to use the DMD degree), is widely believed to be the first to package toothpaste in tubes in

1892. However, an Austrian firm predated Sheffield by 5 years! The double cantilever and thin short posts in the illustration make one wonder about the retention and potential longevity of such prostheses.

Figure 33 shows the PHILADELPHIA DENTISTS. This adorable

little girl invited one and all to the Sunbury, Pennsylvania, office of the Philadelphia Dentists. With claims such as “Gold Fillings and Bridge Work a Specialty” and “TEETH EXTRACTED POSITIVELY WITHOUT PAIN,” how could anyone resist this sparkling, pudgy, rosy-cheeked little visage?

Figure 34 shows the PHILADELPHIA DENTAL PARLORS. This card is another example of how Victorian advertisers chose lovely children, flowers, and beautiful colors for attention. Dr. Pearce of York, Pennsylvania (see Figure 23), pictured this complete maxillary prosthesis to be cantilevered off of two molars. One must wonder if his optimism exceeded his knowledge of biomechanics.

Figure 35 shows a trade card for DR. DECKER'S DENTAL

ROOMS. Superficially, this card has an eye-catching pleasant image. And, why not? Dr. Decker sensitively offered his wonderful crown and bridge work and multiple dental services to “the nervous and delicate, also children.” However, he also distributed this stock advertising card displaying a beautiful young girl about to convert two

adorable little kittens into fondue. Dr. Decker was obviously a very funny or somewhat demented dentist, or perhaps both.

Figure 36 shows a trade card for the KING DENTAL PARLORS. This balding, tattooed hobo golfer served as an unusual emissary for “Premier Painless Dentist,” Dr.

Thomas Jefferson King, in Boston, Massachusetts. The unique heart-shaped configuration of the internal aspect of the “NATURAL GUMS” denture was probably some kind of retention aid.

Figure 37 shows the HARVARD DENTAL PARLORS. This Elmira, New York, dental establishment offered this trade card with the identical text and prosthesis illustration shown on Dr. Decker’s trade cards (see Figures 29 and 35). Perhaps there was a business relationship between the two offices, or more likely, a slick trade card salesperson was able to sell the same advertising text to both dental offices, but printed on different stock cards.

Figure 38 shows ALBANY DENTISTS. This Lancaster, Pennsylvania,



Figure 33. Philadelphia Dentists.



Figure 34. Philadelphia Dental Parlors.



Figure 35. Dr. Decker's Dental Rooms.

nia, trade card is of the “die cut” variety. To further the attraction of trade cards, printers offered special die cutting designs, and other

embellishments such as embossing (pressed relief) and metamorphics (folding or otherwise movable parts to the card).



Figure 36. King Dental Parlors.

Figure 39 shows THE PROGRESSIVE DENTAL PARLORS. This metamorphic two-piece puzzle card challenged the user to “TAKE THIS CARD OFF WITHOUT CUTTING, BREAKING or UNTYING THE STRING.” The “FULL SETS OF TEETH That Fit, including Double Suction” were only \$5.00. The figure on the card shows a happy patient strutting, with all the money he saved at Progressive Dental Parlors hanging out of his pockets.

Figure 40 shows DR. STOUGHTON. From the looks of this mandibular denture, Dr. Stoughton of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, relied on his “PATENT GOLD CLASPS” to assist in reten-



Figure 37. Harvard Dental Parlors.



Figure 38. Albany Dentists.

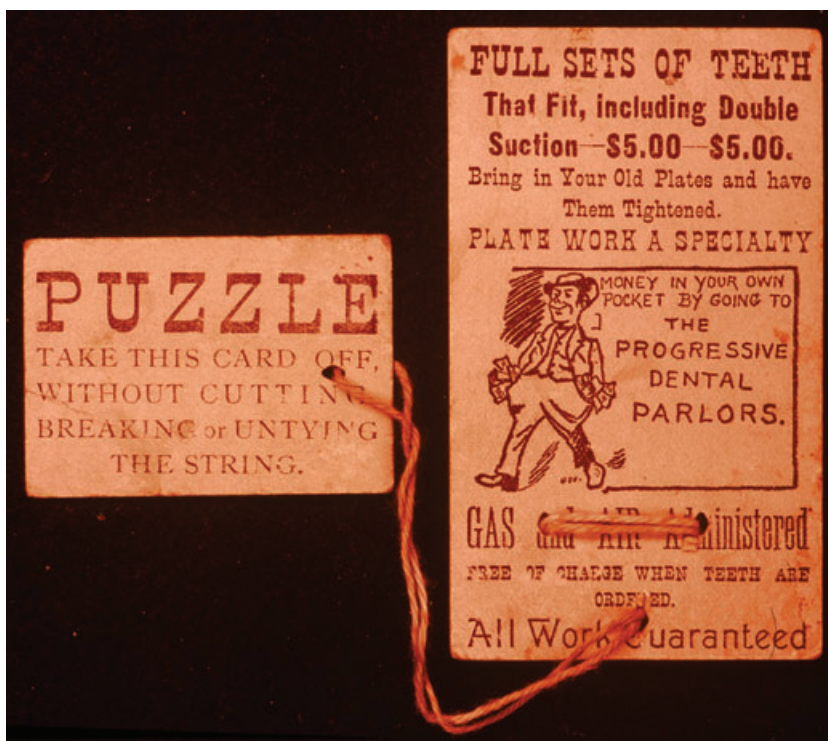


Figure 39. The Progressive Dental Parlors.

tion. With “OVER 300 TEETH EXTRACTED DAILY WITHOUT PAIN,” one must wonder how there was any time for flossing instructions for patients who were lucky enough to have two teeth

contacting, after Dr. Stoughton’s treatment.

Figure 41 shows BOSTON DENTAL PARLORS. This alluring picture of Tilly Rogers (an actress of

the time?) attracted patients to this Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, dental parlor. Along with never wedging the teeth before filling, artificial noses and palates were made here. Patients could “come in the morning and wear their teeth home the same day,” and “Any advice in regard to the teeth given free.”

Figure 42 shows DR. H. J. DESAXE, DENTIST. This sensational anthropomorphic “flower person” beckons one and all to Dr. DeSaxe’s Dental Parlors offering “GAS AND COCAINE” for painless tooth extraction, “TEETH FILLED WITH GOLD, PLATINA AND WHITE ENAMEL,” and “NEW TOOTH CROWNS AND PIVOTS.” In the spirit of one-stop shopping, “FRUITEN FRUIT TOOTH PASTE” was also available for 50 cents per pot, along with “instant cure” toothache drops for 25 cents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Rather than making specific citations, the authors offer suggested readings about Victorian era advertising trade cards. We borrowed heavily from the work of Professor Robert Jay. His 1987 book is the definitive text about advertising trade cards and was invaluable to us while preparing this article. The books by Kit Barry and Dave Cheadle also added useful historical information. We gratefully acknowledge these trade card scholars.



Figure 40. Dr. Stoughton.

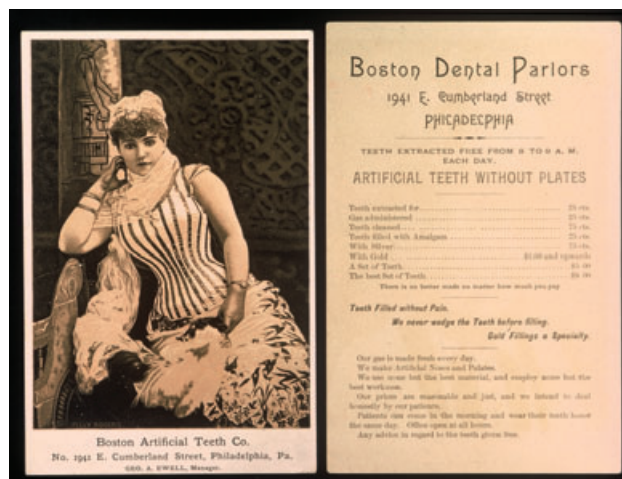


Figure 41. Boston Dental Parlors.



Figure 42. Dr. H. J. DeSaxe, dentist.

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Most of the trade cards pictured here have not been published before, but a large part of the introductory text of this article is reprinted from Croll TP, Swanson BZ. Babies, children and dentistry on Victorian-era advertising trade cards. J Dent Child 1999;66(Sept/Oct):305–19.

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