Fast forward: 130 years later, in 1813, Mrs. Kemball discovers a trap door hiding the forceps.

Mr. Cardawine, surgeon, presents forceps to Medical and Chirurgical Society of London. Original sets reside in RCOG, 27 Sussex Place, Regent’s Park, London.

Fast forward: 268 years later, midwives of England are granted guild status in 1902.
The Ethics

- It was common then to have secret remedies
- Harvey
- Theodore Turquet de Mayerne
- Chapman

The Ethics

- Laenec – 1816 the stethoscope
- Ian Donald – 1946 clinical ultrasound

The Ethics

- Patents protect the inventor for 14 years
- Patents assure public domain thereafter
- US Patent Office introduction states the “Chamberlens’ forceps would not have been secret if they had been able to patent them.”
- FACT: Chamberlens had many patents. They chose a different approach for the forceps – secrecy.

The Chamberlens’ Secret

- Judging the ethics of three centuries ago is complex
- The fact that the family held five patents on other inventions does not support beneficence

The Chamberlens’ Secret

- Family secrets are understandable but the magnitude of depriving a lifesaving invention from the world for thirteen decades can generate no reasonable or credible support

The Chamberlen’s Secret

- Invention of the forceps allowed trained men to enter the all female world of childbirth
- This innovative device was driven by a passion to improve the birth process but tainted by a desire for personal wealth
- How many lives were saved by forceps?
- How many were lost by keeping it secret?
OBSTETRICAL FORCEPS

Throughout the 19th and 20th century forceps had an increasingly important role in obstetrics. Cesarean section was initially performed in the 1800s but was generally fatal until the early 1900s.

Operative Vaginal Delivery


FORCEPS SIMULATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- In his O&G editorial Shad Deering asks
  - 1. What is the best way to train health care providers?
  - “Simulation is the key component.”
  - 2. Why are forceps not being used more?
  - Lack of confidence due to inadequate training/use and viewed more dangerous by lay press.
- Vol 128, no. 3 September 2016. OBS & GYN

Simulation Training for Forceps-Assisted Vaginal Delivery and Rates of Maternal Perineal Trauma

- A retrospective cohort study of a novel simulation curriculum for obs residents.
- It revealed a reduction of 22% in severe perineal lacerations among women delivered by residents completing simulation training versus those who had not. (OR) 0.78 p = 0.05
- Grossatt DR et al. Vol 128, no. 3, September 2016. O&G

Obstetric Forceps: a Species on the Brink of Extinction

- Current residency requirements are insufficient to ensure competency
- Solutions:
  - 1. abandon attempts to teach forceps - OR
  - 2. high fidelity simulation models which fetal head size and attitude, and pelvic size and architecture are varied
- Dixey GA, Belfort MA, Clark, SL. Current Commentary
- Vol 128, no. 3. Sept 2016 Obstetrics & Gynecology