

conspiracy theorists think they know who these people were. Pick any book from the anti-fluoridation bookshelf, read any one of a hundred articles, or bring up any anti-fluoride webpage at random; it will not be long before you encounter one of the four *bête noires* of the anti-fluoridation movement: Andrew Mellon, Gerald Cox, Oscar Ewing, or Edward Bernays.¹⁶ So here follows, in somewhat abbreviated form, their tangled tale. Most readers will probably find the alleged kinship between these men a bit thin, but if you have a suspicious turn of mind, you may find it seductive.

The earliest villain in the alleged rogue's gallery is Andrew W. Mellon, one of the founders of Alcoa and a major stockholder in the company, who in 1925 became Secretary of the Treasury in the federal cabinet. At that time, the Public Health Service fell under Treasury jurisdiction, and it is one of the tenets of anti-fluoridation lore that Mellon influenced the direction of the emerging dental research program and pointed it down the road to fluoridation, to the greater benefit of the aluminum industry. It is also during this period that Andrew and Richard Mellon established the Mellon Institute, an applied science laboratory that was heavily funded by industry and purportedly catered to their needs.¹⁷ Some of the most influential pro-fluoride research was carried out at the Mellon Institute.

Gerald J. Cox was a biochemist who worked at the Mellon Institute, where some of his research was allegedly funded by Alcoa. He was one of the first scientists to carry out experiments on rats that proved the efficacy of fluoride in reducing dental caries.¹⁸ He became a strong supporter of the fluoridation movement, and prepared several pro-fluoridation research summaries for both state and federal government review boards. It was Cox who is generally given credit (or blame) for first proposing the systematic fluoridation of public water supplies.¹⁹ Anti-fluoridationists find it significant that this first proposal came from Cox, who was "not a doctor, not a dentist, but an industry scientist working for a company threatened by fluoride damage claims."²⁰

The Mellon Institute is not the only industrial laboratory that is censured in anti-fluoridation literature. The Kettering Laboratory, located at the University of Cincinnati, also raises their ire. This laboratory was established in 1930 to carry out contract research on chemical hazards that arise in industrial operations. Anti-fluoridationists charge that it is little more than a lobby group for industry. Considerable research was carried out in the early years at Kettering on the toxicology of fluoride, and most of it minimized the possibility of health impacts. It was the Kettering Laboratory that was responsible for the alleged sanitization of abstracts uncovered by Darlene Sherrell,