Malleable and Inert
Gold has long been the preferred material for fillings and crowns. Durable and easily shaped, it doesn’t react to foods or body fluids. Suppliers advertised gold that was rolled, beaten, cohesive, non-cohesive, crystal, cylinder and corrugated depending on the dentist’s needs.

Annoying Improves Workability
Heat from the annealing lamp removed internal stresses from the gold after it had been hammered into shape. It was often used to heat gold just before packing it into prepared cavities.

Expert Metallurgists
Using a rolling mill, dentists rolled gold to increase its workability. By using heat and pressure, gold could be prepared for filling teeth or creating crowns.

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Other Outstanding in Every Way
seen here grinding tooth sections in his laboratory, Greene Vardiman Black was an innovator and founder of modern dentistry. Almost completely lacking in formal schooling, he taught himself chemistry, microbiology and metallurgy in order to research and test his ideas. As a professor and dean of Northwestern University’s Dental School, Black influenced generations of students.

Using Mercury Safely
Amalgam is mostly composed of silver and tin with smaller amounts of copper, zinc or gold. It relies on mercury, a heavy metal, to bind these metals. This mercury expresser removed excess mercury just before filling the tooth. Despite concerns about mercury’s safety, amalgam is a remarkably stable substance that has not been proven to have harmful effects.

A Handy Formulation
The S.S. White Dental Manufacturing Co. worked directly with G. V. Black to create True Dentalloy according to Black’s formula. “True Dentalloy,” composed of silver, tin, copper and zinc, was introduced in 1900. The mercury was added just before use.

Comfortable and Secure
Dentists experimented with artificial teeth for centuries. They struggled to find a product that held teeth firmly and was comfortable and long lasting. In 1844, Charles Goodyear patented the vulcanizing process that solved these problems. Dentures were subjected to steam pressure up to 200 pounds. Soon, nearly every dentist had a vulcanizer.

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