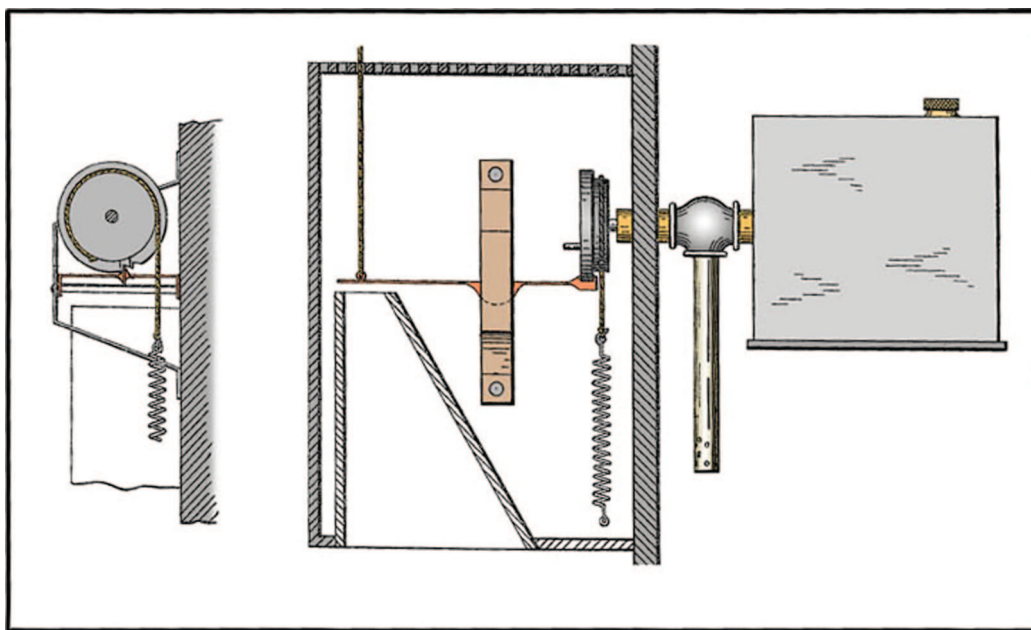


ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

Stewart's Burglary-preventing Apparatus



In January of 1907, David Stewart of Chehalis, Washington filed a patent for a "Burglary-Preventing Apparatus" designed to use volatile anesthetics to thwart thieves. As granted 15 months later, his U.S. Patent No. 885,200 (*see above*, courtesy of the Wood Library-Museum) provides for a "receptacle lined with porcelain, glass, or other non-corrosive material and adapted to contain a fuming fluid . . . such as chloroform [or] ether. . . ." Besides its "fuming fluid containing chamber," his patent claims include "the valve controlling discharge from said chamber, a spring acting to open the valve, and a lever to hold the valve closed, said lever being constructed to move by vibrations produced by an explosion." Stewart also provided a means for manually operating release of the chloroform or ether, say, from a bank "cashier's desk, thus adapting the apparatus to foil burglars when the use of explosives is unnecessary to gain access. . . ." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in color in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at www.anesthesiology.org.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.