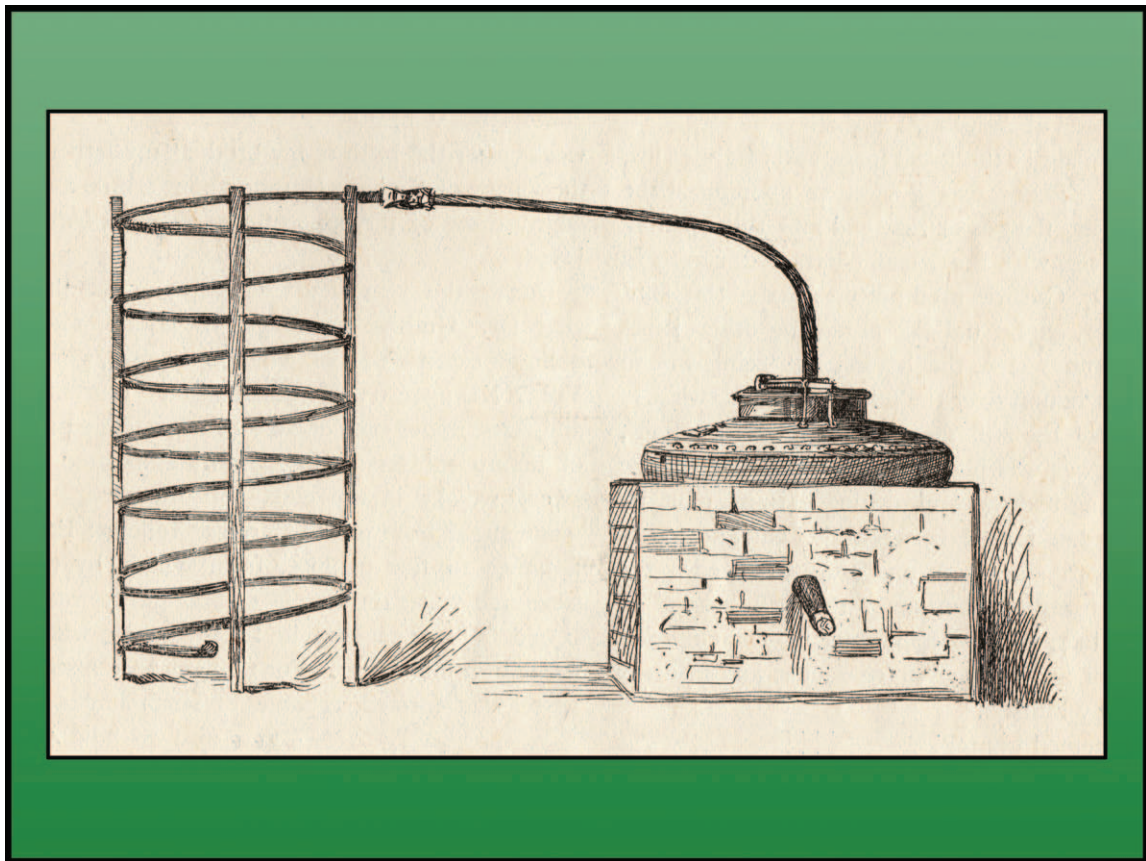


The Chloroform Still of Dr. Samuel Guthrie, Jr.



As early as July of 1831, New York physician Samuel Guthrie, Jr., had submitted for publication his method of generating “sweet whisky” or “chloric ether” (chloroform in alcohol): “Into a clean copper still [above] put ... chloride of lime and ... alcohol ... and distill ... and when the product ceases to come highly sweet and aromatic remove and cork it up closely in glass vessels.” Inside a retort in a water bath, redistill that product in an excess of chloride of lime to concentrate the product as “caustic and intensely sweet and aromatic.” Further concentration results from distilling the “solution of chloric ether from carbonate of potash.” And that is how a primitive still helped an eccentric American physician discover chloroform independently from the better-equipped laboratories of France’s Soubeiran and Germany’s Liebig! (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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