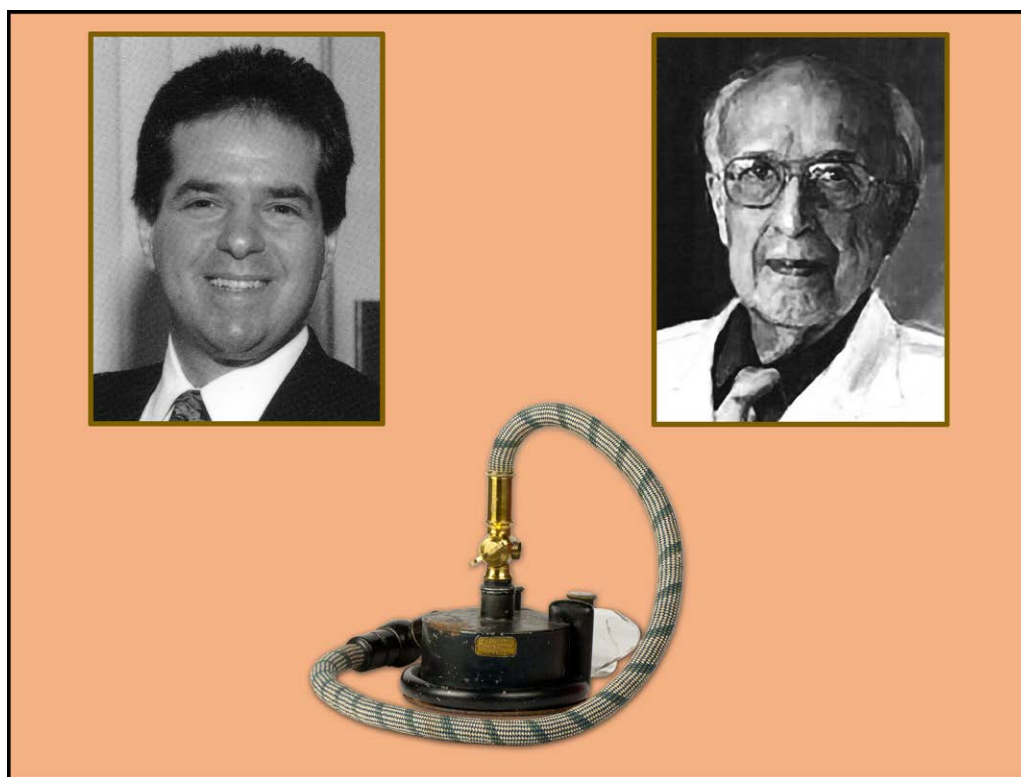


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Byline Backstory No. 7: Following the Historic Footsteps of Snow in Anesthesia and Public Health



On one of my clinical rotations as a Johns Hopkins medical student, I worked alongside surgical resident Ira Rutkow, M.D., M.P.H. (*upper left*), who encouraged me to pursue the history of medicine and to follow him into Hopkins' (now Bloomberg) School of Public Health. There I met Professor George Comstock (*upper right*) who idolized John Snow, M.D., a British pioneer of both anesthesiology and epidemiology. Studying Snow's life and his ether inhaler (*bottom*) kindled my enthusiasm to pursue anesthesia history and then curate departmental anesthesia museums at Hopkins and then Yale. Examining epidemiology, the field fathered by Snow, convinced me to seek ways of reducing anesthetic morbidity and mortality in an at-risk group, the elderly. So, while Ira Rutkow was preparing himself to become America's leading surgeon-historian, I was drafting the nation's first fellowship in geriatric anesthesiology (completed 1984 to 1985), at Johns Hopkins and at the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.