In the early days of modern neurologic surgery, the inconveniences and potential dangers of general anesthesia by chloroform and ether using the so-called "open-drop technique" led to the quest for alternative methods of anesthesia. This became all the more necessary, since patient positioning and the surgical arrangements often hindered the use of a drop bottle. One approach to solve this problem was intrarectal ether application. The present article aims to shed light on this original, less well-known anesthesia technique in the neurosurgical field.