



TIME OF DISCOVERY OF COMMON ACIDS

From "Short History of Chemistry," by Hildritch

Sulfurous—properties of burning sulfur known to Homer (about 1000 B. C.) and Pliny; sulfur dioxide isolated by Priestley.

Sulfuric—known to Geber (8th Century A. D.); preparation from iron vitriol described by Basil Valentine (15th century A. D.).

Nitric—known to Geber; method of preparation by Basil Valentine.

Carbonic—known as a distinct gas to Paracelsus (16th Century A. D.) and C. Helmont (16th Century); constitution due to Black and Priestley (18th Century).

Muriatic [hydrochloric]—known to Basil Valentine (*spiritus salis*); preparation from salt and vitriol by Glauber (1664–1688).

Aqua Regia—known as a mixture of *aqua fortis* and *spiritus salis* to Basil Valentine.

Phosphoric—discovered by Boyle (1693); investigated by Marggraf, Scheele, Gahn.

Boric—first prepared and its salts characterized by Homberg (1702).

Hydrofluoric—Used for etching glass by Schunhardt (17th Century) but without knowing its constitution; worked out by Gay-Lussac and Thenard, Berzelius, Ampere; first prepared pure in 1869 by Frenig.

The *acids* and *anhydrides* of *chlorine* (HClO , HClO_2 , HClO_3) were investigated by Davy, Balard, Roscoe, and others during the first half of the last century, but it is comparatively recently that their constitutions and that of other halogen oxy-acids have been systematically explained by the progressive increase in valency (from one to seven) of the halogen.

The majority of the more complicated inorganic acids (*ferrocyanic*, *sulfocyanic*, *polythionic*, etc.) have only been studied within the past century. Gay-Lussac and Davy were among the first workers in this field; Balard, Liebig, Wöhler, and Roscoe were other prominent names which must be mentioned.

Meaning of Acid

The word acid comes from an Old English word for *vinegar*. The Old English word, in turn, comes from a Greek word meaning *edge*.