Richard Kirwan Encyclopedia Article

Richard Kirwan

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1733-1812

Irish chemist and mineralogist best known for his disagreement with James Hutton over the chemical composition of rocks and his support of phlogiston theory in *Essay on Phlogiston* (1787). Criticisms by Antoine Lavoisier and other caused Kirwin to reject phlogiston theory in 1791. He won the Royal Society's Copley Medal in 1780 for his work on chemical affinity, and his *Elements of Mineralogy* (1784) was one of the first systematic works on the subject in English.