

The Untimely Death of America's Greatest David Christopher, M.H.

The hero of the Revolutionary War, former first President and by certain accounts the most famous man in the world was actively managing his estate and affairs robustly and in good health at the age of 67. On December 12, 1799 George Washington routinely left his home at 10 am and by horseback attended to his beloved Mount Vernon farms until 5pm. The weather was below freezing and snowing with just 3 inches of snow on the ground. In this weather, he also helped move a snow-mired carriage near his home. Upon returning he felt a sore throat and developed hoarseness. However, without removing his damp clothes he proceeded to dinner, which was waiting, and then went on to his evening routines. The next day, Friday, although less invigorated due to the possible acquired cold, he marked trees on the property which were to be removed. He then had a pleasant evening and even joked about his worsening hoarseness. Two o'clock Saturday morning he was chilled, could scarcely speak and breathed with difficulty. In the morning a servant was dispatched to retrieve Dr. Craik and another servant was dispatched for a Mr. Rawlins who was a local bleeder. Mr. Rawlins removed a half pint of blood and then Dr. Craik upon arriving removed another pint of blood and dosed the former President with calomel (a mercury preparation). Two more Doctors arrived and yes removed even more blood and administered more mercury, purgative enemas and blistering plasters. A fourth bleeding was proposed and immediately protested by Dr. Elisha Dick the youngest of the three doctors. However, he was overruled by Dr. James Craik and a Dr. Richard Brown who then bled George Washington a fourth time and of course administered another round of mercury and another toxic chemical, antimony. It is estimated that half of his blood had been removed. By today's standards that much loss of blood would result in extremely low blood pressure and would require an immediate transfusion along with intensive care. Medical apologists today say that the General died from bacterial epiglottitis and that an emergency tracheotomy would have saved his life. Perhaps we shouldn't judge those physicians by today's standards but we can listen to their own words. Two weeks later Dr. Brown had misgivings and in a letter to Dr. Craik said, "If we had taken no more blood from him, our good friend might have been alive now." He added, "But we were governed by the best light we had. We thought we were right, and so we are justified." A contemporary British physician John Reid sarcastically remarked that the "current of blood" drained from George Washington reflected the currents of American rivers. He then was critical of the heavy dosing of mercury and the administrations of emetics and blistering to a man in his late 60's.



In retrospect we should ask if that was the best light available in the 1700s? We do know as a fact that herbalists were present in the 1700s and for that matter in all eras. They were sometimes praised and sometimes ignored. We know that herbalists would have used remedies that were simple such as; lemon grass, rose hips, garlic and onions that could have saved our beloved leader's life. The emerging Thompsonian doctors could have relaxed the muscles with Lobelia and applied cayenne to the throat to increase circulation. Perhaps the native population could have provided golden seal with its berberine

alkaloid that kills bacteria. It is a fact that there was plenty of light and knowledge available in 1799 that could have been used by the Washington family instead of turning to the popular or mainstream doctors of that day with their blood-letting and poisonous practice. At any rate, the sudden agonizing death of George Washington was untimely and a great loss to his family and countrymen.

David Christopher *is a Master Herbalist and the director of The School of Natural Healing. He also co-hosts the popular radio show "A Healthier You" and is a popular international teacher and lecturer.*

Reference: http://www.doctorzebra.com/prez/z_x01death_lear_g.htm