

LAST ILLNESS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON CAUSED BY COLD

Washington—George Washington died 150 years ago Wednesday—a sudden victim of acute laryngitis and carelessness about his own health.

His death at 67 probably was hastened by rigorous medical treatment. It included four blood-lettings; a gargle of molasses, vinegar and butter, which almost suffocated him; blisters of cantharides (dried beetles) applied to his throat, and cataplasms (poultices) of wheat bran on his legs.

However, modern doctors have said that Washington apparently had a streptococcal infection of the throat which might not have responded even to the most efficacious treatment. They say his physicians carried out the accepted, if crude, practices of their day.

Washington's last illness was very brief.

He was caught in rain, hail and snow while riding over his Mount Vernon farms and stayed out in the storm for several hours.

He had a sore throat the following day but in the afternoon went out in the snow to mark some trees for cutting. He became very ill early the next morning, had great difficulty in breathing and speaking and died at 10:20 that night, December 14, 1799.

The diary of Tobias Lear, Washington's secretary, tells of the general's unconcern about catching cold and of his composure on the last day of his life.

When Washington came in on December 12 Lear said to him that he was afraid he had got wet. The general replied that his great coat had kept him dry, but Lear noticed that his neck appeared wet and snow was hanging on his hair. He went to dinner without changing his clothes.

When Washington retired the next night Lear suggested that he take something for his cold. Washington said, "No, you know I never take anything for a cold. Let it go as it came."

Between 2 and 3 o'clock the next morning the general awakened Mrs. Washington and told her he was sick and had had a chill. However, he would not let her get up to call a servant lest she take cold. At sunrise Mrs. Washington asked Lear to summon Dr. James Craik of Alexandria, Va.

Washington said he wanted Mr. Rawlins, a Mount Vernon overseer, to bleed him. Meanwhile, Lear reports, a mixture of molasses, vinegar and butter was prepared "to try its effect" on Washington's throat but "he could not swallow a drop and almost suffocated."

When Rawlins came in the general noticed he was agitated and said, "Don't be afraid." After the incision was made in his arm, Washington commented, "the orifice is not large enough."

Lear says that Mrs. Washington begged that not much blood be taken from him and asked Lear to stop it but that the general put up his hand and said "more, more."

When Dr. Craik arrived he put a blister of cantharides on Washington's throat, took some more blood and prepared a gargle of vinegar and sage tea. Again Washington was almost suffocated. A little later he was bled a third time.

Dr. Craik sent for Dr. Elisha Dick of Alexandria, who came in about 3 p. m. Dr. Gustavus Brown of Port Tobacco, Md., arrived soon after. Washington was given calomel and bled again.

Lear, in a letter to his mother, said:

"His distress through the day was extreme but not a groan or a complaint escaped him. With the most perfect resignation and in full possession of his reason to the last moment, he gave up his life."

"He was fully sensible of his approaching dissolution . . . and he frequently told the physicians that their efforts would be in vain."

About 4:30 in the afternoon Washington said to Lear: "I find I am going. My breath can not last long. I believed from the first the disorder would prove fatal. Arrange and record all my late military letters and papers."

At 5 o'clock he said to his old friend Dr. Craik: "Doctor, I believed from my first attack that I should not survive it. My breath can not last long."

At 8 o'clock the doctor applied more blisters to his throat and poultices of bran to his feet. About 10 o'clock Washington made several attempts to speak to Lear, then said:

"I am just going. Have me decently buried and do not let my body be put in the vault in less than two days after I am dead."

Lear reports: "He then felt his own pulse. I took his hand between mine. The pulse ceased, and he was launched into happier scenes."

Lear wrote that "Mrs. Washington never quitted the room during the whole time."

Riders were dispatched from Mount Vernon to the north and to the south to notify President John Adams, other officials and friends.

The news did not reach Philadelphia, then the national capital until four days later. Congress adopted a resolution recommending that the people wear crepe on the left arm for 30 days.

Washington's funeral was held at Mount Vernon on December 18 before most of the country had heard of his death. It was attended by Masonic and military officials of Alexandria, his neighbors and relatives.

A schooner in the river fired minute-guns as the procession moved from the mansion to the



SOUR NOTE IN CHRISTMAS CAROL . . . You would imagine with a name like Carol the young lady would enter into the spirit of Yuletide. But Carol Sheelin, New York City, just can't get accustomed to that chin foliage worn by the benevolent old gent who is now open to requests at a New York department store.

tomb. Musicians played a dirge with muffled drums.

The general's horse, with his saddles, holsters and pistols was led by two of his grooms. His casket was borne by Masonic and military officials.

At the tomb, the Episcopal service and a short sermon were read and Masonic ceremonies were conducted.

Congress resolved that a marble monument be erected to Washington's memory within the new Capitol to be erected in Washington and that his family be requested to permit his body to be placed beneath the

monument. Mrs. Washington gave her consent.

A crypt was provided under the dome of the Capitol, but the project was never completed. In 1831 the surviving executors of the Washington estate removed the bodies of General and Mrs. Washington and other members of the family from the old vault to a similar vault where they now rest.

U. S. orange production for the 1949-50 season is estimated at 105.6 million boxes, 6 per cent above last season and 13 per cent above average.

RUDDERLESS SHIP

The Army Transportation Crops Board is now testing a rudderless ship. It is the first military craft to be designed and built for cycloidal propulsion and is undergoing sea trials off the South Carolina coast. This type of propulsion utilizes two propellers, each consisting of a blade-wheel, equipped with six blades and resembling a section of an airplane propeller. Its axis is vertical and at right angles to the direction of movement. Thus, it represents a radical departure from the conventional helical screw-type propeller.



Legend not only has identified the Wise Men as Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar, it has crowned them and given them the kingdoms of Tarsus, Arabia and Ethiopia. It has symbolized their gifts as symbolic of what Jesus was to become—gold for a king, frankincense for a high priest and myrrh for a great physician.

The Gospel text's specific wise men from the east logically identifies them with Zoroastrianism—an ancient monotheistic religion of Persia. Zoroastrian priests were called Magi; they were powerful in public and private life since they, and they alone, possessed the priestly mysteries involved in the worship of Mazda—who represented the Zoroastrian power for good.

The Magi may or may not have been fabulously wealthy: St. Matthew does not elaborate their treasures nor the amount of gold, frankincense and myrrh which they presented to the Christ Child. The gifts may have been mere tokens of their treasures, or the sum and substance thereof.

And if they were soothsayers, mystics and possibly clairvoyants they were also truly wise—in as much as they did not return to Herod, but departed into their own country by a different route.

Christmas Cards Have Warm, Friendly Air

The 1949 Christmas cards promise a gay Yuletide.

Scenes of holiday skating, sledding, and juvenile pranks bedeck the sprightly greetings. A Santa with feathery beard comes bearing "A wish so old . . . it has WHISKERS!"

Publishers estimate that 1,600,000,000 Christmas cards will brighten the nation's holiday mail — about 100,000,000 more good wishes than last year.

Religious designs have come to the fore in popularity. Madonna and Child portraits, in soft pastel hues, lead the Holy Land scenes. Chiming bells, midnight churchgoers and surpliced choirs express the modern reverent attitude toward Christmastide.

On the whimsical side, the "three little kittens" of nursery-rhyme fame have hung their mittens on the fireplace, drowsily awaiting Santa. One card's in the shape of a barrel—to wear after you pay your Christmas bills.

Verses have a warm, straightforward friendliness—If me n' Santa were in cahoots—By gash you'd hafta hang HIP BOOTS!

Novelty Yule cards are in heavy demand. Tiny angels and snowmen pop out of tiny watch springs. Several ornaments for decorating your Christmas tree. Other Christmas cards are guaranteed against getting dog-eared in the holiday mail rush—they're stamped from sheet aluminum!

Incidentally, the Post Office Department asks that your out-of-State cards be mailed by December 15, and local cards a week before Christmas.

"Special title" Christmas cards have multiplied, with affectionate individual verses for loved ones and valued friends. Whatever your taste, you'll have no trouble finding a Christmas card this Yule—publishers say 25,000 different designs are available!

Private American capital to finance oil refinery in Puerto Rico.

Merry Christmas

The Night will be hushed (save the Mother Wind's whispered lullaby) . . . and though Santa steps gingerly to the chimney top, nary a little one will hear.

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The Morn will bring Joy . . . Surprise . . . Dancing Stars in the eyes of tots well schooled in the ways of Santa. It will bring the re-uniting of friends and family—well wishing for the Holiday Season—and prayers for Peace, the World over.

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With those prayers go our wishes for a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year Peace, Happiness and Prosperity to all our friends, now, tomorrow and in the years to come!

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NEW RIVER LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY



There'll be Christmas crowds on Long Distance, too

Long distance telephone lines will be crowded on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We'll be on the job doing our best to put calls through. We've added a lot of circuits and rearranged others. Every switchboard will be in service. Even so, there may be delays.

You'll get faster service if you do your calling before Christmas Eve or after Christmas Day.