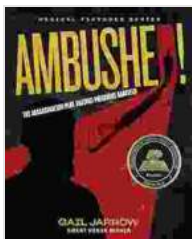


The Assassination Plot Against President Garfield: Medical Fiascoes that Changed the Course of History

On July 2, 1881, President James A. Garfield was shot twice by Charles Guiteau, a deranged office seeker. The assassination attempt plunged the nation into shock and mourning, but it also exposed the glaring inadequacies of medical care in the 19th century.

Garfield's injuries were severe. One bullet lodged near his spine, while the other grazed his arm. However, it was the subsequent medical treatment that proved fatal. Doctors made a series of blunders that allowed infection to set in, leading to Garfield's agonizing death on September 19, 1881.

The doctors who treated Garfield made a number of egregious errors, including:



Ambushed!: The Assassination Plot Against President Garfield (Medical Fiascoes) by Gail Jarrow

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 155778 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

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Print length : 240 pages

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- **Failing to remove the bullet near his spine.** The bullet was lodged dangerously close to Garfield's spinal cord, and doctors were afraid to remove it for fear of causing paralysis. However, this decision left the wound open to infection.
- **Using unsterile instruments.** The doctors who treated Garfield did not use sterile instruments, which allowed bacteria to enter the wound and cause infection.
- **Inserting a metal probe into the wound.** In an attempt to find the bullet, doctors inserted a metal probe into the wound. This further irritated the tissue and introduced more bacteria.
- **Failing to recognize and treat sepsis.** Garfield developed sepsis, a life-threatening infection that spread throughout his body. However, doctors failed to recognize the signs and symptoms of sepsis, and they did not administer appropriate treatment.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, was present during Garfield's treatment. Bell had developed a metal detector that he hoped could be used to locate the bullet near Garfield's spine. However, the detector was not successful, and some historians believe that it may have caused further damage to the wound.

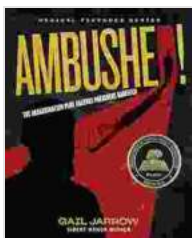
Garfield's assassination had a profound impact on American healthcare. The public outcry over the medical blunders that led to his death led to a number of reforms, including:

- **The establishment of the American Red Cross.** The Red Cross was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton, a nurse who had volunteered during

the Civil War. The organization's mission was to provide medical care and relief to victims of war and natural disasters.

- **The passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act.** The Pure Food and Drug Act was passed in 1906 in response to the public outcry over the use of unsanitary and adulterated food and drugs. The act created the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is responsible for regulating the safety of food and drugs in the United States.
- **The development of new medical technologies.** The assassination of Garfield also led to the development of new medical technologies, such as X-rays and sterile surgical instruments. These technologies helped to improve the safety and effectiveness of medical care.

The assassination of President James A. Garfield was a tragedy that changed the course of American history. The medical blunders that led to his death exposed the glaring inadequacies of medical care in the 19th century and led to a number of important reforms. These reforms helped to improve the safety and effectiveness of medical care, and they continue to protect patients today.



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