



The Dr. Samuel D. Harris  
**NATIONAL  
MUSEUM of  
DENTISTRY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CELEBRATE PRESIDENT'S DAY WEEKEND AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DENTISTRY**

*Home of the first president's not-so-wooden teeth*

**BALTIMORE, MD** (December 14, 2009)—Did you know that George Washington's teeth were *not* made of wood? Take a peek at the first president's famous choppers and find out more about his tooth troubles at the National Museum of Dentistry during **President's Day Weekend, Saturday, February 13-Sunday, February 14, 2010. Wear red, white or blue and get \$1 off admission!**

"Many people are surprised to find out that George Washington never had wooden dentures," said Museum Curator Dr. Scott Swank. "We think the myth arose since ivory dentures tend to stain like wood after years of eating and drinking."

The National Museum of Dentistry features a gallery devoted to the first president and his tooth troubles. His dentures – made of ivory – are on display, as well as forceps made to pull his teeth on the Revolutionary War battlefield and examples of presidential portraits that show how tooth loss affected Washington's appearance.

Washington lost his first tooth when he was 22 years old. Despite the fact that he brushed with tooth powder daily, he would have only one tooth in his mouth by the time he was inaugurated president in 1789. Washington had many illnesses during his life, including smallpox and malaria. Treatments included remedies such as mercurous chloride, which is known to destroy the teeth.

His favorite dentist, John Greenwood, would make several sets of dentures for George Washington during his lifetime -- and none of them would be made from wood. In fact, they were carved from hippopotamus ivory and elephant ivory. Some of the dentures were set in gold and held in place with springs that held the upper and lower teeth together.

### **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DENTISTRY**

See amazing teeth feats, marvel at George Washington's choppers, sing along to vintage toothpaste commercials, and discover fascinating hands-on exhibitions about the power of a healthy smile. Enjoy field trips, home school days, special events, and more. An Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, this one-of-a-kind museum is located at 31 South Greene Street, a short walk from the Inner Harbor. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and students with ID, \$3 for children age 3-19; and free for age 2 & under Open Wednesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Sunday 1–4 p.m. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, and major holidays. Call 410/706-0600 or visit [www.smile-experience.org](http://www.smile-experience.org).

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