

Winter History & Heritage -- #9 (February 20)

Based on our usual sources and readings, this post is our last prior to the **Winter 2012 History & Heritage Test scheduled for Friday, March 2**. All nine winter posts should be carefully reviewed in preparation for that test.

Mr. Zaffini wishes to thank the parents of his students for engaging with the content of the class this term and contributing to the growth and understanding of their children.

Cyril & Methodius -- (Almanac, Feb. 14)

For their fruitful Christian evangelism in Eastern Europe in the 9th-century (800s), **these learned brothers** earned the title “Apostles of the Slavs”? Native Thessalonians of noble birth, one taught philosophy in Constantinople, while the other mastered linguistics and could speak artfully more than twelve tongues. Together, they captured the sounds of the Slavs in an alphabet, the root of modern Cyrillic and the ground for their translations of Scripture, church liturgies, and other writings.

Bonnie Blue Flag -- (Almanac, Feb. 16)

This standard served as the official banner of the short-lived Republic of West Florida on the Gulf Coast in the first decade of the 1800s? With Baton Rouge as its capital, the independent state stretched from the Mississippi River in the west to Pensacola Bay in the east. However, its sovereignty was forcibly terminated in 1810 when the U.S. cavalry, at President Madison’s direction in the name of “Manifest Destiny,” took over, removing West Floridian lawmakers from their own Capitol at bayonet-point.

Democratic Party -- (America, Vol. 1, p. 149)

This political party has its roots in the Jeffersonian republicanism which triumphed in 1800 and, later on, the Jacksonian democracy which dominated the 1830s? The party’s name changed ever so slightly over time, but nowadays the only thing it has in common with the original is a professed devotion to the welfare of everyday people and the poor. Long gone are its historic commitments to strict constitutional limitations on the power of the United States and broad apportionment of authority to the states and localities.

Edmund Burke -- (America, Vol. 1, p. 154)

This Irish-born, British parliamentarian (1729--1797) censured French radicals and championed tradition and restraint in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790)? He startled the “enlightened” elite of his day (including many of his fellow Whigs) when he wrote so unflatteringly of the French democrats (Jacobins). He asked, “[Am I] seriously to felicitate a madman who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell on his restoration of light and liberty? . . .”

Letters of Marque -- (*America, Vol. 1, p. 156*)

These sanctions (issued by recognized governments) made seamen privateers who could disrupt foreign commerce by maritime law? Privateers, as opposed to pirates who could be hung as soon as they were captured, were commissioned to seize merchant ships and cargoes. In the 1790s Citizen Genet, the French ambassador to the U.S., tried to recruit Americans to serve as privateers against the British, but without the approval (and to the displeasure) of the Washington administration.

Girondists & Jacobins -- (*America, Vol. 1, pp. 153-160*)

These two political parties participated in the French Revolution (1789), an earthshaking insurrection which removed the monarchy, attacked the nobility, suppressed the Church, and stripped the provinces of their former freedoms? One of them was more moderate, opposing the killing of the king (Louis XVI). The other, far more radical, began to systematically eliminate its former ally (now rival) by guillotine when it gained full control in 1793.

Whiskey Rebellion -- (*America, Vol. 1, pp. 161-162*)

This tumultuous threat in western Pennsylvania (1794) occasioned U.S. intervention by a 12,950-man militia led by President Washington himself? Organized bands in the Pittsburgh area, participants in Democratic-Republican clubs, were up-in-arms about a certain federal excise tax, part of Hamilton's debt-retirement and financial program. Hamilton, not surprisingly, urged the president to overwhelm the troublemakers with a herculean show of force, but Jefferson thought the affair was a tempest in a teapot.

(Author William Bennet implies, actually expressly states, that Washington's show of federal force in the Whiskey Rebellion in PA set a clear precedent for several other projections of presidential and U.S. power, most notably Mr. Lincoln's call for a 75,000-man militia to squelch the Southern "rebels" in 1861. Such reasoning, this particular teacher believes, is dubious. The differences between the "rebellions" are rather stark and of monumental consequence for free or republican government. We'll address such issues in greater depth in our first spring H&H post in March.)

Jay Treaty -- (*America, Vol. 1, pp. 162-164*)

This 1795 treaty with Britain, intended to keep us out of a war for which we were ill-prepared, proved one of the more divisive in our nation's history? Opposition was fierce, especially among Republicans in the South, based mostly on a sense of being dishonored by a pact making too many concessions to the British. Yet the treaty became law, garnering the necessary two-thirds majority vote in the Senate, while also passing muster in the House with respect to appropriations (funding).