

Spring History & Heritage -- #6 (April 23)

Our entries this week include content from *Tabletalk* magazine as well as William Bennett's *America, Vol. 1* and George Grant's *The Christian Almanac*.

Council of Chalcedon --- (*Almanac*, April 10)

This 5th-century church council (451AD) issued, seemingly for all time, the classic statement on the doctrine of Christ's identity (who Jesus is)? The council declared Christ to be one holy person, God incarnate, with two natures (fully human and fully divine) in perfect union and harmony. False notions (diminishing either His divinity or humanity) and fierce disagreements between bishops in leading cities prompted both church and state to seek a sound consensus based on the Bible.

"He suffered under Pontius Pilate" --- (*Tabletalk*, April 12-13, 16)

This phrase found in the Apostles' Creed signifies much more than an historic fact about the official death sentence pronounced upon Jesus in the first century? Along with the method of His execution (crucifixion), the sentence itself, being issued by a Roman, revealed beyond a doubt that Christ was cursed at the cross for the sin and guilt of God's people. For the Old Testament knew no greater calamity for Israel than to be handed over to the Gentiles for judgment, as Jesus plainly was.

Fort Sumter --- (*Almanac*, April 12)

One hundred and fifty-one years ago, the Civil War began when Union forces refused to surrender **this harbor garrison**, just offshore from Charleston, to South Carolina? The South Carolinians had supplied the fort with food and water during a month-long standoff over its status, but they wouldn't tolerate its resupply with armaments per order of President Lincoln. When Lincoln stuck to his guns, P.T. Beauregard's men opened fire on the fort on April 12, 1861, quickly overcoming it without casualties.

USS Saratoga --- (*America*, Vol. 1, pp. 204-205)

With America threatened from all directions in the War of 1812, the victory of **this U.S. Navy ship** on Lake Champlain (1814) put an end to Britain's northern campaign? Under Captain Thomas McDonough, the ship (named for a famous Revolutionary War battle in the same section of the country) subdued four British vessels. Remarkably, a big British gun struck by one of its cannon balls, with an indentation clear to the eye, stands to this day in front of McDonough Hall at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

"Defence of Fort M'Henry" --- (*America*, Vol. 1, pp. 206-207)

What we know today as our national anthem ("The Star-Spangled Banner") went originally by **this title** as a poem by Francis Scott Key (1779--1843)? On consecutive nights in September 1814, Key, a lawyer, found himself stranded on a British warship that began bombarding a U.S. fort protecting the port city of Baltimore. He had successfully appealed to the British for the release of an elderly American doctor, but his muse was stirred by the battle itself and his countrymen's resolve to stand their ground.

Creek Confederacy --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 207-208)

“Until this is done, your nation cannot expect happiness or mine security.” Thus said General Andrew Jackson to **this southwestern Indian league**, demanding that it cede millions of acres (much of Alabama & Georgia) to the United States? The confederacy had incurred U.S. wrath when it brutally massacred about 250 Americans at Fort Mims (near today’s Mobile, Alabama) in August 1813; Jackson in turn routed them at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend (eastern Alabama) in March 1814.

Battle of New Orleans --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 208-212)

With the British poised to wrest Louisiana from the U.S., the Americans scored one of their greatest military triumphs ever in **this January 1815 battle?** Jackson led a motley force of 5,000, including Kentucky & Tennessee militia, that in a matter of minutes inflicted devastating losses on the redcoats (almost 2,000 casualties). Curiously, the war (War of 1812) was actually over when the battle was fought; a peace pact, word of which spread slowly, had been signed in Belgium on Christmas Eve, 1814.

“the Hero” --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 212-214)

For most early 19th-century Americans, **this unembellished title** summed up their view of Tennessee’s Andrew Jackson? The general was lauded for beating back the British at New Orleans, fiercely repressing Indian raids (Creeks & Seminoles) in the South, and forcefully challenging Spanish possession of Florida. Speaker of the House and “war hawk” Henry Clay (KY), however, publicly admonished Jackson for reckless and autonomous acts which, he said, endangered republican government.

Missouri Compromise --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 214-215)

This congressional act (1820) admitted two states (one free & one slave) to the Union, while also prohibiting slavery in the northern reaches of the Louisiana Territory? Most were pleased with the careful arrangement, conciliatory to North and South, but Jefferson in retirement heard “a fire bell in the night” and the “knell of the Union.” What alarmed him most was the loss of liberty for new states, their domestic affairs (in this case the status of Negroes) now subject to federal mandate.

Monroe Doctrine --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 215-216)

“It would be more candid as well as more dignified to avow our principles explicitly to France and Russia than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of a British man-of-war.” Thus John Quincy Adams advised President Monroe, recommending that **this policy statement (1823)** on colonization in the New World be issued independently of Britain? Nonetheless, it was truly the British fleet, not American parchment, that safeguarded the newly-independent nations of Latin America at the time.