

Spring History & Heritage -- #7 (April 30)

This week's summaries or Q&A are all based upon W. Bennett's *America, Volume 1*.

"Lighthouses of the Sky" --- (America, Vol. 1, p. 217)

Chosen the 6th U.S. president in the 1824 contest, it didn't take long for John Quincy Adams (MA) to propose an ambitious governmental program including a national version of astronomical observatories, "lighthouses of the sky" as he called them.

His initial Message to Congress also urged significant spending increases for the navy, funds for "internal improvements" (roads, canals, & harbors), and high tariffs (taxes) on imports to protect the products of domestic industry.

Sweepingly, the son of the second president called for "laws promoting the improvement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, the cultivation and encouragement of the mechanic and of the elegant arts, the advancement of literature, and the progress of the sciences, ornamental and profound."

Adams had assumed the mantle, as he said, of a "*national* Republican," supposedly a member of the movement championed by Jefferson, but with dreams and visions for the country calling for political centralization more on the order of Hamilton.

Good Counsel for the Young (and for us all) --- (America, Vol. 1, p. 218)

Jefferson, in retirement, wrote lots of letters including his running correspondence with John Adams (once their strained relations were healed). What follows is his advice to a young man (Thomas Jefferson Smith), the son of a good friend:

Few words will be necessary, with good dispositions on your part. Adore God. Reverence and cherish your parents. Love your neighbor as yourself, and your country more than yourself. Be just. Be true. Murmur not at the ways of Providence. So shall the life into which you have entered be the portal to one of eternal and ineffable bliss. And if to the dead it is permitted to care for the things of this world, every action of your life will be under my regard. Farewell.

House of Representatives --- (America, Vol. 1, p. 221)

As required by the Constitution, **this federal lawmaking body** determines the outcome of a presidential contest when no candidate gets a majority of electoral college votes? In such instance, the members of the body choose (with one vote allotted to each state delegation) from among the top three candidates in the electoral vote tally. This happened in 1800 (when Jefferson was chosen over Burr and Adams) and again in 1824 (when John Q. Adams won out over Andrew Jackson and William Crawford).

The Election of 1828 --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 224-225)

With **this year's presidential election** the seeds of America's mass democracy, with its newfound concern for popular vote totals, were sown? Jackson trounced incumbent John Quincy Adams in the world's first political contest where over 1 million votes were cast (out of a total population of about 13 million). The mass campaign, however, seemed to bring out the worst in the campaigners; "the standards for decency and just plain truthfulness," says William Bennett, "could hardly have been lower."

John C. Calhoun --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 230-234)

This acclaimed South Carolinian (1782--1850) was educated in New England (at Yale) and began his U.S. political career as a "War Hawk" in the House? In the 1820s, he served as vice president under both John Quincy Adams and Adams's arch-rival Andrew Jackson. It was in the Senate, however, where he made his mark in a spirited defense of Southern interests (including slavery) as well as theoretical justification of state nullification and secession as remedies for unconstitutional federal acts.

"Tariff of Abominations" --- (America, Vol. 1, pp. 234-240)

The South Carolinians assigned **this derisive title** to the high and onerous tax on manufactured imports passed by Congress in 1828? The controversial tax occasioned Calhoun's written "Exposition and Protest" and a stirring debate in the Senate between Robert Hayne (SC) and Daniel Webster (MA) over the nature of the Union. As the Palmetto State took steps toward nullifying the repulsive law in its jurisdiction, Congress defused the crisis by a compromise measure that lowered the tax.

Daniel Webster --- (America, Vol. 1, p. 235)

"I go for the Union as it is. It is, Sir, the people's Constitution, the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." So replied **this New England statesman (1782--1852)** on the floor of the U.S. Senate in 1830 to the states' rights arguments of Senator Robert Hayne and Vice President John C. Calhoun, both of South Carolina? His speech, a paean to the priority of a people's Union as opposed to a states' Union, has inspired generations of Americans.

Force Bill --- (America, Vol. 1, p. 239)

President Jackson, in an unyielding response to South Carolina's 1832 Nullification Ordinance, pressed Congress to enact **this 1833 military measure?** The measure gave Jackson the authority to send an army if necessary to make the South Carolinians comply with U.S. tariff laws (the object against which their ordinance was directed). As it turned out, the bill empowering Jackson and a related one, the Compromise Tariff of 1833, arrived on the commander-in-chief's desk on the same day.