

Summer History & Heritage -- #5 (July 29)

(This week, entries based on the summer *Christian Almanac* readings)

Thomas Malory --- (*Christian Almanac*; Grant/Wilbur, May 30)

This English knight-errant, sometime in the late 15th-century (1400s), authored the heroic fable, *Le Morte d'Arthur* (The Death of King Arthur)? A simple soldier who described himself as “a servant of Jesu, both day and night,” he assembled the various Arthurian legends and tales and crafted a coherent and compelling narrative for all time. Thus, he gave literary form to the tradition of his people (medieval chivalry) in their own tongue (English prose at an early stage).

D-Day Invasion --- (*Christian Almanac*; Grant/Wilbur, June 6)

This Allied invasion of German-occupied Europe on June 6, 1944, proved to be the turning point of the Second World War (1939—1945)? Thousands of ships crossed the English Channel landing millions of troops (mostly Brits, Americans, & Canadians) on the Omaha and Normandy beaches of northern France. “The eyes of the world are upon you,” U.S. Gen. Dwight Eisenhower told his men. “The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.”

Franklin Pierce --- (*Christian Almanac*; Grant/Wilbur, June 13)

This New Hampshire lawyer (1804—1869), the consummate gentleman, became the 14th U.S. president, though he once said the office was “utterly repugnant” to him? In 1852, a divided Democratic Party made him their compromise candidate, given his reputation for integrity in his State legislature as well as in the U.S. Congress. However, controversy over slavery, particularly his insistence on a rule of law enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act, haunted his administration and made him more than a few foes.

Charles Carroll --- (*Christian Almanac*; Grant/Wilbur, June 18)

This Maryland landholder (1737—1832) was perhaps the wealthiest American of his day and the last of the signers of the Declaration of Independence to die? A leading Catholic, he championed a fairly broad concept of religious liberty for both Maryland and the nation, giving his strong support as a U.S. senator to the Constitution’s *Bill of Rights*. Additionally, his counsel and influence were vitally important in gaining the tardy admission to the Union of little Rhode Island.

Ephrem the Syrian --- (*Christian Almanac*; Grant/Wilbur, June 18)

This 4th-century Christian monk (d. 373 AD) set up a famous school for scholars in the ancient city of Edessa (today in SE Turkey near the Syrian border)? He wrote commentaries on most of the books of the Bible, in addition to popular hymns by which he sought to reinforce the truth and guard against heresy. Known to Syrian Christians even to this day as the “Harp of the Holy Ghost,” he was the only Edessan trusted without question or qualification to distribute stores of grain to the poor in a famine.