

Summer History & Heritage -- #7 (August 12)

(this week, mostly Q&A summaries of our weekly Tuesday/Thursday *Almanac* readings)

“Negro Project” --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*; June 25)

This Planned Parenthood program, begun in 1939, was yet another in a long line of Northern liberal efforts to “fix” something in the American South? The goal was to promote contraception among African-Americans through the moralistic evangelism of their own pastors, thereby reducing the numbers of a race held in contempt by elites. Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger’s dream of discouraging the “reckless” reproduction of the “least intelligent and fit” was gaining legitimacy and support.

Clairvaux --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*; June 25)

This medieval monastery, destined to be the most celebrated in Europe, was founded by St. Bernard in 1115 in Champagne, France? Bernard (1090—1153) sought a recovery of the rigorous monastic disciplines (prayer, study, manual labor) of St. Benedict, and his plan worked, stimulating spiritual revival and the spread of monasteries all over Europe. Bernard was directly responsible for 70 of these sanctified societies, which in turn generated 183 more.

H.G. Wells --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*; June 27)

This English novelist & sociologist (1866—1946) is best known for fantasies of scientific speculation like his *The War of the Worlds* (1898)? In *New Worlds for Old* (1908) among other works, he put forth a progressive social creed in which science displaced religion & tradition as the true source of knowledge, the cure for all man’s ills. By the time he died, however, the world having witnessed war, weaponry, genocide, and tyranny on a frightening scale, his utopian creed seemed more like fantasy than ever.

“Father of the Constitution”

(B. McClanahan; *Politically Incorrect Guide to the Founding Fathers*)

This title is today almost universally accorded to James Madison (1751—1836), though it distorts his career and the history of the Founding era? Truth be told, Madison was not the indispensable figure in the Philadelphia Convention (1787); his nationalist-leaning Virginia Plan of government was rejected or revised almost beyond recognition. The government he settled on and defended eloquently at home and in the *Federalist Papers* was a far cry from the powerful central authority he originally conceived.

James Garfield --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*; July 2)

This Ohio farm boy and teacher (1831—1881), like fellow Republican Abe Lincoln, went from a log cabin to the White House, the last U.S. president to do so? He made himself into a Latin & Greek professor and college president (Hiram College, OH), before serving in the Union army and as a Republican leader in Congress for 18 years. Also like Lincoln, he was cut down by an assassin’s bullet while chief executive officer of the nation (July 2, 1881).