

## Winter History & Heritage -- #6 (Jan. 27)

### **James Buchanan --- (C. Wilson; *Chronicles*, Jan. 2014)**

**This 19th-century U.S. president (1791--1868)**, the only one we've had from Pennsylvania, is regarded by many historians today as our worst chief executive? The academics condemn the cautious politician for failing to use the military to suppress Southern secession in early 1861, in the months prior to Lincoln's inauguration. However, with little support in the country for coercion, the president's real failure was lack of leadership on a political settlement to avoid the terrible consequences of war.

### **Loyalty to Localities & States -- (T. Fleming; *Chronicles* website, Jan. 2014)**

**This social and political loyalty**, not our mythical "rugged individualism," is what really made America great, writes classicist Thomas Fleming? The roots of the loyalty can be seen in our early migration and colonization patterns where, frequently, entire villages of kinfolk settled in cities on the eastern seaboard or in the midwest. Tocqueville, in his *Democracy in America* (1830s), couldn't help but notice that Americans relied less on central power than communal cooperation for their needs.

### **Magnalia Christi Americana --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*, Dec. 9)**

**This classic book (1702)** surveyed the ecclesiastical history of early New England, showcasing the moral philosophy of Puritan author Cotton Mather (1663--1728)? Mather's purpose, reflected in his title, was to remind his countrymen of the divine riches of their heritage in order to encourage reconciliation to the fathers and their God. Prosperity, the Boston pastor surmised, had "softened the resolve and hardened the hearts" of the Puritans' heirs, threatening a dechristianization of Massachusetts Bay.

### **Oberlin College --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*, Dec. 3)**

**This 19th-century Ohio college** was the first co-educational institute of higher learning in the U.S., its 1833 class composed of twenty-nine males and fifteen females? The college also championed the abolition of slavery, welcoming African-Americans as full participants in its student body, another first in the elite academic world. Drawing inspiration from Christian revivalism (the so-called Second Great Awakening), the unorthodox evangelist Charles Finney was one of the school's early presidents.

### **Montgomery Bus Boycott --- (Grant/Wilbur; *Christian Almanac*, Dec. 5)**

**This civil rights protest**, lasting about a year in Montgomery, AL, in 1955-56, was sparked by an indignity suffered by the now-iconic Rosa Parks? The protest exposed injustices in the racial segregation codes of the Southern States, garnered media attention, and brought about both local reforms and national desegregation mandates. Moreover, the event signaled the ascent of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., the protest's chief organizer and a product of Georgia's segregated schools, to Olympian status.

**(sources for the summaries are indicated; any errors of judgment belong to Mr. Zaffini, Veritas history teacher and writer of this blog for his students & families)**