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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“I have opinions of my own- strong opinions – but I don’t always agree with them.” President George H. W. Bush

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES

Now that it appears the country will move on with the inauguration of its 46th president, Joe Biden, it might be fun to look at some snapshots reflecting on the diversity and habits of previous White House residents.

Were you aware that George Washington grew hemp and that James Madison, John Quincy Adams and Woodrow Wilson were atheists?

Thomas Jefferson insisted that the Declaration of Independence be signed on July fourth because that day the planets were astrologically aligned. Don't be shocked by that one - Andrew Jackson believed the world was flat.

Eleanor Roosevelt carried a gun in her purse, but never had to use it. Gerald Ford, however, always likeable, was the only chief of state to have two women try to assassinate him.

JFK was voted most likely to succeed in his class of 112 students at the Choate School, while he graduated only 64th. Any connection there with his father being one of America's most prominent citizens? Nah.

A large majority of U.S. presidents have had pets, mostly dogs and cats. Eisenhower, however, hated cats and ordered that any found on his Gettysburg estate were to be shot on sight.

Calvin Coolidge, Martin van Buren and James Buchanan were quite the opposite. Coolidge kept a menagerie consisting of lion cubs, an

antelope (lion meat?), a donkey and a hippo, albeit a small one. Van Buren kept a tiger at the White House and Buchanan housed an elephant on the grounds.

William Howard Taft was so large he couldn't sit in the driver's seat of a car, but he was the only president to also sit on the Supreme Court (very big chair). Grover Cleveland was the only president to serve two non consecutive terms – a much talked about possibility for president Trump. In fact, a just released poll taken of GOP voters gives Trump 53% of the vote for the 2024 presidential election. Others considered in the polling included pence, Nikki Haley, Ted Cruz, Mitt Romney and Donald Trump Jr. – many a slip twixt the cup and the lip.

Wonder if his wife got a full widow's pension? William Henry Harrison died after only 32 days in office, and, speaking about presidential wives, it turns out that' "silent" Cal Coolidge was an accidental bigamist having married his wife while she was still married to another man.

We all know that Grant and Eisenhower were also famous generals, but, of lesser fame, so were Benjamin Harrison and Chester Arthur.

I always thought it was Dolly Madison, but it is reported that it was Thomas Jefferson who popularized ice cream, and, who remembers Reagan's favorite jelly bean flavor? Licorice, of course.

Did you know that president George W. Bush is the only president to have had both the lowest and the highest approval ratings in history? Speaking of highest, since president Obama rechristened Alaska's Mt. McKinley as, "Denali" (perhaps one of the country's first forays into the world of 'cancel culture') the tallest presidential namesake mountain in the U.S. is Mount Lincoln in Colorado, 14,295 feet.

SPEAK ABOUT CANCEL CULTURE

Unless you are a writer for the NY Times, the country is getting pretty fed up with the 'cancel culture' and it is hurting organizations like BLM from a reputational stand point. Instead of trying to rewrite history and looking in the

rear view mirror, they should be agitating for better schooling, health care and living facilities in our inner cities, which is code for Ghettos and/or Reservations – the U.S. Marshall plan I have been championing in at least six HH issues.

Along comes the NY Times gushing its support for the 1619 Project – an essay-which earned a Pulitzer prize in 2020 for Nikole Hannah-Jones based on the premise that, “slavery, not the Declaration of Independence was the driving force that forged the nation.” Hannah-Jones writes for the NY Times. Dean Baquet, the first black to head the NY Times newsroom says, “Nikole’s work fills me with pride.” Oops – not so fast Mr. Baquet. Frank Bruni and Bret Stephens of your own organization take great exception to Hannah-Jones conclusions. They are by no means outliers. Changes made after the original story appeared tried to downplay some of the controversial assertions, which have come under fire from historians.

On October 6th the National Association of Scholars, in an open letter called on the Pulitzer Prize Board to rescind Hannah-Jones’

award. “Beginning almost immediately after its publication, the essay and the Project ran into controversy.. More than 50 academics charged, ‘ it has been subjected to searching criticism by many of the foremost historians of our time and by the Times’ own fact checkers. The scrutiny has left the essay discredited, so much so that the NY Times has felt the need to go back and change a crucial passage in it, softening, but not eliminating its unsupported assertion about slavery and the revolution.”

Notwithstanding the 1619 Project high level detractors, the NY Times doubles down, offering at the NY Times Store, tote bags and T shirts emblazoned with, “1619 Project.” A number of school districts, primarily in California- there’s a surprise – are now making the 1619 project part of the curriculum.

Can’t help but wonder what is going on at the NY Times, is it pure pandering, centuries of collective guilt, or what? That their new mandated writing instructions require that any time a black person is mentioned it has to be with a capital “B” is quite amazing – doesn’t pertain to hispanics or other racial groups

And, no, all blacks in America are not descendents of slaves.

In an, “I want my say too” vein, with the year 1776 seemingly under attack as the birth year of our country, the Mayflower descendents are rallying around 1620 as the true founding of the country, predicated on the fact that the Mayflower passengers all signed on to the “Mayflower Compact” which is held up as the true and original document establishing the way they would govern themselves and the new land in which they lived.

My one takeaway from all of this controversy- can't we try to move ahead positively instead of backward, negatively?

THANKSGIVING

A pause to remember the hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans who have died from this dreadful pandemic and the millions who have suffered its effect, either as survivors of the virus or bereaved family members.

We can all be thankful for those close to us who have thus far remained healthy, and doubly thankful for the initial emergence of three vaccines that may be our deliverance in coming months.

A personal note of thanks from your scribe to friends and family for your support of the Hermit Herald, which has been the psychotherapy that has kept me sane in these crazy times.

Happy Thanksgiving – Be well.

Your faithful scribe,

PB