

[Intelligencer Journal, 30 April 1973, page 32]

[photo caption]

Col. Oran K. Henderson, far left, Mayor Thomas J. Monaghan, General Daniel B. Strickler and Lancaster's 1185th Army Reservists salute the tomb of President James Buchanan.

### **James Buchanan's Birthday Honored**

The 182nd birthday of James Buchanan, 15th President of the United States, was observed Sunday afternoon by a small gathering in a monument-crowded cemetery in southeast Lancaster.

Pennsylvania's only President, Buchanan was born April 23, 1791 in a log cabin near Mercersburg, Pa. Following his graduation from Dickinson College in 1809, young Buchanan practiced law in Lancaster and joined the bar here in 1812.

A few years later, Buchanan began his political career by serving two terms in the state legislature. He followed this with 10 years as a U.S. Congressman, a tour as ambassador to Russia and 11 years as U.S. Senator before starting his Republican presidency in 1857.

Buchanan's presidency fell just before that of Abraham Lincoln and was probably one of the toughest terms ever faced by an American president. Emotions over slavery ran high, as such events as John Brown's raid on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Va., took place.

### **STATES SECEDED**

Seven southern states actually seceded during the latter days of Buchanan's term, but the 15th president would not use force to bring them back into the union, hoping instead that they would come back on their own. For this, Buchanan has been sharply criticized by historians.

But Sunday afternoon at the cemetery service, an Army officer who has also earned a place in history spoke of the hard times that Buchanan faced during his presidency and the qualities he possessed.

"Any objective and fair historian would agree that there was little that any man could do," Col. Oran K. Henderson said of the historians' criticism of Buchanan.

Col. Henderson, now commander of the Army garrison at Indiantown Gap, was the highest ranking officer tried in connection with the My Lai massacre. He was cleared of charges of trying to cover up the 1968 incident in Vietnam.

### **'UNIMPEACHABLE'**

At Sunday's services, Col. Henderson said that Buchanan delayed the start of the Civil War and was "a man of unimpeachable character."

Col. Henderson attended the ceremony in Woodward Hill Cemetery, just off South Prince Street as the representative of President Nixon.

With flags gently waving in the breeze, the colonel walked to Buchanan's tomb along with Mayor Thomas J. Monaghan and Gen. Daniel B. Strickler and placed the traditional wreath.



### TAPS SOUNDED

The three moved back from the tomb as a bugler from the 1185th Army Reserve unit began sounding taps. The mournful sound of the bugle drifted over the cemetery and mingled with the sounds of playing children and the cheerful bells of an ice cream truck.

Col. Henderson walked back on the green grass to speak about Buchanan and to praise members of the Pilot Club for their work in restoring the 15th President's tomb.

The colonel and other officials posed at the tomb for a few pictures as the crowd of about 30, a little larger than last year's, began to move away.

