

Jess & Lacy

In case you're interested, I included complete copies of these Thanksgiving Proclamations our government has issued. But to make things simple - there's a summary of the true history of Thanksgiving in the USA preceding the official proclamations. As always, Love Uncle Jeff

Mayflower Compact – 1620: This in effect is the beginning of the USA. It is recognized as the first governmental document in our history. It states, “In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, by the grace of God, having undertaken, for the glory of God, and the advancement of the Christian faith... voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia...”

Governor Bradford’s Thanksgiving Proclamation – 1623: He said that on Thursday, November 29th you should take your wives and kids and go to your churches and listen to your Pastor and give thanks to Almighty God for all His blessings.

Thanksgiving Proclamation – June 20, 1676: the Governing council of Charlestown, Massachusetts set apart June 29th to give thanks to the Holy God for His compassion towards them in their war with the Heathen Natives of the land and that the whole people should offer up their bodies and souls as a living and acceptable service unto God by Jesus Christ.

Continental Congress Proclamation for a Day of Public Thanksgiving – Oct. 18, 1780: . . . that all the people may assemble on that day to celebrate the praises of our Divine Benefactor; to confess our unworthiness of the least of His favors, and to offer our fervent supplication to the God of all grace... to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread over all the earth.

Continental Congress Thanksgiving Proclamation – Oct. 11, 1782: IT being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, for His gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give Him praise for His goodness in general . . . Therefore the United States in Congress assembled . . . Does hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of Thursday the twenty-eight day of November next, as a day of solemn Thanksgiving to GOD for all His mercies.

Congressional Resolution – Sept. 25, 1789: Unanimously approved that a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a constitution of government for their safety and happiness.

George Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation – 1789: “...therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering

unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection... And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions..."

Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation – 1863: (America forgot National Prayer during 45 years of peace and prosperity. Then in 1863 Abraham Lincoln thundered, " We have been recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven... we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown, but we have forgotten God.") [this is when Thanksgiving became a National Holiday for the USA] Lincoln proclaimed, " ... the year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come... they are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

1976 – Tradition Finds a Home: In 1976, the year of America's 200th birthday, the chapel of Thanks-Giving Square was consecrated. President Gerald Ford has referred to it as "a major national shrine" and President George Bush noted that it is "a symbol and a home for America's most beloved tradition."

1988 – America Prays Together Again: Anne Armstrong, using Thanks-Giving Square research, asked President Reagan in 1981 to place the National Day of Prayer on its original spring date, which had been neglected for nearly two centuries. The first Thursday in May has been official ever since (confirmed by Congress in 1988), reviving the ancient "spring prayer and fall Thanksgiving" cycle of the Continental Congress.

The *Mayflower Compact* - 1620

In y^e name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwriten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord King James by y^e grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland king, defender of y^e faith, &c. Haveing undertaken, for y^e glorie of God, and advancemente of y^e Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant y^e first colonie in y^e Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutuallly in y^e presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick; for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of y^e ends aforesaid; and by vertue hearof, to enacte, constitute, and frame shuch just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for y^e generall good of y^e Colonie: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witnes wherof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd y^e .11. of November, in y^e year of the raigne of our soveraigne lord King James of England, France, & Ireland y^e eighteenth, and of Scotland y^e fiftie fourth. An^o: Dom .1620.

The above is an exact transcription of the Mayflower Compact made by [Caleb Johnson](#) from a photo-scan of the original page of William Bradford's *History Of Plymouth Plantation* in his own handwriting.

Governor Bradford's Thanksgiving Proclamation - 1623

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

--William Bradford

Ye Governor of Ye Colony

<http://members.aol.com/cheyefree/brad.htm>

The First Thanksgiving Proclamation: On June 20, 1676, the governing council of Charlestown, Massachusetts, held a meeting to determine how best to express thanks for the good fortune that had seen their community securely established. By unanimous vote they instructed Edward Rawson, the clerk, to proclaim June 29 as a day of thanksgiving, our first. That proclamation is reproduced herein the same language and spelling as the original.

FIRST THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION - JUNE 20, 1676:

"The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of his Afflictive dispensations in and by the present War with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against His own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of His judgements He hath remembered mercy, having remembered his Footstool in the day of His sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of His Fatherly Compassion, and regard; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with

many of our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to ourselves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed; and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of His returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading Him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

The Council has thought meet to appoint and set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such His Goodness and Favour, many Particulars of which mercy might be Instanced, but we doubt not those who are sensible of God's Afflictions, have been as diligent to espy Him returning to us; and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him; the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously to keep the same Beseeking that being perswaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people offer up our bodies and souls as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ."

<http://www.ukans.edu/carrie/docs/texts/thanksg.txt>

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS PROCLAMATION: **Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer** **October 18, 1780**

Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, amidst the vicissitudes and calamities of war to bestow blessings on the people of these states, which call for their devout and thankful acknowledgments, more especially in the late remarkable interposition of his watchful providence, in the rescuing the person of our Commander-in-Chief and the army from imminent dangers, at the moment when treason was ripened for execution...

It is therefore recommended to the several state... A day of public thanksgiving and prayer that all the people may assemble on that day celebrate the praises of our Divine Benefactor; to confess our unworthiness of the least of His favors, and to offer our fervent supplication to the God of all grace... to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread over all the earth.

RESOLUTION by CONGRESS

September 25, 1789: unanimously approved: asking President George Washington to proclaim a National Day of Thanksgiving: Day of Thanksgiving.

Resolved.

That a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a constitution of government for their safety and happiness.

Scanned from "One Nation Under God" Pg. 12

Continental Congress 1782 Thanksgiving Proclamation

STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.
IN COMMITTEE of SAFETY,
EXETER, November 1, 1782.

ORDERED,

THAT the following Proclamation for a general THANKSGIVING on the twenty-eighth day of November [instant?], received from the honorable Continental Congress, be forthwith printed, and sent to the several worshipping Assemblies in this State, to whom it is recommended religiously to observe said day, and to abstain from all servile labour thereon.

M. WEARE, President.

By the United States in Congress assembled.

PROCLAMATION.

IT being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to **ALMIGHTY GOD**, the giver of all good, for His gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give Him praise for His goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his providence in their behalf: Therefore the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these States, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war, in the course of the year now drawing to a close; particularly the harmony of the public Councils, which is so necessary to the success of the public cause; the perfect union and good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between them

and their Allies, notwithstanding the artful and unwearied attempts of the common enemy to divide them; the success of the arms of the United States, and those of their Allies, and the acknowledgment of their independence by another European power, whose friendship and commerce must be of great and lasting advantage to these States:----- Do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of **THURSDAY** the twenty-eight day of **NOVEMBER** next, as a day of solemn **THANKSGIVING** to **GOD** for all His mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify to their gratitude to **GOD** for His goodness, by a cheerful obedience of His laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by His influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.

*Done in Congress, at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our **LORD** one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh.*

JOHN HANSON, President.

Charles Thomson, Secretary.

PRINTED AT EXETER.

URL: <http://www.night.net/thanksgiving/1782proc.html>

George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted' for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the

means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have show kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the 3rd day of October, A.D. 1789.

(signed) G. Washington

<http://www.night.net/thanksgiving/kwash-11.html>

Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No

human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

--Abraham Lincoln - October 3, 1863

(from the collection of Lincoln's papers in the Library of America series, Vol II, pp. 520-521).