



PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
1862 & 1863: Abraham Lincoln & Jefferson Davis
issue proclamations of thanks for victories in battle.
1863: The national Thanksgiving begins.
1863-1869: Abraham Lincoln,
Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant

A DAY OF FASTING & HUMILIATION (NOT THANKSGIVING!) 1861
by JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES

WHEREAS, it hath pleased almighty God, the Sovereign Disposer of events, to protect and defend us hitherto in our conflicts with our enemies as to be unto them a shield.

And whereas, with grateful thanks we recognize His hand and acknowledge that not unto us, but unto Him, belongeth the victory, and in humble dependence upon His almighty strength, and trusting in the justness of our purpose, we appeal to Him that He may set at naught the efforts of our enemies, and humble them to confusion and shame.

Now therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, in view of impending conflict, do hereby set apart Friday, the 15th day of November, as a day of national humiliation and prayer, and do hereby invite the reverend clergy and the people of these Confederate States to repair on that day to their homes and usual places of public worship, and to implore blessing of almighty God upon our people, that he may give us victory over our enemies, preserve our homes and altars from pollution, and secure to us the restoration of peace and prosperity.

Given under hand and seal of the Confederate States at Richmond, this the 31st day of October, year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty one.

By the President, Jefferson Davis.

THANKSGIVING DAY 1862 for victory in battle by ABRAHAM LINCOLN
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

It has pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe signal victories to the land and naval forces engaged in suppressing an internal rebellion, and at the same time to avert from our country the dangers of foreign intervention and invasion.

It is therefore recommended to the people of the United States that at their next weekly assemblages in their accustomed places of public worship which shall occur after notice of this proclamation shall have been received they especially acknowledge and render thanks to our Heavenly Fathers for these inestimable blessings, that they then and there implore spiritual consolation in behalf of all who have been brought into affliction by the casualties and calamities of sedition and civil war, and that they reverently invoke the divine guidance for our national counsels, to the end that they may speedily result in the restoration of peace, harmony, and unity throughout our borders and hasten the establishment of fraternal relations among all the countries of the earth.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 10th day of April A.D. 1862, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-sixth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THANKSGIVING DAY 1862 for victory in battle BY JEFFERSON DAVIS

To the People of the Confederate States:

Once more upon the plains of Manassas have our armies been blessed by the Lord of Hosts with a triumph over our enemies. It is my privilege to invite you once more to His footstool, not now in the garb of fasting and sorrow, but with joy and gladness, to render thanks for the great mercies received at His hand. A few months since, and our enemies poured forth their invading legions upon our soil. They laid waste our fields, polluted our altars and violated the sanctity of our homes. Around our capital they gathered their forces, and with boastful threats, claimed it as already their prize. The brave troops which rallied to its defense have extinguished these vain hopes, and, under the guidance of the same almighty hand, have scattered our enemies and driven them back in dismay. Uniting these defeated forces and the various armies which had been ravaging our coasts with the army of invasion in Northern Virginia, our enemies have renewed their attempt to subjugate us at the very place where their first effort was defeated, and the vengeance of retributive justice has overtaken the entire host in a second and complete overthrow.

To this signal success accorded to our arms in the East has been graciously added another equally brilliant in the West. On the very day on which our forces were led to victory on the Plains of Manassas, in Virginia, the same Almighty arm assisted us to overcome our enemies at Richmond, in Kentucky. Thus, at one and the same time, have two great hostile armies been stricken down, and the wicked designs of their armies been set at naught.

In such circumstances, it is meet and right that, as a people, we should bow down in adoring thankfulness to that gracious God who has been our bulwark and defense, and to offer unto him the tribute of thanksgiving and praise. In his hand is the issue of all events, and to him should we, in an especial manner, ascribe the honor of this great deliverance.

Now, therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, do issue this, my proclamation, setting apart Thursday, the 18th day of September inst., as a day of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the great mercies vouchsafed to our people, and more especially for the triumph of our arms at Richmond and Manassas; and I do hereby invite the people of the Confederate States to meet on that day at their respective places of public worship, and to unite in rendering thanks and praise to God for these great mercies, and to implore Him to conduct our country safely through the perils which surround us, to the final attainment of the blessings of peace and security.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Confederate States, at Richmond, this fourth day of September, A.D.1862.

JEFFERSON DAVIS

**THANKSGIVING DAY 1863 for victory in battle BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION**

It has pleased Almighty God to hearken to the supplications and prayers of an afflicted people and to vouchsafe to the Army and the Navy of the United States victories on land and on the sea so signal and so effective as to furnish reasonable grounds for augmented confidence that the Union of these States will be maintained, their Constitution preserved, and their peace and prosperity permanently restored. But these victories have been accorded not without sacrifices of life, limb, health, and liberty, incurred by brave, loyal, and patriotic citizens. Domestic affliction in every part of the country follows in the train of these fearful bereavements. It is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the Almighty Father and the power of His hand equally in these triumphs and in these sorrows:

Now, therefore, be it known that I do set apart Thursday, the 6th day of August next, to be

observed as a day for national thanksgiving, praise, and prayer, and I invite the people of the United States to assemble on that occasion in their customary places of worship and in the forms approved by their own consciences render the homage due to the Divine Majesty for the wonderful things He has done in the nation's behalf and invoke the influence of His Holy Spirit to subdue the anger which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion, to change the hearts of the insurgents, to guide the counsels of the Government with wisdom adequate to so great a national emergency, and to visit with tender care and consolation throughout the length and breadth of our land all those who, through the vicissitudes of marches, voyages, battles, and sieges, have been brought to suffer in mind, body, or estate, and finally to lead the whole nation through the paths of repentance and submission to the divine will back to the perfect enjoyment of union and fraternal peace.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 15th day of July A.D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE FIRST IN AN UNBROKEN SERIES OF AUTUMN PROCLAMATIONS:

THANKSGIVING DAY 1863 by ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

The year that is drawing toward 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 can not 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 theater of military conflict, while that theater 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 defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has 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 battlefield, 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 one 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 if, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 3d day of October A.D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THANKSGIVING DAY 1864

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

It has pleased Almighty God to prolong our national life another year, defending us with His guardian care against unfriendly designs from abroad and vouchsafing to us in His mercy many and signal victories over the enemy, who is of our own household. It has also pleased our Heavenly Father to favor as well our citizens in their homes as our soldiers in their camps and our sailors on the rivers and seas with unusual health. He has largely augmented our free population by emancipation and by immigration, while He has opened to use new sources of wealth and has crowned the labor of our workingmen in every department of industry with abundant rewards. Moreover, He has been pleased to animate and inspire our minds and hearts with fortitude, courage, and resolution sufficient for the great trial of civil war into which we have been brought by our adherence as a nation to the cause of freedom and humanity, and to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions :

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do hereby appoint and set apart the last Thursday in November next as a day which I desire to be observed by all my fellow-citizens, wherever they may then be, as a day of thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God, the beneficent Creator and Ruler of the Universe. And I do further recommend to my fellow-citizens aforesaid that on that occasion they do reverently humble themselves in the dust and from thence offer up penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the Great Disposer of Events for a return of the inestimable blessings of peace, union, and harmony throughout the land which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 20th day of October, A.D. 1864, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THANKSGIVING DAY 1865

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

Whereas it has pleased Almighty God during the year which is now coming to an end to relieve our beloved country from the fearful scourge of civil war and to permit us to secure the blessings of peace, unity, and harmony, with a great enlargement of civil liberty; and
Whereas our Heavenly Father has also during the year graciously averted from us the calamities of foreign war, pestilence, and famine, while our granaries are full of the fruits of an abundant season; and

Whereas righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people :

Now, therefore, be it known that I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do hereby recommend to the people thereof that they do set apart and observe the first Thursday of December next as a day of national thanksgiving to the Creator of the Universe for these great deliverances and blessings.

And I do further recommend that on that occasion the whole people make confession of our national sins against His infinite goodness, and with one heart and one mind implore the divine guidance in the ways of national virtue and holiness.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be

affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 28th day of October, A.D. 1865, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninetieth.

ANDREW JOHNSON

THANKSGIVING DAY 1866

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, has been pleased to vouchsafe to us as a people another year of that national life which is an indispensable condition of peace, security and progress. That year has, moreover, been crowned with many peculiar blessings.

The civil war that so recently closed among us has not been anywhere reopened; foreign intervention has ceased to excite alarm or apprehension; intrusive pestilence has been benignly mitigated; domestic tranquillity has improved, sentiments of conciliation has largely prevailed, and affections of loyalty and patriotism have been widely renewed; our fields have yielded quite abundantly, our mining industry has been richly rewarded, and we have been allowed to extend our railroad system far into the interior recesses of the country, while our commerce has resumed its customary activity in foreign seas.

These great national blessings demand a national acknowledgment.

Now, therefore, I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do hereby recommend that Thursday, the 29th day of November next, be set apart and be observed everywhere in the several States and Territories of the United States by the people thereof as a day of thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God, with due remembrance that "in His temple doth every man speak of His honor." I recommend also that on the same solemn occasion they do humbly and devoutly implore Him to grant to our national council \s and to our whole people that divine wisdom which alone can lead any nation into the ways of all good.

In offering these national thanksgivings, praises, and supplications we have the divine assurance that "the Lord remaineth a king forever; them that are meek shall He guide in judgment and such as are gentle shall He learn His way; the Lord shall give strength to His people, and the Lord shall give to His people the blessing of peace."

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 8th day of October, A.D. 1866, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-first.

ANDREW JOHNSON

THANKSGIVING DAY 1867

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

In conformity with a recent custom that may now be regarded as established on national consent and approval, I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do hereby recommend to my fellow citizens that Thursday, the 28th day of November next, be set apart and observed throughout the Republic as a day of national thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with whom are dominion and fear, who maketh peace in His high places.

Resting and refraining from secular labors on that day, let us reverently and devoutly give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the mercies and blessings with which He has crowned the now closing year. Especially let us remember that He has covered our land through all its extent with greatly needed and very abundant harvests; that He has caused industry to prosper, not only in our fields, but also in our workshops, in our mines, and in our forests. He has permitted us to multiply ships upon our lakes and rivers and upon the high seas, and at the same time to extend our iron roads to far into the secluded places of the continent as to guarantee speedy overland intercourse between the two oceans. He has inclined our hearts to turn away from domestic contentions and commotions consequent upon a distracting and desolating civil war, and to walk more and more in

the ancient ways of loyalty, conciliation, and brotherly love. He has blessed the peaceful efforts with which we have established new and important commercial treaties with foreign nations, while we have at the same time strengthened our national defenses and greatly enlarged our national borders.

While thus rendering the unanimous and heartfelt tribute of national praise and thanksgiving which is so justly due to Almighty God, let us not fail to implore Him that the same divine protection and care which we have hitherto so undeservedly and yet so constantly enjoyed may be continued to our country and our people throughout all their generations forever.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 26th day of October, A.D. 1867, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-second.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

THANKSGIVING DAY 1868

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

In the year which is now drawing to its end the art, the skill, and the labor of the people of the United States have been employed with greater diligence and vigor and on broader fields than ever before, and the fruits of the earth have been gathered into the granary and the storehouse in marvelous abundance. Our highways have been lengthened, and new and prolific regions have been occupied. We are permitted to hope that long-protracted political and sectional dissensions are at no distant day to give place to returning harmony and fraternal affection throughout the Republic. Many foreign states have entered into liberal agreements with us, while nations which are far off and which heretofore have been unsocial and exclusive have become our friends.

The annual period of rest, which we have reached in health and tranquillity, and which is crowned with so many blessings, is by universal consent a convenient and suitable one for cultivating personal piety and practicing public devotion.

I therefore recommend that Thursday, the 26th day of November next, be set apart and observed by all the people of the United States as a day for public praise, thanksgiving, and prayer to the almighty Creator and Divine Ruler of the Universe, by whose everwatchful, merciful, and gracious providence alone states and nations, no less than families and individual men, do live and move and have their being.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 12th day of October, A.D. 1868, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-third.

ANDREW JOHNSON

THANKSGIVING DAY 1869

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION

The year which is drawing to a close has been free from pestilence; health has prevailed throughout the land; abundant crops reward the labors of the husbandman; commerce and manufactures have successfully prosecuted their peaceful paths; the mines and forests have yielded liberally; the nation has increased in wealth and in strength; peace has prevailed, and its blessings have advanced every interest of the people in every part of the Union; harmony and fraternal intercourse restored are obliterating the marks of past conflict and estrangement; burdens have been lightened; means have been increased; civil and religious liberty are secured to every inhabitant of the land, whose soil is trod by none but freemen.

It becomes a people thus favored to make acknowledgment to the Supreme Author from whom such blessings flow of their gratitude and their dependence, to render praise and thanksgiving for the same, and devoutly to implore a continuance of God's mercies.

Therefore, I, Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States, do recommend that Thursday, the 18th day of November next, be observed as a day of thanksgiving and of praise and of prayer to almighty God, the creator and the ruler of the universe; and I do further recommend to all the people of the United States to assemble on that day in their accustomed places of public worship and to unite in the homage and praise due to the bountiful Father of All Mercies and in fervent prayer for the continuance of the manifold blessings he has vouchsafed to us as a people. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 5th day of October, A.D. 1869, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-fourth.

U.S. GRANT