



PRESIDENTIAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATIONS
1880-1889: Rutherford B. Hayes, Chester A. Arthur,
Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison

THANKSGIVING DAY - 1880

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

At no period in their history since the United States became a nation has this people had so abundant and so universal reasons for joy and gratitude at the favor of Almighty God or been subject to so profound an obligation to give thanks for His loving kindness and humbly to implore His continued care and protection.

Health, wealth, and prosperity throughout all our borders; peace, honor, and friendship with all the world; firm and faithful adherence by the great body of our population to the principles of liberty and justice which have made our greatness as a nation, and to the wise institutions and strong frame of government and society, which will perpetuate it - for all these let the thanks of a happy and united people, as with one voice, ascend in devout homage to the Giver of All Good.

I therefore recommend that on Thursday, the 25th day of November next, the people meet in their respective places of worship to make their acknowledgments to Almighty God for His bounties and His protection and to offer to Him prayers for their continuance.

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 1st day of November, A.D. 1880, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fifth.

R.B. HAYES

THANKSGIVING DAY 1881

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

It has long been the pious custom of our people, with the closing of the year, to look back upon the blessings brought to them in the changing course of the seasons and to return solemn thanks to the all-giving source from whom they flow. And although at this period, when the falling leaf admonishes us that the time of our sacred duty is at hand, our nation still lies in the shadow of a great bereavement, and the mourning which has filled our hearts still finds its sorrowful expression toward the God before whom we but lately bowed in grief and supplication, yet the countless benefits which have showered upon us during the past twelvemonth call for our fervent gratitude and make it fitting that we should rejoice with thankfulness that the Lord in His infinite mercy has most signally favored our country and our people. Peace without and prosperity within have been vouchsafed to us, no pestilence has visited our shores, the abundant privileges of freedom which our fathers left us in their wisdom are still our increasing heritage; and if in parts of our vast domain sore affliction has visited our brethren in their forest homes, yet even this calamity has been tempered and in a manner sanctified by the generous compassion for the sufferers which has been called forth throughout our land. For all these things it is meet that the voice of the nation should go up to God in devout homage.

Wherefore, I, Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, do recommend that all the people

observe Thursday, the 24th day of November instant, as a day of national thanksgiving and prayer, by ceasing, so far as may be, from their secular labors and meeting in their several places of worship, there to join in ascribing honor and praise to Almighty God, whose goodness has been so manifest in our history and in our lives, and offering earnest prayers that His bounties may continue to us and to our children.

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 4th day of November, A.D. 1881, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixth.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

THANKSGIVING DAY 1882

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

In conformity with a custom the annual observance of which is justly held in honor by this people, I, Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, do hereby set apart Thursday, the 30th day of November next, as a day of public thanksgiving.

The blessings demanding our gratitude are numerous and varied. For the peace and amity which subsist between this Republic and all the nations of the world; for the freedom from internal discord and violence; for the increasing friendship between the different sections of the land; for liberty, justice, and constitutional government; for the devotion of the people to our free institutions and their cheerful obedience to mild laws; for the constantly increasing strength of the Republic while extending its privileges to fellow-men who come to us; for the improved means of internal communication and the increased facilities of intercourse with other nations; for the general prevailing health of the year; for the prosperity for all our industries, the liberal return for the mechanic's toil affording a market for the abundant harvests of the husbandman; for the preservation of the national faith and credit; for wise and generous provision to effect the intellectual and moral education of our youth; for the influence upon the conscience of a restraining and transforming religion, and for the joys of home - for these and for many other blessings we should give thanks.

Wherefore I do recommend that the day above designated be observed throughout the country as a day of national thanksgiving and prayer, and that the people, ceasing from their daily labors and meeting in accordance with their several forms of worship, draw near to the throne of Almighty God, offering to Him praise and gratitude for the manifold goodness which He has vouchsafed to us and praying that His blessings and His mercies may continue.

And I do further recommend that the day thus appointed be made a special occasion for deeds of kindness and charity to the suffering and the needy, so that all who dwell within the land may rejoice and be glad in this season of national thanksgiving.

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 25th day of October, A.D. 1882, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventh.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

THANKSGIVING DAY 1883

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

In furtherance of the custom of this people at the closing of each year to engage, upon a day set apart for that purpose, in a special festival of praise to the Giver of All Good, I, Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, do hereby designate Thursday, the 29th day of November next, as a day of national thanksgiving.

The year which is drawing to an end has been replete with evidences of divine goodness.

The prevalence of health, the fullness of the harvests, the stability of peace and order, the growth

of fraternal feeling, the spread of intelligence and learning, the continued enjoyment of civil and religious liberty - all these and countless other blessings are cause for reverent rejoicing. I do therefore recommend that on the day above appointed the people rest from their accustomed labors and, meeting in their several places of worship, express their devout gratitude to God that He hath dealt so bountifully with this nation and pray that His grace and favor abide with it 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. 1883, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighth.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

THANKSGIVING DAY 1884

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

The season is nigh when it is the yearly wont of this people to observe a day appointed for that purpose by the President as an especial occasion for thanksgiving unto God.

Now, therefore, in recognition of this hallowed custom, I, Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, do hereby designate as such day of general thanksgiving Thursday, the 27th day of this present November.

And I do recommend that throughout the land the people, ceasing from their accustomed occupations, do then keep holiday at their several homes and their several places of worship, and with heart and voice pay reverent acknowledgment to the giver of All Good for the countless blessings wherewith He hath visited this nation.

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 7th day of November, A.D. 1884, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninth.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

THANKSGIVING DAY 1885

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

The American people have always abundant cause to be thankful to Almighty God, whose watchful care and guiding hand have been manifested in every stage of their national life, guarding and protecting them in time of peril and safety leading them in the hour of darkness and of danger. It is fitting and proper that a nation thus favored should on one day in every year, for that purpose especially appointed, publicly acknowledge the goodness of God and return thanks to Him for all His gracious gifts.

Therefore, I, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate and set apart Thursday, the 26th day of November instant, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, and do invoke the observance of the same by all the people of the land.

On that day let all secular business be suspended, and let the people assemble in their usual places of worship and with prayer and songs of praise devoutly testify their gratitude to the Giver of Every Good and Perfect Gift for all that He has done for us in the year that has passed; for our preservation as a united nation and for our deliverance from the shock and danger of political convulsion; for the blessings of peace and for our safety and quiet while wars and rumors of war have agitated and afflicted other nations of the earth; for our security against the scourge of pestilence, which in other lands has claimed its dead by thousands and filled the streets with mourners; for plenteous crops which reward the labor of the husbandman and increase our nation's wealth, and for the contentment throughout our borders which follows in the train of prosperity and abundance.

And let there also be on the day thus set apart a reunion of families, sanctified and chastened by tender memories and associations; and let the social intercourse of friends, with pleasant

reminiscence, renew the ties of affection and strengthen the bonds of kindly feeling. And let us by no means forget while we give thanks and enjoy the comforts which have crowned our lives that truly grateful hearts are inclined to deeds of charity, and that a kind and thoughtful remembrance of the poor will double the pleasures of our condition and render our praise and thanksgiving more acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

Done at the city of Washington, this 2d day of November, A.D. 1885, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and tenth.

GROVER CLEVELAND

THANKSGIVING DAY 1886

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

It has long been the custom of the people of the United States, on a day in each year especially set apart for that purpose by their Chief Executive, to acknowledge the goodness and mercy of God and to invoke His continued care and protection.

In observance of such custom I, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, do hereby designate and set apart Thursday, the 25th of November, instant, to be observed and kept as a day of thanksgiving and prayer.

On that day let all our people forego their accustomed employments and assemble in their usual places of worship to give thanks to the Ruler of the Universe for our continued enjoyment of the blessings of a free government, for a renewal of business prosperity throughout our land, for the return which has rewarded the labor of those who till the soil, and for our progress as a people in all that makes a nation great.

And while we contemplate the infinite power of God in earthquake, flood, and storm let the grateful hearts of those who have been shielded from harm through His mercy be turned in sympathy and kindness toward those who have suffered through His visitations.

Let us also in the midst of our thanksgiving remember the poor and needy with cheerful gifts and alms so that our service may by deeds of charity be made acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

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 1st day of November, A.D. 1886, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eleventh.

GROVER CLEVELAND

THANKSGIVING DAY 1887

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

The goodness and the mercy of God, which have followed the American people during all the days of the past year, claim their grateful recognition and humble acknowledgment. By His omnipotent power He has protected us from war and pestilence and from every national calamity; by His gracious favor the earth has yielded a generous return to the labor of the husbandman, and every path of honest toil has led to comfort and contentment; by His loving kindness the hearts of our people have been replenished with fraternal sentiment and patriotic endeavor, and by His unerring guidance we have been directed in the way of national prosperity.

To the end that we may with one accord testify our gratitude for all these blessings, I, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, do hereby designate and set apart Thursday, the 24th day of November next, as a day of thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by all the people of the land.

On that day let all secular work and employment be suspended, and let our people assemble in their accustomed places of worship and with prayer and songs of praise give thanks to our Heavenly Father for all that He has done for us, while we humbly implore the forgiveness of our sins and a continuance of His mercy.

Let families and kindred be united on that day, and let their hearts, filled with kindly cheer and

affectionate reminiscence, be turned in thankfulness to the source of all their pleasures and the giver of all that makes the day glad and joyous.

And in the midst of our worship and our happiness let us remember the poor, the needy, and the unfortunate, and by our gifts of charity and ready benevolence let us increase the number of those who with grateful hearts shall join in our thanksgiving.

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 25th day of October, A.D. 1887, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and twelfth.

GROVER CLEVELAND

THANKSGIVING DAY 1888

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

Constant thanksgiving and gratitude are due from the American people to Almighty God for His goodness and mercy, which have followed them since the day He made them a nation and vouchsafed to them a free government. With loving kindness He has constantly led us in the way of prosperity and greatness. He has not visited with swift punishment our shortcomings, but with gracious care He has warned us of our dependence upon His forbearance and has taught us that obedience to His holy law is the price of a continuance of His precious gifts.

In acknowledgment of all that God has done for us as a nation, and to the end that on an appointed day the united prayers and praise of a grateful country may reach the throne of grace, I, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, do hereby designate and set apart Thursday, the 29th day of November instant, as a day of thanksgiving and prayer, to be kept and observed throughout the land.

On that day let all our people suspend their ordinary work and occupations, and in their accustomed places of worship, with prayer and songs of praise, render thanks to God for all His mercies, for the abundant harvests which have rewarded the toil of the husbandman during the year that has passed, and for the rich rewards that have followed the labors of our people in their shops and their marts of trade and traffic. Let us give thanks for peace and for social order and contentment within our borders, and for our advancement in all that adds to national greatness. And mindful of the afflictive dispensation with which a portion of our land has been visited, let us, while we humble ourselves before the power of God, acknowledge His mercy in setting bounds to the deadly march of pestilence, and let our hearts be chastened by sympathy with our fellow-countrymen who have suffered and who mourn.

And as we return thanks for all the blessings which we have received from the hands of our Heavenly Father, let us not forget that He has enjoined upon us charity; and on this day of thanksgiving let us generously remember the poor and needy, so that our tribute of praise and gratitude may be acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

Done at the city of Washington on the 1st day of November, 1888, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and thirteenth.

GROVER CLEVELAND

THANKSGIVING DAY 1889

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

A highly favored people, mindful of their dependence on the bounty of Divine Providence, should seek fitting occasion to testify gratitude and ascribe praise to Him who is the author of their many blessings. It behooves us, then, to look back with thankful hearts over the past year and bless God for His infinite mercy in vouchsafing to our land enduring peace, to our people freedom from pestilence and famine, to our husbandmen abundant harvests, and to them that labor a recompense of their toil.

Now, therefore, I, Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States of America, do earnestly

recommend that Thursday, the 28th day of this present month of November, be set apart as a day of national thanksgiving and prayer, and that the people of our country, ceasing from the cares and labors of their working day, shall assemble in their respective places of worship and give thanks to God, who has prospered us on our way and made our paths the paths of peace, beseeching Him to bless the day to our present and future good, making it truly one of thanksgiving for each reunited home circle as for the nation at large.

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 1st day of November, A.D. 1889, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fourteenth.

BENJAMIN HARRISON