

In Congress. November 1, 1777. Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God, to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations to Him for benefits received ... [Boston

In CONGRESS, NOVEMBER 1, 1777.

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations to Him for benefits received; and to implore such farther blessings as they stand in need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant mercy, not only to continue to us the *innumerable* bounties of his common providence; but also to smile upon us, in the prosecution of a just and necessary war for the defence and establishment of our unalienable rights and liberties: *Particularly* in that he hath been pleased in so great a measure, to prosper the means used for the support of our troops, and to crown our arms with most *signal* success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth day of *December* next, for Solemn Thanksgiving and Praise: That at one time and with one voice, the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their Divine Benefactor: and that, together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor; and their humble and earnest supplications that it may please God through the merits of Jesus Christ, *mercifully* to forgive and *blot* them out of remembrance. That it may please him graciously to afford his blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the PUBLIC Council of the whole. To inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments, under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE. That it may please him, to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people, and the labour of the husbandman, that our land may yet yield its increase. To take schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue and piety, under his *nurturing* hand: and to prosper the means of religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom which consisteth "IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE Holy Ghost."

And it is further recommended, that servile labour, and such recreation as, though at other times innocent, may be unbecoming the purpose of this *appointment*, may be omitted on so solemn an occasion.

By order of CONGRESS, HENRY LAURENS, President.

STATE of MASSACHUSETTS-BAY.

Council-Chamber, in Boston, *November 27, 1777.*

AGREEABLE to the above recommendation of the honorable CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, by the advice of the COUNCIL, and at the desire of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, we have thought fit to appoint, and do hereby appoint THURSDAY *the eighteenth day of December next*, to be observed throughout this State as a day of public THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: And we do hereby call upon Minister and People of every denomination, religiously to observe the said day accordingly.

Jeremiah Powell,

Artemas Ward,

Walter Spooner,

Richard Derby, Junr.

Thomas Cushing,

Samuel Holton,

Jabez Fisher,

Moses Gill,

John Taylor,

Benjamin White,

Benjamin Austin,

Daniel Davis,

Daniel Hopkins,

Nathan Cushing,

Abraham Fuller.

By their Honor's Command, JOHN AVERY, Dep. Sec'ry.

GOD Save THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

Congress Proclamation for Thanksgiving 18 Decem 1777
For The New Mr Parker

Rare Broadside Found Upstate Proclaims First National Thanksgiving Day in 1777

By SANKA KNOX

An extremely rare broadside proclaiming a national Thanksgiving Day in 1777 was discovered recently in a bundle of old papers and documents in an attic in Middletown, N. Y. This proclamation is said to be the first Federal decree of Thanksgiving.

The attic's dusty pile rewarded the finder with the third copy of the broadside to come to light.

The proclamation or "recommendation" is now in the hands of John F. Fleming of 322 East Fifty-seventh Street, dealer in rare books and manuscripts. He values his acquisition at \$1,500. The two other known copies are at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass., and at the Boston Public Library.

Plymouth Pilgrims observed a heartfelt day of Thanksgiving after their first harvest in 1621. Good harvests and victories over the Indians were occasions for Thanksgiving Days in other New England colonies. After 1680, a day was set aside annually in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

However, according to the broadside, the recommendation for the first national Thanksgiving, made "to the legislative or executive powers of these United States," came on Nov. 1, 1777. The "eighteenth of December next," a Thursday, was appointed for "Solemn Thanksgiving and Praise."

The broadside, printed in Boston by John Gill, carried under the Congressional recommendation an announcement by the "State of Massachusetts-Bay" that it was "agreeable" to the observance.

The first Presidential Thanksgiving proclamation was made by Washington. It set aside Thursday, Nov. 26, 1789. After that, national observances of the kind were sporadic.

Thanksgiving Day became a yearly observance by executive decree in 1864. President Lincoln named the last Thursday in November as the holiday that year.

The Continental Congress had had particular reason for Thanksgiving. The larger part of New Jersey had been regained from the British forces, and the victory at Saratoga, with Burgoyne's surrender, had taken place on Oct. 17, two weeks before the proclamation.

The proclamation, "By order of CONGRESS, HENRY LAURENS, President," asked God "not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of his common providence; but also to smile upon us, in the prosecution of a just and necessary war for the defence and establishment of our unalienable rights and liberties. Particularly in that he hath been pleased in so great a measure, to prosper the means used for the support of our troops, and to crown our arms with most signal success."