Thanksgiving Day Proclamations 1789 – Present

The *First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving* was issued by the Continental Congress in November of 1777, following the Colonial victories over British General John Burgoyne in the **Battles of Saratoga**. In the Proclamation, Congress “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.” Near the end of the Revolutionary War—after the British House of Commons had voted to end the war in America, but before the formal signing of the Treaty of Paris—the Congress *proclaimed another Day of Thanksgiving*, to be held on November 28, 1782.

But the first Thanksgiving Day celebrated under the new Constitution took place on November 26, 1789, the first year of George Washington's presidency. President Washington issued this proclamation recognizing November 26 as “a day of public thanksgiving and prayer.” John Adams and James Madison also issued proclamations calling on Americans to observe certain days with fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving, but after Madison no President of the United States issued a proclamation for Thanksgiving until Abraham Lincoln.

On October 3, 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln made the traditional Thanksgiving celebration a nationwide holiday. Since this proclamation, each of his successors as president has issued a Thanksgiving proclamation every year, appointing the day first specifically set by Lincoln—the “last Thursday in November.”

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt *moved the holiday* to the third Thursday of November to lengthen the Christmas shopping season. After a storm of protest, Congress established the Federal Thanksgiving Day holiday following the passage of a joint resolution, **H.J. Res. 41**, by the House of Representatives on October 6, 1941, declaring the “last Thursday in November a legal holiday.” The Senate then passed an amendment “making the fourth Thursday in November a legal holiday.”

**George Washington**

George Washington, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1789
George Washington, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1795

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John Adams
John Adams, A Day of Fasting and Humiliation, 1798
John Adams, A Day of Fasting and Humiliation, 1799

James Madison
James Madison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1813
James Madison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1815

Abraham Lincoln
Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1862
Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1863
Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1863
Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1864

Andrew Johnson
Andrew Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1865
Andrew Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1866
Andrew Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1867
Andrew Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1868

Ulysses S. Grant
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1869
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1870
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1871
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1872
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1873
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1874
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1875
Ulysses S. Grant, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1876

Rutherford B. Hayes
Rutherford B. Hayes, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1877
Rutherford B. Hayes, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1878
Rutherford B. Hayes, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1879
Rutherford B. Hayes, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1880
Chester A. Arthur
Chester A. Arthur, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1881
Chester A. Arthur, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1882
Chester A. Arthur, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1883
Chester A. Arthur, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1884

Grover Cleveland
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1885
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1886
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1887
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1888

Benjamin Harrison
Benjamin Harrison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1889
Benjamin Harrison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1890
Benjamin Harrison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1891
Benjamin Harrison, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1892

Grover Cleveland
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1893
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1894
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1895
Grover Cleveland, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1896

William McKinley
William McKinley, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1897
William McKinley, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1898
William McKinley, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1899
William McKinley, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1900

Theodore Roosevelt
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1901
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1902
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1903
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1904
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1905
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1906
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1907
Theodore Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1908

William Howard Taft
William Howard Taft, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1909
William Howard Taft, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1910
William Howard Taft, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1911
William Howard Taft, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1912

Woodrow Wilson
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1913
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1914
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1915
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1916
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1917
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1918
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1919
Woodrow Wilson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1920

Warren G. Harding
Warren G. Harding, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1921
Warren G. Harding, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1922

Calvin Coolidge
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1923
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1924
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1925
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1926
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1927
Calvin Coolidge, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1928

Herbert Hoover
Herbert Hoover, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1929
Herbert Hoover, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1930
Herbert Hoover, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1931
Herbert Hoover, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1932
Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1933
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1934
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1935
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1936
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1937
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Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1944

Harry S. Truman
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1945
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1946
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1947
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1948
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1949
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1950
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1951
Harry S. Truman, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1952

Dwight D. Eisenhower
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1953
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1954
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1955
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1956
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1957
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1958
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1959
Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1960

John F. Kennedy
John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1961
John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1962
John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1963

Lyndon B. Johnson
Lyndon B. Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1964
Lyndon B. Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1965
Lyndon B. Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1966
Lyndon B. Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1967
Lyndon B. Johnson, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1968

Richard Nixon
Richard Nixon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1969
Richard Nixon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1970
Richard Nixon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1971
Richard Nixon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1972
Richard Nixon, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1973

Gerald R. Ford
Gerald R. Ford, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1974
Gerald R. Ford, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1975
Gerald R. Ford, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1976

Jimmy Carter
Jimmy Carter, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1977
Jimmy Carter, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1978
Jimmy Carter, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1979
Jimmy Carter, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1980

Ronald Reagan
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1981
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1982
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Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1984
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1985
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1986
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1987
Ronald Reagan, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1988
George H.W. Bush
George Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1989
George Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1990
George Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1991
George Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1992

William J. Clinton
William J. Clinton, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1993
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William J. Clinton, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1997
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William J. Clinton, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1999
William J. Clinton, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2000

George W. Bush
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2001
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2002
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2003
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2004
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2005
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2006
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2007
George W. Bush, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2008

Barack Obama
Barack Obama, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2009
Barack Obama, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2010
Barack Obama, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 2011