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Thanksgiving

by

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Thanksgiving is a holiday with a great history, having originated informally in 1621 after a bountiful harvest that fall. That was the famous Thanksgiving that included over 90 of the local Indians who had helped the settlers survive the bitter winter. Massachusetts Governor Bradford declared another official day of Thanksgiving in 1623. Fifty-three years went by before another day of Thanksgiving was declared in 1676. It wasn't until October, 1777, that all 13 Colonies joined in to celebrate Thanksgiving, which also coincided with a victory over the British in Saratoga. That Thanksgiving was a one time happening, however, and it wasn't until 1789, 12 years later, that President George Washington proclaimed a National Day of Thanks for our newly formed country to come together with thankful hearts.

As is the case today, there were many dissenters who felt the day would be a waste and that remembering the ills of a few colonists over 100 years previous was not a very good reason to call a holiday. Some just don't get the idea that remembering one's deliverance from death and destruction, and the myriad of other blessings from God is more than enough cause to be thankful.

Two Presidents later it is said then President Thomas Jefferson "scoffed" at the idea of a national day of thanks and refused to get involved. Anyway, it wasn't until 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November the official day of Thanksgiving. His decision I'm sure was one from the heart, but a lady by the name of Sara Josepha Hale, editor of the *Boston Ladies' Magazine*, had spent the previous 40 years writing and imploring Governors and former Presidents to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. I feel we should give her some of the credit for it happening, don't you?

It is said that every President since Lincoln celebrated the holiday, even though a few of them changed the day from time to time. President Franklin D. Roosevelt backed Thanksgiving up a week in the late 30's to accommodate the retail industry to another week of shopping prior to Christmas. There was such an outcry from the public that he rescinded that order two years later, returning the holiday to its proper place on the calendar. In 1941, probably to forestall future Presidents from messing with the holiday, Congress officially declared Thanksgiving a National Holiday to be commemorated the last Thursday of November.

In our day and time Thanksgiving has always been a holiday that produces the heaviest traveling days of any of the other holidays because families seem to want to gravitate back together to share in memories of what once was. How many still give God the thanks for their health and other blessings one can only guess, but it is still the purpose behind the day.

Thanksgiving used to be treated as the official beginning of the Christmas shopping season, however, I believe Halloween has captured that spot. Hopefully it won't sneak back to Labor Day, or God

forbid, the 4th of July. In many ways Thanksgiving has withstood the pressure to be commercialized, unless you can call the enormous number of turkeys sold preceding it as commercialization. By the way, is it true that turkey can only be eaten on Thanksgiving and Christmas?

Of course, the really big sales seem to take place immediately the day after Thanksgiving and can you believe those women who get up at 5-6 am to be first in line for a “\$3 TV set” or be one of those “First 100 in the door get 75% off all purchases...sales?” Judy and I for the last two years have alternated between families here in FL, VA, WV, and NC. This year we decided we were going to spend it with our new family of friends here and have invited 22 of our closest friends to our humble abode to share in the fantastic blessings the Lord has endowed us with these last few years. It will be a fun time with lots of good food, football games, talking and laughing... and remembering all those family members who are located in distant environs.

We are very thankful and even though you will be reading this a few days after Thanksgiving please continue to praise God for what He’s done for you. And we cannot forget those brave men and women who serve proudly and honorably in our military overseas and at home that you and I can continue to have the blessing of freedom in this great nation in which we live. God bless our armed forces and God bless America! Belated Happy Thanksgiving folks.

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