

FREDERICK WILLIAM DAME

THANKSGIVING

The word *thanksgiving* is made up of two substantial words: the plural noun *thanks* and the verb *giving*. The word *thanks* means *acknowledgements with feelings to express gratitude*.¹ The word *giving* means *to give*.² Putting them together with the intention of meaning the national holiday in the United States of America, we have the meaning of Thanksgiving: *acknowledgements with feelings to express gratitude to God and giving God this gratitude*.

In grade school this author learned that the first idea of giving thanks to God for a successful year and harvest was begun by the Pilgrim Fathers. To show their gratitude not only to God, they also invited the local Indians (Native Americans) to partake of the Pilgrim kind of Thanksgiving. Yet, essentially this observance took place mostly in the New England Colonies. The celebration was not official and it was not always on a yearly basis. Coincidentally, the grade school account was not exactly true!

On 4 December 1619, thirty-eight English settlers at a place known as Berkeley Plantation, presently Charles City, Virginia gave their thanks to God. The settlers' charter required that a thanksgiving to God be observed.³ The first observance in New England was in 1621, a year after the Pilgrims had landed at Plimouth Colony in the New World.⁴ The reality of the first official proclamation is that the Native Americans were enemies and the Pilgrims were giving thanks to God

¹ The Indo-European word root is *tong-*. See Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, A. Franke Verlag, Tübingen und Basel: 2005, Vol. I, p. 1088.

² The Indo-European word root is *ghebh-*. See Pokorny, Vol. I, p. 407.

³ <http://www.eventcrazy.com/Charles-City-VA/events/details/200536-Berkeley-Plantation-First-Thanksgiving-Festival>.

⁴ Edward Winslow, *Mourt's Relation* at <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/1stthnks.htm>. Plimouth is the colonial spelling.

that they were so successful in defeating them. On June 20, 1676, the governing council of Charlestown, Massachusetts issued the following proclamation:

"The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of his Afflictive dispensations in and by the present Warr with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against his own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of his judgements he hath remembered mercy, having remembered his Footstool in the day of his sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of his Fatherly Compassion, and regard; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with many of our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to ourselves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed; and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of his returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

The Council has thought meet to appoint and set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such his Goodness and Favour, many Particulars of which mercy might be Instanced, but we doubt not those who are sensible of God's Afflictions, have been as diligent to espy him returning to us; and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him; the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously to keep the same Beseeching that being persuaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people offer up our bodies and souls as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ."⁵

⁵ <http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/thanksgiv.shtml>. The orthography is original. The phrase "instant June" means *the month of June*, *instant* being an Old English way of saying *month*.

A little more than one-hundred years later a public, official announcement was made by the Continental Congress on June 12, 1775 when it proclaimed that one of the four fasting days was intended to give strength and resolve to the union of the Colonies and their religious foundations,⁶ for the Colonies were uniting in order to secure various civil and religious freedoms that eventually became listed in the *Constitution for the United States of America*, particularly the *Bill of Rights*.

Such an observance as that of the Pilgrim Fathers and the proclamation of the Continental Congress on June 12, 1775 and on November 1, 1777 emanate from traditional Judeo-Christianity.⁷

"It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise; that with one heart and 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 manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication 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 blessings 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 blessings, independence and peace; that it may please him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people and the labor of the husbandman, that our land may 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."⁸

⁶ Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, Harper, New York: 1950, 3 vols., Vol. I, p. 451.

⁷ The Jewish Thanksgiving is the autumn observance known as Sukkot.
<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Judaism/2005/10/From-Fasting-To-Feasting.aspx>

⁸ Proclamation Thanksgiving Day 1777 at
<http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=3847>

After 1777, the proclamations of the leaders of the Continental Congress and the later presidents deleted references to the trinity, but kept the religious tone, except for Barack Hussein Obama, who has not made any apparent, intentional references to the religious traditions enveloped by Thanksgiving.⁹ In the sacrilegious world of the putative president Barack Hussein Obama it is not necessary for America's heritage and culture to rest upon religious foundations. This is quite a change and departure from hope delivered by God that is expressed in the proclamation of the *Northwest Ordinance of 1787*, the last action that was taken by the Continental Congress that reaffirmed the concept of religious freedom and its importance for the functioning of moral, just government.

(R)eligion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."¹⁰

America's religious building blocks must be recognized and promoted. All presidents since George Washington through George W. Bush have made Thanksgiving Day proclamations that have underscored the religious tenets and guidelines that assure the national existence and continuation of the United States of America. None other than George Washington in his *Farewell Address* (1796) warned of the dangers when not regarding religion and morality as essential for the continuation of the nation.

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."¹¹

⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/23/presidential-proclamation-thanksgiving-day>. In this proclamation Barack Hussein Obama refers to President Abraham Lincoln's reference to "the Almighty Hand" to heal and restore the nation. Yet, Barack Hussein Obama, in his unequalled narcissistic manner considers himself to be the Almighty Hand! It must be noted that when Barack Hussein Obama makes any positive reference to a religion other than the questionable Islam, he is practicing the concept of *al taqqiya*, the doing or saying of anything to achieve your goal, even if it means telling lies and/or undertaking criminal activities. It was a method used by Mohammed and is considered a quasi-order from Allah that should be used by the believers when Islam or a Muslim is threatened or in danger.

¹⁰ *The History of the First Sentence of Article III of the Northwest Ordinance* at <http://candst.tripod.com/nwo1a.htm>.

¹¹ George Washington's *Farewell Address* at http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/milestones/farewell_address_read3.html.

John Adams continued the thought in his First Inaugural Address when he stated:

"a love of science and letters and a wish to patronize every rational effort to encourage schools, colleges, universities, academies, and every institution for propagating knowledge, virtue, and religion among all classes of people, not only for their benign influence on the happiness of life in all its stages and classes, and society in all its forms, but as the only means of preserving our Constitution from its natural enemies..."¹²

In the proclamation of Thanksgiving Day on March 23, 1798, John Adams spoke these words:

"As the safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and the blessing of Almighty God, and the national acknowledgement of this truth is not only an indispensable duty which the people owe to Him, but a duty whose natural influence is favorable to the promotion of that morality and piety without which social happiness cannot exist nor the blessings of a free government be enjoyed; and as this duty, at all times incumbent, is so especially in seasons of difficulty or of danger... I do hereby recommend that...(the) 9(th) day of May... be observed throughout the United States as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer;... to the Father of Mercies... that all religious congregations do... acknowledge before God the manifold sins and transgressions with which we are justly chargeable as individuals and as a nation, beseeching Him... through the Redeemer of the World, freely to remit all our offenses, and to incline us by His Holy Spirit so that sincere repentance (sic) and reformation... that our civil and religious privileges may be preserved inviolate and perpetuated to the latest generations... that the principles of genuine piety and sound morality may influence the minds and govern the lives of every description of our citizens, and that the blessings of peace, freedom and pure religion may be speedily extended to all nations of the earth."¹³

No better logic than this states that America's free government is derived from divine, natural law. John Adams carried the thought to its logical conclusion on March 16, 1799, when he stated that the United States of America is a free society that

¹² http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/John_Adams/Inaugural_Speech/Inaugural_Address_p3.html.

¹³ <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/ThanxProc1789.htm>.

depends on (a belief in) God for its freedom. All other dependencies constitute subversive dangers.

"... the most precious interests of the people of the United States are still held in jeopardy by the hostile designs and insidious acts of a foreign nation, as well as by the dissemination among them of those principles, subversive of the foundations of all religious, moral and social obligations, that have produced incalculable mischief and misery in other countries

...

And I do also recommend that with these acts of humiliation, penitence, and prayer fervent thanksgiving to the Author of All Good be united for the countless favors which He is still continuing to the people of the United States, and which render their condition as a nation eminently happy when compared with the lot of others.¹⁴

The United States of America has deviated greatly from the original concepts and doctrines that have their source in Judeo-Christian heritage. The election of Barack Hussein Obama as an occupant in the Oval Office is the ultimate deviation from America's Christian traditions. It is a deviation that must be made into a short detour only so that the main road of American freedom can be reached once again, hopefully in November 2012 when Americans take back their country!

Originally, each state had its own date for the celebration of Thanksgiving. The first Thanksgiving that was celebrated on a reserved day was President Abraham Lincoln's proclamation on October 3, 1863 that the last Thursday in November was to be reserved for the celebration. That was the custom throughout the United States of America into the twentieth century. Although Thanksgiving Day is not a religious holiday – it is a secular holiday – there is no reason to forget its religious message: *Giving Thanks to God!* That message was enacted into law when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the fourth Thursday in November the national holiday Thanksgiving Day on December 26, 1941.¹⁵

¹⁴ *PROCLAMATION Fasting, Prayer, and Thanksgiving*, John Adams, March 7, 1799
http://www.churchstatelaw.com/historicalmaterials/8_6_2_4.asp.

¹⁵ Ann Morill, *Thanksgiving and Other Harvest Festivals*, Chelsea House, New York: 2009. p. 33.

American patriots and families who hold dearly to traditions still have a great deal to be thankful for in these present four years of disaster. To make the-Barack-Husseini-Obama years at least a little more bearable for the moment, the author has decided to relate the following anecdote.

Uncle Ceylon and The Thanksgiving Hunter

A True Story

It was during the hunting season of 1950, a few days before Thanksgiving. The Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, which had not yet been named such by Vermont Congressional Senator George Aiken, was famous as a hunting ground and so-called hunters from *down south* or *out of country*, meaning Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey, always came up to Vermont to do their hunting and brag about how good they were at what they termed *wild sporting in the woods*.

One Saturday morning at about 9 o'clock, Uncle Ceylon drove into Concord, Vermont to deliver the mail. The United States Post Office was located in the vicinity of the Concord General Store. As he drove into town he noticed a crowd gathering in front of the general store. He stopped his vehicle, got out, and went to ask why the crowd was gathering. Men, women, and practically all of the boys and girls from Concord, and even some people from Granby and Victory who had come into town to do a little early shopping had gathered together. They were somewhat silent, yet they had smiles on their faces. A young man of about twenty-five years was standing in front of a parked vehicle that Uncle Ceylon recognized as being a fairly new, black, Buick sedan.

The young man was explaining what had happened. He said that he was from New York City, from the better, cultured part where all of the rich people live. He said it was in the vicinity of Central Park and asked if any of the listeners had heard of it. They said, "Yes, of course." But in their minds they were all certain that the forests of Granby, Victory, and Concord, Vermont were better than any park New

York City or any other place had to offer. They kept smiling and the young Know-It-All from New York City (the upper class section, mind you) kept on talking.

He related how he had learned to shoot a rifle over the summer, had taken official shooting and hunting lessons and was sure that when he travelled to northern Vermont in the fall, he would get his first *stag*. The listeners knew that he meant *buck*. He had driven up to Lancaster, New Hampshire two days before. He related that he had got out of bed early that morning and had driven to the woods where the road from Concord turns into the Victory and Granby townships, up along the small river. (The river is Moose River, but the Know-It-All from Central Park, New York City, couldn't pronounce the word [He kept saying *mu us ee.*], let alone know what a moose is!) Shortly before the forest began, he noticed a large, beastly animal in a field near the road. He told how he slowly and carefully pulled the car to a stop, got out of it without making any drastic moves so that the beast would not be frightened, crawled under the fence, silently sneaked up to within about forty feet of the wild animal, and that not wanting to take a chance on scaring it, he had decided to stop at that distance. While lying down in the wet field he slowly raised his rifle to his shoulder, took aim through the scope, fixed the beast in the crosshairs, squeezed the trigger, and fired. He said that he was so good at shooting that the first shot felled the stag. He then went up to the animal, rolled it over, began to rub it with grass, because he said that all hunters do this to clean the beast and gutted (field dressed) it as he had learned in his summer hunting lessons in New York City. He then dragged it to the car, tied it onto the left side of the front bumper, up over the left fender, over the hood, and fastened it tightly with cross ties of rope over the hood and onto each side of the car, the side rear-view mirrors and door handles included.

There was little reaction from the crowd, but any onlooker could see the facial expressions of amazement on each face. The young boys and girls, however, snickered. He said that he then decided to drive back to Concord and register his trophy shot with the local authorities. On the road to Concord, he noticed how some people that he saw in their driveways and yards and even in on-coming cars were filled with amazement. And the more people he saw and their amazed reactions, the prouder he became. Now he was in Concord, had already sent someone to get the local newspaper photographer, so that all of the readers of the local newspapers, the

Caledonia Chronicle and even the *Burlington Free Press* would be able to see and read how this great hunter from New York City had shot the largest stag ever to be hunted in the state of Vermont and had downed it with his first shot.

The newspaper photographer arrived just as the young man was relating how he was going to take his trophy back to New York City tomorrow, on Tuesday, two days before Thanksgiving, and have a big celebration and invite all of his friends and their families over to his villa to eat a big Thanksgiving meal with him and his family. Instead of turkey, they would have "Stag Steaks!"

After the photographer had taken the necessary photos that would document this great hunter and his trophy, the young man blurted out in his pride, "I'm not bragging, but if you want I'll autograph copies of the pictures for you and I won't charge you a penny!"

At that moment the owner of the Concord, Vermont General Store noticed Ceylon in the crowd. He called to Ceylon, "Hey, Ceylon, come on up to the steps and tell the people what you think of this great event." The young hunter was grinning from ear to ear. He even began to hold in his stomach and pump out his chest. Everyone knew that Ceylon would make a comment, but they did not know what he would say about this great hunting feat.

When Uncle Ceylon got up to the steps of the Concord General Store, he turned to the young man and spoke slowly but clearly so that the hushed crowd could hear exactly what he said. Everyone knew that what Uncle Ceylon said would be worth hearing.

"Well, yer pretty prod uf yerself, ain't ye?"

"I sure am, sir." came the reply and the young hunter from New York City added, "Don't you think I accomplished quite a feat?"

At that the whole crowd began to snicker and giggle, the older folks trying to keep from bursting out loud in a roar of laughter.

Uncle Ceylon replied. "Well, Yuv accomplish'd somethin' that non' uv us folk around 'ere have never accomplished."

At that the young man was exploding with pride.

"Yu'll go down in 'istory."

Everyone saw that Uncle Ceylon was flattering the young man and the young hunter was enjoying every minute of the flatter, pride, and attention he was getting.

"Well, I probably am the best hunter that this area has ever seen." he gushed out, hardly being able to control his emotion.

Yer, sur' ar'. I'v' nev'r meta 'unter like ya. None of us 'av'.

"Well thanks for the compliment; you people are really being nice to me." He said with a gesture thankfully.

Uncle Ceylon now knew he had the young man exactly right where he wanted him: high enough to get him.

Uncle Ceylon shouted out, "Yuv' shot th' only buck I'v' ever saw, and as far as I know, all uv us gathered 'ere ever saw, that has two horns, black and white flecked hide, and a balloon utter. Yuv' shot a cow!"

The crowd roared with laughter and the young hunter from New York City, who had never seen a cow, but now knew that a cow was not a stag, ran to his car, sped out of Concord and was never seen again in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

But the next day and that weekend all of the Vermont daily and weekly newspapers were filled with documentation of the Know-It-All's great hunting feat.

Giving Thanks

Entering the late season.

Sitting in the study.

Having finished work.

Looking out of the window.

Enthralling in nature.

Showing light-hued season.
Silver-graying sleekness.
Being finished with the garden.
Preparing for winter's sleep.
Gathering are the birds.
Flying southward courses.
Staying with me some.
Searching busily for winter safety.
Singing season's songs.
Enjoying perching.
Standing tall trees.
Whistling wind.
Bowing branches.
Leafing colorfully.
Raking together.
Re-soiling the earth.
Slowing time day.
Paying attention.
Cherishing little matters.
Standing before the hearth.
Cooking the meal.
Coming was yesterday.
Continuing the whole week.
Boiling potatoes.
Mixing filling.
Baking bread and pies.
Roasting turkey.
Stirring home-made soup.
Saucing seasonal sprouts.
Canning fruit.
Enjoying fine wine.
Showing feeling for each other.

Doing good.
Communicating together.
Taking Sunday time.
Living harmoniously.
Guesting upon the globe.
Forgetting it too often.
Experiencing life fully.
Remembering it.
Valuing it.
Being always.
Transcending all about.
Securing our future.
Making it just with respect.
Greeting.
Loving.
Autumning.
and
Giving Thanks to God.

I wish all American patriots a meaningful and heritage-oriented Thanksgiving Day.

Frederick William Dame

Patriotic, Steadfast, and True

November 22, 1011