**THE HISTORY OF THANKSGIVING**

The **Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony** landed in Massachusetts on the ***Mayflower*** in the fall of **1620**. They did not have time to build proper shelter or to plant and **harvest** crops before the brutal winter arrived. During that first winter, nearly half of the pilgrims died from disease or starvation. The following year, with the help of **local Indians**, the Pilgrims had a good harvest. They thanked God for the harvest with **three days of prayer and feasting** in the **fall of 1621**. Later, after the colonists had won their **independence** from Great Britain, the new Congress of the United States asked **President George Washington** to recommend to the people of the United States a **day of public thanksgiving** and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness…

On Thursday, **November 26, 1789**, President Washington issued the first Thanksgiving **proclamation**: “Whereas it is duty of all Nations to **acknowledge** the **providence** of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to **implore** his protection and favor, I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the Service of that great and glorious **Being** who is **beneficent** Author of all the good that was, that is , or that will be”.

President Washington proclaimed another Thanksgiving Day in 1795. Later, the governors of the States proclaimed Thanksgiving Days. **In 1863**, during the **Civil War**, **President Abraham** **Lincoln** made Thanksgiving a **national annual holiday** to be celebrated that last Thursday in November. His proclamation said, “I invite my fellow citizens of the United States to observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent **Father** who dwelled in heaven….” Since 1863, except for two years, **(1939 and 1940)**, when **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** moved the holiday to the third Thursday of November, Thanksgiving has been celebrated every year on the fourth Thursday in November.

**Questions**

1. Define: harvest – proclamation – acknowledge – providence – implore – beneficent – almighty – benefits – annual – grateful – fall - starvation.
2. Describe the problems the Pilgrims faced in the fall of 1620.
3. Who were the Pilgrims?
4. Why did the Pilgrims have three days of prayer and feasting in the fall of 1621?
5. Why do you think the colonists would want to have a day of thanksgiving after the war with Great Britain?
6. When was Thanksgiving celebrated in the time of President Washington?
7. What war was the United States fighting when Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863?
8. Which president proclaimed Thanksgiving Day?
9. What day and month was finally chosen to celebrate Thanksgiving Day?
10. What did President Roosevelt change?

**Answers:**

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**Thanksgiving Chop Worksheet**

The table below contains words that have been chopped in half. Find the pieces that fit together and write them in the answer area below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| cranb | at | kin | pil |
| erries | vest | key | ast |
| tur | grat | nks | aut |
| tha | grim | sett | har |
| lers | ive | tre | ck |
| ony | umn | nat | fe |
| eful | tume | cos | col |
| tri | pump | yer | pra |

**Answers:**

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***Good Luck - Enjoy***

*By Dionisios Perdikatsis*

***Key***

***Cranberries***

***Prayer***

***Settlers***

***Colony***

***Grateful***

***Pilgrim***

***Thanks***

***Feast***

***Autumn***

***Native***

***Harvest***

***Treat***

***Costume***

***Turkey***

***Pumpkin***

***Trick***