



Thanksgiving

With the popularity of Dan Brown's latest novel turned movie, "The Lost Symbol," Americans were informed that the founding of the United States was based on the secrets of Freemasonry. Yet, with a cursory investigation of our history one finds our founding was not Masonic, but Mosaic!

Moses led the Israelites out of captivity from Egypt, parted the Red Sea through Yahweh's miraculous assistance so that his people could escape, and received the divine law – the Torah in the form of the Ten Commandments. Like Moses, Puritan leaders felt they were rescuing their people from spiritual corruption in England, passing miraculously over a wild sea with Yahweh's aid, and fashioning new laws and new forms of government after Yahweh's wishes.

All who are familiar with American history remember that in 1620 the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, coming to the New World primarily to escape religious persecution which prevailed in Europe. They sailed from Plymouth, England and aboard were 44 Separatists that the crew began to call Pilgrims because they had wandered to find a home first to Holland and then to the New World. The Puritans were divided into two groups: 44 Separatists who called themselves the "Saints", and 66 others, who called themselves the "Strangers". The long trip was cold and damp and took 65 days. There was always the danger of fire on the wooden ship, so food had to be eaten cold. Many passengers became sick and one person died and one person was murdered by the time land was sighted on November 10th. The long trip led to many disagreements between the "Saints", the "Strangers" and the crew.

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without Yahweh in the world. But now in Messiah YahShua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. (Ephesians 2:11-13

To understand the Pilgrims who came to America we must go back 500 years earlier. The 1500's were years of great tumult and change. Constantinople had already fallen to the Islamic powers in 1453. The Turks were moving against Christendom from the east. Islam's Second Jihad against western Christendom was under way. For a while things looked very grim. The Islamic armies were actually threatening Vienna.

Many people, in their distress, cried out to the Heavenly Father. He answered them by bringing the Holy Scriptures out of the Latin, the dead language of the Roman Empire, and through Gutenberg's printing presses getting the bible at low cost in German, French, Dutch, and English as well as other languages of Europe. For the first time in history the scriptures were available for the laity. Out of this

emerged a people in the spiritual ferment of the English Reformation that emerged early in the 1500's, soon after the coming of the English Bible to the common man. This Biblical Revival was fired by the zeal to know the true faith. This was the first of many Great Awakenings among the English speaking people. America took form in the womb of England within it the embryo of a new breed of people. Because of their zeal and commitment to "purify" their faith they came to be known as the Puritans.

The Puritans were a people who caused others to sit up and listen. They didn't just do it by evangelizing their peers. Rather, they expressed their teaching quite forcefully, even to the point of straining the social constraints of a rigid monarchical English society. They were bound and determined to make an impact in their generation.

The Church of England in the 1500's under King Henry VIII, had changed very little from what it had been in the Dark Ages. The King had usurped the role of the Pope but the religion stayed basically the same. The Church of England was still under the ministry of an entrenched medieval priesthood and Catholic theology. Until the coming of the English Bible, (which King Henry in his later years finally permitted), little else had changed. The church hierarchy was not amused by English laity reading and meditating on the Bible for themselves without official Church oversight. The English Church, an old hardened wineskin was simply unable to contain or accommodate this new Biblical spiritual "new wine" of Biblical evangelical faith.

The English clergy came to persecute the Puritans and their friends the Pilgrim Separatists. Separatists went further than the Puritans keeping the 7th day Sabbath, biblical holy days, and some even proclaimed the sacred name of our Heavenly Father – Yahweh.

The persecutions carried out by Cardinal Wolsey in England were severe. But Queen Mary was horrific as a persecutor. The English people came to call her "Bloody Mary". At Coventry Cathedral Pilgrim Separatists families were rounded up. They were summarily tried and sentenced by Church bishops. English fathers were burned alive, some for merely for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer in English. Latin, (the dead language of pagan Rome), had become the official, (or 'holy') language of the Church of Rome. The religious priest craft of that day persisted in the belief that Latin was the only holy language in which Christian worship could be properly conducted.

The spiritual emergence of the Puritans came in the 1500's but their political emergence came in the following 1600's as the Puritans rose up in Parliament. The bitter feud between King Charles 1 and the Puritan leaders in Parliament got progressively worse. Finally it erupted into the English Civil War.

The father of the Separatists was Richard Clifton who, on 12 February 1585, was ordained to the vicarage of the Church of England at Marnham, near Newark, and on 11 July 1586 to the rectory of Babworth, near Retford. The first Separatists congregation was secretly pastored by Clifton at Nottinghamshire which ordinarily met covertly in William Brewster's house at Scrooby. John Robinson was his assistant in the ministry. William Brewster, a former diplomatic assistant to the Netherlands, was living in the Scrooby manor house, serving as postmaster for the village and bailiff to the Archbishop of York. Having been favorably impressed by Clyfton's services, he had begun participating in Separatist services.

Unlike conforming Puritan groups who maintained their membership in and allegiance to the Church of England, Separatists held that their differences with the Church of England were irreconcilable and that their worship should be organized independently of the trappings, traditions and organization of a central church. They wanted to try and get back to the original faith before it became apostated by the Catholic Church.

Under the 1559 Act of Uniformity, it was illegal not to attend official Church of England services, with a fine levied for each missed Sunday and holy day. The penalties for conducting unofficial services included imprisonment and larger fines. Under the policy of this time, Separatists Barrowe and Greenwood were executed for sedition in 1593.

Following the Conference, in 1605, Clyfton was declared a nonconformist and stripped of his position at Babworth. Brewster invited Clyfton to live at his home.

Member of the Nottinghamshire congregation, William Bradford, of Austerfield, kept a journal of the congregation's events that would later be published as *Of Plymouth Plantation*. Of this time, he wrote:

"But after these things they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted & persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken & clapt up in prison, others had their houses besett & watcht night and day, & hardly escaped their hands; and ye most were faine to flie & leave their howses & habitations, and the means of their livelehood."

A group of Puritans had settled Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.

Hearing about the success of the Jamestown Puritans, members of the Nottinghamshire congregation agreed to bribe officials to obtain passage to Holland. This turned out to be a sting operation, with all arrested upon boarding. The entire party was jailed for one month awaiting arraignment, at which time all but seven were released. Missing from the record is for how long the remainders were held, but it is known that the leaders made it to Amsterdam about a year later. Ultimately, at least 150 of the congregation did make their way to Amsterdam.

Here's what the Separatists believed concerning Holy Days, "From the beginning of the Reformation to this present year of our Lord 1618, the Kirk (Church) of Scotland has diverse ways condemned the observation of all holy days (Lev. 23), the Lord's Day (7th day Sabbath) only excepted. In the first chapter of the First Book of Discipline penned anno 1560, the observation of holy days to Saints, the feast of Christmass, Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, and other fond feasts of our Lady are ranked amongst the abominations of the Roman religion, as having neither commandment nor assurance in the word. It is further affirmed that the obstinate maintainers and teachers of such abomination should not escape the punishment of the civil magistrate. The book aforesaid was subscribed by the Lord's of secret Council." (David Calderwood's (1575-1651) *Perth Assembly* (1619))

This document was printed and circulated by William Brewster in 1619. William Brewster had mortgaged his house in Holland to purchase a printing press. This document, as Brewster must have known was viewed by the King of England as the crime of high treason punishable by death. The King of England pressured Holland, a land long known for religious tolerance, to confiscate the press and deport Brewster to England to stand trial. Dutch authorities got the printing press but Brewster stowed away on the Mayflower for the famous voyage of 1620.

There was also widespread excitement about Scriptural prophecy, and many anticipated the imminent return of the Messiah. One group, called the Fifth Monarchists (after Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2, in which Yahweh's Kingdom is portrayed as the fifth and greatest of a prophesied series of empires), stressed the literal millennial reign of Messiah on earth. The most radical Fifth Monarchists hoped to pave the way for that reign by overthrowing the King. So great was the struggle that England's Civil War pitted the Puritans against the Crown Forces.

Parliament defeated King Charles at the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644 and then at the Battle of Naseby in 1645.

As the Battle of Marston Moor was coming to its end Oliver Cromwell came upon "A young Pilgrim who lay dying on the field. Cromwell bent over him that one thing lay on his spirit. I asked him that one thing lay on his spirit, Cromwell wrote afterwards. He told me that "God had not suffered him to be anymore an executioner of His enemies."

Parliament strangely enough tried to negotiate with King Charles 1 for some kind of democratic monarchy. All their efforts of persuasion were to no avail. The king would merely look at the Puritan leaders in Parliament and calmly ask, "By what authority do you bring me here?"

During the negotiations it was revealed to Parliament that King Charles 1 had tried to enlist help from foreign nations abroad. That was high treason against the English people. Parliament, under Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, had the king arrested. He was then brought to trial. Condemned by Parliament as a traitor King Charles was sent to the Tower of London and was beheaded in 1649 as an enemy of the state.

Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, established a representative republic and became the first Puritan leader over England. Cromwell did succeed in uniting England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland together as the United Kingdom. He ruled as until his death of malaria in 1658. The Puritans were totally and absolutely committed to establishing a righteous nation with a representative government elected by and subject to a righteous people.

England reverted back to the monarchy again after Cromwell's death crowning King James I. Puritans were hunted down and the Crown restored; hence their displacement to America. In 1661, Oliver Cromwell's body was exhumed from Westminster Abbey, and was subjected to the ritual of a posthumous execution. Finally, his disinterred body was thrown into a pit, while his severed head was displayed on a pole outside Westminster Abbey until 1685. Afterwards the head changed hands several times, before eventually being buried in the grounds of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in 1960.

Meanwhile, the evangelical zeal among the separatists in England was just as strong as ever. The most famous being the Non-Conformist John Bunyan who preached openly in the streets without proper

ordination and authority from the Church of England. For this he was arrested and imprisoned for many years at **Bedford Jail** during which time he wrote the classic "Pilgrim's Progress".

The Pilgrim separatists were not as politically motivated. Spiritual reformation they believed was priority, namely, the sharing of the Gospel. Many separatist became radically apolitical in those years. They had read the scriptures. They had come to believe that they were serving the Kingdom of Heaven. Messiah was, after all, the coming King of kings. To them, holiness was very much a matter of separation from the systems of this world. Their faith was a journey of sanctification through history. It was a pilgrimage. And they were happy to be referred to as Pilgrims. For this they were persecuted bitterly, not only by Rome, and the King but by the Reformers as well.

"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says Yahweh. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6:17 see Isaiah 52:11; Ezek. 20:34, 41)"

"It is the privilege of God's power to appoint a day of rest, and to sanctify it to his honor...In the book of Ecclesiasticus (cap. 33: 7, 8) it is demanded, *why doth one day excel another, when as the light of every day of the year is of the Sun? It is answered, By the Knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished, and he altered seasons and feasts. Some of them hath he made high days, and hallowed them; some of them he hath made ordinary days.* ...The Papists will confess that one day is not holier than another in its own nature, no not the Lord's Day: for then the Sabbath might not have been changed from the last to the first day of the week ." (David Calderwood's *Perth Assembly*)

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)"

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, groups of Sabbatarians sprang up in various parts of England and Wales; more than sixty congregations that either met on Saturday or included Sabbatarians, they have been identified by historian Bryan W. Ball. Many of these groups lasted only a generation or two, but some survived much longer---*one of them for over three hundred years*. Moreover, the majority of the Sabbatarian Believers in the world today can trace their spiritual lineage, directly or indirectly, to these brave and determined people.

The decision to observe the seventh day Sabbath was not one to take lightly. Those who made this choice placed themselves conspicuously outside of the mainstream of society. In the seventeenth century, people who adopted practices different from those of the Church of England were placed under close scrutiny and could be subjected to fines or imprisonment. For example, in the 1660s and 1670s, local churchwardens kept careful records of all "Nonconformists", including anyone who worked or didn't attend church on Sunday, refused to have infants baptized, or kept the seventh day Sabbath. (These records have provided historians with valuable clues about the identities and locations of Sabbath keepers.) Sabbath keepers were often labeled as "Jews," and this label was not intended as a compliment. In England, the anti-Semitism of the time was exacerbated by ignorance. *All Jews in England had been expelled from the country in 1290 CE.*

One well-known example of the persecutions faced by early English Sabbatarians is the story of John and Dorothy Traske. John Traske (1585-1636) was a controversial and apparently rather colorful traveling preacher whose words and actions repeatedly got him into trouble with the authorities. What exactly he taught is difficult to determine, because the available sources on his life are largely hostile ones. It is also not certain how many followers he attracted; only the names of a few have come down to us, including Hamlet Jackson, Returne Hebdon, and Christopher Sands. We do know that in 1617, Traske was in London teaching that one should obey the fourth commandment by resting on the seventh day and working on each of the other six days. He also taught obedience to Scriptural dietary laws and is said to have advocated Christian observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Traske's preaching was too radical to go unnoticed for long. By late 1617, Traske and several associates had been arrested, and on June 19, 1618, he was charged with "having a fantastical opinion of himself with ambition to be the Father of a Jewish faction" and making "the people of God, his majesty's subjects, little better than Jews." Traske was whipped and pilloried, and his forehead was branded with a letter "I" (for "Iew", as "Jew" was written at that time). He was also sentenced to life in prison, where he subsisted on a meatless diet (rather than eat the pork prescribed by the court) until he recanted his "Jewish" views and was released in 1619. He published an account of his changed beliefs in "*A Treatise of*

Libertie from Judaisme" (1620) and apparently never taught seventh-day Sabbath keeping after that. However, two of his associates refused to recant and eventually died in prison--Returne Hebdon in 1625, and Traske's wife Dorothy in 1645. The example of Dorothy Traske, who remained steadfast over many years in prison, was a great inspiration to other seventeenth-century Sabbatarians.

John Traske was by all accounts very eccentric, and he was threatened with arrest and imprisonment both before and after he advocated observance of the Sabbath. However, one didn't have to be as provocative as Traske to face persecution; *a thoroughly orthodox Christian who wrote or spoke in favor of the Sabbath was also in danger in the early seventeenth century*. Such was the case with Theophilus Brabourne (1590-1662), an Anglican clergyman who hoped to persuade the Church of England to adopt the seventh day Sabbath in two books that he wrote in 1628 and 1632. In 1634 and early 1635, Brabourne was imprisoned, repeatedly examined by church officials, and threatened with excommunication and a fine of 1000 pounds before his carefully-worded recantation was accepted on April 30, 1635. (Brabourne claimed that he never recanted anything of any substance, and in the more tolerant climate of the 1650s he wrote again in favor of the Sabbath.)

Were any Sabbatarians on the Mayflower which brought the Puritans to America? "Strange as it may seem in the early history of America there was an attempt at suppression of the Christmas spirit. The stern Puritans at Plymouth, imbued with the rigorous fervor of what they called the Old Testament, abhorred the celebration of the worldly holidays. "I say there is no power either civil or ecclesiastical can make a holy day: no King, no Kirk (Church): only the Lord that made the day, and distinguished it from the night: he hath sanctified the seventh day. If the special sanctification of a day to an holy use depends upon God's commandment and institution, then neither King nor kirk (church) representative may make a holy day."...In the Assembly held in April anno 1577, it was ordained that the Visitor with the advice of the Synodal Assembly, shall admonish ministers preaching or ministering the communion at Pasche (Passover – they favored the Seder over communion), Yule (Christmass), or other like superstitious times, or Readers reading, to desist, under the pain of deprivation. ... It was a part of the idolatry of the golden calf to *proclaim a holy day*. It is numbered among one of Jeroboams sins that he ordained a feast after the devise of his own heart (1 Kings 12:33). Musculus (Loci Communes Praec. 4.) says, *If any man shall attempt to make holy at his pleasure the things that God has not sanctified*, is not only superstitious, but challenges unto himself that which belongs only to God. When God blesses and sanctifies a day, then may man look for a blessing in sanctifying it. ... Nay let us utter the truth, December-Christmas is a just imitation of the December Saturnal of the ethnic Romans, and so used as if Bacchus, and not Christ were the God of Christians...Of the ancient kirks (Churches) I have spoken before. Some excuse the ancients with good intention, because to win the Gentiles they converted their days into Christian holy days. Others excused them with the circumstance of time, that dwelling among pagans, they made profession before their eyes of Christ's birth, passion, resurrection, etc., by observing such days. But the wisdom of their intention has proven folly, as the seventh reason makes manifest. The like circumstance of time is not offered: therefore we may not be excused. It is gross ignorance to say that holy days were so many hundred years before Papistry. For Papistry has been in the kirk ever since the days of Apostles; yea the mystery of iniquity was working in their times. The errors of the Orthodox Kirk were the beginnings of Papistry, at length they grew to a great mass. ..." (David Calderwood's *Perth Assembly*) Their worship was on the Sabbath (Saturday), rather than Sunday, and Christmas in particular they considered a pagan celebration. Later immigrants attempted to observe Christmas as a time of joy, but were suppressed. Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster, Miles Standish and other leaders were firm against the yuletide spirit as we know it today (Hugh Sprague, editor of the *St. Joseph Gazette* (Missouri), December, 1934)." Instead they kept only the Scriptural Holy Days.

In a private conversation between Elder A. N. Dugger (who became a pioneer in the Sacred Name Movement) and Editor Hugh Sprague, after his editorial had appeared, the latter stated that he was a member of the "Mayflower Association" meaning the Puritan Colony were his direct ancestors, and that he very well knew their religious beliefs and practices. And in addition, he stated that all his grandparents and great-grandparents knew that the Puritans of the Mayflower days were strict Sabbath keepers on the seventh day of the week instead of Sunday.

When the Puritans crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1620, they landed, December 11, on the rocky shores of a territory that was inhabited by the Wampanoag (Wam pa NO ag) Indians. The small band of Puritans passed the harsh winter filled with sickness and hardships. Forty-seven of the 103 Mayflower passengers died.

We can only guess what the Wampanoags must have thought when they first saw the strange ships of the Puritans arriving on their shores. But their custom was to help visitors, and they treated the newcomers with courtesy. It was mainly because of their kindness that the Puritans survived at all. The wheat the Puritans had brought with them to plant would not grow in the rocky soil. They needed to learn new ways for a New World, and the man who came to help them was called "Tisquantum" (Tis SKWAN tum) or "Squanto" (SKWAN toe).

Squanto was originally from the village of Patuxet (Pa TUK et) and a member of the Pokanokit Wampanoag nation. Patuxet once stood on the exact site where the Pilgrims built Plymouth. In 1605, fifteen years before the Puritans came, Squanto went to England with a friendly English explorer named John Weymouth. He had many adventures and learned to speak English. Squanto came back to New England with Captain Weymouth. Later Squanto was captured by a British slaver who raided the village and sold Squanto to the Spanish in the Caribbean Islands. A Spanish Franciscan priest befriended Squanto and helped him to get to Spain and later on a ship to England. Squanto then found Captain Weymouth, who paid his way back to his homeland. In England Squanto met Samoset of the Wabanake (Wab NAH key) Tribe, who had also left his native home with an English explorer. They both returned together to Patuxet in 1620. When they arrived, the village was deserted and there were skeletons everywhere. Everyone in the village had died from an illness the English slavers had left behind. Squanto and Samoset went to stay with a neighboring village of Wampanoags.

One year later, in the spring, Squanto and Samoset were hunting along the beach near Patuxet. They were startled to see people from England in their deserted village. For several days, they stayed nearby observing the newcomers. Finally they decided to approach them. Samoset walked into the village and said "welcome," Squanto soon joined him. The Puritans were very surprised to meet two Indians who spoke English.

The Puritans were not in good condition. They were living in dirt-covered shelters, there was a shortage of food, and nearly half of them had died during the winter. They obviously needed help and the two men were a welcome sight. Squanto, who probably knew more English than any other Indian in North America at that time, decided to stay with the Puritans for the next few months and teach them how to survive in this new place.

By the time fall arrived things were going much better for the Puritans, thanks to the help they had received. The corn they planted had grown well. There was enough food to last the winter. They were living comfortably in their Native American-style wigwams and had also managed to build one European-style building out of squared logs. This was their Sanctuary. They were now in better health, and they knew more about surviving in this new land. The Puritans decided to have a thanksgiving feast to celebrate their good fortune. They had observed thanksgiving feasts in the fall High Holy Days as religious obligations in England for many years before coming to the New World. That first Thanksgiving was actually a Feast of Tabernacles celebration.

Captain Miles Standish, the leader of the Puritan Settlement, invited Squanto, Samoset, Massasoit (the leader of the Wampanoags), and their immediate families to join them for a celebration, but they had no idea how big Native American families could be. As the Thanksgiving feast began, the Puritans were overwhelmed at the large turnout of ninety relatives that Squanto and Samoset brought with them. The Puritans were not prepared to feed a gathering of people that large for three days. Seeing this, Massasoit gave orders to his men within the first hour of his arrival to go home and get more food. Thus it happened that the Indians supplied the majority of the food: Five deer, many wild turkeys, fish, beans, squash, corn soup, corn bread, and berries. Captain Standish sat at one end of a long table and the Clan Chief Massasoit sat at the other end. For the first time the Wampanoag people were sitting at a table to eat instead of on mats or furs spread on the ground. The Indian women sat together with the Indian men to eat. The Puritan women, however, stood quietly behind the table and waited until after their men had eaten, since that was their custom.

For three days the Wampanoags feasted with the Puritans. It was a special time of friendship between two very different groups of people. A peace and friendship agreement was made between Massasoit and Miles Standish giving the Puritans the clearing in the forest where the old Patuxet village once stood to build their new town of Plymouth.

What does appear evident is that among the Puritans, first in England, and then in America, were conscientious Sabbatharians. Clark's Island, Mass., was the site of "America's first Sabbath."

Clark's Island is a Golden Gate to understanding the story of the Pilgrims. On a stormy Friday evening in 1620, a band of nine beleaguered Pilgrim scouts, a half days sail from their families on the

Mayflower, were spying the Massachusetts coastline in an open boat for a suitable place to settle. Earlier, they barely escaped from a skirmish with some Pequot Indians that morning. The Pilgrims were scared, lost, and starving. As the afternoon progressed, their situation worsened. As Sabbath set in a storm nearly capsized their boat, forcing the men ashore.

They reflected, they had crossed the sea and arrived in this great land. They believed they were on a mission from Yahweh to escape England – the Land of Oppression. They had thwarted the hostile plans of a latter-day Pharaoh, King James I. They had come to America – a new Promise Land.

Everything they had done for the last 20 years was designed to fulfill their dream of creating Yahweh's New Israel. They believed they were the Chosen People of an Infinite Deity casting off the yoke of Mystery Babylon. Their leader, William Bradford proclaimed, "Our mission is as vital as Moses' and the Israelites when they went out of Egypt...May our Children say, 'Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in the wilderness; but they cried out unto the Lord, and He heard their voice.'"

After the storm lifted, the Pilgrims were ready to seek a permanent place for a landing but it was Sabbath, so they set aside everything and began to worship. At the center of the little Island there is a boulder they called "Pulpit Rock" on which they carved – "On the Sabbath Day wee rested."

The earliest Sabbath keeping congregations in America were not formally incorporated or organized into conferences, but merely local congregations going by various designations or names, such as: Sabbatarians, Church of God, Church of Christ, Seventh Day Baptists, and even Independents. The Seventh Day Baptists were among the earliest to effect a General Conference organization (1802).

Arthur Elwell Main, D.D., in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Volume 1, says as early as 1646 Sabbath-keeping was the occasion of much earnest discussion in New England, this dates the Sabbath debate twenty-six years after the Puritans arrived in 1620, and about eighteen years prior to the London Seventh Day Baptists' sending of Stephen Mumford to America. Since Sunday observers would not have advocated seventh-day Sabbath observance, it appears evident that it came about by the Pilgrim descendants. The situations of those times may also be ascertained from Felt's *Ecclesiastical History of New England*, Volume 1, p. 593.

As far as documented written historical records go, it appears that the first local organization of Sabbath keeping Christians in America was that of the congregation at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1671. Mumford attended the first-day Baptist Church, and for several years taught the Sabbath truth among them. As a result, a number of them embraced the Sabbath in 1665 and in 1666, but the intention was not to sever their connection with the Baptist Church. They soon learned, however, that even in the church of Roger Williams, where liberty of conscience was supposed to prevail, it was not possible to have close communion on such drastic differences in beliefs as the Sabbath and Sunday brought about. Accordingly, the seventh-day observers left the Baptist Church on December 7, 1671, and sixteen days later, on the 23rd of December, they covenanted together in a congregational organization.

As the Puritans immigrated and formed individual colonies, their numbers rose from 17,800 in 1640 to 106,000 in 1700.

Journals of the Puritans that settled New Salem, Massachusetts, record that they were so moved by the stories of the ancient Israelites that they saw themselves fulfilling a similar role seeing America as their Zion and New Salem as their Jerusalem. They wanted to build a Torah based society.

Other Sabbath keeping centers established shortly after the Newport group was formed were the group near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, through the labors of Able Noble, who came from England about 1684; and the group at Piscataway, New Jersey. From these centers streams of Sabbatarian emigration flowed westward and southward until there were not less than twenty congregations and settlements of Sabbath keepers in nine of the ten colonies or states when the General Conference of Seventh Day Baptists was organized in 1802. Their headquarters is at Plainfield, New Jersey.

There also is in the state of Pennsylvania a small body of German Seventh Day Baptists, who have a very interesting Sabbath keeping heritage. It dates approximately from 1728 when Conrad Beissel, a native of Germany, became the real leader of an independent Sabbath keeping group established in the Ephrata community. In those years it was largely a monastic movement, comprised of the "Brotherhood of Zion" and the "Spiritual Order of the Roses of Saron," one of the most celebrated establishments of its kind in the country. Because of their unusual manner of life, and because it was feared that through their influence the whole state of Pennsylvania would be affected with their Sabbatarian teachings, they were at times persecuted. They also established and successfully maintained a Sabbath school at Ephrata, its headquarters, forty years before Robert Raikes of England introduced the system of Sunday schools.

Because of the circumstances of the times, the German Seventh Day Baptists had some associations with William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington. Franklin did some of Beissel's printing. Peter Miller, a member of the colony, was a close friend of the Penn family. He was also personally acquainted with George Washington. When the Continental Congress sought a trustworthy and loyal man to conduct its diplomatic correspondence with the governments of Europe, it was this Sabbath keeper of the Ephrata Community who translated the Declaration of Independence into seven different languages.

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION - November 29th, 1623: "Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings."

--William Bradford

Ye Governor of Ye Colony

"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses . . ."—Puritan John Winthrop, aboard the Arbella, 1630.

During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress set several Thanksgiving Days for the people to rejoice in their homes and churches for victories won.

THE FIRST NATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING was given by the Continental Congress in 1777: "FOR AS MUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation 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 Defense 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 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 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 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.

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion."

In 1778, George Washington proclaimed a day on which to give thanks for the treaties just concluded with France.

George Washington as President Signed on October 3, 1789 a decree that set aside Thursday, November 26 as "A Day of Publick Thanksgiving and Prayer." Entitled "General Thanksgiving," the decree appointed the day "to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God."

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION OCTOBER 3, 1789: "WHEREAS it is the 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 favour; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLICK THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;-- for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish Constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;-- for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge;-- and, in general, for all the great and various favours which He has been pleased to confer upon

And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions;-- to enable us all, whether in publick or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wife, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us); and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

GIVEN under my hand, at the city of New-York, the third day of October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine."

Three years after the War of 1812, President Madison proclaimed a special thanksgiving for peace. Later, there were scattered observances at varying dates in some states, mostly in the North. In 1817, New York State had adopted Thanksgiving Day in the Autumn as an annual custom.

By the middle of the 19th century many other states also celebrated Thanksgiving Day. Gradually, the feeling grew all over the land that we should have a uniform national Thanksgiving Day. Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of the popular magazine, Godey's Lady's Book, was the chief sponsor of this idea for forty years. After the victory at Gettysburg, there was great rejoicing that the Civil War would soon be over.

President Lincoln issued a proclamation and named the last Thursday in November as the date for our national Thanksgiving Day after the tally of the Gross National Product was in.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION OCTOBER 3, 1863: "I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full

enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union. It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord."

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the holiday to the third Thursday of November (to extend the Christmas shopping season and boost the economy). After a storm of protest, Roosevelt changed the holiday again in 1941 to the fourth Thursday in November, where it stands today.

Thanksgiving Day is the only American holiday birthed by the need of our country to give thanks to the Heavenly Father for our abundance.

President Ronald Reagan in 1982 reflected his vision of America: "I have always believed that this anointed land was set apart in an uncommon way, that a divine plan placed this great continent here between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the Earth who had a special love of faith and freedom. Our pioneers asked that He would work His will in our daily lives so America would be a land of morality, fairness, and freedom.

I've spoken of the Shining City all my political life. ...In my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still."

President George Walker Bush said in an address to the nation on Sept. 11, 2001: "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world...And no one will keep that light from shining."

"Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; His love endures forever. Let the Redeemed of Yahweh say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south. Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to Yahweh in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress...Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of Yahweh, His wonderful deeds in the deep. For He spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves...They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to Yahweh for His unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders. (Psalms 104: 1-6 ;23-25;30-32)"

"And this full message of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

"Go, proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." (Leviticus 25:10)

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in Heaven."— King Messiah YahShua, from the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5:14-16).

