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Sarah Josepha Hale, a 74-year-old magazine editor, wrote a letter to Lincoln on September 28, 1863, urging him to have the "day of our annual Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival." She explained, "You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day, in all the States; it now needs National recognition and authoritative fixation, only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution."

Prior to this, each state scheduled its own Thanksgiving holiday at different times, mainly in New England and other Northern states. President Lincoln responded to Mrs. Hale's request immediately, unlike several of his predecessors, who ignored her petitions altogether. In her letter to Lincoln she mentioned that she had been advocating a national thanksgiving date for 15 years as the editor of Godey's *Lady's Book*. George Washington was the first president to proclaim a day of thanksgiving, issuing his request on October 3, 1789, exactly 74 years before Lincoln's.

Source: [Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln](#), edited by Roy P. Basler et al.

Brothers:

In my job as a teacher, I often come across fascinating nuggets of history that I then “turnkey” to my students in class. This time I “turnkey” it to you as a reminder that in the performance of our duty to “keep green the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic,” we should remember the reason why we celebrate the many holidays that we have.

This year, as we gather around our different tables to give thanks and appreciate the bounty of our tables, just as the American people did 153 years ago, we must remember those who are sick, indigent, in harm’s way or recuperating from military service. We should remember and be thankful for the American soldier and veteran of today who give or gave the best years of their lives to make sure that we can sit at our tables and enjoy the many blessings of family, food and fellowship. Remember the soldier who walks guard so that we can watch the myriad football games and tease each other over the results. Remember the soldier who sits or crawls in the hot dust and has put off his own celebration just so we can play backyard football or basketball and argue each other’s bad calls or plays.

To all the veterans who are brothers in our order I personally want to say, “THANK YOU!” from the bottom of my heart. This year, when I ask the Lord’s blessing on our meal, I will thank Him for the bounty we are about to enjoy and thank Him for the heroes who have offered their “last full measure of devotion” and for those who continue to offer their lives so that we, a free people in a free land, can continue to enjoy what we have in the greatest nation on earth!

***HAPPY THANKSGIVING  
AND  
GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!!***

Yours in Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty,  
Commander FMossbrucker  
SUVCWNJ