Private, Philadelphia, Sept. 28th, 1863.
Hon. Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States

Sir,

Permit me, as Editor of the "Lucky Book," to request a few minutes of your precious time, while laying before you a subject of deep interest to myself and - as I trust - even to the President of our Republic of some importance.

This subject is to have the day of our Annual Thanksgiving made a National and Jubilee Union Festival.

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.

Enclosed are three samples (being printed these very days) which will make the idea and its progress clear and show also the feasibility of the plan.

For the last fifteen years I have set forth this idea in the "Lucky Book," and placed the feature before the Governors of all the States and Territories, also I have sent these to our Ministers abroad and our Ambassadors to the heads of the Governments of the various States and Territories, also I have sent these to our Ministers abroad and our Ambassadors to the heads of the Governments of the various States and Territories.
Governor Morgan, sir, enclosed both gentlen-
men, you will see, how I most wished to bring
about the desired Thanksgiving dinner.

But I find there are obstacles not possible to
be overcome without legislative act, that
each State should by statute make it obligatory
on the Governor to appoint the last Thursday of No-
vember, annually, as Thanksgiving Day; or, as this
way would require years to be realized, it has
come to me that a proclamation from
the President of the United States would
be the best, most safe, and most fitting method
of national appointment.

I have written to my friend, Hon.
Mr. H. Stevens, and requested him to confer
with President Lincoln on this subject,
for the President of the United States has the
power of appointment for the District of Co-
olumbia and the Territories, also for the
Army and Navy, and all American citi-
zens abroad have claim protection from
the M.S. Ship. Could he not, with right as well
as duty, issue this proclamation for a Day
of Thanksgiving for all the above classes of persons, and would it not be fitting
and patriotic for him to address the Gover-
ners of all the States inviting and comman-
ding them to unite for the last Thursday in
November as the Day of Thanksgiving for

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/266/2669900/malpage.db&recNum=0
the people of each State? Thus the great Union Festival of America would be established.

Now the purpose of this letter is to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation appointing the last Thursday in November (which falls this year on the 26th) as the national Thanksgiving for all those classes of people who are tender the national Government particularly, and recommending this Union Thanksgiving to each State Executive; thus by the noble example and action of the President of the United States, his permanency and beauty as a great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured.

An immediate proclamation would be necessary so as to reach all the States in season for State appointments, also to anticipate the early appointments by Governors. Because this liberty I have written.

With profound respect,

Your truly,

[Signature]

[Notes on the side]

Would it not be of great advantage, socially, nationally, religiously, to have the day of our American Thanksgiving positively settled? Pleading adds the sectional feelings and local incidents that might be urged by any single State or isolated Territory that desired to choose its own time, would it not be more noble, more truly American, to become nationally as we are when we offer to God our tribute of joy and gratitude for the blessings of the year?

Taking this view of the case, would it not be better that the proclamation which appoints Thursday the 3d of November (1863) as the day of Thanksgiving for the people of the United States of America should, in the first instance, emanate from the President of the Republic—to be applied by the Governors of each and every State, in acquaintance with the chief executive adviser?
March 2nd. 1863
Ed. Lady,

Acting that Thanksgiving day to serve a national
purpose, unselfishly.
Sarah J. Hale to Abraham Lincoln, Monday, September 28, 1863 (Thanksgiving)

From Sarah J. Hale to Abraham Lincoln, September 28, 1863

Private

Philadelphia, Sept. 28th 1863.

Sir.--

Permit me, as Editress of the "Lady's Book", to request a few minutes of your precious time, while laying before you a subject of deep interest to myself and -- as I trust -- even to the President of our Republic, of some importance. This subject is to have the day of our annual Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival.

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.

Enclosed are three papers (being printed these are easily read) which will make the idea and its progress clear and show also the popularity of the plan.

For the last fifteen years I have set forth this idea in the "Lady's Book", and placed the papers before the Governors of all the States and Territories -- also I have sent these to our Ministers abroad, and our Missionaries to the heathen -- and commanders in the Navy. From the recipients I have received, uniformly the most kind approval. Two of these letters, one from Governor (now General) Banks and one from Governor Morgan are enclosed; both gentlemen as you will see, have nobly aided to bring about the desired Thanksgiving Union.

But I find there are obstacles not possible to be overcome without legislative aid -- that each State should, by statute, make it obligatory on the Governor to appoint the last Thursday of November, annually, as Thanksgiving Day; -- or, as this way would require years to be realized, it has occurred to me that a proclamation from the President of the United States would be the best, surest and most fitting method of National appointment.

I have written to my friend, Hon. Wm. H. Seward, and requested him to confer with President Lincoln on this subject As the President of the United States has the power of appointments for the District of Columbia and the Territories; also for the Army and Navy and all American citizens abroad who claim protection from the U. S. Flag -- could he not, with right as well as duty, issue his proclamation for a Day of National Thanksgiving for all the above classes of persons? And would it not be fitting and patriotic for him to appeal to the Governors of all the States, inviting and commending these to unite in issuing proclamations for the last Thursday in November as the Day of Thanksgiving for the people of each State? Thus the great Union Festival of America would be established.

Now the purpose of this letter is to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation, appointing the last Thursday in November (which falls this year on the 26th) as the National Thanksgiving for all those classes of persons.
people who are under the National Government particularly, and commending this Union Thanksgiving to each State Executive: thus, by the noble example and action of the President of the United States, the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured.

An immediate proclamation would be necessary, so as to reach all the States in season for State appointments, also to anticipate the early appointments by Governors.³

Excuse the liberty I have taken

With profound respect

Yrs truly

Sarah Josepha Hale,

Editress of the "Ladys Book"

[Note 1 ID: Sarah J. Hale, a poet and novelist, became editor of the Ladies' Magazine in 1828. In 1837 the Ladies' Magazine was sold and became known as the Lady's Book. Hale served as editor of the Lady's Book until 1877. During her tenure as editor, Hale made the magazine the most recognized and influential periodical for women. Hale was involved in numerous philanthropic pursuits and used her position as editor to advocate the education of women.]

[Note 2 Nathaniel P. Banks and Edwin D. Morgan]

[Note 3 On October 3, Lincoln issued a proclamation that urged Americans to observe the last Thursday in November as a day of thanksgiving. See Collected Works, VI, 496-97.]