



# The Coffee Cooler



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## SPECIAL THANKSGIVING EDITION



### THANKSGIVING IN CAMP

*Harper's Weekly* November 29, 1862

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanksgiving has been celebrated since 1621, but became a national holiday thanks to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Holding the holiday as a special annual event was suggested to President Abraham Lincoln by Sarah Josepha Hale, a magazine editor. She urged the nation's wartime president to declare a "National and fixed Union Festival of Thanksgiving." President Lincoln issued a proclamation in October 1863 establishing the last Thursday of November "as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise." According to an April 1, 1864 letter from John Nicolay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, Secretary of State William Seward wrote the proclamation. The manuscript was sold a year later to benefit Union troops and since then has disappeared.*

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### By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they can not fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed

everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People.

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 ascription's 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, tranquility and Union.

*In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.*

*Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the Unites States the Eighty-eighth.*

**By the President: Abraham Lincoln**  
***William H. Seward***  
Secretary of State



*Baton Rouge, Louisiana Nov. 1863*

*"To Captain Charles C. Doten ...The dinner passed off in grand style and no one got drunk though many toasts were given with a will none more heartily drank than the health of Capt. C.C. Doten. Our appetites had been sharpened by a very pleasant ride of some three hours and we did full justice to the entire list. The 'right wing mess' observed the occasion in due form by a dinner composed of the prescribed elements and had a party at a house near by in the evening. The 'left wing mess' had an assembly at a neighbors to eat roast turkey but did not celebrate so zealously as the others. Most of the companies had some extra dish for Dinner and on the whole thanksgiving in the 38th was well marked."*

*. . . A. Mason, Lieutenant, 38th Massachusetts*