



State Senator Scott T. Rupp ~ District 2

# The Rupp Report

*Serving Lincoln County & St. Charles County***Column For Week of: November 16, 2009**[Website](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

## Giving Thanks: An Important Annual Tradition

Times were tough in 1620, when a harsh winter killed more than half of the group of freedom-seeking pilgrims near Plymouth, Massachusetts. Yet, by the autumn of 1621, with the help of the Wampanoag Indians who taught them about planting, fishing and hunting, the pilgrims had reason to celebrate by collecting enough food to last during the upcoming winter.

For most Americans, this story of the pilgrims' three-day feast with the Wampanoag Indians represents the first Thanksgiving, even though we learn from U.S. history that later generations of Colonists celebrated Thanksgiving as more of a religious holiday to give thanks for bountiful harvests, battle victories, and drought-ending rains. By 1777, the Continental Congress decreed all 13 colonies celebrate a day of Thanksgiving that year to celebrate the victory over the British at Saratoga. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, many states were celebrating a day of thanks, but it could vary by days or months.

Interestingly, it was a magazine editor named Sarah Josepha Hale, the author of the beloved children's rhyme, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, whose one-woman letter writing campaign in the mid-1800s led to the establishment of a national Thanksgiving Day. Hale believed the holiday would serve to unite a nation heading into Civil War and pleaded with politicians to establish the holiday. Four months after the victory at Gettysburg in 1863, President Lincoln declared the last Thursday of November to be Thanksgiving Day. Congress made it a national holiday in 1941. (The National Football League's Thanksgiving Day game and Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade became annual Thanksgiving traditions in the 1920s.)

Thanksgiving is a wonderful part of the American tradition. It's a day about family, a time to give thanks and to celebrate life's many blessings. While we live in a land of plenty, the downturn in the national economy has affected many American families. Since Thanksgiving is also about sharing the harvest, please consider contributing to your local food pantry this season and helping a neighbor in need.

As I consider this Thanksgiving holiday, I am thankful for a wonderful family, great friends, and satisfying work, which includes serving as your state senator. Thank you for entrusting me to represent your interests in Jefferson City, and I will do my best to continue to forward meaningful legislation to benefit the lives of residents in Lincoln and St. Charles counties. Happy Thanksgiving.

As always, if you have any questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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