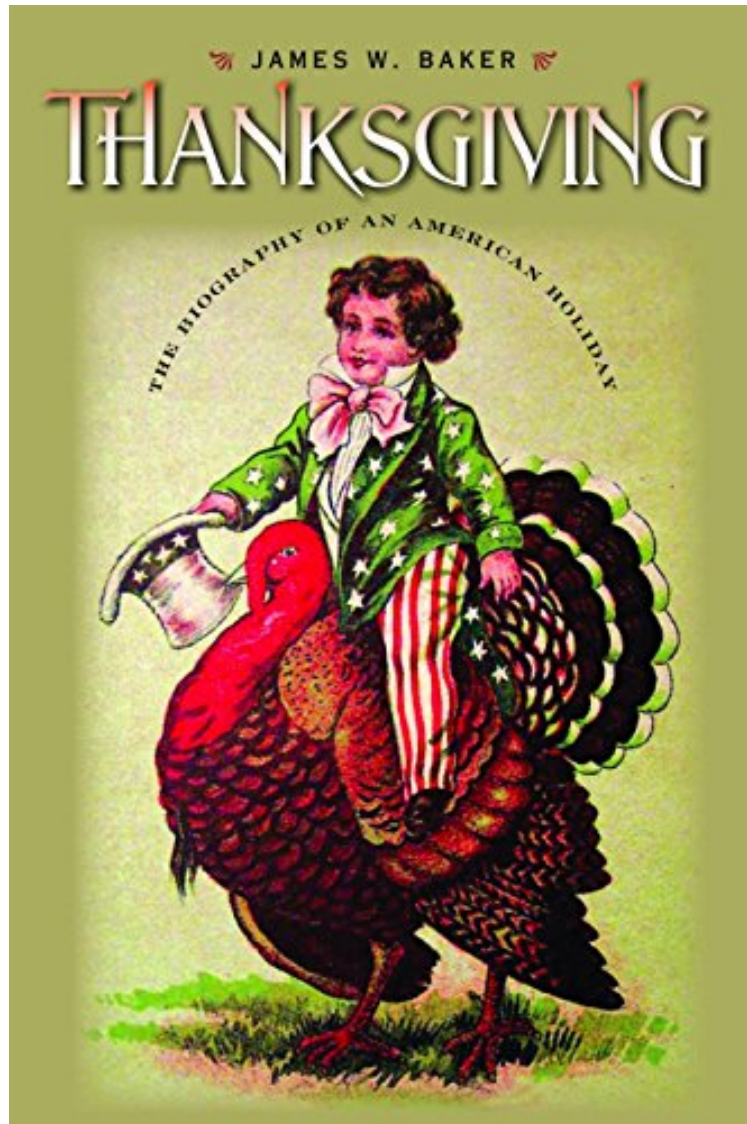


(Ebook free) Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday (Revisiting New England)

## Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday (Revisiting New England)

*James W. Baker*

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**James W. Baker : Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday (Revisiting New England)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday (Revisiting New England):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Thanksgiving Through The YearsBy L. M YoungYour typical Thanksgiving book for adults is a cookbook, whether of traditional foods or new twists, like using other ethnic foods

for "spice." The book may also have tips on decorating: "tablescaping" and other ideas of how to set a pretty table. Let's say I hate cookbooks, unless they have something historical to offer, like THE LITTLE HOUSE COOKBOOK. Very few adult books ever talk about the holiday itself or its history. Those are mostly reserved for children, and run the gamut from the old "Pilgrims and the Indians" story even though we have known for years now that most of our stories about "the first Thanksgiving" are myths created after the fact, many people still think that Pilgrims wore black and had hats and boots with buckles, that the feast they celebrated in 1621 was a "Thanksgiving," etc. to stories about being generous and giving thanks. Baker's BIOGRAPHY is a very readable companion piece to Diana Appelbaum's THANKSGIVING, but is an easier read without being simplistic. It also touches more on things like images, writings, and films about Thanksgiving, changes in menus in the intervening years, and parades and football games. The one thing that this book makes very clear is that the now "iconic" AUTUMN Thanksgiving imagery of Pilgrims and Indians only became emphasized at the very end of the 19th century and during the early decades of the 20th, back when the United States became flooded with non-English speaking immigrants whom the schools wished to impress upon some idea of the country's heritage. Previous to that it was simply a WINTER New England holiday which spread as New England residents moved westward, and involved reunions with family and friends. Even fictional short stories about Thanksgiving mostly emphasized reunions between estranged or long-parted relatives; Pilgrims and Indians were rarely to never mentioned. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to read more about the history of the Thanksgiving holiday and its changing face over four centuries. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I'm glad that I bought the book. By Customer I bought the book to give to a friend when I visit her on Thanksgiving; that is her favorite holiday, and I thought that she would like to know more about it. I knew that the book existed, but never got around to buying it until now. I have begun it and plan to finish it before I have to turn it over. So far, it has quite exceeded my expectations and makes me want to learn even more about colonial and 19th-century American history. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great book! By Mike P Very in-depth, informs you about the origins of our traditional Thanksgiving plus all of the other Thanksgivings during the nascent years of our country.

In this, the first in-depth study of the most American of holidays, James Baker sweeps away lingering myths and misconceptions to show how this celebration day was born and grew to be an essential part of our national spirit. Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday opens with an overview of the popular mythos of the holiday before discussing its possible religious and cultural precedents. This classic Yankee holiday is examined in historical and contemporary detail that embraces everything from proclamations, sermons, and local and regional traditions to family reunions, turkey dinners, and recipes. Thanksgivings evolving face is illustrated with charming and often revealing period prints that chart our changing attitudes: the influence of Victorian sentiment in Thanksgivings development, Progressive utilitarianism, intellectual debunking, patriotic wartime reclamation, and 1960s-era protest. Thanksgiving remains controversial up to the present day, as Mayflower descendants, Native Americans, and commercial exploiters compete for the American public's opinion of the holiday's contemporary significance and its future status. This is an intelligent and illuminating introduction to a beloved holiday and a fascinating cultural history of America and Americana.

Baker has incorporated all the available research on Thanksgiving and enriched it with his unparalleled access to original sources as the former director of research at Plimoth Plantation. Most appealing about this book is that it has been produced by an expert on the topic, and one who is also a Plymouth, MA, native. He shows us how Thanksgiving is seen through each generation's reality, having morphed from a holiday for pilgrim hats and turkeys to a cause for Native American protests to a holy day to several ancient holidays combined and a full-scale orgy of food and football. Thanksgiving is not the holiday you think it is and will not be the holiday you know now in 100 years, but it can be whatever holiday you need. There is now a desire to make it an international holiday-Who knows? . . . This is destined to become the accepted text for research on the history and myth of this most American holiday, and it will be an enjoyable, fascinating read both for students and for anyone looking for a good story. Booklist