

# Why First Nations People Regard Thanksgiving Day as a National Day of Mourning

(And why Alexander Ramsey Should be Posthumously Tried for Crimes Against Humanity)

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*“The Sioux (aka Lakota) Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state.” - Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey*

We turkey-celebrating, obese, sports-addicted, shop-until-you-drop, historically-illiterate couch potatoes are all beneficiaries of the acts of our guilty ancestors who may have been unaware perpetrators of the crimes against humanity that occurred during the never-ending, shameful 500 year-long history of genocide, ethnic cleansing, colonizing and occupation of the people and the land that rightfully belonged the aboriginal tribes that had inhabited North, Central and South America for thousands of years before Columbus (who had no clue as to where he was) and his sex-starved sailors disembarked from their stinking ships and started pillaging the land and raping the most nubile female inhabitants back in 1492. (Soon cutting off the hands of those who couldn't bring in their quota of gold from precious metal-less mines.)

Thus started the systematic genocide against the aboriginal, non-white people that led eventually - and perhaps inevitably - to the cruelty and crimes against humanity that enslaved millions of black Africans, many of whom died in chains even before they reached this so-called “promised land”.

In many cases the psychopathic killer-conquistadors that followed Columbus, were initially welcomed, tolerated and even nurtured (a la the mythical First Thanksgiving) - rather than being killed off as the criminal invaders that they were. Trusting the intruders to return their hospitality - in the spirit of the Christian Golden Rule - turned out to have been a huge mistake, for within decades the slaughter began, performed in the name of Christ - with the blessings of the accompanying priests whose mission was to convert the heathen to Christianity under threat of death.

Most of our European ancestors were greatly enriched by the US Army's massacres, the occupation and theft of their land, the exploitation of the resources, the colonization and the destruction of their way of life. We pink-skinned progeny have been conditioned to believe way too many myths about our obfuscated history. Thanks to our cunningly censored history books and the myths learned in Sunday School over the ages, we have been led to believe the story about the “nice” Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 and who gratefully shared a feast with their new friendly Indian neighbors (who were soon to be driven off their land and annihilated by the Puritan so-called “christians” and others that soon followed).

The disinformation process about the first Thanksgiving (and the successor long week-end that happens every fourth Thursday of November in the US) has been designed to absolve our ancestors of guilt for the cruel bloodbaths that were perpetrated “in their names” by obedient soldiers against the militarily weaker aboriginals, a pattern that has been repeated against many weaker nations all around the world throughout our history.

The following censored-out stories about a few of our so-called “heroes” need to be told in the context of the true history of the American genocide of the First Nations people that happened right here in River City. Those “heroes” include Minnesota’s first two governors and one humiliated Civil War general.

The following quotes and explanatory commentary will expand on the title of this essay.

“The Sioux (aka Lakota) Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state.” – Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey in a genocidal declaration made on Sept. 9, 1862. Ramsey had made a fortune in real estate because of his dealings selling property to white settlers and businessmen after he himself had negotiated US-Dakota treaties that cheated the Dakota tribes out of their land. (<http://sites.mnhs.org/historic-sites/alexander-ramsey-house/history>)

“I shall do full justice, but no more. I do not propose to murder any man, even a savage, who is shown to be innocent.” “I shall probably approve them (the executions of the 303 Dakota warriors) and hang the villains” — Ex-Minnesota Governor, Colonel Henry H. Sibley, whose troops had defeated Chief Little Crow in the Battle of Wood Lake on August 23. Sibley had appointed the five member military tribunal that tried, convicted and sentenced, via death by hanging, 303 Dakota warriors that had been captured in the battle that ended the 6 week US-Dakota War of 1862.. Sibley was commenting on the fate of the convicted warriors, all but 38 of whom had their death sentences commuted by President Lincoln. Many warriors were imprisoned at Camp McClellan, near Davenport, Iowa and more than 1,600 non-combatants were imprisoned at a concentration camp at Fort Snelling over the winter of 1862 – 63. Those that survived the cold, the starvation diets and the diseases were then deported to concentration camps in Nebraska and South Dakota (Pine Ridge). (<http://www.minnpost.com/minnesota-history/2012/09/150--years-ago-us-dakota-war-ends-battle-wood-lake>)

“The 38 Indians and half-breeds ordered by you for execution were hung yesterday at 10 am. Everything went off quietly.” – Henry Sibley, in a December 27, 1862 telegraph message to President Lincoln. (<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/dakota/sibley.html>)

“There will be no peace in this region by virtue of treaties and Indian faith. It is my purpose utterly to exterminate the Sioux (aka the Dakota) if I have the power to do so and even if it requires a campaign lasting the whole of next year. Destroy everything belonging to them and force them out to the plains, unless, as I suggest, you can capture them. They are to be treated as maniacs or wild beasts, and by no means as people with whom treaties or compromises can be made.” – Civil war Major General John Pope, in a letter to Colonel Sibley, urging an all-out effort to totally exterminate the Dakota, (letter was dated September 28, 1862): The punitive 40 year-old Pope was infamous for his abrasiveness, conceit and loud mouth, with which he alienated his colleagues, his officer staff and his soldiers. Significantly, Pope had recently been summarily relieved of his command of the Union Army of Virginia and demoted to Minnesota after his humiliating defeat by Robert E. Lee at the Second Battle of Manassas just a month earlier (August 31, 1862). (<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/secondmanassas/second-manassas-history-articles/second-battle>)

[of-manassas.html](#) and

<http://usdakotawar.org/history/aftermath#sthash.XxnK8yhx.dpuf>)

“As Europeans settled the East coast, they displaced eastern tribes who then migrated to get away from the White civilization, and they, in their turn, displaced weaker local tribes they encountered, and pushed many of those tribes farther from their homelands, as they took over their homelands.

“Westward moving Europeans would give the displaced eastern tribes ... guns and gun powder and they would then instigate fights between the newly arrived tribes and the long established tribes in order to force the long established tribes from their homelands; and in doing so, extinguish the long established tribes’ ancestral ties that they had with the land, their ancestors and the spirit world. Evidence of this practice has shown itself time and time again throughout the Americas.

“Around 1750, a displaced East coast band of Ojibwe were pushed into the Dakota’s homeland and they then used French guns and gun powder to force the Dakota from their Mille Lacs Lake homeland.

“This was the strategy the European colonists used to greatly diminish the number of Dakota in their Mille Lacs homeland, which encouraged and made it possible for a French weapons armed, alcohol manipulated band of Ojibwe to violently force the Dakota from their Mille Lacs homeland.”

“Grieved by the loss of their lands, dissatisfied with reservation (aka, concentration camp) life, and ultimately brought to a condition of near starvation, the Dakota people appealed to US Indian agencies (involving ex-Minnesota governors Sibley and Ramsey) without success. The murder of five whites by four young Dakota Indians ignited a bloody uprising in which more than 300 whites and an unknown number of Indians were killed. In the aftermath, 38 Dakota captives were hanged in Mankato (the day after Christmas Day 1862) for ‘voluntary participation in murders and massacres,’ and the Dakota remaining in Minnesota were removed to reservations in Nebraska. Meanwhile, the Ojibwa were relegated to reservations on remnants of their former lands.

“What happened to the Dakota in 1862 and afterward was a grievous crime against humanity. If it had occurred in this present day and age the United Nations and the international community would condemn it and declare it to be ethnocide and genocide. A United Nations world court indictment would be issued and the perpetrators of this ethnocide and genocide would be rounded up, tried, convicted and punished for crimes against humanity.” — Thomas Dahlheimer from his long essay, entitled, [A History Of The Dakota People In The Mille Lacs Area](http://www.towahkon.org/Dakotahistory.html) (<http://www.towahkon.org/Dakotahistory.html>)

Gov. Ramsey’s Thanksgiving Proclamation of November 3, 1862:

“WHEREAS, it is meet and in accordance with good and cherished custom of our fathers worthy to be “a statute forever in all our dwellings,” that the people “when they have gathered the fruit of the land,” should “keep a feast unto the Lord,” in commemoration of His goodness, and by a public act of Christian worship, acknowledge their dependence as a community upon Him in whose hands the kingdoms of the earth are but as dust in the balance.

“Therefore I, Alexander Ramsey, Governor of the State of Minnesota, do hereby

set apart the twenty-seventh day of the present month of November, as a Day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for his wonderful mercy towards us—for all the good gifts of His providence—for health and restored domestic peace—and the measure of general prosperity which we enjoy.

“Especially let us recognize His mercy in that He has delivered our borders from the savage enemies who rose up against us, and cast them into the pit they had privily dug for us; that our friends have been rescued from the horrors of captivity, and that our homes and household treasures are now safe from the violence of Indian robbers and assassins.

“And let us praise Him for the continued preservation of the Government of our Fathers, from the assaults of traitors and rebels; for the sublime spirit of patriotism, and courage, and constancy with which He has filled the hearts of its defenders; for the victories won by the valor of our troops; for the glorious share of Minnesota in the struggles and triumphs of the Union cause; for the safety of her sons who have passed through the fire of battle unscathed, and the honorable fame of the gallant dead; for the alacrity and devotion with which our citizens have rushed from their unharvested fields to the standard of the nation; and, above all, for the assurance that their toils, and perils, and wounds, and self-devotion, are not in vain; for the tokens, now manifest, of His will, that, through the blood and sweat of suffering and sacrifice, the nation is to be saved from its great calamity, and the great crime of which it is at once the effect and punishment; and that behind the thunders, and lightnings, and clouds of the tempest, the awful form of Jehovah is visible, descending in fire upon the mount, to renew the broken tablets of the Constitution, and proclaim FREEDOM as the condition and the law of a restored and regenerated Union.

“Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State, at the City of St. Paul, this third day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two”.- Alexander Ramsey, Governor of the State of Minnesota

“Since 1970, Native Americans have gathered at noon on Cole’s Hill in Plymouth to commemorate a National Day of Mourning on the US Thanksgiving holiday. Many Native Americans do not celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims and other European settlers. To them, Thanksgiving Day is a reminder of the genocide of millions of their people, the theft of their lands, and the relentless assault on their culture. Participants in a National Day of Mourning honor Native ancestors and the struggles of Native peoples to survive today. It is a day of remembrance and spiritual connection as well as a protest of the racism and oppression which Native Americans continue to experience.” — Text of a plaque on Cole’s Hill, overlooking Plymouth Rock, Plymouth, MA

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