



Leif Erikson Day, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, we Americans pause on Leif Erikson Day to commemorate the life and legacy of this courageous Norse missionary and explorer. In remembering the young Viking who travelled to North America nearly a millennium ago, we also celebrate our Nation's Nordic heritage.

Son of "Erik the Red," who led the first group of Europeans to colonize Greenland, Leif Erikson returned to his native Norway in the year 1000. A year after his conversion to Christianity there, Erikson was commissioned by King Olaf Tryggvason (Olaf I) to return to Greenland as a missionary. During his lengthy travels, the young navigator visited new, unknown lands. Calling the places he discovered Helluland, Markland, and Vinland, Erikson described their pristine beauty in his journal. Centuries later, other European explorers, inspired by Erikson's account, decided to pursue his exciting discovery and journeyed to these shores.

Although American history is filled with testaments to the faith and courage of many a missionary and explorer, Leif Erikson has remained a beloved symbol of valor. Displaying the same vision and daring embodied by "Leif the Lucky," generations of Scandinavian immigrants have since followed his path to North America. Leif Erikson Day provides an opportunity to pay tribute to those industrious and determined Nordic peoples who have settled in the United States, and to honor them for their many contributions to our Nation. On this special occasion, we also celebrate the close relations between the people of the United States and our friends in all the Nordic countries.

In honor of Leif Erikson and the heritage of America's Nordic people, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (78 Stat. 849, 36 U.S.C. 169c), has authorized the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1989, as Leif Erikson Day, and I direct the appropriate government officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on that day. I also invite the people of the United States to honor Leif Erikson and our Nordic-American heritage by holding appropriate exercises and ceremonies in suitable places throughout our land.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush