

JOURNALS ²⁹⁰²
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John Smith Kerr's

OF

1832

The American Congress:

John Brown Kerr

From 1774 to 1788.

Charles Goldsborough Kerr

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME III:

From August 1, 1778, to March 30, 1782, inclusive.

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1823.

<i>New-Jersey,</i>	Mr. Witherspoon,	no	}	no	<i>Virginia,</i>	Mr. Jones,	no	}	no	
	Clark,	no					Madison,			no
	Boudinot,	no					Randolph,			no
<i>Pennsylvania,</i>	Mr. Montgomery,	no	}	no	<i>N.-Carolina,</i>	Mr. Hawkins,	no	}	no	
	Atlee,	no					Mr. Matthews,			ay
	Smith,	no					Middleton,			ay
<i>Maryland,</i>	Mr. Hanson,	no	}	no	<i>S.-Carolina,</i>	Motte,	ay	}	ay	
	Carroll,	no					Eveleigh,			ay
							Mr. Telfair,			no
					<i>Georgia,</i>	N. W. Jones,	ay		ay	

So it passed in the negative.

FRIDAY, October 26, 1781.

The committee, consisting of Mr. Witherspoon, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Varnum, Mr. Sherman, appointed to prepare a recommendation for setting apart a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, reported the draught of a proclamation, which was agreed to as follows :

PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, it hath pleased Almighty God, the father of mercies, remarkably to assist and support the United States of America in their important struggle for liberty, against the long continued efforts of a powerful nation : it is the duty of all ranks to observe and thankfully to acknowledge the interpositions of his providence in their behalf. Through the whole of the contest, from its first rise to this time, the influence of Divine Providence may be clearly perceived in many signal instances, of which we mention but a few.

In revealing the councils of our enemies, when the discoveries were seasonable and important, and the means seemingly inadequate or fortuitous ; in preserving and even improving the union of the several states, on the breach of which our enemies place their greatest dependence ; in increasing the number, and adding to the zeal and attachment of the friends of liberty ; in granting remarkable deliverances, and blessing us with the most signal success, when affairs seemed to have the most discouraging appearance ; in raising up for us a powerful and generous ally, in one of the first of the European powers ; in confounding the councils of our enemies, and suffering them to pursue such measures as have most directly contributed to frustrate their own desires and expectations ; above all, in making their extreme cruelty to the inhabitants of these states, when in their power, and their savage devastation of property, the very means of cementing our union, and adding vigor to every effort in opposition to them.

And as we cannot help leading the good people of these states to a retrospect on the events which have taken place since the beginning of the war, so we recommend in a particular manner to their observation, the goodness of God in the year now drawing to a conclusion : in which the confederation of the United States has been completed : in which there have been so many instances of prowess and success in our armies ; particularly in the southern states, where, notwithstanding the difficulties with which they had to struggle, they have recovered the whole country which the enemy had overrun, leaving them only a post or two on or near the sea : in which we have been so powerfully and effectually assisted by our allies, while in all the conjunct operations the most perfect harmony has subsisted in the allied army : in which there has been so plentiful a harvest, and so great abundance of the fruits of the earth of every kind, as not only enables us easily to supply the wants of our army, but gives comfort and happiness to the whole people : and, in which, after the success of our allies by sea, a general of the first rank, with his whole army, has been captured by the allied forces under the direction of our commander in chief.

It is therefore recommended to the several states to set apart the 13th day

of December next, to be religiously observed as a day of thanksgiving and prayer ; that all the people may assemble on that day, with grateful hearts, to celebrate the praises of our gracious benefactor ; to confess our manifold sins ; to offer up our most fervent supplications to the God of all grace, that it may please Him to pardon our offences, and incline our hearts for the future to keep all his laws ; to comfort and relieve all our brethren who are in distress or captivity ; to prosper our husbandmen, and give success to all engaged in lawful commerce ; to impart wisdom and integrity to our counsellors, judgment and fortitude to our officers and soldiers ; to protect and prosper our illustrious ally, and favor our united exertions for the speedy establishment of a safe, honorable and lasting peace ; to bless all seminaries of learning ; and cause the knowledge of God to cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas.

A motion was made by the delegates of Virginia :

That inasmuch as it appears from the journal of the 27th November, 1775 ; the 28th of July, the 12th of August, the 12th of September, the 10th and 20th of October, and the 2d of November, 1778 ; the 22d and 26th of January, the 16th and 23d of February, the 1st of March, the 15th of April, the 11th and 28th of May, the 1st of June, the 5th and 28th of July, the 27th of September, the 20th and 22d of December, 1779 ; that after orders for referring papers to a committee, or for the re-commitment of a report, it was expressly provided in some of the preceding instances, that the committee should be instructed, in others that they should be directed, and in others that they should be authorized to hear evidence, and reduce to writing such parts thereof as they should think proper, to confer with persons not members of Congress, or to send for persons or papers : and as it appears to be the usage of Congress, in cases of moment or difficulty, or in which it may be their pleasure that committees should have recourse to documents, proofs or evidence, other than those which are to be found among the records, or on the files of Congress, to instruct them specially for this purpose ; and as the delegates of Virginia, having received notice from the committee to whom was re-committed the report on the cessions of Connecticut, New-York, and Virginia, and on the memorials of the Vandalia, Illinois, Ouabache, and Indiana companies, that they should confer with the agents thereof, on a day now past, did, for the reasons assigned in their motion of the 16th, request the said committee to postpone such conference until the sense of Congress should be taken, how far they were warranted by the terms of their appointment to enter thereon :

“ It be declared, that the re-commitment of the said report, does not authorize the said committee to admit counsel, or to hear documents, proofs, or evidence, not among the records, nor on the files of Congress, which have not been specially referred to them.”

On the question to agree to this, the yeas and nays being required by the delegates of Virginia,

<i>Massachusetts</i> , Mr. Patridge,	no	}	no	<i>Maryland</i> ,	Mr. Hanson,	no	}	no	
	Osgood,			no		Carroll,			no
<i>Rhode-Island</i> ,	Mr. Mowry,	no	*	<i>Virginia</i> ,	Mr. Madison,	ay	}	ay	
<i>Connecticut</i> ,	Mr. Sherman,	no	}	}	Randolph,	ay			
	Law,	no			<i>N.-Carolina</i> ,	Mr. Hawkins,	ay	*	
<i>New-Jersey</i> ,	Mr. Witherspoon,	no	}	}	<i>S.-Carolina</i> ,	Mr. Middleton,	ay	}	ay
	Clark,	no				Motte,	ay		
	Boudinot,	no				Eveleigh,	ay		
	Elmer,	no	}	}	<i>Georgia</i> ,	Mr. Telfair,	ay	}	ay
<i>Pennsylvania</i> ,	Mr. Montgomery,	no				N. W. Jones,	ay		
	Clymer,	no							

So it passed in the negative.

MONDAY, October 29, 1781.

On motion of Mr. Clymer, seconded by Mr. Osgood,