
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6934 of October 9, 1996

The President

Leif Erikson Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Leif Erikson Day commemorates the life and the voyages of the great Nordic explorer who first set foot on the fertile soil of North America about one thousand years ago. On this day, we also celebrate the close bonds of friendship between the people of the United States and the Nordic peoples, as well as the outstanding contributions that Nordic Americans have made to our country.

We have good cause to mark this day. The pioneering spirit that Leif Erikson and his followers demonstrated embodies the virtues of independence, self-determination, and initiative that are firmly rooted in our national consciousness today. As a vital transatlantic bridge between the continents of America and Europe, the Nordic countries of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland have repeatedly shown a bedrock commitment to the democratic values that contributed greatly to the formation of our own national ideals.

Just as our forebears persevered through what sometimes seemed insurmountable odds to transform adversity into prosperity, we have continued to champion the cause of liberty and to reach out without reservation or hesitation to our neighbors and those in need around the world. The same heritage that enabled our ancestors to brave wars and uncharted frontiers—because they were convinced that they were working to create a better world—also emboldens us today in our cooperative effort to integrate the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Western community of nations.

Our immigrant ancestors survived unthinkable hardships to achieve economic, religious, and political freedom. Their dreams were big, but so was their willingness to work for them. The link they forged across the oceans is sustained today by a common commitment to freedom and the rule of law—ideals that have strong roots in the civic and legal traditions of Nordic countries dating back at least to medieval times.

In honor of Leif Erikson—son of Iceland, grandson of Norway—the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88–566), has authorized and requested the President to designate October 9 of each year as “Leif Erikson Day.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1996, as Leif Erikson Day. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities commemorating our rich Nordic-American heritage.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William Clinton

[FR Doc. 96-26529

Filed 10-11-96; 8:45 am]

Billing code 3195-01-P