

Anniversary religious commemorations in the empire and commonwealth

the empire and commonwealth as a whole

The religious anniversaries appointed in England during the 16th and 17th centuries were observed in numerous early colonies where the Church of England had a substantial presence and once royal government became well established. This was particularly so after the church services for these occasions were appended to *The Book of Common Prayer* in 1662. These anniversaries were for the *accession of the sovereign* (various dates), the *execution of Charles I* (30 January), the *Restoration of the monarchy* (29 May) and *discovery of the Gunpowder Plot and, later, commemoration of the 1688 revolution* (5 November). The extent and duration of their observance across the empire awaits further investigation; it is likely to have been uneven, and to have declined during the eighteenth century. All except the service for accession day were abolished in the United Kingdom in 1859.

Armistice day (11 November), marked by a two-minute silence, was appointed by the king for the whole empire from 1919. The observance of the day almost immediately acquired religious connotations, and churches often treated a related Sunday as *Remembrance Sunday*. In Canada, several provinces appointed public holidays on 11 November, designated as Remembrance day. In Britain during the Second World War, Remembrance Sunday replaced the observance of Armistice day. This practice was followed in much of the empire, but not in Australia and Canada. In 1946, by agreement of most Dominion governments, Remembrance Sunday became the official day of remembrance of the dead of both world wars; Canada continued with Remembrance day on 11 November.

particular colonies and dominions

In various colonies the authorities appointed anniversary religious days to mark momentous events affecting their own territories. The known anniversaries are recorded in the following list, organised by the earliest year of observance and then by territory. Durations of the observance is not always clear; for the early modern anniversaries there was probably a gradual decline into obsolescence. Years are given in new style. The key to the sources is given at the end of the list. In New England and later in other American colonies, a practice became established of fast days early in the year and thanksgiving days late in the year, but these were not on fixed dates: W. DeLoss Love, *The fast and thanksgiving days of New England* (Boston, MA, 1895), ch. XVII.

territory	years	observance	occasion	authority	sources
Virginia	1623–?	22 March	thanksgiving: deliverance from Indian massacre 1622	assembly act	<i>Virginia statutes</i> , I, 177
	1645–?_	18 April	thanksgiving: deliverance from Indian massacre 1644	assembly act	<i>Virginia statutes</i> , I, 290
	1663–?	13 September	thanksgiving: defeat of servants' plot 1663	assembly act	<i>Virginia statutes</i> , II, 191
Barbados	1649–?	28 November	thanksgiving: end of slave rebellion 1649	assembly act	<i>Barbados acts</i> , 461
	1783–?	10 October	fast: hurricane 1780	gov proclamation	<i>Barbados mercury</i> , 20 Sept 1783
	1832–?	11 August	humiliation and thanksgiving: hurricane 1831	gov proclamation	<i>Watchman</i> (Jamaica), 29 Sept 1832
Maryland	1688–?90	10 June	thanksgiving: birth of Prince James (heir to James II)	assembly act	<i>Maryland archives</i> , XIII, 152,184–6, 209

Jamaica	1672–76	10 May	thanksgiving: conquest 1655 (repealed by UK order)	assembly act	<i>CSPC</i> , VII, 360; IX, 393
	1684–?	7 June (if Sun, 8th)	fast: earthquake, Port Royal 1692	assembly act	<i>Jamaica acts</i> , I, 48–9
	1722–?	28 August	fast: hurricanes in both 1712 and 1722		<i>Jamaica acts</i> , I, 108–9
Nevis	? (recorded in 1724)	last Fri in July, August and September 2nd or 3rd Th in Oct	fasts: hurricane season thanksgiving: if no hurricane	?	<i>Caribbeana</i> , III, 322
Bermuda	1701–28	1st Weds in October, January, April & July	fasts: multiple causes (diseases, drought, infestation)	assembly act	Trott, 434–5; <i>Bermuda acts</i> , 9, 12
North Carolina	1715–40	22 September	day of humiliation: Indian massacre 1711		<i>North Carolina records</i> , XXIII, 3

Canada	from 1879	October/November	harvest thanksgiving (varying dates)	gov proclamation
New Zealand	from 1920	25 April	Anzac day: remembrance of Gallipoli landings	government order
Australia	from 1921	25 April	Anzac day	government notices

Sources:

<i>Barbados acts</i>	<i>Acts passed in the island of Barbados from 1643 to 1762</i> , ed. Richard Hall (1764)
<i>Bermuda acts</i>	<i>Bermuda acts from 1690 to 1923</i> , ed Thomas Dill (London, 1923)
<i>Caribbeana</i>	<i>Caribbeana ... miscellaneous papers relating to ... the British West Indies</i> (6 vols, 1910-19)
<i>CSPC</i>	<i>Calendar of state papers colonial</i> (44 vols, 1860–1963)
<i>Jamaica acts</i>	<i>Acts of assembly ... Jamaica</i> (2 vols, Kingston, Jamaica, 1787)
<i>Maryland archives</i>	<i>Archives of Maryland</i> (Baltimore, MD, 1883 and continuing)
<i>North Carolina records</i>	<i>Colonial and state records of North Carolina</i> (30 vols, Raleigh, NC, 1886–1914)
Trott	Nicholas Trott (ed.), <i>The laws of the British Plantations in America relating to the Church ...</i> (1721)
<i>Virginia statutes</i>	<i>Statutes at large ... Virginia</i> , ed. William Hening (13 vols, Richmond, VA, 1809–23)