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Why Groundhog Day?

FEBRUARY 02ND 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Why Groundhog Day?

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United States - Have you ever wondered where Groundhog Day came from or why we celebrate a rodent emerging from his home after winter?

Each year on February 2nd, Groundhog Day is celebrated across the nation by millions of people wondering if the groundhog will see his shadow.

According to folklore, on this day if it is cloudy, when a groundhog comes out of its burrow, then spring will come early; if it is sunny and the groundhog sees its shadow and retreats back into its burrow, then winter will continue on for six more weeks.

On Groundhog Day, people participate in early morning celebrations and festivals to watch the groundhog emerge from its burrow.

- Southeastern Pennsylvania, Groundhog Lodges – Celebrates Groundhog Day with fersommlinge (a Pennsylvania Dutch social event where food is served, speeches are made and one or more play or skit are performed for entertainment). Those who speak English at this event must pay a penalty as

the Pennsylvania German dialect is the only language allowed to be spoken.

- Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania – Hosts the largest Groundhog Day celebration since at least 1886. Crowds have numbered 40,000.
- Other Pennsylvania Groundhog Day celebrations – Quarryville in Lancaster County – the Anthracite Region of Schuylkill County – The Sinnamahoning Valley – Bucks County.
- University of Dallas-Irving, Texas – Has Groundhog Day as an official university holiday and organizes a large-scale celebration every year. It is claimed to be the second largest Groundhog celebration in the world.
- The day is observed with various ceremonies at other communities in North America.
- The first documented American reference to Groundhog Day was found in storekeeper James Morris' diary entry dated February 4, 1841:

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Last Tuesday, the 2nd, was Candlemas day, the day on which, according to the Germans, the Groundhog peeps out of his winter quarters and if he sees his shadow he pops back for another six weeks nap, but if the day be cloudy he remains out, as the weather is to be moderate.

**In Scotland, the poem:**

If Candle-mas Day is bright and clear,  
There'll be two winters in the year.

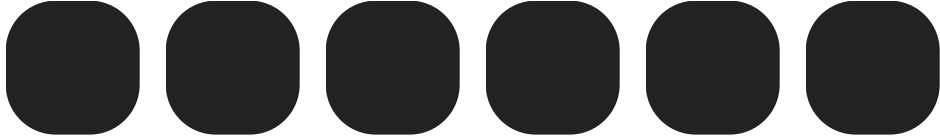
**An English poem:**

If Candle mas be fair and bright,  
Winter has another flight.  
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,  
Winter will not come again.

[\(Wikipedia\)](#)

**Today may be a good day to watch the 1993 film  
“Groundhog Day”.**

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