



GROUNDHOG DAY CELEBRATION 2010

History of Groundhog Day*

PUNXSUTAWNEY HISTORY + TRADITION

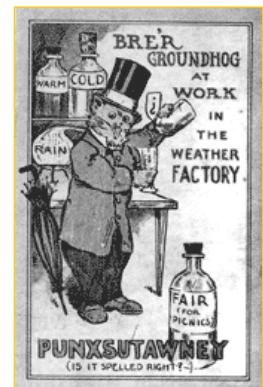
- The first legendary trek to Gobbler's Knob was in 1887. In early observances, the groundhog's predictions were conducted in private wooded areas that neighbor the town.
- Presently, Phil makes his prediction in Gobbler's Knob in front of tens of thousands of visitors and a global audience via the international press.
- Members of the Inner Circle, a mystical group of keepers sworn to uphold the grand tradition of Groundhog Day, coax Phil from his hole and announce Phil's prediction.
- If Phil sees his shadow, he regards it as an omen of six more weeks of winter and returns to his hole; if not, spring is just around the corner.

EUROPEAN ROOTS

- The Groundhog Day celebration is similar to some ethnic cultures' belief that animals awake from hibernation on specific dates.
- Early Christians celebrated Candlemas Day, when the clergy blessed and distributed candles. Roman legions, during the conquest of the northern country, brought this tradition to the Germans, who picked it up and concluded that if the sun made an appearance on Candlemas Day, an animal (the hedgehog) would cast a shadow, thus predicting six more weeks of bad weather, which they interpolated as the length of the "Second Winter."
- Pennsylvania's earliest settlers were Germans who found groundhogs in many parts of the state. They determined that the groundhog, which resembled the hedgehog, was an intelligent animal and decided that if the sun appeared on Feb. 2, the groundhog would see its shadow and hurry back into its underground home for another six weeks of winter.

"PHAMOUS" PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL

- During Prohibition, Phil threatened to impose 60 weeks of winter on the community if he wasn't permitted a drink.
- In 1958 Phil announced that it was a "United States Chucknik," rather than a Soviet Sputnik or Muttnik that became the first man-made satellite to orbit Earth.
- In 1981 Phil wore a yellow ribbon in honor of the American hostages in Iran.
- Phil traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1986 to meet with President Reagan.
- In 1993, Columbia Pictures released the movie Groundhog Day, starring Bill Murray. Since, record crowds numbering as high as 30,000 have visited Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney!
- Phil debuted on "Oprah" in 1995.
- Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell attended Groundhog Day ceremonies in 2003, making him the first sitting governor ever to do so.



*Some material adapted from "Groundhog Day 1886 to 1992" by Bill Anderson