



美国传统节日

(英汉注释对照)

陈琳华 编译



旅游教育出版社



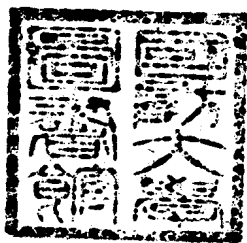
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Preface

This book is written to meet the needs of the many people studying English who, stimulated by the open-door policy of our country, are eager to understand the American people, their history, their customs and culture. It presents a vivid and detailed description of the origins, history and customs of the main American holidays, including New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Saint Patrick's Day, Easter, Independence Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. It will help the readers to get some knowledge about the history and geography of the country, the customs and culture of the people and, meanwhile, enjoy beautiful legends and learn some recipes for holiday food as well.

The book is in English with Chinese translations and notes on some difficult grammatical and rhetorical points. Some background information is also provided when necessary. It is aimed at helping the readers improve their English and acquire knowledge while reading. The book suits university and college students, self-taught students of English and those whose work involves tourism and foreign affairs.

I should like to acknowledge my debt and gratitude to Professor Rose Chen from the United States for her great help in transla-

ting the book into Chinese.

Suggestions and criticisms from our readers would be sincerely appreciated.

Chen Linhua

March 1989

前 言

随着我国对外开放政策的贯彻执行,越来越多的人在学英语,想了解美国的历史、美国人民的风俗习惯及文化情况。本书就是为适应这一需要而选编翻译的。它详细介绍了美国主要传统节日——元旦节、圣瓦伦丁节、圣帕特里克节、复活节、独立节、万圣节、感恩节、圣诞节——的由来、历史、风俗习惯等。读者可以从中掌握一些美国的历史、地理知识和了解美国人民的风土人情、文化习俗,还可读到优美的民间故事,甚至还可领略到一些美国人的节日佳肴。

本书为中英文对照,并对语法、修辞上的难点作了详细的注释,还介绍了有关的背景知识。目的在于使读者能通过阅读获取知识和提高英语水平。本书适合大专院校学生、广大英语自学者,以及从事旅游、外事等工作的同志阅读参考。

在本书的翻译过程中,曾得到美籍华人Rose Chen教授的热情帮助特此表示感谢。

译者水平有限,错误实所难免,欢迎读者多加指正。

陈琳华

1989年3月

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1. New Year's Day

"Happy New Year!"

"The same to you, and many more.①" The familiar greeting heard throughout the United States on January First has a counterpart in every land. The words may be different and the dates may vary, but new year greetings everywhere express the hope for renewed life and happiness.

Down through history, primitive and civilized peoples alike have celebrated the coming of a new year. For ancient peoples dependent upon the land, time revolved about the seasons. A new year began for the Egyptians when the life-giving waters of the Nile River overflowed their banks, and the early Britons② counted from the first day of Spring, as did the Romans. To this day some countries begin their year with the vernal equinox.

As civilization advanced, a calendar based on the seasons was no longer practical, and in 45 B.C. the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar ordered the adoption of a calendar which would correlate the civil and the astronomical years. The Romans arbitrarily chose January 1 as the first day of the year and so it has remained in all parts of the Western world, even though the Gregorian calendar, in general use since 1582, altered the division of the months. Present day New Year's customs also perpetuate many Old World③ traditions.

January, which derives its name from *Janus*, the Roman god of beginnings, endings, openings and closings, appropriately symbolizes the theme of leaving the old for the new. When we see the old year out④ and noisily welcome the new one, we are following the ancient tradition of burying the past and frightening away demons that might threaten the future. The modern reveler who blows toy horns and turns on the factory siren is erasing past mistakes or failures with a noisy final gesture. And when he hurls confetti to the winds, whistles and shouts, he is showing his joyous expectancy for the new year. *Father Time*, always shown as a very old man with a long white beard carrying a scythe⑤, is ceremoniously ushered out⑥, and the round fat cherub, symbolizing the new year redolent with hope, is welcomed amid wild cheers.

Whether the New Year's Eve party is in a luxurious hotel ballroom or in a modest home, it will be gay, noisy and glittery. The music will be loud and carefree, and there will be bright colors, festive foods, and high good spirits to make this last night of the year one of fun and frivolity. At celebrations in restaurants, clubs and shipboard salons, guests are given silly paper hats and noisemakers and as the evening goes on no one remains a stranger. At midnight everyone joins hands and sings, "We'll take a cup of kindness yet, for Auld Lang Syne⑦."

Preparation for the party includes planning what one will wear. If it is a formal affair, men will wear tuxedos and the ladies will

put on their most elegant gowns. And even small parties mean "dressing up⑧." But if it is a masked ball, "dressing up" takes another form. The guests vie for the most original, exotic, humorous or appealing costume. Hidden behind a mask or domino, dignity and care are cast aside, and not until unmasking at midnight must the party-goers discard the illusion of their changed personalities⑨.

Not everyone goes to a party, but almost everyone makes an occasion of New Year's Eve. A favorite place to see the old year out is New York City's Times Square. Thousands of New Yorkers and tourists crowd this famous spot (at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue) and crane their necks to watch for "*Happy New Year*" to flash across the electronically controlled sign tract that circles the Allied Chemical Tower. When the moment arrives bedlam breaks forth⑩. Bells ring, whistles blow, people cheer with unrestrained exuberance.

This chaotic scene is repeated in public squares throughout the country, but not at the same moment. Because of the four time zones in the United States the New Year comes to the Central States one hour later, to the Mountain States two hours later, and finally to the Western States three hours after the Eastern States have noisily said good bye to another year. So by following the radio and television broadcasts everyone can enjoy the festivities in other parts of the country as well as their own.

Some people prefer to see the old year out at a church service^⑪. Although the holiday does not have religious origin, churches of many denominations and faiths hold "Watch Night" services on New Year's Eve. Practices differ among the religions but most of these late evening services include a period of quiet meditation, perhaps a short talk, prayers and hymn singing. Then with the arrival of the pristine new year, thoughts turn to the future viewed optimistically and hopefully. Greeting cards and spoken messages convey wishes for health, wealth and long life. A new year allows a fresh start and New Year's resolutions abound.

Grownups and children alike enthusiastically vow to get rid of their bad habits and resolve to lead better lives. Children are apt to write down their resolutions with solemn ceremony:

"I resolve to stop teasing my sister."

"I resolve to save part of my allowance."

"I resolve to hang up my clothes before I go to bed."

To show their seriousness they sign their names and deliver the paper to a parent for safe-keeping. Adults make equally ambitious resolutions:

"I resolve to stop smoking."

"I resolve to lose weight."

"I resolve to learn a new language."

Despite the sincerity of the resolutions, no one seems surprised that the determination to "turn over a new leaf"^⑫ disappears before the new year is well started.

Just as each person takes year-end stock^⑬ of his individual progress and needs, business and government leaders also evaluate prospects for national and international affairs. Political analysts summarize the past and predict future trends, and printed charts show the state of the economy. Authorities in every field broadcast "wrap ups"^⑭ of the year's events, and with characteristic new year spirit they predict greater things to come.

Although New Year's traditions in the United States stem from as many cultures as do the people themselves^⑮, they have gradually assumed a typical American flavor. The giving of gifts, for instance, an important part of Roman and Old English tradition, has all but^⑯ disappeared. Instead, New Year's cards are exchanged among friends and relatives, and commercial firms combine greetings with advertisement of their products by distributing calendars and small trinkets. There are, of course, notable survivals still followed in their original form. Two of the most cherished came from Scotland: toasting from the wassail bowl and the ever-popular song, "Auld Lang Syne".

The custom of visiting friends, relatives and neighbors on New Year's Day is one of the Old World traditions that has taken on a new form in the United States. It is called the *Open House*. Officially inaugurated by George Washington during his first term as President, it is now as much a part of New Year's Day as floral parades and football games^⑰. On Jan-

uary 1, 1789, President Washington first opened the doors of his official residence, then in Philadelphia, to all who wished to come. Then, when the capital was moved to the Federal City¹⁸ in 1800 the White House became the scene of the annual open house. Over the years the occasion grew increasingly elaborate. The Vice-President and his wife and the Cabinet members and their wives were added to the receiving line, and sumptuous food and patriotic music created an atmosphere of elegant conviviality. This White House tradition came to an end with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose physical handicap prevented him from standing, but the Open House is still a very popular way for clubs, civic organizations and individuals to observe the holiday.

An open house is just what the name implies: the front door is left open, inside there is a spirit of relaxed cordiality, and guests are free to arrive and leave when they like. Invitations may say simply, "Drop in after the game." or "Come drink a New Year's toast with us." At a large party, and most of them are large, guests serve themselves from festive buffet tables laden with cold roast beef, turkey and ham (along with cranberry sauce and other holiday specialties), a chafing dish of tiny meat balls or a cheese fondue, and platters of decorative and delicious hors d'oeuvres. They meet new friends, greet old ones, and drink repeated toasts from the punch bowl.¹⁹ Americans love parades and nowhere more than²⁰ in the New Year's Day spectacles do we note remnants of medieval pagean-

try. Lively music, fine horsemanship, and athletic finesse create an excitement clearly reminiscent of the Roman circus. Chariot races were even a part of the early *Tournaments of Roses*. First the glitter and drama of the colorful parade and then the football stadium becomes the arena for the cheering crowds.

At New Year's most of the United States is blanketed in cold winter weather, but in California and the Southern States January is generally fair and mild. Gardens are in full bloom, the citrus crops ripen, and balmy weather invites outdoor recreation. The now famous New Year's parades and Bowl games²¹ have grown up in this atmosphere. Their names typify the region: Pasadena, California, has its *Tournament of Roses* and *Rose Bowl* game; in Miami, Florida, it is the *Orange Bowl*; at Dallas, Texas, the *Cotton Bowl*; and at New Orleans, Louisiana, the *Sugar Bowl*. Recently, two more have appeared: the *Gator* (alligator) *Bowl* at Jacksonville, Florida, and the *Sun Bowl* at El Paso, Texas.

The Tournament of Roses is the oldest and largest of the New Year's pageants. From a small village celebration started some 75 years ago when members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their surreys with flowers to celebrate the ripening of the oranges, it has grown into an internationally renowned event. Three and a half million spectators line the Pasadena streets and another 70 million television viewers watch miles of flower-bedecked floats transform the city into a make-believe²²