

PUNXSUTAWNEY'S GROUND HOG

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

The most famous continuing fight in Pennsylvania is not the Lehigh-Lafayette football game, or Clearfield-Phillipsburg wrestling matches, or even the perennial battle between the Republicans and Democrats-- it is rather, the constant, nagging, violent battle between Punxsutawney and Quarryville as to which groundhog in which part of the State is the world's most famous predictor of winter weather.

February 2nd is the annual date of the battle--when two sleepy-eyed groundhogs in Jefferson and Lancaster County are roused from their hutches by two legged interlopers to try to see their shadows. It is also the religious day of Candlemas--but that takes second significance in the respective communities. Today we look at Punxsutawney's claim--of groundhog prognosis. The Pennsylvania Groundhog Club, (called the original one) was founded in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania ninety-four years ago and since has been adopted by the Chamber of Commerce there as the great festival of winter-time. It's founding is hazy in the minds of most men, albeit there are rumors that a bunch of fellows who were whooping it up with a keg of brew; parboiled and sauteed a few delectable groundhogs one night up on Gobbler's Knob--and that hallowed spot has become the sanctum sanctorum of groundhog worshippers the world over. Hearing of this few-years annual event, some newsmen came to join in the festivities and the name was decided, a charter was drawn up and now there are branches in Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and even Shinnston, West Virginia, wherever that is. On the morning

of each February 2nd, before daylight, this morning, the faithful gather at Gobbler's Knob in the borough--and as dawn hits the sky eastward in Clearfield County, Brer Groundhog emerges, gazes about him, stands up erect on hind feet--straight as a Pennsylvania hemlock--and probably yawning, mutters to himself "those two-legged are here again"--then, he looks over his shoulder. If Brer Groundhog sees his shadow, there will be six or seven more weeks of winter--if he doesn't, spring is just around the corner. Hundreds gather at the Knob to see this mystical moment--then in the afternoon, Sam Light, the former lifetime president of the order, would announce to the world what has occurred on the Knob, and assuredly Brer Groundhog was by that time fast asleep. Charlie Gearhart did it this morning--Sam's successor. Radio carries the prediction far and wide; Punxsutawney has itself a day in which a man and woman of the year are chosen, king and queen of the day are hailed at the high school. I shall be there this evening. They claim that ole Brer Groundhog has never been wrong--on February 2nd there are almost six more weeks until the first day of spring--so whatever the groundhog sees, he is positively right--either six more weeks of winter--or truly spring is just around the corner. That animal just can't miss, according to an ordinary calendar. Punxsutawney claims that Quarryville doesn't even have a groundhog, but a white-striped pussy cat indigenous to Lancaster County. Tonight, I'm in Punxsutawney celebrating the event--for you Quarryville folks--I'll be there a month from now--in time, hopefully for a beautiful Pennsylvania spring.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.