

LET'S CELEBRATE ~ IT'S A HOLIDAY!

January 2011

I find with most things, it is better to start at the beginning, that way you know how you arrived at the end...in theory anyway. So let's start with a brief glimpse into our beginnings as ***The United States of America*** to understand the diversity of our country, and what and why we celebrate.

A Little History

During what we now know as the *American Revolutionary War* (1775-1783), America declared its independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain and King George III, and ignited an international war (1778-1783) that not only affected the major European countries, but also their colonial holdings in the West Indies and India. Just in case you have forgotten your high school history; those 13 Colonies (Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island) instigated two wars on two different fronts. Yet in the midst of war, their representatives to the 2nd Continental Congress still managed to hammer out the document we call our *Declaration of Independence*. Below are the preamble and its first lines, which pretty much sum up what it means to be an American.

"IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

56 men made up the 2nd Continental Congress and signed the Declaration. These men were; of means or no means, first generation American or European Immigrant, sons or orphans, college graduates or home schooled – whose professions were; Merchants, Doctors, Politicians, Lawyers & Judges, Sheriffs, Military, Land Owners, Tradesmen, and Clergy. With

the crafting of this document, and a few strokes from quill and ink in the form of signatures, this nation was forged.



Skipping forward roughly a century...originally for our Centennial as a Nation, the people of France gave America a gift as a memorial to/or commemoration of our Independence...we know that gift as the Statute of Liberty. Lady Liberty's real name is *Liberty Enlightening the World* (*La Liberté éclairant le monde*), designed by Frédéric Bartholdi, and dedicated to the country at Bedloe's Island on 28 October 1886. In 1903, Emma Lazarus sonnet *The New Colossus* (written in 1883) was emblazoned onto a bronze plaque donated by philanthropist Georgiana Schuyler, and mounted to her pedestal. Prior to this event taking place; Lazarus had written the sonnet to help raise money for the construction of *Lady Liberty's* pedestal. Unfortunately, Emma Lazarus would not see the one literary work that forever landed her in American History as she succumb to cancer in 1887. The simple act of adding the plaque forever changed Lady Liberty's role from that of a memorial/commemoration, to the official 'Unofficial Welcomer' of immigrants to this country.



The *Sonnet* in its entirety reads:

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus, 1883



Spanning the years of these three historical events, a term was coined from a concept...the term...*melting pot*. It first appeared in American Literature in *Letters from an American Farmer* by J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur:

"What then is the American, this new man?" that the American is one who "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."

The term *The Melting Pot* came into popular use after a play of the same name written by Israel Zangwill, was performed in Washington, DC in 1909, with President Theodore Roosevelt in attendance.

David Quixano, the hero of the play states:

"America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming...Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians - into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American."

Okay, history lesson concluded – we've briefly taken a look at from where we've come, 'our roots' so to speak. Now let's examine the reasons why we celebrate, and observe the holidays that are connected to those celebrations, from the '*melting pot*'...*The United States of America*.

What and Why We Celebrate

Holiday celebrations tend to follow six different threads or lines of logic, not only in America, but around the globe. They are; **Religious** – Holy Days, **Commemorative** – a significant event or person, **Nationalism** – Country's independence, **Honoring** – Mothers' Day, **Disasters** – 9/11 or Patriots Day, and, **World** – Earth Day. Just one more thing that reinforces, eventhough we may not come from the same ancestry – *we are Diverse* – we are more the same than we are different.

Coastal States, and/or States with larger populations, have seen the diversity of culture both ancestrally and with new immigrants to America for generations. Here in Nebraska, the ancestral history has been limited to; Native American, European¹, Black American, and Mexican, where the only places or times additional diversity could be seen, would be in Lincoln or Omaha – students or educators from other countries coming to study or work on University of Nebraska campuses. That has changed!, though be it in recent history (within the past 20 years) that *New Americans* have been re-settled here by the US State Department, or they themselves have immigrated and settled in Nebraska.

Anyone reading this piece thus far I know is wondering, "why the history lesson?", or "what's with the categorization of holidays?", or "doesn't she know the term melting pot is passé, it's multi-culturalism now?" – well wonder no more! I put together a calendar which is representative of Nebraska – the major religions practiced here and countries that *New Americans* were from. This is my humble effort to help all of us become better acquainted with the new student, the teacher, your co-worker, or the small business man – our neighbors. So.....**Let's Celebrate ~ It's a Holiday!**

NOTE: Many Countries' Holidays are 'Holy Day(s)' celebrations and therefore follow that country's religion. Had they all been included, you would see many days that duplicate the Religions Calendars, so they were omitted.

NOTE²: Calendar is 'color coded' as follows:

US/Hawaii/Samoa Holidays;

Christian/Islam/Jewish /Baha'i/Hindu [these celebrations contain 'movable feasts' meaning they do not fall on the same day every year, so 2010 dates were used];

China/Viet Nam/Japan/Kayin (Burma) {for most Asian celebrations, the calendars are *lunisolar*, which means they incorporate both elements from the lunar & solar calendars – so the 'new year' always begins on the 2nd moon of the Winter Solstice -2011 dates were used};

Latino/ Serbia/Croatia;

Pakistan/Iraq/Iran/Sudan/Somalia

January

January 1 – New Year's Day

January 1 – Eid-e Ghadir Khom

January 1 – Independence Day

January 2 – 2nd Day of New Year's Day

January 4 – Independence Day

January 5 – Kayin New Year's Day

January 6 – Epiphany

January 6 – Día de Los Reyes Magos [Spain]

January 6 – Army Day

January 7 - Ashura

January 7 – Coptic Christmas

January 9 – Peace Agreement Day

January 10 – Baptism of Jesus

January 10 – Coming of Age Day

January 11 – Birthday of Eugenio María de Hostos [Puerto Rico]

January 14 – Makar Sankrant Festival

January 16 – World Religions Day

January ~ 3rd Monday – Martin Luther King Day

January 19 - Tassoua

January 20 – Inauguration Day (every 4 years)

January 27 – Kitchen God Festival

January 27 – Vietnam Day

January 27 – Spirituality Day

January 28 – Birth of José Martí [Cuba]

January 30 – Tu B'Shevat

Chinese New Year – Can fall anywhere between Late

January to Mid-February

February

February 2 – Groundhog Day

February 2 – February 8 – Spring Festival Golden Week

February 3 – Chinese New Year

February 3 – Tét (Lunar New Year)/Foundation of the Vietnamese Communist Party

February 3 – Setsubun (Beginning of Spring)

February 3 – St. Blasé Day

February 8 – Vasant Panchami

February 8 – Victory of Islamic Revolution

February 11 – National Foundation Day

February 14 – St. Valentine's Day

February 15 – Statehood Day of the Republic of Serbia

February ~ 3rd Monday – Presidents' Day

February 16 – St. Matthew's Day and/or Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) [Carnival]

February 17 – Lantern Festival

February 17 – Ash Wednesday

February 25 – Taanit Esther

February 25 – February 28 – Intercalary Days

February 26 –Mawlid al-Nabi (Birth of the Prophet Mohammad)

February 27 – Dominican Republic (Hispaniola)

Independence Day

February 28 – Purim

March

March 1 – First Dat of Ala'

March 2 – Peasants' Day

March 3 – Hina Matsuri (Girl's Day)

March 3 – Dolls Festival

March 3 - Mahashivratri

March 6 – Zhoghe Festival

March 8 – International Women's Day

March 10 - Arbaeen

March 12 – Arbor Day

March 14 – White Day

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day/ St. Patrick's Day

March 18 – Demise of Prophet Mohammad

March 19 – St. Joseph's Day

March 19 – Holi (Spring Festival)

March 20 – Naw-Ruz

March 20 – Martyrdom of Imam Reza

March 21 – Vernal (Spring) Equinox Day

March 21 – Birth of Benito Juárez [Mexico]

March 21 - Navruz

March 22 – Emancipation Day [Puerto Rico]

March 23 – Pakistan Day

March 26 – Kuhio Day (Prince Jonah Kuhio

Kalaniana'ole Day)

March 26 – Youth Day

March 28 – Palm Sunday

March 30 – April 6 – Pesach

March 31 – César Chávez Holiday [Mexico]

March/April ~ Week between Palm & Easter Sundays –

La Semana Santa (Holy Week)[Spain/Latin America]

April

April 1 – April Fools' Day/Maundy (Holy) Thursday

April 2 – Good Friday

April ~ 2nd Sunday – Easter Sunday/Easter

April 5 – Sham el Nessim

April 4 – Orthodox Easter

April 5 – Easter Monday

April 5 – Qing Ming Jie Festival

April 11 – Yom HaShoah

April 12 – Swaminarayan Jayanti & Rama Navami

April 12 – 20 – Burma (Myanmar) Thingyan Festival

April 17 – FAO Day

April 18 – Hanuman Jayanti

April 19 – Yom HaZikaron
April 20 – Yom HaAtzmaut
April 20 – First Day of Ridvan
April 21 – Burma (Myanmar) New Year's Day
April 21 – Tiradentes Day [Brazil]
April 22 – Earth Day
April 23 – St. George's Day
April ~ Last Wednesday of last full week –
Administrative Assistants' Day
April ~ Last Friday – Arbor Day
April 28 – Ninth Day of Ridvan
April 29 – Shōwa Day
April 30 – St. James the Great Day
April 30 – Liberation Day

May

May 1 – Lei Day (May Day)
May 1 – Final Day of Ridvan
May 1 – Labor Day (May Day)
May 2 – Labor Holiday 2nd Day
May 2 – Lag baOmer
May 3 – Constitution Memorial Day
May 4 – Greenery Day
May 4 – Youth Day
May 5 – Children's Day
May 5 – Tango no Sekku (Boy's Day)
May 5 – Cinco de Mayo [Mexico]
May 9 – Victory Day
May 9 – Rogation Sunday
May 10 – Día de Las Madres [Mexico/Latin America]
May 12 – Yom Yerushalayim
May ~ 2nd Sunday – Mothers' Day
May 16 – SPLA Day
May 17 – Full Moon Day of Kasone
May 19 – May 20 – Shavuot
May 19 – Ho Chi Minh's Birthday
May 20 – Cuban Independence Day
May ~ 3rd Saturday – Armed Forces Day
May 22 – Declaration of the Bab
May 23 – Pentecost
May 28 – Ascension of Baha'u'llah
May 30 – Trinity Sunday
May ~ Last Monday – Memorial Day

June

June 1 – Independence Day
June 1 – Children's Day
June 1 – International Children's Day
June 3 – Corpus Christi
June 6 – Dragon Boat Festival
June 11 – Kamehameha Day (King Kamehameha I Day)
June 14 – Flag Day
June ~ 3rd Sunday – Fathers' Day
June 22 – Day of Antifascist Struggle
June 24 – Feast of San Juan Bautista [Puerto Rico]
June 25 – Statehood Day
June 26 – Independence Day (from the United Kingdom)
June 27 – Memorial Day for War Martyrs

June 28 – St. Vitus Day
June 29 – Sts. Peter & Paul/Shiva Asar B'Tammuz
June 30 Inqaz Revolution Day

July

July 1 – CPC Founding Day
July 1 – Independence Day (from Italy)
July 4 – Independence Day
July 6 -14 – San Fermín Festival (Running of the Bulls)
[Spain]
July 7 – Star Festival
July 8 – Martyrdom of the Bab
July 9 – Laylat al-Miraj
July 9 – Prophet Mohammad receives his calling
July 11 – Maritime Day
July 13 – 15 – Festival of Souls (Obon)[Tokyo]
July 14 – National Day
July 15 – St. Vladimir
July 15 – Full Moon Day of Waso
July 17 – Republic Day
July 18 – Marine (Ocean) Day
July 19 – Martyr's Day
July 20 – Tisha B'Av
July ~ 4th Sunday – Parents' Day
July 25 – Puerto Rico's Constitution Day
July 27 – Laylat al-Baraat
July 28 – Independence Day [Peru]
July 28 – 29 – St. Ignatius of Loyola Festival [Spain]
July 30 – Martyrs' Day

August

August 1 – Lamma
August 1 – Army Day
August 1 – 6 – Feast of the Savior of the World [El Salvador]
August 5 – Homeland Thanksgiving Day
August 6 – Transfiguration Sunday
August 6 – Double Sevens (Night of Sevens) Festival
August 8 – Ceasefire Day (End of Iran-Iraq War)
August ~ 2nd Sunday – Fathers' Day
August ~ 3rd Friday – Admissions Day
August 11 – Ramadan
August 13 – Raksha Bandhan
August 13 – 15 – Festival of Souls (Obon)[rest of Japan]
August 14 – Spirit Festival
August 15 – Assumption of Mary
August 19 – Revolution of 1945
August 22 – Janmashtami – Krshna Jayanti
August 29 – Beheading of St. John the Baptist
August 31 – Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)

September

September ~ 1st Monday – Labor Day
September ~ 1st Sunday after Labor Day –
Grandparents' Day
September 2 – National Day
September 6 – Laylat al-Qadr
September 7 – Independence Day [Brazil]

September 8 – Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
September 8 – Feast of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre [Cuba]
September 9 – September 10 – Rosh Hashanah
September 9 – Birthday of Imam Mahdi
September 10 – 12 – Eid al-Fitr
September 11 – Patriots’ Day
September 12 – Tzom Gedaliah
September 12 – Min-Autumn Festival
September 14 – Holy Cross Day
September 15 – Independence Day [Central America minus Panama]
September 16 – Mexican Independence Day
September 18 – Yom Kippur
September 19 – Respect for the Aged Day
September 23 – Autumnal Equinox Day
September 23 – October 1 – Sukkot/Shmini Atzeret
September 28 – Navaratri (beginning of a 9 night festival that marks the start of Autumn)
September 29 – Michael and All Angels

October

October 1 – National Day
 October 2 – 7 – National Day Golden Week Holiday
 October ~ 2nd Sunday – Lotu a Tamaiti (White Sunday)
 October ~ 2nd Monday – Columbus Day
 October 5 – Double Ninth Festival
 October 6 – Dussera
 October 8 – Independence Day
 October 10 – Health & Sports Day
 October 12 – Full Moon Day of Thadingyut
 October 12 – Día de la Raza [Latin America]
 October 12 – Holy Mary Day [Brazil]
 October 15 – Martyrdom Imam Ali
 October 18 – Señor de los Milagros (Our Lord of Miracles) [Peru]
 October 19 – Birth of Bab
 October 24 – United Nations Day
 October 26 - Diwali
 October 28 – Milvian Bridge Day
 October 31 – Halloween
 October 31 – All Hallows Eve

November

November 1 – Xia Yuan Festival
 November 1 – All Saints’ Day
 November 2 – All Souls’ Day
 November 2 – El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) [Mexico/Latin America]
 November 3 – Culture Day
 November 3 – Separation Day (from Columbia) [Panama]
 November ~ Tuesday on or after the 2nd – Election Day
 November 5 – Colon Day [Panama]
 November 6 – Confucius’ Birthday
 November 6 – Eid ul-Azha (Feast of the Sacrifice)
 November 9 – Allama Muhammad Iqbal Day
 November 10 – Full Moon Day of Tazaung Mone
 November 10 – Grito de Independencia [Panama]

November 11 – Veterans’ Day
 November 11 – Birth of Baha’u’llah
 November 15 – Shichigosan (7-5-3) Festival
 November 15 – Republic Proclamation Day [Brazil]
 November 15 – 18 – Corban Bairam Holiday
 November 16 – Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)
 November 17 – Eid-e Ghorban
 November 18 – Martyrdom Imam Jafar Sadegh
 November 19 – Fetas of Nuestra Señora de la Divina Providencia [Puerto Rico]
 November 20 – Revolution of 1910 Anniversary [Mexico]
 November 20 – Teachers’ Day
 November 21 – Christ the King
 November 23 – Labor Day
 November 25 – Day of Covenant
 November ~ 4th Thursday – Thanksgiving Day
 November 28 – Advent
 November 28 – Independence Day (from Spain) [Panama]
 November 30 – St. Andrew’s Day

December

December 2 – December 9 – Chanukah
 December 5 – Public Holiday
 December 6 – St. Nicholas Day
 December 7 – Muharram (Islamic New Year)
 December 8 – Mothers’ Day [Panama]
 December 12 – Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe [Mexico]
 December 16 – 24 – Las Posadas [Mexico/Cuba/Latin America/Spain]
 December 16 – Ashura
 December 17 – Asarah B’Tevet
 December 22 – Winter Solstice Festival
 December 22 – Army Day
 December 23 – The Emperor’s Birthday
 December 24 – Christmas Eve
 December 25 – Christmas Day/Feast of the Nativity
 December 25 – Quaid-e-Azam’s Birthday
 December 26 – 2nd Day of Christmas
 December 26 – Boxing Day
 December 28 – Holy Innocents
 December 31 – New Year’s Eve
 December 31 – Watch Night

¹ European Country Origins of Nebraska Settlers: France, Spain, England, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Italy, and Greece.

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