

The Story of a Special Day: Sample Book (Volume 0)

by Michael Dobson

Smashwords Edition

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For the definition of "O.S.," "CE," and "BCE" used with some dates , see the section ["On Names and Dates."](#)

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Cover: Covers from different volumes of *The Story of a Special Day*.

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About This Book

Welcome to The Story of a Special Day Sample Book! If you're intrigued by the concept of a book for each day of the year, or are interested in an inexpensive but thoughtful gift in place of an impersonal birthday card, this book will show you a different and exciting alternative.

The pages in this book are drawn from individual volumes in the series to show you the range and quality of material you'll find in the volume for your special day. We hope you enjoy the book, and if you have any questions, please contact us at editor@timespinnerpress.com.

Completing all 366 volumes of this series will take a few years, but if we don't have your volume ready yet, please drop us a line. After all, we have to write them anyway, and if there's a date you want (and you can give us at least six weeks' head start), we should be able to get it to you in time.

Michael Dobson
Editor and Publisher, Timespinner Press
Author, The Story of a Special Day

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March 29 Quotations

“Typical Hollywood crowd — all the kids are on drugs
and all the adults are on roller skates.”

— *Eric Idle, British comedian,
member of Monty Python, born March 29, 1943*

“What the world really needs is more love and less paper
work.”

— *Pearl Bailey, singer and actress, born March 29, 1918*

“The only thing that saves us from the bureaucracy is
inefficiency. An efficient bureaucracy is the greatest
threat to liberty.”

— *Eugene McCarthy, US Senator and
presidential candidate, born March 29, 1916*

*Quotations are from people who were born or who died
on that day in history, or in some cases are about events
that took place on that day, or speeches made on that day.
Each book has at least one page of quotes, and often two
or three, depending on how many quotable notables are
associated with that date.*



Pearl Bailey

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Event of the Day **The Berlin Blockade Begins**

In the aftermath of World War II, the victorious Allied powers agreed to divide conquered Germany into four occupation zones, intended to be temporary. One zone each was controlled by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union. Berlin, the capital, was also divided into four sectors, even though it

was located about 100 miles inside the Soviet sector.

In June 1945, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin informed leaders of the German Communist Party of his intention to undermine the Western powers and reunite Germany as a communist nation under Soviet control. One key element in his plan was to take full control of Berlin.

* * * * *

Each book features a main “Event of the Day,” the most significant historical event that took place on that day in history. On June 24, 1948, the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on Berlin that led to the Berlin Airlift. The “Event of the Day” story is usually three or four pages in length, with several photographs.



Berliners watching an incoming C-54 during the Berlin Airlift

April 1 Holidays and Celebration

S

Besides April Fools Day, April 1 is also celebrated in different countries in different ways. Each volume of The Story of a Special Day lists all the holidays and special occasions associated with that date. Here are a few of the extra holidays associated with April 1.

Wan Kha Ratchakan Phonlaruean (Thailand)

Civil Service Day in Thailand commemorates the enactment of the first Civil Service Act in 1928.

Kha b-Nisan (Assyrian people)

The Assyrian people, in Syria and elsewhere, celebrate the beginning of their new year on April 1.

National Sourdough Bread Day (United States)

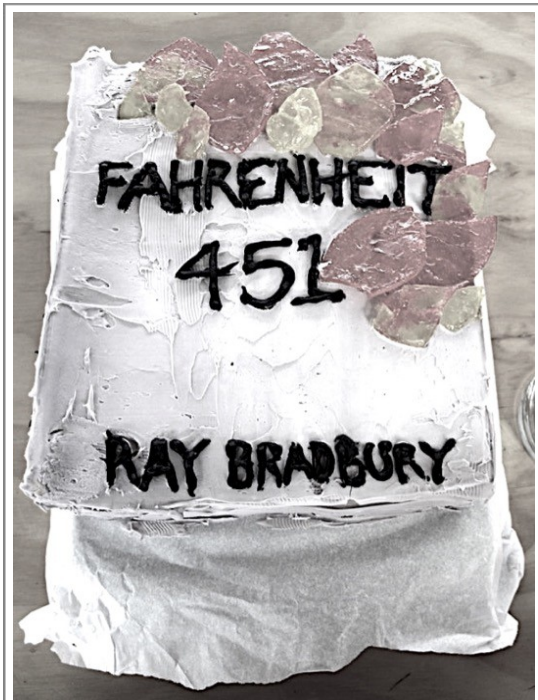
In the United States, almost every day of the year is dedicated to a particular food. Sponsored by manufacturers, retailers, farmers, or simply fans, these days are often proclaimed by the President, Congress, state governors, or mayors.

April 1 is National Sourdough Bread Day. Although sourdough bread is most often associated with San Francisco, sourdough bread has been discovered in ancient sites dating back to 3700 BCE. Throughout human history, sourdough, a lactobacillus culture, was used instead of cultivated forms of yeast. Because flour contains a variety of natural yeasts and bacteria, if mixed with water and given time, it will form a dough with a characteristically sour taste. In addition to the San

Francisco variety, rye bread, Amish friendship bread, pumpernickel, and Ethiopian *injera* all use a sourdough process.

Edible Book Day (International)

The International Edible Book Festival officially commemorates the birthday of French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, but it's also connected to April Fools' Day, because it's a great day to "eat your words." Participants create "edible books," which must integrate text or otherwise relate to actual books, which are eaten at the end of the festival. Festivals are held in a number of different cities around the globe.



An edible book version of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, for "Edible Book Day"

Veneralia (ancient Rome)

The Romans honored Venus Verticordia (“Venus, the changer of hearts”) and Fortuna Virilis (“Virile Fortune”) on the Kalends of April (April 1). At the Veneralia, women and men asked Venus Verticordia for help in affairs of the heart.

Christian Feast Days

In *Western Christianity*, saints commemorated on April 1 include Cellach of Armagh, Hugh of Grenoble, Frederick Deinson Maurice (Episcopal Church), Melito of Sardis, Nuno Álvarez Pereira, Tewdrig, Theodora, and Abbot Walrich of Leuconay.

In *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, it is the commemoration of Hermes and Theodora the martyrs, Melito of Sardis, Saint Mary of Egypt, Saint Procopius of Sázava, Tewdric of Tintern, Abraham of Bulgaria, Barsanuphius of Optina, and Joachim of Kyiv. (These are celebrated on April 14 by “Old Calendarists.”)

Other Holidays

Some holidays are simply made up by individuals, companies, or other organizations, and whether they become widely adopted depends on whether people choose to celebrate them. Here are some opportunities to celebrate on April 1.

April 1 is:

- Boomer Bonus Day
- International Tatting Day
- Library Snap Shot Day
- Myles Day
- National Fun Day
- National Soylent Green Day
- Poetry and the Creative Mind Day
- Reading is Funny Day
- Sorry Charlie Day

- St. Stupid Day

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What Happened on December 10?

Each volume lists important events in history that took place on this date. These events (and more) all happened on December 10.

1541 — Execution of Queen Catherine's Lovers

After his fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves was annulled, King Henry VIII of England married Catherine Howard, who was about 30 years younger, three weeks later. Soon, Queen Catherine began a romance with Thomas Culpepper, who was the king's favorite courtier. When their relationship was exposed, Francis Derham, another courtier who had been involved with Catherine before her marriage to Henry, was caught in the scandal. On December 10, 1541, both men were executed. Catherine survived until February 1542, when she, too, was beheaded.



Portrait of Catherine Howard by Hans Holbein the Younger

1817 — Mississippi Becomes the 20th US State

On December 10, 1817, the Mississippi Territory, which had been won by the British from the French in 1763 and s



1898 — Spanish-American War Ends

On December 10, 1898, the Spanish-American War officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. It was the end of the Spanish Empire in America and the beginning of United States colonial power.

1901 — First Nobel Prizes

In 1888, Alfred Nobel, Swedish arms manufacturer and inventor of dynamite, was shocked to find his own obituary in a French newspaper. It was an error; it was actually Alfred's brother who had died.

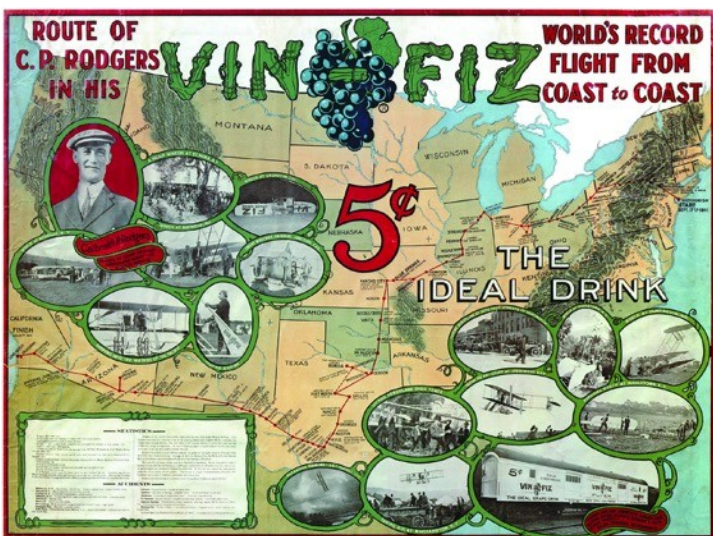
But what shocked Alfred Nobel the most was the headline: "The Merchant of Death is Dead." This was not how he wanted to be remembered. As a result of this shock, he changed his will to specify that his fortune would be used to create prizes for those who contributed "the greatest benefit on mankind." The categories were physics, chemistry, peace, physiology or medicine, and literature.

Alfred died on December 10, 1896, and shortly thereafter the Nobel Foundation established the process for awarding the prizes. Beginning in 1901, the Nobel Prizes are awarded on December 10 of each year, interrupted only by World War II.

1911 — First Transcontinental Flight Completed

Competing for the Hearst \$50,000 prize for the first aviator to fly from coast to coast across the United States, Cal Rodgers, flying a customized Wright EX biplane named the *Vin Fiz* (after a then-popular soft drink), landed in Long Beach, California, and taxied his plane into the Pacific Ocean.

The trip, which began in Sheepshead Bay, New York, on September 17, 1911, took 70 stops to make the trip. Today, the *Vin Fiz* can be seen in the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum.



Advertising poster for the Vin Fiz transcontinental flight

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Who Was Born on May 20?

Birthdays are organized by category: acting, sports, music, politics, science, adventure, and more. Here are a few of the notable birthdays associated with May 20.

Business

William Fargo (May 20, 1818—August 3, 1881)

William Fargo (right) was a key organizer of the companies Wells Fargo and American Express. The city of Fargo, North Dakota, is named for him.

Film and Television

Timothy Olyphant (May 20, 1968—)

Olyphant played US Marshal Seth Bullock in *Deadwood* and US Marshal Raylan Givens in *Justified*, and has appeared in numerous films.

Mindy Cohn (May 20, 1966—)

Actress Mindy Cohn is best known as Natalie from the sitcom *The Facts of Life*.

Bronson Pinchot (May 20, 1959—)

Bronson Pinchot appeared in such films as *Risky Business* and *Beverly Hills Cop*, but is best known as Balki from the sitcom *Perfect Strangers*.

Dave Thomas (May 20, 1949—)

Comedian Dave Thomas is best known for his long-running involvement with the Canadian television series *SCTV*.

Anthony Zerbe (May 20, 1936—)

Actor Anthony Zerbe's many films include *The Omega Man*, *License to Kill*, *The Turning Point*, and *Star Trek: Insurrection*.

Jimmy Stewart (May 20, 1908—July 2, 1997)

James Maitland Stewart was one of the greatest film stars of all time, appearing in numerous classic films from *It's a Wonderful Life* to *Rear Window*. He received five Academy Award nominations (one win) along with a Lifetime Achievement Award. He flew 20 missions as a B-17 pilot in World War II and rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the US Air Force Reserve.

Government and Military

Moshe Dayan (May 20, 1915 — October 16, 1981)

Moshe Dayan (right) was Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces and subsequently Minister of Defense during the Six-Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). He later served as Foreign Minister, where he helped draw up the Camp David Accords.



Moshe Dayan

Dolley Madison (May 20, 1768 — July 12, 1849)

Wife of fourth US President James Madison, Dolley Madison served as First Lady of the United States from 1809 to 1817. She also served as First Lady for ceremonial functions in the administration of second US President Thomas Jefferson, a widower.



Portrait of Dolley Madison by Gilbert Stuart

Literature and Philosophy

Mary Pope Osborne (May 20, 1949—)

Children's book author Mary Pope Osborne is best known for her *Magic Tree House* series that has sold over 100 million copies.

John Stuart Mill (May 20, 1806—May 8, 1873)

British political philosopher John Stuart Mill was highly influential in social and political theory, especially the theory of liberty.

Honoré de Balzac (May 20, 1799—August 18, 1850)

French novelist and playwright Honoré de Balzac is considered one of the founders of the European realist movement, and influenced many other writers. He is best known for his multi-volume *La Comédie humaine* (*The Human Comedy*).



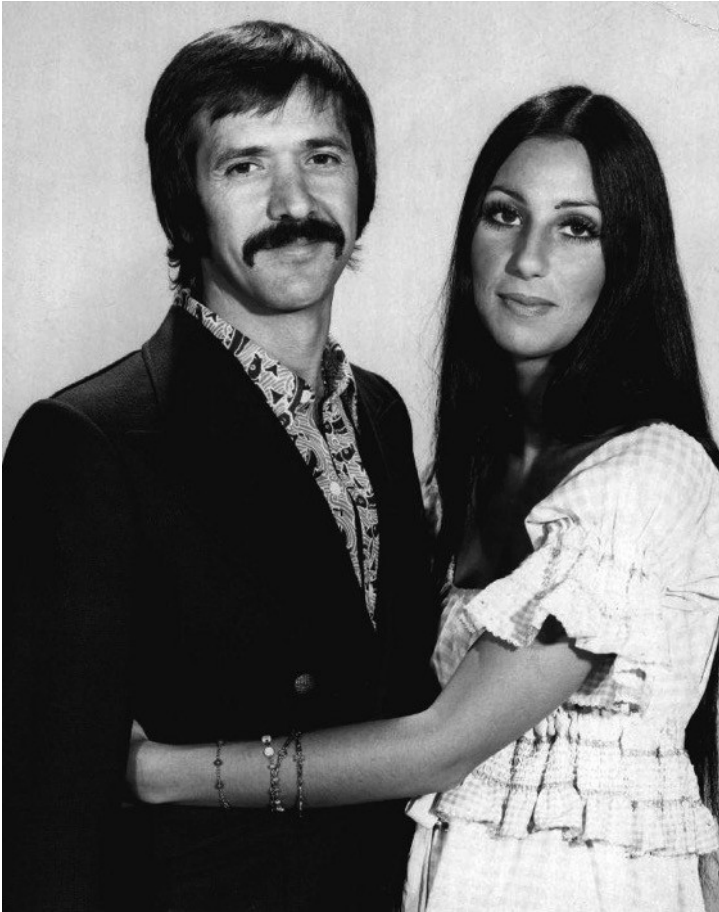
Honoré de Balzac

Music

Cher (May 20, 1946—)

Cherilyn Sarkisian became famous as half of the pop duo Sonny & Cher, and went on to a highly successful solo

career as a singer and actress, selling over 140 million records. She won the Best Actress Academy Award in 1988 for her role in *Moonstruck*.



Sonny and Cher

Joe Cocker (May 20, 1944—)

Singer Joe Cocker is best known for his Grammy-winning 1983 duet with Jennifer Warnes, “Up Where We Belong.”

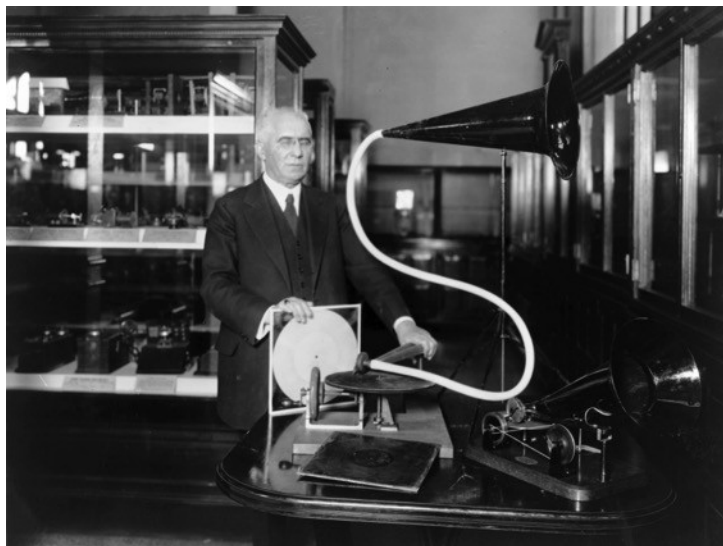
Shorty Long (May 20, 1940—June 29, 1969)

Shorty Long co-wrote “Devil With the Blue Dress On” and “Here Comes the Judge.”

Science and Invention

Emile Berliner (May 20, 1851—August 3, 1929)

German-American inventor Emile Berliner developed the disc record, or phonograph, and founded the well-known record label Deutsche Grammophon along with other companies. He was also a pioneer in the development of the helicopter.



Emile Berliner and the first phonograph

William Congreve (May 20, 1772—May 16, 1828)

Second Baronet Sir William Congreve developed the famous “Congreve rocket,” with a range of two miles but extremely poor accuracy. Congreve rockets are described in the US national anthem “The Star-Spangled Banner,” in

the phrase “And the rockets’ red glare/the bombs bursting in air.”

Sports and Competition

Ramón Hernández (May 20, 1976—)

Hernández is an MLB catcher who has played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Oakland Athletics, San Diego Padres, Baltimore Orioles, Cincinnati Reds, and Colorado Rockies.

Tony Stewart (May 20, 1971—)

Racing driver Tony Stewart has been NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion, won the Winston Cup and the Nextel Cup, and is the only driver to have won a championship in both IndyCar and NASCAR.

Terrell Brandon (May 20, 1970—)

NBA point guard Terrell Brandon played for the Cleveland Cavaliers, the Milwaukee Bucks, and the Minnesota Timberwolves in his ten year professional career.

Stu Grimson (May 20, 1965—)

Enforcer Stu Grimson was known as “The Grim Reaper.” He compiled over 2,000 penalty minutes in his 13-year career.

David “Boomer” Wells (May 20, 1963—)

Former MLB pitcher David Lee Wells pitched the fifteenth perfect game in baseball history and subsequently became a sportscaster.

Stan Mikita (May 20, 1940—)

Chicago Black Hawks center Stan Mikita was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1983.

Ken Boyer (May 20, 1931—September 7, 1982)

In his 15-year career as a third baseman for four different teams including the St. Louis Cardinals, Boyer won the 1964 National League MVP Award.

Bud Grant (May 20, 1927—)

Head coach of the Minnesota Vikings, Bud Grant was named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1994. He was the first coach in professional football history to have teams reach both the Grey Cup finals and the Super Bowl.

Bob Sweikert (May 20, 1926—June 17, 1956)

In 1955, racer Bob Sweikert became the only driver to sweep the Indianapolis 500, the National Championship, and the Midwest Sprint Car championship in a single season.

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Who Died on September 12?

Sadly, each day is associated with the passing of important people. Here are some of those who left us on September 12.

Actors and Actresses

Raymond Burr (May 21, 1917 — September 12, 1

993)

Actor Raymond Burr is most famous for his roles in the television series *Perry Mason* and *Ironside*.



Raymond Burr (right)

Anthony Perkins (April 4, 1932 — September 12, 1992)

Actor Anthony Perkins is best known for his role in

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and sequels. He was nominated for an Oscar for *Friendly Persuasion*.

Literature and Words

Robert Lowell (March 1, 1917 — September 12, 1977)

American poet laureate Robert Lowell won numerous awards and is considered a key literary figure of his generation.

Peter Mark Roget (January 18, 1779 — September 12, 1869)

British theologian and lexicographer Peter Mark Roget is best known for *Roget's Thesaurus*, originally published in 1852.

Music

Johnny Cash (February 26, 1932 — September 12, 2003)

One of the most influential American musicians of the 20th century, Johnny Cash, known as The Man in Black, was inducted in the Country Music Hall of Fame, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, for the range of his work.



Johnny Cash

Politics

Steve Biko (December 18, 1946 — September 12, 1977)

South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko is famous for his slogan “Black is beautiful.” He died in police custody after being clubbed by his captors, and his death became an international cause célèbre.

Sports

Tommy Armour (September 24, 1894 — September 12, 1968)

Scottish golfer Tommy Armour, known as the Silver Scot, won numerous championships and co-authored the 1953 best-seller *How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time*. He was named to the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1976.

Spot Poles (December 9, 1887 — September 12, 1962)

Negro League outfielder Spot Poles was one of the fastest players of his day, with a lifetime batting average of over .400. He served in the US Army's 369th Infantry (Harlem Hellfighters), winning five battle stars and a Purple Heart.



The 1912 Negro League Lincoln Giants team. Spot Poles (died September 12, 1962) is in the top row at the far right.

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The Month of November

Each month has a story as well. Where does the month come from? How do other cultures view the month? What superstitions are associated with it? Here are a few interesting facts about the month of November.

The Eleventh Month

In Latin, *novem* means “nine,” so it may seem strange that November is the eleventh month of the year. The original Roman calendar started in March, making November indeed the ninth month. No one is completely sure when the start of the year was moved to January, but the traditional name of November stuck.

In the northern hemisphere, November is a month in late autumn. In the southern hemisphere, November is in the springtime. May is its opposite month; spring in the north and fall in the south.

If it's not a Leap Year, November always starts on the same day of the week as February. If it is a leap year, November starts on the same day of the week as March.

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November in Other Cultures

The month of November has different names in different languages. Some nations use calendars other than the Gregorian, and their months may overlap with November. Still, they often have a word for November

itself.

Arabic: Nūfambar
Croatian: Studeni
Czech and Polish: Listopad
Finnish: Marraskuu
Greek: Νοέμβριος
Hebrew: נובמבר
Old English: Blōtmōnaþ
Russian: ноябрь

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November Wedding Superstitions

“A November bride will be liberal and kind, but sometimes cold.”

“Married in veils of November mist/Fortune your wedding ring has kissed.”

“If you wed in bleak November, only joys will come, remember.”

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July Symbols

Each month has official birthstones and flowers. Here's i

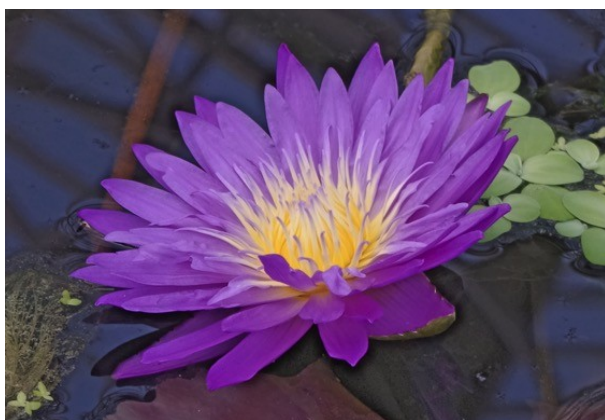
nformation for July.

Birthstone: Ruby (symbolizes success, devotion, and integrity).



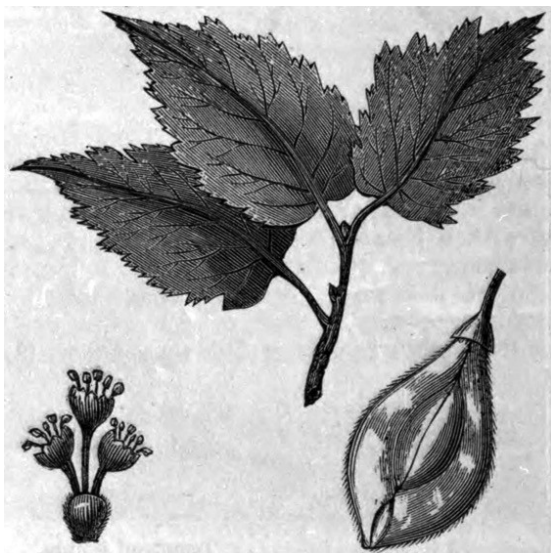
Ruby

Birth Flowers: Water Lily (purity of heart) or Larkspur (lightness and levity.)



Water Lily

Birth Tree: Elm (strength of will and intuition).



Elm

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March Events

Some events vary in their dates from year to year, or take place over the entire month or at least a few days. Each volume of The Story of a Special Day covers all the events that sometimes happen on the date. For movable holidays like Easter, we have an entire section that appears in every day on which Easter can possibly fall.

Honorary Months

Presidents, Congresses, and nations around the world issue proclamations recognizing particular months to honor certain causes. These events generally fall in March. (All US unless otherwise noted.)

- American Red Cross Month
- Child Life Month
- Fire Prevention Month (The Philippines)
- Irish-American Heritage Month
- Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- National Caffeine Awareness Month
- National Celery Month
- National Cheerleading Safety Month
- National Flour Month
- Women's History Month (celebrated in Canada during October)



Women's Suffrage Demonstration 1917

“March Madness” (United States)

The NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship, popularly known as “March Madness” or the “Big

Dance,” is a single-elimination tournament to establish the champion college basketball team.

Moveable and Multi-Day Events

Some events take place over a specific week or time period. Start and finish dates may vary from year to year. Some events occur on different days each year (such as “fourth Saturday of a month”).

Birkat Hachama (ברכת החמה) (Judaism)

According to the Talmud, the Sun was created at the vernal equinox position at the beginning of the Jewish month of Nisan, established by tradition as March 25 on the [Julian](#) calendar.

The Birkat Hachama, “Blessing of the Sun” is recited when the vernal equinox occurs at sundown on a Tuesday, which happens every 28 years. When the Julian calendar gave way to the Gregorian calendar in 1582, the date shifted forward, and continues to shift slowly forward by approximately a day per century.

Birkat Hachama took place on April 8, 2009 (14 Nisan 5769), and will occur next on April 8, 2037 (23 Nisan 5797).



Birkat Hachama at the Western Wall, 2009

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Easter Season

Easter, American Thanksgiving, and some other important holidays can take place on different days each year but are significant enough to deserve a section of its own. These sections appear in every volume of The Story of a Special Day that includes one of those dates.

In Western Christianity, Easter can happen as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. Because Eastern Christianity uses the Julian rather than Gregorian calendar for liturgical purposes, Easter in those countries can happen as early as March 9 and as late as April 12.

Although the Christian Good Friday was originally celebrated as a Passover seder by Jesus and his disciples, the dates of Easter and Passover no longer match because different calculations are used to determine the dates for each.



La crucifixion by El Greco

Passion Sunday

The fifth Sunday of the Christian season of Lent is known

as Passion Sunday in various Protestant denominations and by some traditionalist Catholics. Sometimes, the sixth Sunday of Lent is referred to as Passion Sunday, but it is more commonly known as Palm Sunday. Passion Sunday starts the two-week Passiontide, which ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, commemorating the day that Jesus's body was laid in the tomb. The fifth Sunday of Lent can occur as early as March 8 (though the next time it will be that early is in 2285 CE), and as late as April 11.

Palm Sunday

The moveable feast of Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in all four gospels. In many Christian churches, palm leaves are distributed to the worshippers. The earliest date for Palm Sunday is March 15, and the latest is April 18.

Maundy Thursday

The Thursday before Easter is Maundy Thursday, when the Last Supper took place. Because of its relation to Easter, the earliest day it can occur is March 19, and the latest it can occur is April 22.

Good Friday

Good Friday, observed during Holy Week on the Friday preceding Easter Sunday, commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary. Because of its relation to Easter, the earliest day it can occur is March 20, and the latest it can occur is April 23.

Holy Saturday

Sometimes called Easter Eve or Black Saturday, Holy Saturday commemorates the day in which Jesus's body lay in the tomb. Some mistakenly refer to this day as "Easter Saturday," but that properly describes the

Saturday following Easter, the last day of Easter Week. The earliest it can occur is March 21, and the latest it can occur is April 24.

Easter

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his crucifixion. In the liturgical calendar, Easter follows the season of Lent, and begins the period known as Eastertide, which ends on Pentecost Sunday.

Easter is observed religiously in a morning service. In the U.S., it's also common to decorate Easter eggs and make Easter baskets of eggs and candy, often with the Easter bunny as a symbol. The White House traditionally hosts an egg hunt, and many communities have Easter parades.

Easter customs around the world include bonfires (Cyprus, western Sweden), men spanking women with a ceremonial whip (Czech Republic and Slovakia), egg fighting (Bulgaria), cross-country skiing and reading murder mysteries (Norway), and children dressed as witches collecting candy door-to-door (other Nordic countries).



Easter Eggs

Easter Monday

In some Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox cultures, the Monday after Easter is celebrated as a holiday. It is also known as Egg Nyte, featuring egg rolling competitions and dousing other people with water that had been blessed with holy water the previous day at mass. Easter Monday is also celebrated as Family Day in South Africa. In Guyana, people fly kites that were made on Holy Saturday. In Portugal, it is known as the Anjo (Ivy) Festival, in which people picnic in the countryside.

Śmigus-Dyngus (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia)

The Monday after Easter in Poland and in the Polish diaspora is known as *Śmigus-Dyngus*, or simply Dyngus Day in the US. Boys throw water over girls they like and spank them with pussy willows. Girls avoid getting wet by giving boys “ransoms” of painted eggs.

Easter Week (Western Christianity), Bright Week (Eastern Christianity)

The period from Easter Sunday to the following Saturday is known as Easter Week. In both Western and Eastern Christianity (where it's known as Bright Week), the resurrection continues to be celebrated in church services. Easter Tuesday is a public holiday in the Australian state of Tasmania.

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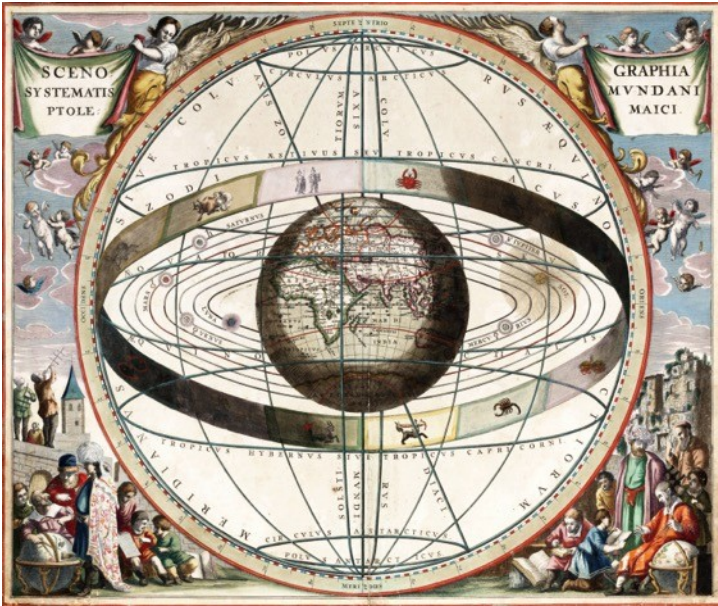
June Zodiac Signs

From the perspective of someone on Earth, the Sun appears to move through the sky throughout the year, along a path astronomers call the ecliptic plane. The ecliptic plane is divided into twelve constellations, known as the zodiac, based on traditionally observed patterns of stars. On your birthday, you can't see your constellation, because it's in the daytime sky.

The zodiac was first developed by Babylonian astronomers about 2,500 years ago. Because they were unaware that the Earth wobbles like a spinning top (known as precession), they didn't make allowance for the fact that the Sun's path through the zodiac changes over time.

That means there are now two sets of dates for your birth sign. The *tropical* dates are the original Babylonian dates; the *sidereal* dates tell you where the Sun actually appears as it moves along its annual path.

Each volume of The Story of a Special Day lists both the tropical and sidereal zodiac signs for the day. These are the signs for June 24.



Scenography of the Ptolemaic Cosmography, by Johannes van Loon,
based on Andreas Cellarius's *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, 1660



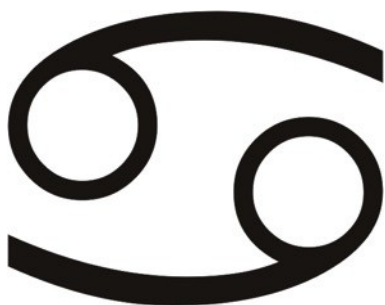
Gemini

Tropical May 22 to June 21

Sidereal June 16 to July 15

According to Greek mythology, Leda, wife of the King of Sparta, gave birth to Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra. The god Zeus, disguised as a swan, seduced her after she had already lain with her husband on the same night. This resulted in two eggs, which hatched to become the twins Castor and Pollux. Castor's father was the King of Sparta, but Pollux was the son of Zeus and therefore immortal. When Castor died, Pollux shared his immortality, so that they could divide their time between Hades and Olympus. They were enshrined in the Zodiac as the constellation Gemini, the Twins.

In astrology, Gemini is an air sign, ruled by Mercury, compatible with Libra, Aquarius, and Aries. Geminis are supposed to be communicative, flexible, intellectual, and curious, but prone to fickleness and easily distracted.



Cancer

Tropical June 22 to July 22

Sidereal July 16 to August 15

In Greek mythology, Cancer (the Crab) is connected to the legend of Hercules. Hera, wife of Zeus, had sworn to kill Hercules, so when he was battling the many-headed Hydra, Hera sent a crab to snap at his toes. Hercules killed the crab by stomping on it. Hera rewarded the crab for serving her by placing it in the sky as a constellation.

In astrology, Cancer is a water sign, ruled by the Moon. (Because of its association with the disease, some astrology columns use “Moon Children” in place of Cancer.) Those born under this sign are supposed to be compatible with Taurus, Scorpio, and Virgo. Like their namesake crab, those born under the sign of Cancer retreat into their shell when threatened, and can be a bit crabby at times. However, they are extremely loving and caring, dedicated to protecting their loved ones, and value security and respect for the past.

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What Day of the Week is This Day?

On what day of the week does this special day fall?

Surprisingly, this isn't an easy question. Because the calendar year is 365 days long (366 in leap years), it doesn't divide evenly by the seven days of the week.

Also, the Earth goes around the Sun in about $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, so a calendar tends to drift over time. That's why the same date falls on different weekdays in different years.

This is made even more complicated by a change in calendars that took place in 1582. Our modern calendar has its roots in ancient Rome, in a calendar reform conducted by Julius Caesar. Caesar commissioned mathematicians to attack the problem, and they came up with the idea of leap years, and thus standardized the calendar for centuries to come. This was called the Julian calendar.

Over time, however, the small errors in Caesar's

calculation compounded. That's why Pope Gregory XIII commissioned the Gregorian calendar, used in most of the world today. Some countries converted in 1582, when the calendar was first developed; some converted later; other still haven't changed.

Gregorian and Julian aren't the only types of calendars. The Hebrew year, the Islamic year, and many other calendars are used in different parts of the world and among different people.

You can convert Gregorian dates to other calendars, including the Hebrew calendar, the Islamic calendar, and even the Mayan calendar by visiting the Fourmilab Calendar Converter at

<http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/>.

Chinese calendar systems are quite complex and have changed several times; a full discussion is far beyond the scope of this book. If you're interested, you can find information here:

http://www.hermetic.ch/cal_stud/chinese_cal.htm.



Illustration by Edward Penfield

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On Names and Dates

Historians use “CE” (Common Era) and “BCE” (Before

the Common Era) instead of the more common “AD” (Anno Domini, or Year of Our Lord) and “BC” (Before Christ), reflecting the fact that the year-numbering system established by the Gregorian calendar is used throughout the world in many countries not culturally Christian.

The CE/BCE designation dates back to at least 1708, and has been adopted as a standard by the United Nations and the Universal Postal Union. Because this series of books covers events and people of all nations and cultures, we use the CE/BCE terms.

The abbreviation “O.S.” (“Old Style”) on some dates refers to the fact that the Russian Empire did not switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar at the same time as the rest of Europe, and therefore some figures and events have two dates.

Also, in the Julian calendar in England in the 16th century, the year began on March 25 rather than January 1. To avoid confusion with Gregorian dates, dates between January and March were often written using both years.

People and events whose original names are not in the Western alphabet have their native names (where possible) in the appropriate script shown in parenthesis. If you are using an e-reader to access an electronic version of this book, all characters don’t always display on all devices.



A 50-year brass perpetual calendar.

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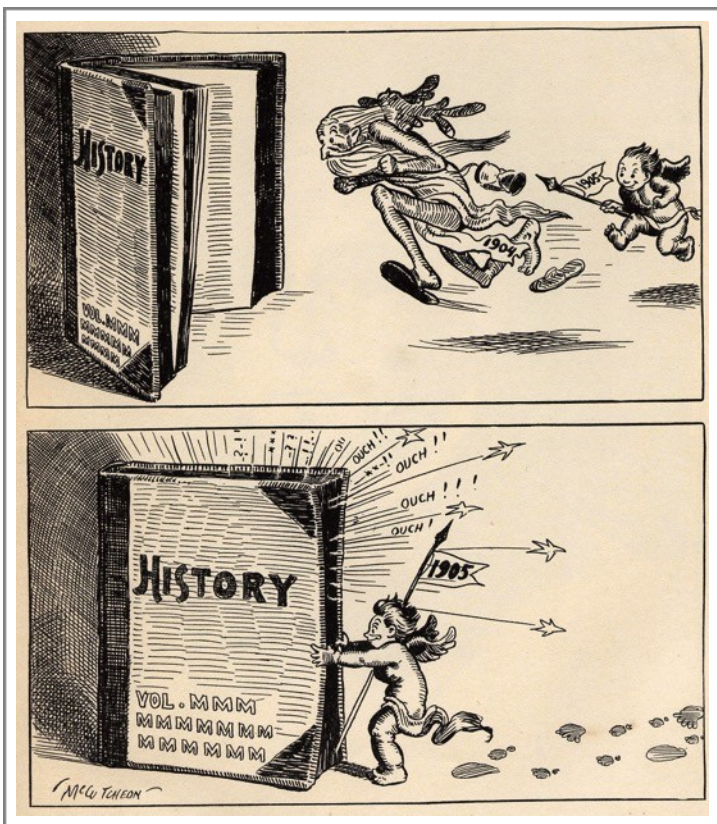
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Cartoon by John T. McCutcheon

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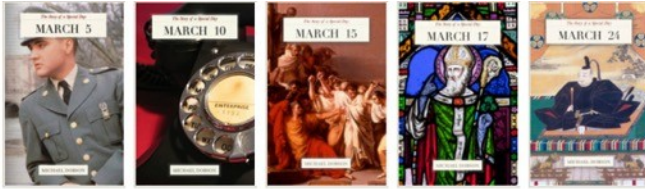
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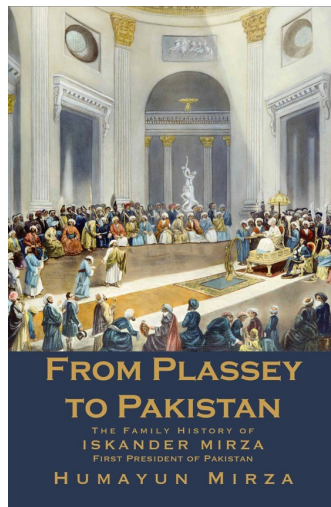
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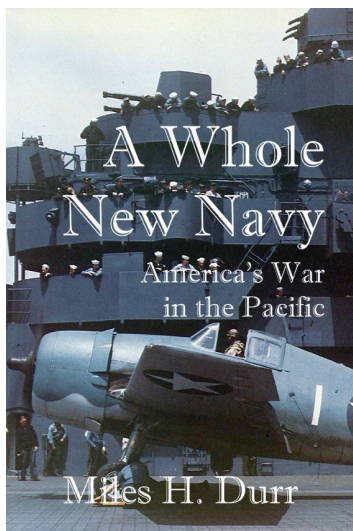


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