

**Groundhogs here,
Groundhogs there,
Groundhogs, Groundhogs
Everywhere!**

**Welcome to
Punxsutawney,
the
Home of the
Groundhog!**



**Punxsutawney Area Historical
& Genealogical Society**

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Groundhogs have lived in the Punxsutawney area since long before there was recorded history. The last of the Native Americans who occupied the lands of Punxsutawney were the Lenni Lenape, also known as the Delaware Indians. In their language, the groundhog was called "Oijak", which is pronounced "Wojak." The name signified "grandfather."

When the European settlers came to the area, they pronounced "Wojak" as "Woodchuck." The European settlers also brought with them their cultural legends of Candlemas.

Some of the Christian faith celebrate February 2nd as the day when Mary took her son Jesus to the temple for the purification ritual. Today some churches continue this practice of with the baptism of children

This practice evolved from an earlier pagan holiday called Imbolc, where people lit candles to banish the dark. The word Imbolc means "ewe-milk" because this was the time of the year when lambs were born which brought the flow of a ewe's milk.

February 2nd is also known as Candlemas, the Festival of Lights. Is a time when agricultural implements and livestock are blessed. Often it includes a blessing of the home and the lighting of candles to welcome the return of the light and Spring.

Candlemas became the day for forecasting the weather for the next 40 days. The belief was that bad weather and cloudy skies on February second would mean an early spring. If the sun shown on Candlemas Day, there would be forty more days of cold and snow.

In Scandinavia the folk saying for this was:

*"If Candlemas is fair and clear,
There'll be two winters in the year."*

This tradition was brought to Punxsutawney by immigrants from Germany and transformed into the familiar saying:

*"If the woodchuck sees his shadow and the sun
Six weeks of winter shall have begun;
If the woodchuck his shadow does not see,
Six weeks of spring-like weather there shall be."*

In 1841, Seba Smith, alias Major Jack Downing, in letter to the New York Express, expressing his opinion on the act of the United Congress creating a universal currency and tariff, stated: “I have no notion of compelling our democracy to go down into the mines and live like woodchucks and groundhogs.....I want them to earn something more and live more like rational men, and to be able to school their children.”

In the 19th Century, when the industrial coal mines opened in the Punxsutawney Area, the miners and the community learned what it was like to go down into the ground to earn their living. They adopted the groundhog as the mascot for the community.

Throughout the 20st Century the groundhog continued symbolize the hope of the community. The trek to the knob in the midst of winter is an annual celebration to hear the prediction of the Punxsutawney Groundhog, the Seer of Seers. This prediction was broadcast over the media to the world.

In the 21st Century the celebration continues. Each celebration features the Punxsutawney Groundhog as the symbol of the hope of a brighter future in which rational men may earn an adequate income and provide for the education of their children.

Check out the Groundhogs on line and when you visit Punxsutawney, be sure to visit the following:

The Phantastic Phils:

Located at various sites throughout the Punxsutawney. Pick up a map to locate them. Have your picture taken with them.

The Groundhog History Exhibit:

Located in the Lattimer House of the Punxsutawney Area Historical & Genealogical Society at 400 West Mahoning Street.

The Groundhog Displays:

Groundhog Headquarters, Gobblers Knob, 1548 Woodland Avenue Ext, Punxsutawney, PA 15767

WORD SEARCH

GROUNDHOG DAY

Y	R	A	U	R	B	E	F	J	A	W	N	S
U	E	A	R	Y	F	K	A	J	I	O	N	H
C	A	N	D	L	E	M	A	S	E	O	B	A
S	I	X	W	E	E	K	S	P	W	D	R	D
U	G	W	E	A	T	H	E	R	A	C	R	O
K	N	O	B	Y	T	M	A	I	R	H	C	W
E	N	I	H	S	N	U	S	N	H	U	A	P
D	R	I	L	D	M	A	S	G	Y	C	G	J
N	E	Q	U	I	N	O	X	X	U	K	N	N
O	J	W	O	R	R	U	B	U	N	L	I	Y
C	T	S	U	G	U	A	O	S	E	U	R	P
E	T	E	M	B	E	R	T	R	E	K	P	O
S	O	L	S	T	I	C	E	C	T	O	S	B

Punxsutawney
Groundhog
Knob
Candlemas
February
Second

Winter
Trek
Solstice
Equinox
Spring
Weather
Oijak

Woodchuck
Sunshine
Shadow
Six Weeks
Snow
Burrow