

Easter Sunday was formerly equivalent to New Year's day; though not the first day of the year it was the day on which the opening of the year was celebrated. Historically, the Christian Easter is simply a continuation of the Jewish Passover, which was celebrated on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish year—that is, on the day of the first full moon next following the day of the equinox. It has been questioned whether any special observance of this day was practiced or enjoined by the apostles and the early Church fathers; yet the words of St. Paul in I Cor. 5:7-8 seem to sanction if they do not recommend an observance of some sort and foreshadow the thought which came finally to underlie it: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." According to the Jewish tradition, the Passover commemorated the passing of the angel of death over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, the doorposts and lintels of which had been sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb. The Christians, in adopting the festival, gave it a new significance. For them the Savior became the true Paschal Lamb, and the new festival commemorated His resurrection on the third day following the Crucifixion.

The proper day for celebrating Easter was one of the questions which the Council of Nice was called upon to decide. By the eastern Christians it was at that time celebrated on the same day as the Jewish Passover, without regard to the day of the week on which it might fall. Among the western Christians, who held that the crucifixion occurred on a Friday and the resurrection on a Sunday, there had arisen a custom of celebrating Easter on the first Sunday following the 14th of the first month, and to this custom was given the official sanction of the council. Furthermore, the rule then established for fixing upon the proper Sunday was designed partly to prevent the possibility of Easter ever falling on the same day as the Passover, but the rule has failed on several occasions to prevent this coincidence, and at rare intervals the two festivals came together.

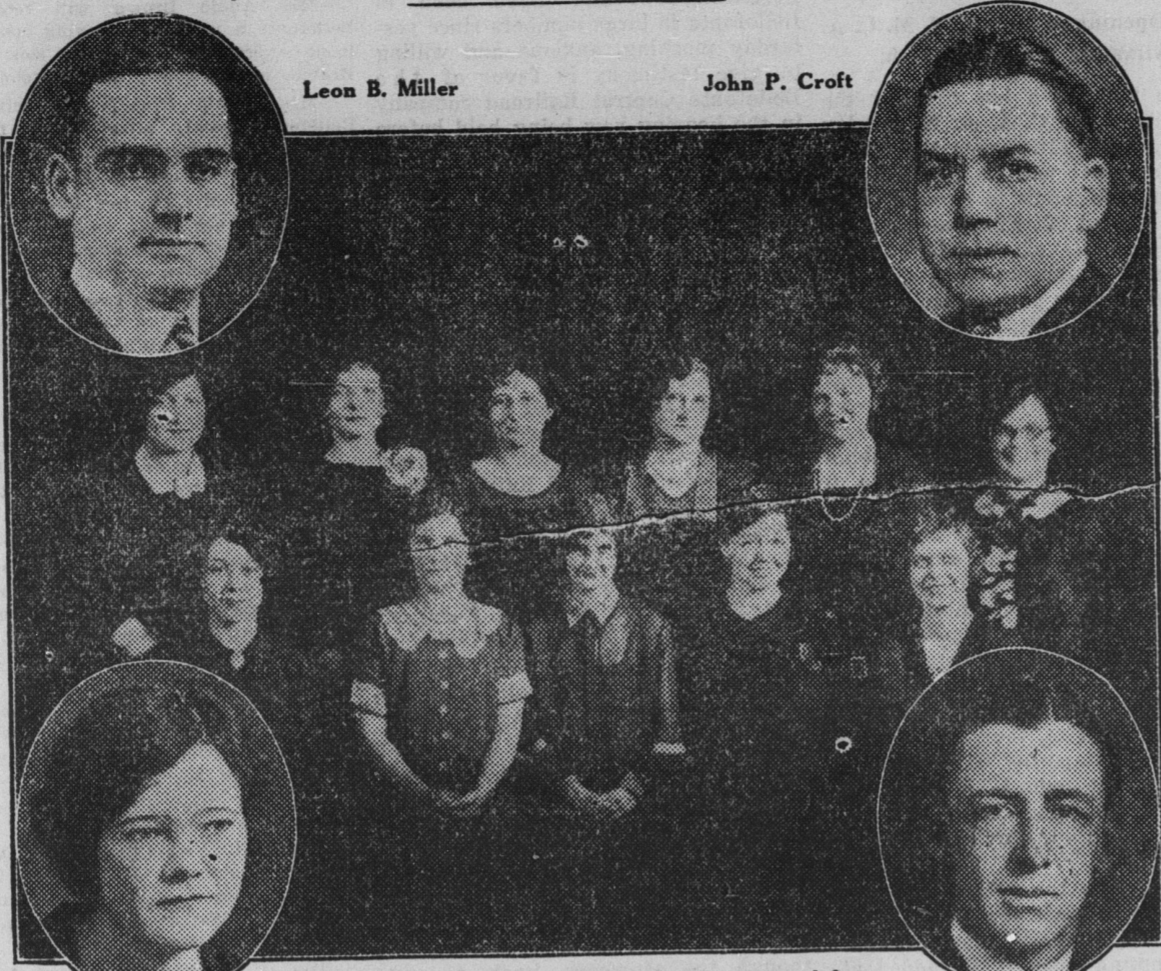
The old Roman year, like the Jewish year, began in March, when the sun entered the constellation Aries. When the calendar was reformed under Julius Caesar, the year was made to begin on the first day of January. After the adoption of Christianity in Europe, the date of the beginning of the year was changed to March in most countries, so that Easter became recognized as a New Year's day. The reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory, in 1582, again changed the day on which the year began, although in England it continued to begin on the 25th of March until the adoption of the "new style" there in 1742.

Christianity found Spring festivals already in vogue in heathen Europe, and to these oldtime festivals many of the customs and superstitious rites still connected with Easter are clearly traceable. The name Easter, given to the day by the Teutonic nations—the Roman nations have retained the old Hebrew name, pascha, under modified forms, as the Jour de Paques, of the French—is derived by Bede from Oster or Ostara, the name of an old Anglo-Saxon goddess, in whose honor a spring festival was celebrated. Grimm was unable to find any mention of a deity of this name among the ancient Germans, but from the fact that the month of April still bears the name Ostermonat, he did not doubt that such a goddess, probably "the divinity of the radiant dawn," had been known among them. The old Oster festival was clearly of a solar character, a celebration in honor of the birth or the rejuvenation of the sun of the new year. This is made evident, aside from the known character of similar festivals in other parts of the world, by many of the observances which are bequeathed to Easter. Thus, it was formerly a custom all through the provinces of Germany, on the night of Easter Sunday or the third night following, to kindle bonfires on all heights, affording a magnificent spectacle, when these fires were to be seen here and there over miles of country. This custom had become simply a mode of merrymaking, but it is held with plausibility that originally the bonfire was symbolical of the new fire that was to warm the earth and quicken it into renewed life after the cold embrace of winter.

Another indication of the ancient solar character of this festival is an old popular belief, said to survive still in Brandenburg and Saxony, that the sun at the moment of rising on the morning of Easter gives three joyous leaps, that he dances with youthful joy. This curious belief was not confined to Germany. In the middle districts of Ireland, according to Brand, it was customary, after spending Easter eve in merrymaking and carousing—watching the pot boil, the contents of which were to break the long Lenten fast, yet must not be touched before the crowing of the cock—for the whole company of revellers to go out just at daybreak to see the rising sun take his three Easter leaps. Sir Thomas Browne, writing of popular errors, mentions thus quaintly the existence of this belief in England; "We shall not, I hope, disparage the resurrection of our Redeemer, if we say that the sun doth not dance on Easter day; and though I would willingly assent unto any sympathetic exultation, yet we cannot conceive therein more than a tropical expression." Perhaps there is no more striking illustration than this of the power of an inherited belief to live on in spite of the testimony of all experiences against it. In some

## Theodore N. Vail Bronze Medals Awarded for Acts of Bravery in Public Service

Four Individuals and a Central Office Group of The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania so Honored in 1927



The Shenandoah Central Office group. Upper left to right the Misses O'Brien, Whalen, Murphy, Armstrong, Kathryn Dalton and Rowland; lower, Misses Swoyer, Teeley, Butler, Dugan and Anna Dalton

Announcement has just been made of the award of the Theodore N. Vail bronze medals in Pennsylvania for the year 1927. These awards are made annually for "conspicuous acts of public service" which result in the saving of a human life or the continuation of a public service in times of stress. The fund from which the awards are made was created in memory of the late Theodore N. Vail, for many years President of the Bell System.

The Pennsylvania Bell Telephone recipients of the medals are Frank Miffin Balderston, Repairman, Philadelphia; Leon Bernard Miller, Combination Man, Shenandoah; John Paul Croft, Wire Chief, Lancaster, and the traffic force at Shenandoah. In addition, Miss Leonora McCann, Night Operator for the South Penn Telephone Company at Greensboro, was cited for her activities on that occasion of a very serious fire that had broken out about 500 yards from the exchange and threatened the entire town. She telephoned for assistance from six adjacent towns and from Uniontown. The latter fire department made a record run to Greensboro and Miss McCann, although working in the dark, for the electrical power was interrupted, kept in touch with the situation by relays of messengers and continued to operate the

switchboard until she was relieved the next morning. Mr. Balderston's citation was for his aid at a time when a passing freight train struck two small boys. One boy had a hand crushed off at the wrist and Mr. Balderston went to his assistance, controlled the bleeding and directed the application of a tourniquet. When the boy was lifted it was found that the other arm was terribly injured, the flesh being torn from the bone above the elbow. Mr. Balderston held the bleeding artery during the ride to the hospital, while another was looking after the second boy who had received a fractured skull.

Leon Miller and the Shenandoah Central Office force were both cited for coolness and courage at the time of a serious fire in an adjoining building, which spread to the exchange. Mr. Miller discovered the smoke and blaze in the central office, directed one of his men to procure an extinguisher and notified the Chief Operator. He devised an emergency exit for the operators, removed the records and returned to fight the fire until smoke compelled him to leave. The period of tension was from 4.50 P. M. until 6.15 P. M. Under the leadership of the Chief Operator and the Operator in Charge the central office group handled the traffic without interruption in

spite of the confusion. The young women cited in the award included Mae Armstrong, Chief Operator; Margaret Dugan, Operator in Charge; Bernadette Butler, Anna and Catherine Dalton, Anna Murphy, Anna, Kathryn and Marion O'Brien, Elizabeth Rowland, Evelyn Swoyer, Isabelle Teeley and Anna Whalen.

The medal awarded to John Paul Croft, of Lancaster, was accompanied by a citation "for initiative and conspicuous proficiency in first aid, resulting in the saving of a human life." On April 22d, at the intersection of Hummel Avenue and Third Street, Lemoyne, Mr. Croft heard a scream and after a trolley car passed found a woman holding in her arms a child, both of whose legs had been run over. Realizing that the bleeding was arterial, he grasped the child at the points of pressure at the thighs, stopped the bleeding and carried her to a doctor's office at the corner. There he assisted the doctor until compresses and tourniquets were applied and then took the woman and the child to the hospital, where it was found necessary to amputate the little girl's feet.

The medals will be presented early in the future at special exercises to be held in Philadelphia.

places, apparently as an alternative for giving up the belief wholly, it was held that in order to witness these three leaps one must look, not at the sun itself, but at the reflection of it in a pool of clear water. As a last resort, to save the belief, the sun might be made to dance. Brand could recall that when he was a boy he had seen "a vessel full of water set in the open air, in which the reflected sun seemed to dance, from the tremulous motion of the water." If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, then Mahomet must go to the mountain.

Among the customs handed down through long ages and accepted by the Church were those of Easter eggs and the Easter tale which the preacher told from the pulpit, in lieu of a sermon connecting it with Christian reminiscences. Later still there were in Germany dramatic shows, named Osterspiele, executed by twelve performers one of whom, apparently, was the leader, and represented Summer heating Winter out of the land. The dances and sports prevalent at this season in Germany among the youths and maidens appear sometimes to have been marked with something of the looseness characteristic of the floral games in Italy.

**Bell Company Shows 63,241 Telephones in Operation.**

An increase of 63,241 telephones over the 1,061,571 in operation on January 1, 1927, is shown in the annual report to the board of directors of the Bell Telephone company of Pennsylvania, just released. Of this total, 307,645 telephones or 29 percent of all Bell telephones in the State were being operated on the dial basis at the end of the year.

The Bell Telephone company of Pennsylvania, according to the report, now owns 105 buildings in the State and rents 363. One building is now in course of construction. During the past year the company's investment in land and buildings approximated \$28,000,000.

An interesting feature of the report is found in the daily volume of telephone calls last year. The daily average in 1927 was 4,574,000 in addition to handling 231,400 toll calls. The report shows that there are now in the Bell system 228 connecting companies serving 221,592 telephones in addition to 12,215 telephones operated on service lines owned by mutual associations.

### Easter Eggs Past and Present.

The custom of associating eggs with Easter, like many other customs of Christian festivals, was derived from pagan usages. Eggs had been associated with the worship of Ashtoreth, of the Astarte of the Phoenicians, Isis of Egypt, Diana of the Greeks and Romas and Estre of the Teutons worshipped in spring. Easter is said by some to have derived its name from the latter goddess; others say it was named for an old pagan spring festival in honor of the sun's new birth in the east. Its time coinciding with that of the Resurrection, the symbol was taken over by the council of Nice 1,062 years ago, and the day of celebration fixed as the first Sunday after the paschal full moon, the season of the Hebrew Passover. The egg with its life germ, destined to burst forth after the appearance of death, became popularly associated with the general idea of resurrection, just as the Egyptians had adopted it as a sign of man's regeneration, and the Jews as a symbol of their delivery from bondage.

The lore of Easter eggs touches on many phases of life in many different countries. Under old ecclesiastical laws in England rent was payable in eggs of Easter; games were played with them; and in the north of England children asked for them to play with.

The custom of dyeing Easter eggs is centuries old. Commoners for the most part dyed them red as a symbol of Christ's blood. Lords and ladies covered theirs with gold leaf. Later the decorations were elaborated, particularly in continental Europe. Sometimes the eggs were merely marbled in a variety of colors; sometimes they bore cupids and love knots, flaming hearts and signs of the zodiac. Again they would be halved and the shells hinged together with ribbon and lined with gilt paper and religious pictures. Venetians used to send out gift eggs bearing their portraits.

**Tourist Map will be Ready on 10th of May.**

Revision of the tourist map published annually by the Department of Highways was completed recently and the contract let for printing the first lot of 150,000. Delivery of the first shipment is estimated for May 10, earlier than any year since the law provided for free distribution of such a map.

### De Luxe Autos with Bars for French Travel.

A fleet of ten "grand luxe" automobiles fitted with a bar, at which the passengers may be served their favorite cocktails during the voyage, will be ready to transport incoming tourists to Paris this season, according to plans being made by a large agency.

The directors of the company say the cars will be pullman cars on wheels with special springs for riding qualities and will deliver passengers in Paris eight hours after their arrival from the liners.

A stop will be made at the halfway for lunch in some picturesque Normandy "Auberge." A barman will be in attendance who will act also in the capacity of guide and will point out the interesting sights along the route.

The cars will pass the Malmaison and the Castle at St. Germain into Paris and will drop the passengers at their hotels.

### Plan Inspection of All Roadside Stands.

Plans have been completed for the spring clean-up of public eating and drinking places throughout the Commonwealth. This activity, according to Howard M. Haines, chief of the restaurant hygiene section, State Department of Health, will include a thorough inspection of roadside eating stands located on the main and secondary highways; to protect the motoring public.

The health officer personnel will be used by the department making the actual investigations which will be directed toward general cleanliness, method of cleansing eating utensils, protection of foodstuffs and the medical examination of food handlers.


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## Pennsylvania Railroad Stock

CERTAIN action in the interest of the holders of Pennsylvania Railroad Stock is to be taken at the Annual Meeting of the Shareholders to be held April 10, 1928.

Do not neglect sending in the proxy that you have received from the company, as a two thirds vote will be necessary to effect this action.

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