

THE BATTLE CRY



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NEW YEARS DURING CIVIL WAR

BY JEREMY BURCHARD

NEXT PROGRAM

Jan. 17, 2017

Candace Hooper:
Lincoln's General's Wives. (7pm Grace Church, as below)

Meetings 2nd Tues. of the month (7 pm) GRACE CHURCH ADULT ANNEX, 8000 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34236.

On Occasion time and location of the meeting will be changed.



6 STRANGE NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS OF THE SOUTH

Most Southern New Year's Eve traditions generally begin and end with the kitchen. And no matter how you slice it, tradition says you need three main components when it comes to food.

Black-Eyed Peas The tradition of eating black-eyed peas reigns in the South, but it actually dates back to the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. However, rumor has it the Southern-based tradition started during the Civil War. Apparently, Union General Sherman and his troops raided the Confederate food supplies but left the black-eyed peas and salted pork, thinking they were animal foods. The Confederate soldiers considered the two items lucky since they still had food left to eat. Another tradition still says African Americans ate them to celebrate their freedom when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect Jan. 1, 1863.



Another explanation still: the peas looked like coins, and signified wealth (spoiler alert: all three foods signify wealth).

How you should cook the peas is up for debate. In fact, some traditions actually involve cooking the black-eyed peas with a dime or coin. It's probably not the most sanitary thing, but it hammers the point home. And the person who receives the coin is then "extra lucky." Provided they don't actually swallow it, of course.

Some people fry or roast the peas. Others say the only way is to eat them as plain as possible to show "humility." And even more weird, some people go so far as to eat 365 peas, no more, no less. And if you miscount? You'll have that many unlucky days in the year. Talk about a lot of pressure!

Collard Greens Collard greens are among the healthiest Southern foods (until you cook them in ham hock, bacon and butter, of course). Besides being a healthy food, which obviously brings good luck in the form of good health, collard greens are said to bring in the cash for the new year. You know, green and green and such. But there's also a pretty good reason Southerners eat greens around New Years: they're still in season! Cabbage and collard greens are both late crops, so it just makes sense that's the fresh green we eat on New Year's.

Cornbread and Ham Now, no meal in the South is complete without a meat. Besides loving pork all the time, Southerners eat ham and other pork products on New Year's Day because the animal has long been considered lucky. Along with the possible Civil War story, people consider pigs to be an animal of "[progress](#)."

For some, the specific cut of pork may turn visitors off. Hog jowls — the meaty, tough pig cheek — often make their way to New Year's Day tables in the South. Hog jowls are cured, kind of like bacon. And that's pretty much the best explanation for why they became so popular in the rural South. They kept for a long time and one pig often fed an entire family for months. For some, the specific cut of pork may turn visitors off.

LIMERICK FUN

*When he occupied old New Orleans
He commandeered so much more than just beans
He said, "I will pilfer
So much of their silver,
I'll go home as a man of some means."
Who am I?*

TRIVIA QUESTIONS

- Which Confederate major general of cavalry was captured in Ohio and tried as a common criminal?
- The first "Zouave" units were formed in which country?
- Eugene O'Neill had a Civil War brigadier general as a character in one of his plays. Which one?
- Where did Sherman Meet armed resistance during his march to the sea?
- When did the Emancipation Proclamation take effect?
- When the Union's 6th West Virginia was captured by the Confederacy's McNeill's Rangers, where were they?



Fireworks Do you know why we set off fireworks? If you answered, "Because blowing stuff up is fun," you're mostly right. But the tradition actually has much greater superstitions. Fireworks and firecrackers supposedly scare off all the old spirits from year's past who may be trying to hang around too long.

In some homes, it's even customary to open the door at midnight when you make a bunch of noise to let all the "bad" out.

Clean Home and a Full Cupboard A clean home represents a fresh start for the new year. In the South, some people even get out and put a fresh coat of paint on the home if it's warm enough. But there's a catch: make sure you get everything clean before Jan. 1 or the day after. Some traditions state nothing should leave the house on the first day of the New Year — not even trash — to signify not losing anything important to you.

And, to make matters even more complicated, you should make sure your cupboard is full. A bare cupboard could mean a similarly bare year, and nobody wants that!

The First Visitor This tradition has its roots in Scotland and England, but many Southerners share the same sentiment. The story goes that the first person who enters your home after midnight on New Year's Eve is a symbol of what's to come. Ideally, that person should be tall, dark-haired and good-looking. You should reward them accordingly for entering your home and bringing good luck for the new year.

SOME LESSER KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR:

- The first U. S. Naval hospital ship, the Red Rover, was used on the inland waters during the Vicksburg campaign.
- During the Civil War, glasses with colored lenses were used to treat disorders and illnesses. Yellow-trimmed glasses were used to treat syphilis, blue for insanity, and pink for depression. Thus we get the term, To see the world through rose-colored glasses.
- After the Battle of Gettysburg, the discarded rifles were collected and sent to Washington to be inspected and re-issued. Of the 37,574 rifles recovered, approximately 24,000 were still loaded; 6,000 had one round in the barrel; 12,000 had two rounds in the barrel; 6,000 had three to ten rounds in the barrel. One rifle, the most remarkable of all, had been stuffed to the top with twenty-three rounds in the barrel.
- One of the most popular questions park rangers get when giving tours around Civil War battlefields is: "Did the soldiers have to fight around all of these monuments?" They could only smile and say yes: They knew exactly where to die.



LETTER FROM GENERAL HAMPTON ON THE BURNING OF COLUMBIA

To Hon. Reverdy Johnson, *United States Senate*:

President: Gordon Balme
Vice President: Matt Donovan
Treasurer: Pat McInerney
Newsletter Editor: M. Bruce Maxian

DUES FOR THE 2016-2017 CAMPAIGN ARE PAYABLE TO PAT McINERNEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DUES KEEP THE PROGRAMS AND NEWSLETTERS AVAILABLE TO YOU.

Our Annual Campaign runs from Sept. through May, dues are \$30 .

**Anyone interested in receiving "The Battle Cry" by e-mail please see Bruce Maxian at one of our meetings or e-mail me at:
Sarasota.cwrt@gmail.com**

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**PLEASE WEAR YOUR T-SHIRTS TO THE MEETING. IN THE MEANTIME WEAR THEM WHEREVER YOU ROAM.
OUR MONTHLY RAFFLE ALWAYS NEEDS YOUR DONATED BOOKS & MAGAZINES.**

Sir—A few days ago I saw in the published proceedings of Congress that a petition from Benjamin Kawles of Columbia, South Carolina, asking compensation for the destruction of his house by the Federal army in February, 1865. Had been presented to the Senate, accompanied by a letter from Major-General Sherman.

In this letter General Sherman uses the following language: "The citizens of Columbia set fire to thousands of bales of cotton rolled into the streets, and which were burning before we entered Columbia. I, myself, was in the city as early as 9 o'clock, and I saw these fires, and knew that efforts were made to extinguish them, but a high and strong wind kept them alive.

"I gave no orders for the burning of your city, but on the contrary, the conflagration resulted from the great imprudence of cutting the cotton bales, whereby the contents were spread to the wind, so that it became an impossibility to arrest the fire.

"I saw in your Columbia newspaper the printed order of General Wade Hampton, that on the approach of the Yankee army all the cotton should thus be burned and from what I saw myself I have no hesitation in saying that he was the cause of the destruction of your city."

This same charge, made against me by General Sherman, having been brought before the Senate of the United States, I am naturally most solicitous to vindicate myself before the same tribunal. But my state has no representative in that body. Those who should be her constitutional representatives and exponents there are debarred the right of entrance into those halls. There are none who have the right to speak for the South; none to participate in the legislation which governs her; none to impose the taxes she is call upon to pay, and note to vindicate her sons from misrepresentation, injustice or slander.

Under these circumstances I appeal to you, in the confident hope you will use every effort to see that justice is done in this matter.

I deny, emphatically, that any cotton was fired in Columbia by my order.

I deny that the citizens "set fire to thousands of bales rolled out into the streets."

I deny that any cotton was on fire when the Federal troops entered the city.

I most respectfully ask of Congress to appoint a committee, charged with the duty of ascertaining and reporting all the facts connected with the destruction of Columbia, and thus fixing upon the proper author of that enormous crime the infamy he richly deserves.

I am willing to submit the case to any honest tribunal. Before any such I pledge myself to prove that I gave a positive order, by direction of General Beauregard, that no cotton should be fired; that not one bale was on fire when General Sherman's troops took possession of the city; that he promised protection to the city, and that, in spite of his solemn promise, he burned the city to the ground, deliberately, systematically and atrociously,

I, therefore, earnestly request that Congress may take prompt and efficient measures to investigate this matter fully. Not only is this due to themselves ad to the reputation of the United States army, but also to justice and to truth.

Trusting that you will pardon me for troubling you, I am very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Wade Hampton.

Southern Historical Society Papers. [Kraus Reprint, 1977] Vol. VII. January to December, 1879. P. 156-157.

[N.B. RESPONSE TO HAMPTON'S REQUEST IN NEXT ISSUE]