

Tab O

Holidays, Observances, and Special Occasions

IP Event Lesson Plan

1. Topic:

Holidays, observances, and special occasions

2. Suggested activities:

A. Guest speakers, local tours, or events focusing on the particular day or occasion (e.g., ceremonies or parades commemorating occasions, fourth of July firework displays, etc.)

B. This topic area is not a stand-alone area. All events performed can be linked to one of the twelve IP topic areas.

C. No cost to IP events such as picnics, sporting events and recreational activities, visits to American homes, etc. (since many of the events which can be performed under this heading are family oriented activities, this is a good forum for sponsor program implementation)

3. Student requirements:

- A. Attire (civilian clothes/uniform)
- B. Event information sheet
- C. Camera and film
- D. Money for emergency phone call or souvenirs

4. Escort requirements:

- A. Advance ticket purchases if necessary
- B. Event information sheets for each international student
- C. Ensure necessary briefing information is available
- D. Brief (pre & post) international students about event(s)
 - E. Ensure escorts are familiar with event objectives to guarantee all points are adequately covered
- F. Confirm/arrange transportation requirements
- G. Event evaluation sheets are completed by each student
 - H. Discuss event with point of contact at event location and ensure escort carries point of contact's name and phone number
 - I. Ensure point of contact at event location is provided with the objectives to be covered prior to arrival of students

5. Introduce student to following objective(s) (under the universal declaration of human rights):

Choose the objective(s) from the applicable IP topical area(s) which pertains to the event or activity

6. IP area(s) of emphasis:

- A. Internationally recognized human rights as outlined in the universal declaration of human rights.
- B. The democratic ideals of an elected government and effective civil-military relations that reinforce the government.
- C. The roles and interrelationships of a culturally, ethnically, economically, and socially diverse population in a democratic society.
- D. U.S. free enterprise system and its role in a democratic society.

7. Other learning objective(s) or teaching point(s):

This section of the handbook describes several holidays, observances, and special occasions that Americans celebrate. Since many international students will be in training when these special days occur, it is important that international students have a better understanding why we place importance on these days.

Holidays are days set aside for special observances, either religious or secular. In the U.S., holidays are often marked by public ceremonies with parades or religious services, as well as by rest and recreation. Several states have their own public holidays, and each city may also have yearly celebrations.

National public holidays include new year's day, martin Luther king, Jr.'s birthday (third Monday in January), presidents' day (third Monday in February), memorial day (last Monday in may), independence day (4 July), labor day (first Monday in September), Columbus day (second Monday in October), veterans' day (11 November), thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November), and christmas (25 December).

There are also many days that are observed, but they are not legal holidays. These include ground hog day (2 February), valentine's day (14 February), St. Patrick's day (17 March), Easter, mother's day (second Sunday in may), father's day (third Sunday in June), flag day (14 June), Halloween (31 October), and others. The most popular holiday season extends from thanksgiving to new year's day.

There are certain events that Americans treat as special occasions, but are not considered holidays. These include the yearly world series baseball games, the annual super bowl football game, and Mardi Gras which is celebrated in new Orleans, Louisiana each year in carnival style tradition in preparation for the religious Lenten season.

This section does not contain every holiday, observance, or special occasion that Americans celebrate; however, it does provide background information on many special days and periods which we, as Americans, feel are important.

IP Information Sheet

The Fourth of July

The Fourth of July in the United States is Independence Day. It is a national legal holiday, and it is regarded as one of the most glorious days in American history. It was on July 4th, 1776 that the American Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence which announced to the world "that the American colonies henceforth are and of right ought to be free and independent states." A brief account of events leading to that day, and how we, as Americans, celebrate July Fourth will be valuable.

What is now the United States of America began many years ago as a few separate colonies founded by England. The first of these thirteen original colonies was founded in 1607, and this colony later became the great state of Virginia. The colonists being mostly English, although there were some Germans, Dutch, Swedes and other nationalities among them, looked upon England as their mother country and were proud to regard themselves as Englishmen. In those days it took more than six weeks for a ship to cross the Atlantic Ocean, therefore, the Thirteen Colonies had little interference from England; they were left to develop themselves, and for the most part, they governed themselves.

In the year 1760, the King of England died, and his son, George III, became the new King. Few Kings of England have been so incompetent as was George III. He was ignorant, narrow minded, and jealous of men of ability. He chose his ministers among those who would do his bidding in all things, and at the same time, he bribed many members of the English Parliament to vote as he wanted them to vote.

The laws which George III had the English Parliament pass soon raised great opposition among the American colonists. Among these were certain laws of taxation. The American colonists had long been accustomed to self-government. They declared that they could not rightly be taxed by the English Parliament because they did not have any representatives in the Parliament, and that taxation without representation was tyranny. This argument of the Americans failed to persuade George III. On the contrary he carried things to the point of sending British armies to America to punish the colonies for their disobedience. In England, farsighted statesmen spoke out against the policy of George III, but the King was obstinate, and he was supported by his servile ministers and a corrupt Parliament. His actions led the American colonists to resist with arms, bringing on a war between England and her Thirteen Colonies. This conflict is known in American history as the Revolutionary War.

The Revolutionary War lasted from 1775 to 1781. When it began there was no widespread desire for independence in America, but a year of war produced a great change in the feelings of the American colonists toward the mother country. This was particularly true when George III hired thousands of mercenary soldiers called Hessians from a German prince, and he sent them to America to try to conquer the colonists.

Shortly after the beginning of the Revolutionary War, delegates from the Thirteen Colonies met on May 10th, 1775 in Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania. They organized the Continental Congress as the government of the Thirteen Colonies to conduct the war against England. As the war continued, the American colonists saw more and more clearly that they had no choice except either to submit to the demands of George III or to declare their independence, so the Continental Congress appointed a committee of five members to draw up a declaration of independence. This committee was headed by Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, who at the time was only 33 years old. On July 3rd, 1776, the Continental Congress took up consideration of the Declaration of Independence, and they adopted it on July 4th, 1776. Delegates from each of the Thirteen Colonies in the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence.

After the signing of the Declaration of Independence, more than five years of hard fighting against the armies of England was still necessary before the American people could make good their claim of being a free and independent nation. The last battle of the Revolutionary War was fought in 1781, and a treaty of

peace was signed with England in 1783 whereby the United States of America was recognized by England as a free and separate nation.

The immortal Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson, a brilliant and learned man who later became the third President of the United States. The inspiring words of the Declaration constitute the solid foundation upon which American institutions of government are based. Perhaps the most famous sentence in the Declaration of Independence is the following:

"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; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Ever since 1776 the United States of America has observed each Fourth of July as the birthday of its independence. Independence Day has always been celebrated with parades and Marching bands throughout the country. On this day, patriotic speeches are made by the highest of government officials praising the heroes of the Revolutionary War for allowing each and every American the rights to freely pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Also, there are many sporting and recreational activities held this day in celebration of American freedom. In the city of Washington, which is the nation's capital, there is an impressive display of fancy fireworks near the Washington Monument -- firework displays are also held in many cities throughout the U.S. The day is celebrated by Americans all over the world because the Fourth of July is the day when Americans rejoice and dedicate themselves anew to maintain that freedom which their ancestors won for them.

IP Information Sheet

Labor Day

Labor Day is celebrated the First Monday of every September. It is a legal holiday in the United States. It is interesting how Labor Day began, and how it is observed in this country.

The American people are an industrious people because they realize that work not only creates wealth and well-being, but more importantly, it builds strong character. Americans know that it required centuries of hard work by so many Americans, hundreds of millions, to bring this country to its present state of wealth and influence. Not luck and not accident, but careful, painstaking work is the rule for getting ahead in the United States. Thomas A. Edison, the greatest of all American inventors said years ago: "None of my inventions came by accident; they came by work." It is because the value of work is so universally recognized in this country, and because the United States is a nation of workers, that the working man in America is greatly respected. This is true whether one is a manual worker or an intellectual worker -- whether one works in a factory or in an office or on a farm -- whether on dry land or on the high seas. A nineteenth century president of the United States, Grover Cleveland, once said: "A truly American sentiment recognizes the dignity of labor and the fact that honor lies in honest toil."

Americans therefore recognize the dignity of labor by setting aside one day each year in honor of labor. This day is called Labor Day, and as was mentioned earlier, it is a legal holiday throughout the United States. Labor Day, as a special day on which labor is honored, had its origins in 1882 when Peter J. McGuire, the president of a labor union known as the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, submitted a proposal that organized labor should select a day for a parade by the members of its unions in honor of labor and the parade should be followed by a picnic. Mr. McGuire suggested that the first Monday in September was the most desirable day for this purpose because it fell about half way between Independence Day (July 4th) and Thanksgiving Day (the fourth Thursday in November). His proposal was adopted, and the first Labor Day celebrations took place on September 5th, 1882, in the city

of New York. A few years later the American Federation of Labor voted to make the celebration national. By 1894 Labor Day had become a legal holiday in thirty states of the United States. On June 28th, 1894 the American Congress passed a law making Labor Day a national legal holiday and designating the first Monday in September as Labor Day. Since that time Labor Day has been observed as a legal holiday throughout the United States. On this day the people do not work. There are parades in most large cities throughout the U.S., the leaders of government deliver speeches, and the people have picnics or otherwise enjoy the holiday.

Nearly all of those who March in the parades on Labor Day are members of American labor unions. Similar to manufacturers associations, contractor associations, and professional associations, we also have labor associations -- these are called labor unions. The American labor unions are independent entities, and the workers who comprise the membership are free and independent to choose whether or not they desire to be members. A great American statesman, Daniel Webster, who has been dead for over 100 years, once said in a speech, "Labor in this country is independent and proud." The largest labor organization in the United States is the AFL-CIO. The initials AFL stand for American Federation of Labor, and the initials CIO stand for Congress of Industrial Organizations. The AFL and the CIO were at one time two separate labor organizations, but they are now united in one very large organization with over ten million members. There are other large labor organizations in the United States, but the largest is the AFL-CIO. American labor unions are interested in the most advanced social legislation to improve the life and working conditions of all Americans. In order to fully understand labor unions as we know them in the U.S., the attached paper provides a good description of labor unions and U.S. labor and labor management practices.

U.S. Labor and Labor Management

This paper provides background for those who would like more information and who would like to better understand labor unions and U.S. labor and labor management practices in the United States.

In the continuing process of industrialization in America, we have been transformed from a nation of farmers to a nation of workers -- white collar, blue collar, specialists. Most of us are wage earners, dependent on the paycheck as the main source of support for ourselves and our families. A large proportion of the labor force belongs to trade unions of various kinds, and these organizations have come to play an important role, and a controversial one, in our politics, our economy, and our society as a whole. It is therefore necessary for anyone seeking a balanced picture of American life and institutions to understand the status of our workers and the nature of their organizations.

Many people have many incorrect notions about both the position of workers in America and the functions of their unions. Most foreigners come from countries with rigid, often insurmountable, class distinctions, with the ordinary workingman on the bottom rung of the ladder both socially and financially. Even in industrial, democratic England, for example, a man's "class" is "branded on his tongue," a theme recently revived in "my fair lady," and it can seem very difficult for people of talent to find "room at the top." In the less developed countries the differences between classes are often much sharper. It is difficult for people with this background to grasp the remarkably fluid nature of our society; the fact that "classes," if they exist at all, have very vague boundaries and that people can move in and out of them with relative ease. On the other hand, many of the trainees are also likely to have ideas about workingmen's lives in an industrial society based on the dismal picture of the early 19th century shown by writers like Charles Dickens or Karl Marx. Some might be inclined to think of labor unions in such a society as basically political organizations, dedicated to the radical overthrow of the existing regime, as indeed they are in some countries.

These difficulties are compounded by the fact that the great gains of American labor unions since 1933 and the powerful role of labor organizations in our national life remain emotional issues for many Americans. The idea of organizing the workingman for collective action jars against the image of "rugged individualism," which has had such appeal in our history. Some Americans are alarmed by labor's power, which they feel could be used irresponsibly under certain circumstances. Such fears have proved wide of

the mark. But, right or wrong, they reflect an old theme in our society: a distrust of any great concentration of power.

To understand American unions and to avoid being ensnared in the controversy which still surrounds them, the topic must be placed in a sound perspective. Bigness is an unavoidable feature of modern industrialism. We have seen the same trend in the evolution of American business and on our farms. Big labor has grown up for many of the same reasons. Its growth came only after a long struggle, marked by the kinds of compromises which are typically American. One such compromise involved our strongly held conviction about the sanctity of private property. Industrial growth often brought this into conflict with our equally strong ideals about the sanctity of individual rights. We have tried to preserve both of these ideals and bring them into harmony in our new "mixed economy." Labor unions have been accepted as a permanent and established feature of our democracy, sharing fully in the benefits of the free enterprise system. They are as dedicated as any group to its preservation, so much so that some students of union affairs criticize them for being too "conservative." And businessmen, while subject to greater governmental control than previously and confronted with a very different relationship with their workers, have lost little on the whole in power, prestige or profits. Indeed, some experts have argued that by giving labor a bigger role, we have strengthened our free enterprise economy and made it more different than ever from the kind of "capitalism" that Marx wrote against.

There are very rich and very poor people in the United States as there are in almost all societies; and, as we might expect, more of the latter than the former. But the great majority fall somewhere between the extremes. Sociologists and other experts have shown that our people are divided to some degree by "status" or "class;" there can be no blinking at the fact that almost every community has both a country club and a shantytown. But the great majority of Americans, including most of those who work at tough jobs for a living, regard themselves as "middle class," and rightly so.

Over the course of the last four generations there has been a more equitable distribution of the national income, a change that is taking place slowly and gradually. More important, perhaps, than the shares of income each occupational group may achieve is the fact that individuals can move from one group to another in the quest for greater opportunity. This was a land settled and populated by those who sought the opportunity to improve their lot in life, and that of their children, by escaping from rigid class distinctions and restrictions. A democratic government and labor-short economy provided ideal conditions for realizing those aspirations. The result, as one scholar has pointed out, is that "America has had a greater measure of social equality and social mobility than any highly developed society in human history." Work has always enjoyed respect in America, and we have constantly sought to make sure that no permanent barriers were ever placed before individual effort. Many of the social reforms of the progressive era and the new deal period were passed with this objective in mind. Consequently, ordinary working people -- if any among our highly individualistic labor force can be called ordinary -- have shared to a striking degree in the benefits of economic growth.

The gains of the American wage earner have been particularly notable in the economic prosperity that has generally prevailed since World War II. Take-home pay in manufacturing industries rose from an average of \$70 per week in 1950 to about \$82 in 1959 (all in 1960 prices), an impressive record for a decade of only moderate growth. The increase in take home pay has continued during the 60's and 70's; however, the effective buying power in terms of real dollars has been diminished because of inflationary increases in the cost of goods and services. There has also been a reduction in the proportion of the population in low income groups (family income of less than \$2,500 per year). This kind of improvement means that a large proportion of our working families can afford many of the goods and services which in other societies are restricted to the very well-to-do. About 70 percent of American spending units (families and single persons) own a car and about 60 percent own a house. It was by no means a perfect record, and there are still many glaring inequities and social problems; but the improvement is very real and something that all Americans not only expect, but take for granted.

The United States has a highly mobile labor force. Here is one of the unique elements in our society, a working class in which the overwhelming majority are certain that they will share in the proceeds of

continuing industrialization and equally convinced that those among them with special talent and ambition will not find the road to advancement barred. We have no hereditary working class -- proletariat, in the marxist jargon-bound together as they are in many lands by old ties, social immobility, and festering grievances. Our workers are more likely to be divided from each other -- racially, religiously, ethnically, and regionally. They move around a good deal, both geographically and socially. Above all, they are independent in spirit, on the job, in the union hall, and in broader affairs. Like most Americans they will follow good leaders (and sometimes bad ones if they produce results), but are skeptical of authority.

Relatively few workers belonged to labor organizations before the 1930's, although such institutions have existed since the beginning of our republic. Skilled craftsmen in particular formed local and regional associations early in our history. But much of the working class was recruited from the constant stream of immigrants who came here during the 19th century; the ethnic and language divisions among them and their general expectation of rapid personal gains made them difficult to organize. Some national unions were formed after the civil war, like the railroad brotherhoods and the knights of labor. There were also some attempts to form radical unions with basically political purposes, but they had very little appeal and, by the 1920's, were virtually defunct.

Only the American federation of labor (AFL), begun in 1886, succeeded in forming a permanent widespread organization. A loose confederation of existing national craft unions, the AFL turned away from political and social objectives and concentrated on immediate economic benefits for its members. Under Samuel Gompers its membership reached three million by the 1920's, about 10 percent of the labor force. Even these gains required great effort and were made in the face of a rather suspicious public and hostile courts. Although fairly successful, the AFL provided little or no protection for unorganized workers in the great mass industries. These unskilled workers were most vulnerable to technological change and the swings of the business cycle. The great depression of the 1930's underlined that vulnerability. This was the background of the drive to organize unskilled labor during the 1930's, led by the Congress of industrial organizations (CIO).

With mass unemployment and real distress among the workingmen, public opinion, which had long looked upon unions as "radical" outfits, came to sympathize with their purposes for the first time. Reflecting that public opinion, the new deal Congresses passed laws which favored organization and recognition of labor unions. Meanwhile, the courts, which had taken a restrictive view of the rights of labor when they seemed to conflict with those of private property, rendered more favorable decisions and upheld the new laws.

Against this background of a favorable political and public climate, the CIO led a great drive to organize the industrial workers, and found a favorable reception under depression conditions. The result was a rapid growth in labor union membership, which jumped from three million in 1925 to about 11 million by the outbreak of World War II.

So rapid was the growth of the CIO and so powerful its political and economic influence that since World War II many Americans feel that, having so successfully encouraged labor's gains, the time has come that it should be placed under tighter control. In the 1930's unions were left almost completely free from government interference and were given certain great advantages in their bargaining position with management. Since 1947 several laws, notably the Taft-Hartley act of 1947 -- have been passed, subjecting unions to the same kind of government regulations that business bears. There has also been a drive -- both inside and outside the labor movement -- to eliminate any communist influence from unions and to bring corrupt union officials to justice. All these efforts have sought to strike a new and fairer balance between labor and management -- not to destroy labor's position. It remains as much as ever an established force in our society. It is no longer an underdog. It is legal, respectable for the most part, often powerful, and increasingly businesslike.

The American workingman and his leaders have never sought organization purely for the sake of organization. Their aim was to use organization to deal effectively with problems. As we look back at them today some of these problems were temporary, arising out of conditions which have passed away.

Others were permanent, arising out of human nature and society itself; they are still with us and always will be.

Wages for American workers during the 19th century, while low by modern standards, were good compared with those of Europe. However, they were rarely high enough to permit much saving, particularly in an increasingly urban society. Better wages therefore have been a principal aim of labor organization from the beginning.

Working conditions in many ways are -- and always have been -- equally important as wages to the workingman. Under 19th century conditions he worked a 12- to 14-hour day, 6 days a week. He had little, if any, security in the event of injury or death on the job. He could be fired or laid off without recourse at almost any time.

In the first stages of our industrialization, many of the workers were immigrants -- confused, ignorant of our language, very liable to being exploited. Even natural-born Americans found the new, impersonal discipline of the factory hard to take.

To deal with these conditions labor leaders have sought to establish two clear rights. First, they seek the right to represent the workers--either locally or nationally -- in bargaining with employers over wages and conditions. Second, to enforce their bargaining position, they claim the right to withdraw the labor force (that is, to strike) and to prevent, forcibly if necessary, the hiring of other laborers to take their place in the meantime. It is on the last count that labor met most

Criticism -- from public opinion and the courts as well as management.

Through combined action by unions and government, the wages and working conditions of American labor today have become the best in the world.

Despite these gains, unions have not become less important than before in workingmen's eyes -- for a reason often overlooked by people who have never had direct experience with a mass production line. Work in a modern factory is likely to be a mechanical and impersonal affair. Often the individual worker feels like just a cog in the great machine, powerless to affect it much. In such circumstances there is a powerful motive for unionism -- personal identification of worker with union as a social grouping. Unions have responded to this fact by sponsoring social, educational, and political activities for their members. Many students of labor affairs feel that union efforts in these directions present their greatest opportunities in the years ahead. It is the strength and diversity of these motives for union membership -- not purely economic in nature--which have won and assured them a permanent role in our society.

The American government, as we have seen, exists primarily to protect and advance individual rights. In many areas it serves that purpose best by standing completely aside, as it does in matters of religion. In others intervention is necessary. From the beginning, the American government has been concerned with the position of labor in this country. As the United States has become more industrial, more urban, and more complex, both state and federal governments increasingly have intervened in social and economic affairs with an eye to improving the positions of the common man.

Until the "new deal," most government responsibility in this area was left to the states. Their actions varied widely, depending on local conditions and local politics. In the industrial areas of the nation, state governments from about 1880 enacted laws governing child work (in many states it was prohibited for children under 14), working hours for women, and working conditions in dangerous occupations. Many states provided workmen's compensation and various forms of health and old age insurance.

The federal government established the department of labor in 1913 to facilitate these and other efforts. But generally it contented itself with providing a good example through treatment of its own employees. In the 1930's, it intervened more directly in broad social welfare problems and it has since extended that

interest. The federal government brought low-cost housing, vocational training, employment services, and many other kinds of aid to economically deprived persons. It also passed the fair labor standards act -- still a basic law which sets minimum conditions of employment.

Perhaps the most important of these laws was the social security act of 1935. Continuously amended and expanded, it provides a broad system of federally sponsored programs.

In 1946 Congress passed the full employment act, which pledged the federal government to pursue policies designed to achieve the highest possible level of employment for our workers. In the years since then, there has also been continuous broadening and extending of the social security act, of public housing programs, and of manpower retraining activities.

The present character of the American labor movement has been shaped by many factors. The principal ones are:

Our open society whose social climate blurs ideas of class, diminishes personal identification with class distinctions, and emphasizes and provides a good measure of individual opportunity.

The labor movement which is devoted to practical goals and hostile to ideology (foreign or otherwise).

A political climate which is accustomed to dealing with "pressure groups" devoted to special interests and able therefore to deal with labor precisely as with other pressure groups, balancing off its interests and purposes against those of other similar groups.

Government is increasingly inclined to intervene in social and economic affairs to better the living standards of the people, and is supported by the greater part of the electorate in making such interventions.

It is well to remember that Americans look upon noisy encounters and polemics as sources of strength, not of weakness, as we attempt to adjust our institutions to deal with the problems of the present and the future. The whole history of labor disputes and arbitration has been filled with many "noisy" encounters.

Union membership grew vigorously during the 1930's and World War II. After the war it has increased very slowly, and now remains practically stationary. Some people feel the unions have lost their organizing zeal and were too slow in opening membership more widely to blacks.

Many of the unorganized workers are rural, southern, or white-collar workers who are usually less interested in joining a union than were the northern city workers. Furthermore, in recent years the laws have been less favorable for the extension of unionizing activity to these groups than in the 1930's.

Unions have had their greatest successes in mining and manufacturing. About two-thirds of the workers in these trades are union members. Unfortunately for the unions, it is precisely this sector of the economy which is most affected by automation and other technological advances. And the new groups advanced by these changes -- technicians, professionals, and white-collar workers-are of all groups the most difficult to organize. As a result, labor unions may be fated, as some experts feel, to become the representatives of a "permanent minority." This was the case in Europe where labor organized earlier and more completely than it ever has here.

The growth of unskilled unionism in the 1930's was achieved only at the cost of a split within the ranks of labor, resulting in jurisdictional disputes and other antagonism between the AFL and CIO.

The basic ideological split between the organizations had been over the question of whether and how to organize mass-production industries, a matter of little concern now that most of them have been unionized.

In December 1955, the two major groups merged into a loose federation and were joined by several other smaller, independent unions. This has eliminated much of the jurisdictional rivalry so harmful to both labor and the public. However, several national unions have remained outside of the AFL-CIO; therefore, the AFL-CIO can "speak for labor" -- but sometimes it cannot say too much.

Americans are instinctively mistrustful of power. This mistrust, reflected in changing tides of public opinion, has been very influential in the history of the labor movement. For the last few years it has been veering in the direction of greater limitations on the power of union leadership.

The "magna carta" of labor unions, the Wagner act of 1935, was passed during the great depression for which big business received much of the blame. Public opinion therefore shifted in favor of labor organizations as a means of self-protection for the worker. It gave the unions great power, backed by government, and great freedom in the disposal of their own affairs, finances in particular.

In 1947 the tide turned, with the passage of the Taft-hartley act. This act aimed at protecting the rights of union and nonunion workers, the employers, and the general public. It did not repeal the Wagner act, but changed and modified its character; in particular, it outlawed the closed shop and other union practices which were felt to be unfair. There is pressure from unions to have the most undesirable features of this law repealed.

The Taft-hartley act was augmented in 1959 by the Landrum-griffin act, designed to curb certain abuses of union power and the misuse of union funds. This regulation of the internal affairs of unions was made on the grounds that unions are quasi-public institutions.

These acts have been hotly opposed by some union spokesmen as "slave-labor laws." They seem, however, to be supported by the electorate and by many, if not most, union members. Their aim is to protect the individual worker, union member or not, from aggressive acts by unions and to ensure that union leadership is more responsible and more responsive to the needs and desires of members. There is much controversy about whether these laws really do the job, but little about their aims.

Although the AFL-CIO carried on an aggressive campaign to purge unions of leaders who abuse their powers, and laws have been passed regulating union affairs more closely. In addition, unions are threatened in some states by campaigns to pass "right-to-work" laws forbidding the "union shop." In their struggle against such laws, unions are gravely handicapped by charges of corruption and intimidation which, while applying to only a few unions, can be used to castigate all of them. But because of the looseness of its "federal" organization, labor

Itself has not been able to act effectively to clear up such abuses. This failure has cost labor much public sympathy which it can regain only by a major effort.

This has changed very little since the late 19th century. The worker belongs to a local to which he pays dues, whose meetings he attends (sometimes), and whose officers he elects. A local union is a chapter of a national union, which is the real seat of power. Some national unions are formed on the basis of a craft or particular skill (like the carpenters union) others on the basis of work in a particular industry (like the united automobile workers).

On the city and state level there are bodies which serve to coordinate locals. One important function is to unite the political efforts of local unions; to voice opinions on school problems, public transportation, and other civic issues. The state federation maintains a constant watch on legislatures and applies pressure to get favorable treatment of bills affecting labor.

A federation like the AFL-CIO is made up of national unions, but it is not comparable to the federal level of government. It more closely resembles the United States in that it is not a governing unit but a league which cannot dictate to the member national

Unions. This is why it is so often difficult for the federation to impose its policy on a recalcitrant member.

There seems to be a trend toward increasing the power of the national unions and reducing that of locals -- the growing emphasis on bargaining for standard contracts with all the employers in an industry is one example of this. But the great remaining autonomy of the local unions and almost complete sovereignty of the national unions makes it very difficult to introduce reforms into the labor organizations. There is also the tendency for unions to be afflicted with the same problems of internal bureaucracy which plague other large institutions in modern life.

The local chapter is fairly autonomous in the AFL and is important, if not so powerful, even in the CIO. Chapters are grouped together in national industry organizations -- the United Mine Workers, for example - - but the policies and decisions of such organizations often reflect the mood and temper of the "locals." Occasionally the "locals" ignore the national organization and follow their own noses. The power of the big confederations -- the AFL and the CIO -- is even more amorphous. If most of their member unions are agreed, the confederations can push this way or that. But such agreement is hard to come by, and in most respects the confederations are like our national political parties -- loose coalitions of divergent local groups.

All levels of the labor movement are run by union democracy; officials are subject to periodic reelection. American union democracy, like our political democracy, contains among its other rights the right to apathy. Thus many unions are effectively controlled by small groups within their membership. However, when those groups offend the union members they can be promptly voted out and often are. But on most issues union members tend to follow their leaders. In this fact lie both the great strength and many of the weaknesses of the American labor movement.

A union's chief objective is to gain maximum benefits for its members by making an advantageous bargain with the employer. Its right to represent employees at the bargaining table, resisted for many years by most employers, was established in law by the Wagner act in 1935. The union's ultimate weapon is the strike; management's is the shutdown and/or lockout. Both sides--and the public -- are hurt when these weapons are used.

In recent years there have been greater efforts to avoid strikes. When negotiations break down, the national labor relations board (NLRB) is available to act as an impartial arbiter. In some industries, there have been experiments with year-round committees of labor and management which negotiate issues well in advance of contract expiration. Negotiations have become more complicated, including extensive "fringe benefits" for workers, profit-sharing plans, wage scales tied to the cost-of-living index or to increases in productivity, and a host of other complicated provisions. Such matters are difficult to negotiate successfully under a strike deadline.

The Taft-Hartley act gave the president authority to intervene in work stoppages which threaten "national health and safety" and impose an 80-day "cooling-off" period.

Collective bargaining hitherto has been reasonably successful. It has provided a method for resolving the conflicting economic interests of management and labor; has enhanced the rights, dignity, and self-respect of the workingman; and has served as a bulwark for the preservation of the private enterprise system. Some experts feel that the strike is an increasingly undesirable solution for industrial problems. A strike in a key industry can hamper production all across the country and can sometimes drastically affect national defense efforts. Consequently, government has been forced recently to intervene even more directly than before in such disputes and exert pressure for the settlement. The kind of direct intervention

seen in the railroad dispute is still rare, but some observers look for an increase of this governmental role and for other changes in the bargaining process.

Technological advance presents a tremendous and growing challenge. The increased productivity such changes bring is of great benefit, but it has sharply reduced the number of workers in industries where such changes are introduced, particularly the less skilled workers for whom new employment is difficult to find. This problem has presented a great challenge to labor. Some unions have responded by "featherbedding" tactics. Others have attempted to deal with it more honestly. In some cases they got management to agree to cushion the effect of layoffs by various arrangements. They set up schemes to retrain skilled workers made redundant by automation and to train unskilled ones to higher standards. With government cooperation they relocated workers to areas of greater employment opportunities. But solutions are not easy, and they are likely to get more difficult. All this is bound to bring great changes in American unionism. The "unskilled worker" was never very unskilled, but now he seems to be passing from the scene. In the future we seem likely to have only skilled and very skilled workers.

In some areas, like eastern Kentucky and west Virginia, economic change has brought serious hardship to an entire region. Aid to these depressed areas, vocational training centers, and special programs to attract new industry are some of the means being tried to remedy this problem, but it remains a serious one.

The foregoing factors have intensified the unions' traditional stress on job security and on keeping high the barriers to membership, and thus to employment, as long as there are too few jobs for existing members. But the demands of the great wave of young people coming into the labor market and of such groups as the blacks, so long denied membership in certain unions and access to the jobs they control, have generated a certain amount of hostility toward unions as they grapple with the difficult problems they face.

American labor unions, like our corporations, are an integral part of our economic and social life and of the private enterprise system we have created. They have made the American wage earner a full partner in our social democracy and the recipient of its material blessings. There is still much to be done to aid the bottom 20 to 30 percent of our income groups—mostly composed of the badly educated, the blacks, the older citizens, and the displaced rural population. Despite the shortcomings and the serious new problems arising alongside our increasing wealth, we have achieved a considerable measure of economic justice while retaining an open, fluid society with few restrictions on liberty and opportunity for the individual worker.

Each year in the United States the 4th Monday of October is known as Veterans Day and is a national holiday. Veterans Day originally was called Armistice Day in remembrance of the Armistice which on November 11, 1918 ended the fighting in World War I. That war broke out in Europe on August 1, 1914, and before it was over it had drawn in nearly the whole world. It was a war with terrible loss of life to both sides, with the fighting in Europe going on for more than four more years.

One person told of the first Armistice Day on Monday, November 11, 1918. He was then a young man of 20. When the news flashed to all parts of the world on November 11, 1918, that an armistice had been signed to take effect at 11 o'clock in the morning of that day, instantly in all the cities of the United States and its allies there were the most enthusiastic demonstration of relief and rejoicing. The individual went on to say that he was living in Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, at that time, where the happy news arrived at 6 o'clock in the morning. When it is 6 o'clock in the morning in Philadelphia it is 11 o'clock in the morning in Paris, France. Immediately the streets in Philadelphia were filled with people. Some were shouting for joy, others were singing for joy, still others were dancing for joy, and many women were weeping for joy. All through the city church bells rang, automobile horns and factory whistles blew and locomotive sirens wailed in an unending din. There was the same kind of demonstrations in every other American city large and small. It was a day never to be forgotten.

Woodrow Wilson was the President of the United States at the time. One year later, on November 11, 1919, President Wilson issued a proclamation reminding the American people of the armistice signed a year earlier, which he said gave the world a chance "to work out in peace a new and just set of international relations." The day of November 11, 1919 was not, however, declared a holiday, but in memory of the dead all business was suspended on that day for two minutes at 11 o'clock during which a silence was observed. Since 1918, the 11th day of November has been observed by the American people as Armistice Day.

Armistice Day was declared a legal holiday in 1938, when the American Congress passed a law that "the 11th day of November in each year, a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be Armistice Day, is hereby made a legal holiday." In 1954 the American Congress by another law changed the name from Armistice Day to Veterans Day, and since that time the day has been called Veterans Day. In 1970 the American Congress passed another law which changed the day on which Veterans Day is commemorated from the 11th of November to the 4th Monday of October.

On Veterans Day many Americans go to their house of prayer and pray for peace for the whole world. There are also parades by veterans and by members of the Armed Forces of the United States, and national leaders make speeches honoring the war dead. Exactly at 11 o'clock everybody becomes still and observes a silence for two minutes in memory of all Americans who in all the wars of the United States have given their lives in defense of their country.

IP Information Sheet

Halloween

Halloween is a folk custom that is observed in the United States on October 31 each year. The name Halloween is perhaps incorrectly used for this folk custom, since its meaning is "holy evening" signifying the evening preceding 1 November. The first of November in the Catholic Church is All Saints Day. Today our folk custom called Halloween is observed by children every year on the night of October 31. It is not a holiday, but only the survival of a superstitious custom that began in Europe many centuries ago.

Hundreds of years ago the belief in sorcerers and witches was universal and very real. Sorcerers, who were also known as warlocks, were men and witches were women who, it was believed, had sold their souls to the devil and had received from the devil the power to perform marvelous, and even sometimes, unbelievable acts. It was believed that they used their power to harm simple, honest people. So strong was this very foolish belief that in every country in Europe in those olden times, as well as in the American colonies that had settled along the Atlantic seaboard, there were laws which made it a crime punishable by death for anyone to practice witchcraft. In those times tens of thousands of unfortunate people, mostly poor old women, were arrested, tried in courts, and put to death for practicing witchcraft. It was believed that on Halloween night the sorcerers and witches left their homes by flying through the air, and they gathered at a secret place in the forest where they met the devil. Huge bonfires were built to ward off these malevolent spirits. Of course this belief no longer exists -- having passed away more than 250 years ago.

A very popular Halloween decoration is the "jack-o-lantern" which is a hallowed-out pumpkin with a face cut into it. It has also become a symbol of Halloween. The jack-o-lantern originally came from Ireland.

In the United States the night of October 31 is made the occasion for some fun by the younger children. Children's pranks have replaced witches' tricks. These younger people, who for the most part may not yet have reached the age of 10 or 12 years, put on masks, very often with the help of their parents, and with a small container, usually a paper bag, in their hands visit their neighbors and cry "trick or treat." The phrase "trick or treat" means that "if you do not treat me to something nice, then I will play a trick on you." The neighbors will give the children some candy, fruit, cookies, or even a small coin or two. Some of the

older children, particularly young men, may be inclined to be a little more mischievous. However, it is all done in fun and merriment.

Not only do children partake in this occasion, for Halloween entertains many adults as well. Many adults attend Halloween parties where the guests attend dressed in costumes. There is usually dancing and toward the end of the evening, prizes are awarded to those wearing the most interesting costumes. The fun and merriment is all over before the night has passed, not to be repeated until October 31 a year later.

IP Information Sheet

New Years Day

New Year's Day is the first day of the calendar year -- January 1st. Celebrations are both festive and serious. Some people reflect on the past year and look forward to bettering their lives during the next 12 months.

On New Year's Day many people visit relatives and friends and some attend church services. Large numbers of people go to parties on New Year's Eve at friends' homes, commercial establishments, or a relative's house. The parties are generally very festive. At the stroke of midnight the people cheer, blow whistles, ring bells, and shout "Happy New Year" which is usually followed by showing some gesture of affection to one's wife or husband and other close friends and relatives.

In many large cities in the United States, parades are held on New Year's Day, and for those interested in sports, many college football games are played and televised live during the afternoon and early evening hours.

IP Information Sheet

Columbus day

Columbus Day honors Christopher Columbus' first voyage to America in 1492. It became a legal federal holiday in 1971. It is celebrated on the second Monday in October. Before 1971, a number of states celebrated Columbus Day on October 12th. Many cities and organizations sponsor parades and banquets on Columbus Day.

The first Columbus Day celebration was held in 1792 when New York celebrated the 300th anniversary of the landing. In 1892, President Benjamin Harrison called upon the people of the United States to celebrate Columbus Day on the 400th anniversary of his landing in the Americas. Columbus Day has been celebrated annually since 1920.

Cities, towns, rivers, streets, and public buildings throughout the United States bear his name. The name "Columbia" has also been used as a poetic personification of the United States.

For those interested in learning more about Christopher Columbus, the following paragraphs tell of his life.

Christopher Columbus, an Italian-born navigator who sailed in the service of Spain, is commonly described as the discoverer of the New World -- America. Although Columbus was in search of a westward route to Asia by sea, the discoveries he did make were more important and valuable than the route he failed to find. It is certain that Columbus was not the first European to cross the Atlantic. Documentary evidence supports claims that the Vikings reached the New World about 1000 A.D. Also

there is good circumstantial evidence to suggest that both Portuguese and English fishing vessels made the crossing during the 14th century, probably landing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Columbus was born in Genoa in 1451. His father was a weaver, and he had at least two brothers. Christopher Columbus had little education and, only as an adult, learned to read and write. He went to sea at a young age, as did many Genoese boys, and voyaged in the Mediterranean. Columbus yearned to venture in the legendary Atlantic and to the lands west of Madeira and the Azores. He acquired and studied books and maps in hopes to set sail on far off voyages. In 1484, Columbus sought support for an exploratory voyage from King John II of Portugal, but he was refused support for this voyage. However, Columbus did not give up and in 1485 Columbus took his son, Diego, to Spain where he spent almost seven years trying to receive support from Isabella I of Castile. He finally reached an agreement between the crown and himself and set the terms for the expedition.

The Pinta, the Nina, and the Santa Maria were outfitted in the port of Palos and then set sails for their voyage. His first landfall was made on the morning of October 12, 1492, at an island in the Bahamas, which Columbus named San Salvador. The landing was met by Arawak, a friendly local population that Columbus called Indians. Some days later the expedition sailed on to Cuba. From there Columbus and his contingent sailed east to Hispaniola where the Santa Maria was wrecked near Cap-Haitien. Columbus got his men safely ashore on the Island of Navidad and set up a colony. Columbus then sailed back to Spain. Upon reaching Spain, he was welcomed by Isabella and her husband, Ferdinand II of Aragon, where Columbus presented some of his findings -- artifacts, Indians, and some gold. He claimed to have reached Islands off the coast of Asia.

Portuguese claims to Columbus' discoveries led Pope Alexander VI to issue papal bulls in 1493 that divided the world into areas open to colonization by Spain and Portugal. The two nations moved the line of demarcation to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. Colonization efforts were quickly mounted.

Columbus set sail a second time after receiving funds by Ferdinand and Isabella on September 25, 1493. This time he had 17 ships and almost 1,500 men. He made landfall on November 3, 1493, near Dominica among the Lesser Antilles. He sailed through the Lesser Antilles, and he sighted and named the islands. The explorers went past Puerto Rico and reached the site of Navidad on November 27-28, 1493. The shipwrecked sailors from the Santa Maria that had been left were found dead. They had been killed by the Indians.

Columbus set up a new colony, named Isabella, about 70 miles to the East of Navidad's site. Columbus explored the southern coast of Cuba, discovered Jamaica, and then returned to Isabella about 5 months later. He tried to govern the colony, but he was not a good administrator. He left his brother Bartolome in charge of

The colony and told them to sail south and settle at Santo Domingo -- which became the first permanent European settlement in the New World. Then Columbus again sailed back to Spain.

He reached Cadiz in June of 1496. Columbus had not found the rich Asian mainland, and some of his crew had complaints against him. However, he was authorized to make a third voyage in May 1498. He had difficulties in recruiting new crews, but he finally found enough seamen to man six ships. He made landfall in Trinidad on July 31, 1498. The next day he reached the mainland, and he became the discoverer of South America.

He found pearls at Islands near the coast, and then sailed across the Caribbean to Santo Domingo. Columbus and his brothers were removed from the government because the colonists were in revolt. He was returned to Spain in chains.

He was freed by royal command after arrival in Cadiz in November 1500, and he soon mounted a fourth expedition, which left Spain in May 1502. He made first landfall at Martinique and then sailed to Santo Domingo. He was not allowed to land in Santo Domingo despite his warnings about a hurricane. His ships weathered the storm, sailed west, and reached Guanaja Island and then Honduras in Central America. His vessels rotted out because of shipworms. He abandoned his ships near Jamaica and remained marooned there for over a year. Finally rescued, Columbus reached Spain in November 1504.

Christopher Columbus died in Valladolid on May 20, 1506 while pressing his claims that he had reached Asia. The crown refused him further support and violated its original agreement with him. However, even though Columbus had made major errors in his navigational computations, it is as a result of his "discovery" that the New World became part of the European world.

IP Information Sheet

Memorial Day

Memorial Day, or Decoration Day, is a patriotic holiday in the United States. It is celebrated the last Monday in May of each year, and it is a day to honor Americans who gave their lives for their country.

The origin of such a day set aside to honor the war dead goes back to the Civil War when women of the Confederate Southern States placed flowers on the graves of soldiers from both North and South. It now also honors those who died in the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Memorial Day is a legal holiday in most states.

Flowers and flags are normally placed on graves of military personnel, parades are held, and special programs take place all over the country. Perhaps the most impressive ceremonies are held at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania and at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia where the Tomb of the Unknowns is the site of a special program. In other cities across the country various organizations such as the Boy Scouts are invited to March in Memorial Day military parades. In some ports, tiny boats with flowers are set afloat to honor those who died at sea.

IP Information Sheet

Presidents Day

Presidents day is the celebration of the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. George Washington was the first President of the United States and Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth.

It is celebrated on the third Monday in February even though George Washington's birthday is actually February 22nd and Abraham Lincoln's birthday is actually February 12th.

Both birthdays are celebrated on the same day in order to have one holiday in honor of both Presidents, as well as all of the Presidents of the United States.

Before Presidents Day, the 2nd Monday in February was a national holiday and the entire nation gave honor to one of the most prominent Americans in the history of the United States -- George Washington. He is the great patriot, soldier, and statesman who is called the "founder of our country." George Washington was the first President of the United States and the only President ever to be unanimously elected in the American electoral college. He was re-elected to a second term, and then chose to step aside after eight years in the nation's highest office. General Washington was commander-in-chief of the Continental Army which fought against the British in the Revolutionary War to win independence from England. His military skill and inspiring courage enabled the American troops to defeat the British General Lord Cornwallis in the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 to end the war. George Washington is our most honored President as attested by the numerous impressive monuments erected to his memory throughout the

land. Prior to the passage of Presidents day, many ceremonies were held on February 22nd throughout the United States. In the capital city of Washington, which bears his name, there is still a celebration and parade to honor the "father of our country." Larger department stores in the U.S. hold spectacular George Washington Day sales which attract many bargain hunters.

February 12th is the actual birthday of Abraham Lincoln. The day, while never proclaimed an official national holiday, was celebrated in many states with parades and speeches honoring one of America's greatest figures. Abraham Lincoln is perhaps the greatest man ever to be President of the United States. Abraham Lincoln was President during the American Civil War, and it is due largely to his energy, vision, and will power that the Union was preserved and civil war ended after four years of fighting brother against brother.

Lincoln rose from humble origins to become the 16th President of the United States, proving that opportunity and hope exist for every American under our democratic form of government. While he was President, Abraham Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation which freed all the slaves in the South and led to the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which forbids involuntary servitude in any state or territory. Lincoln also delivered his inspiring Gettysburg address during the course of the war. This speech is considered a literary classic and provided the Union Army, which was fighting to preserve the Union, with the will to win. Abraham Lincoln endeared himself to mankind when, in that speech, he said that ".government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." President Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, while still in office, by a fanatical opposer of his promises for leniency toward the Southern States after the war.

IP Information Sheet

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Martin Luther King's Birthday honors a man of impressive moral presence who devoted his life to the fight for full citizenship rights of the poor, disadvantaged, and racially oppressed in the United States. His birthday became a legal federal holiday in 1983. Martin Luther King's birthday is celebrated on the third Monday in January.

King was born on January 15, 1929. He received a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1948 from Morehouse College, a second bachelor's degree in 1951 from Crozer Theological Seminary, and a doctorate in philosophy in 1955 from Boston University.

In 1954, King accepted his first pastorate -- the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He and his wife, Coretta Scott King, whom he had met and married in June 1953 while at Boston University, had been resident in Montgomery less than a year when Mrs. Rosa Parks defied the ordinance concerning segregated seating on city buses on December 1, 1955. King's successful organization of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, with the assistance of the Rev. Ralph Abernathy and Edward Nixon, catapulted him into national prominence as a leader of the Civil Rights Movement.

King studied the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and further developed the Indian leader's doctrine of satyagraha ("holding to the truth") or nonviolent civil disobedience. In the aftermath of Montgomery he traveled, delivered speeches, and wrote his first book in 1958 titled Stride Toward Freedom. In 1960 he accepted copastorship with his father of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and became president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Although King continued to travel and speak widely and firmly committed the SCLC to voter-registration campaigns throughout the South, his major campaigns were those in Albany, Georgia from December 1961 to August 1962, Birmingham, Alabama from April to May 1963, and Danville, Virginia in July 1963. He organized the massive March on Washington on August 28, 1963 where, in his brilliant "I Have a Dream" speech, he "subpoenaed the conscience of the nation before the judgment seat of morality." In January 1964, Time magazine chose

King "Man of the Year." He was the first black American so honored. Later that year he became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

After supporting desegregation efforts in Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1964, King concentrated his efforts on the voter-registration drive in Selma, Alabama, leading a harrowing March from Selma to Montgomery in March 1965. Soon after, a tour of the northern cities led him to assail the conditions of economic as well as social discrimination. This marked a shift in SCLC strategy, one intended to "bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible." Having begun to recognize the deeper relationships of economics and poverty to racism, King now called for a "reconstruction of the entire society, a revolution of values." Along with demands for stronger civil and voting rights legislation and for a meaningful poverty budget, King spoke out against the Vietnam War. On April 4, 1967 he told an audience that "The Great Society -- President Lyndon Johnson's antipoverty program -- has been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam."

Early in 1968 King began to plan a multiracial poor people's March on Washington to demand an end to all forms of discrimination and the funding of a \$12-billion "Economic Bill of Rights." In the midst of organizing this campaign, he flew to Memphis, Tennessee to assist striking sanitation workers. There, on April 4, 1968, King was killed by an assassin's bullet. The violent death of this man of peace brought an immediate reaction of rioting in black ghettos around the country.

Although one man, James Earl Ray, was convicted of King's murder, the question of whether he was the paid agent of conspirators has not been conclusively resolved. It is clear only that the United States was deprived of a towering symbol of moral and social progress.

IP Information Sheet

Christmas

Christmas is a Christian holiday which celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. It is observed on December 25th of each year.

Primitive Christianity considered it a significant event and important for the understanding of Christ being the son of God and the Messiah. The church did not observe a festival for the celebration of the event until the 4th century despite the beliefs about Christ that the birth stories expressed.

In Rome, under the emperor Aurelian, celebrations for the feast of the "Invincible Sun" had been held on December 25 since the year 274. The Christians picked this same date to counter those pagan festivities connected with the winter solstice.

The Eastern Church initially preferred January 6, the second time of the year associated with winter solstice. In the course of time, however, the West added the Eastern date as the feast of the Epiphany, which is a Christian festival held to celebrate the manifestation of the divine nature of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi. The West then subsequently divided the Christmas celebration between December 25, the birth of Christ and homage of the Shepherds, and January 6, the homage of the Magi.

In the traditional church calendar the pre-Christmas season of Advent was one of quiet preparation for the coming or birth of Christ. However, since the Industrial Revolution, the Christmas season has lost some of its religious fervor and has become a commercially venturesome time of the year for many business people.

In the U.S., the Christmas season is a time during which families tend to reunite and share time with one another. One will find Americans exchanging gifts between family members and friends during this joyous and festive season.

On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus, a popular myth among young children, is believed to deliver presents to everyone's home and place them under the Christmas Tree. These presents are then opened on Christmas morning. Stories are told to younger children that Santa Claus climbs down chimneys in his red suit trimmed with white fur carrying a large bag over his shoulder filled with toys and gifts and leaves presents for those who have been good throughout the year. Santa travels every Christmas Eve from his legendary home in the North Pole in a sleigh pulled by reindeer.

Special music for the season is played during the month of December before Christmas -- known as Christmas carols. Most people decorate their homes with many varied decorations during the Christmas holidays -- the more popular being ornamental lighting displays and highly decorated Christmas trees. The Christmas Tree is a tradition adopted from the Germans in the 1800's.

Many families attend church services together either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Also, many churches hold religious services on Christmas Eve beginning at midnight -- this allows families to have the entire Christmas day to be with family and friends.

Of all of the holidays, observances, and special occasions, Christmas day is by far the one which is most celebrated. This day reaches and affects practically everyone in one way or the other.

IP Information Sheet

Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving, an annual holiday in the United States, is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. The first national Thanksgiving Day, proclaimed by President George Washington, was celebrated on November 26, 1789. It was only in 1863, however, that it was made an annual holiday by President Abraham Lincoln, who named the last Thursday in November Thanksgiving Day. For three years, 1939 to 1941, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the day was celebrated on the third Thursday in November, primarily to extend the Christmas shopping season, which traditionally began after Thanksgiving. The holiday was returned to the fourth Thursday in November by Congress in 1941.

This day is set aside as the day on which the American people give thanks to God for the many blessings they have received from Him. The American custom of a day of thanksgiving began with the coming to New England in this country of the first band of English Pilgrims. Pilgrims means wanderers. The Pilgrims were wanderers from their native country of England because of religious dissensions which made it difficult for them to practice their religion in England. In the year 1620, this band of Pilgrims consisting of exactly 100 men, women and children, crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a small ship, the name of which was "mayflower," and came to America. All of America was then a wilderness inhabited by Indians.

The Pilgrims were very earnest, religious people. In England they had been known as Puritans. They declared that their worship of God was a purer form of worship than that of most of the other people in England. Because they found it difficult to practice their religion peacefully in England, a small group from the whole body of Puritans, namely, this band of 100 Pilgrims, determined to move to some unsettled place in the New World where they could live according to their religion with being disturbed.

The Pilgrims landed in December 1620 at a spot which they called Plymouth Rock, in that part of North America which later became the State of Massachusetts. During their first winter, the Pilgrims had to face many difficulties, and by the time the first winter was over, one-half of that little band of 100 Pilgrims had died of disease and hardships. But they did not give up. They built log cabin homes, cleared the land for farming, hunted wild game in the forests, and protected themselves from unfriendly Indians. In the fall of 1621, after the little colony of Pilgrims had gathered in their harvest, their governor, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to God for the bountiful harvest, and he set the fourth Thursday in November 1621 as the day. On that day the entire colony went to their church for divine services, and

after the services, they held a feast in joyful appreciation of God's blessing to them. This was the first Thanksgiving Day in America.

IP Information Sheet

Easter

Easter is one of the most important Christian holidays of the year. It is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter has its roots in the Jewish Passover, which commemorates Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Early Christians observed Easter on the same day as Passover. In the 2nd century, the Christian celebration was transferred to the Sunday following Passover if that day fell on a weekday. Originally, the Christian Easter was a unitive celebration, but in the 4th century Good Friday became a separate commemoration of the death of Christ, and Easter was devoted exclusively to the resurrection.

On the other hand, some say that Easter is derived from the pagan spring festival of the Anglo-Saxon Goddess Eostre, and many folk customs associated with Easter are of pagan origin, e.g., Easter eggs.

In the U.S., Easter is observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the first day of Spring.

Many younger children wear their best clothes on this day not only for attending church services, but to visit friends and relatives. It is customary for women and young girls to wear head pieces, referred to as Easter bonnets.

Another tradition in the United States which has been adopted is for small children to receive Easter baskets as gifts which are filled with colored eggs and assorted candies. Eggs and rabbits have become symbols of Easter. It is thought that eggs symbolize new life and rabbits symbolize the fertility of Spring because of their ability to produce many young. Generally, the smaller children participate in "Easter egg hunts" where brightly colored eggs are hidden by the older children and adults in order for the younger children to find and keep.

IP Information Sheet

All Saints Day

In the Christian church, All Saints' Day is the feast of all known and unknown Saints. It is observed on November 1 in the West. During the Middle Ages, the feast was called All Hallows' Day, giving its name to Halloween (All Hallows' Eve), the preceding day.

IP Information Sheet

Daylight Saving Time

Daylight Saving Time (DST) provides more usable hours of daylight for activities by setting clocks ahead one hour in the Spring. Although the total amount of daylight remains the same, more daylight hours are allowed for outdoor work and recreation in the late afternoon and evening.

Daylight Saving Time can also reduce power requirements for lighting. In most parts of the United States, year-round Daylight Saving Time was adopted during World War II. Now it is in effect only during that part of the year when daylight hours are the longest.

Congress fixed this period as extending, as of 1987, from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October. Daylight Saving Time was extended during 1974 and 1975 because of the U.S. energy crisis.

IP Information Sheet

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is a religious holiday, and in the Western church, it marks the first day of Lent and the seventh Wednesday before Easter. Its name comes from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of worshipers to symbolize death and sorrow for sin. In the Orthodox church, Lent begins on a Monday rather than on Ash Wednesday.

IP Information Sheet

Good Friday

Good Friday is the Christian commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ, observed on the Friday before Easter. Originally, it was a day of fasting in preparation for the unitive celebration of the death-resurrection-exaltation of Jesus. However, no liturgy was held on that day.

In the 4th century, at Jerusalem, a procession was staged from Gethsemane to the sanctuary of the cross, followed by readings about the passion. This was the beginning of the Good Friday observance as it is now known.

In the Catholic tradition, the liturgy of the day consists of reading the passion, the ceremony of the veneration of the cross, and communion from the sacrament consecrated the day before.

The service of preaching on the seven last words, of Jesuit origin, has become popular in Protestantism.

IP Information Sheet

Palm Sunday

In the Christian calendar, Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter, the sixth and last Sunday in Lent, and the first day of Holy Week. It recalls the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, a week before the Resurrection, when the people strewed palm branches in his path.

IP Information Sheet

Mothers Day

The second Sunday in May is called Mother's Day and is set aside to honor motherhood in the United States. On this day mothers all over the country are given special attention and kindness, usually including gifts, by their families.

Many people follow the custom of wearing a carnation on Mother's Day. A colored carnation means that a person's mother is living and white one indicates that a person's mother is deceased.

Mother's Day was first observed in England. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed it an annual national observance in 1915. It is a day dedicated to peace.

IP Information Sheet

Armed Forces Day

The third Saturday in May is Armed Forces Day, at which time the United States salutes all the men and women of the military services.

Military installations are usually open to the public on Armed Forces Day and special programs and events are held on land, at sea, and in the air to demonstrate and explain the purpose of various military operations.

President Harry S. Truman proclaimed Armed Forces Day. It was first celebrated in May 1950, and it replaced the three separate celebrations conducted by the Army, Navy and Air Force.

IP Information Sheet

Valentines Day

Valentine's Day is a special day observed on February 14th. On this day, people send greeting cards called valentines to members of their families, sweethearts, and friends. Many valentine cards have romantic verses while others have humorous pictures and sayings. Some people send flowers, candy, or some other gift to their wives, husbands, or sweethearts.

Different authorities believe Valentine's Day began in various ways. Some trace it to an ancient Roman festival called Lupercalia. Other experts connect it with one or more of the early Christian saints. Still others link it with an old English belief that birds choose their mates on February 14th. Valentine's Day probably came from a combination of all three sources, plus the belief that Spring is a time for lovers.

Symbols that are linked to Valentines Day are hearts and Cupid with bow and arrow.

IP Information Sheet

Election Day

Election Day in the United States is the day on which national elections for presidential electors take place. Congress established the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November as Election Day. It is a legal holiday in most states and in all territories. Many state elections are also held on this day.

Most states forbid the retail sale of liquor while the polls are open. Originally, Congress did not set a specific date for national elections. Each state could appoint its electors on any day within 34 days before the date in December is set for the convening of electors.

In 1845, Congress established Election Day to correct abuses caused by the lack of a standard election day.

IP Information Sheet

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras in French means "Fat Tuesday." Mardi Gras is also referred to as Shrove Tuesday, and is the last day of the period of carnival before Ash Wednesday, which marks the arrival of the fasting days during the Lenten Season.

Mardi Gras celebrations in the United States are most notable in New Orleans, Louisiana. This carnival period lasts approximately two weeks; however, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is the most celebrated day and is the day in which most Americans relate to Mardi Gras.

IP Information Sheet

Baseballs World Series

Baseball's World Series is a highly publicized, viewed, and anticipated yearly event. Following a regular major-league professional baseball season of at least 162 games, the American and National League champions compete in what we call the World Series to determine the best baseball team in America. The World Series is generally held in October of each year, and the competition employs the best-of-seven games to determine the winner.

Baseball, itself, is an immensely popular American game, known as the "national pastime," played between two teams of nine players each. The basic implements used in the game are a leather-covered ball, wooden bats for hitting the ball, and gloves for catching the ball. Baseball is played on a large scale in Latin America, Japan, and other places besides the United States, but it is in the United States that it thrives most both as a participant's and spectator's sport. It is played at its highest level in the United States and two Canadian cities, where 28 teams make up the American and National Leagues. Each of these two leagues have two divisions, East and West. Combined, these leagues are called major-league professional baseball.

Most ball players who reach the major leagues have worked their way up through Little League, scholastic, college, and minor-league professional ball playing. The vast majority of major-league players are American-reared, although since the 1960s the sport has seen an influx of Latin American players.

Baseball's popularity is in part a result of the fact that almost every American child plays the game at one time or another, and the lore of the game is intertwined with American life. Baseball has supplied the American culture with a wide range of legendary heroes, as well as books, magazines, movies, and songs. The game has contributed hundreds of words and phrases to the American language.

IP Information Sheet

Footballs Super Bowl

The professional teams of the National Football League (NFL) culminate their season with the Super Bowl game which is a play-off game between the winners of the American and National conferences to determine the best football team in America. This annual event is played in January and is one of the most publicized events -- the game itself is televised around the world.

Football, in its American version, is a physically tough team sport that rivals baseball as the most popular athletic event for spectators in the United States. Millions watch football games on the interscholastic, intercollegiate, and professional levels. Games are often accompanied by Marching bands, halftime shows, and alumni or fan-club gatherings -- fierce loyalties develop on the part of some spectators. On the intercollegiate and professional levels, crowds of 50,000 to 100,000 at games are common, and millions more watch football games on television.

Football is basically an autumn sport, with teams playing from 8 to 16 games, usually on successive weekends. The best of the teams then enter postseason play-offs. Many states have championships at the interscholastic high school level. The best of the college teams play in several bowl games -- the most popular being the Rose Bowl, the Sugar Bowl, the Orange Bowl, and the Cotton Bowl. Although there is no one official college championship team, the unofficial intercollegiate champion is selected by a vote from coaches, sportswriters, and broadcasters.

Despite its tremendous popularity in the United States, football has remained basically an American sport. Except for Canadians, who play the game with slightly altered rules, the game has failed to take hold elsewhere. This fact has added to the mystique of the sport's popularity in the United States.

IP Information Sheet

Groundhog Day

According to popular legend, the groundhog, or woodchuck, emerges from hibernation on Groundhog Day, February 2. People await anxiously to see if the day will be sunny or cloudy. If the day is sunny and the groundhog sees his shadow, he will return to his burrow to sleep through 6 more weeks of winter weather. On the other hand, a cloudy or overcast day signals an early Spring.

European folklore assigns this weather-predicting ability to the bear and the badger. A similar tradition where snow and dark skies presage a quick end to winter is observed in northern Europe on Candlemas Day which also falls on February 2nd. In some areas this marks the beginning of Spring planting.

IP Information Sheet

Fathers Day

Father's Day is a day where many express gratitude and appreciation by giving their fathers gifts or greeting cards.

In the United States and Canada, Father's Day is celebrated on the third Sunday in June. Some groups and organizations hold special programs to celebrate the day. Sonora Louise Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, started the U.S. observance of Father's Day in 1910.

IP Information Sheet

Flag Day

Flag day is celebrated as the day in 1777 when the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States. It is not an official national holiday, but the President proclaims a public Flag Day observance every year on June 14th.

In Pennsylvania, Flag Day is a legal holiday. On Flag Day, people in the United States display the flag on their homes, businesses, and public buildings. Flag day was first officially observed in 1877 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the selection of the flag.

IP Information Sheet

Saint Patricks Day

Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17th which is the feast day of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Saint Patrick was a missionary to Ireland in the A.D. 400's who converted the Irish to Christianity. Saint Patrick's Day is a national holiday in Ireland. It also is celebrated outside of Ireland in cities with a large number of people of Irish decent.

In Ireland, Saint Patrick's Day is primarily a religious holiday. People honor Saint Patrick by attending special religious services, enjoying family and community gatherings, and wearing shamrocks. According to legend, Saint Patrick used a shamrock to explain the idea of the Trinity to the Irish.

In the United States, Saint Patrick's Day is primarily a nonreligious holiday. Many people wear green clothing so as not to be pinched. In some of the larger cities in the U.S., parades are held on Saint Patrick's Day. Many people attend parties, and it is customary to find food and drink on this day that has been dyed or colored green.

The first Saint Patrick's Day celebration in the United States was held in Boston in 1737.

IP Information Sheet

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, Hebrew for "head of the year," is the Jewish New Year. It commemorates the creation of the world, and is celebrated in early fall (Tishri 1 by the Jewish calendar). Rosh Hashanah is a solemn occasion indicating the Day of Judgment which ushers in the penitential season that culminates ten days later on Yom Kippur.

The distinctive feature of the synagogue service on this day is the blowing of a ram's horn called a shofar. The liturgy of the day stresses the sovereignty of God and the hope that all humans will at least recognize him as Father and King.

The festival is celebrated for two days by the traditionally observant, whereas Reform Jews keep it for one day in accord with biblical law. On the afternoon of the first day it is customary to go to a river or pond and recite tashlich which is scriptural verses on repentance and forgiveness of sin.

IP Information Sheet

Hanukkah

A Jewish festival that occurs in December, the Hebrew month Kislev. Hanukkah is also spelled Chanukah, and it marks the reconsecration of the Temple of Jerusalem after its recapture from the Syrian Greeks in 165 B.C. A miracle recorded in the Talmud, which is the burning of a day's supply of pure olive oil for eight days until fresh jars of clean oil could be brought into the temple, accounts for the eight days during which candles are kindled during Hanukkah. The eight-branched candelabrum has become a symbol of the holiday.

Hanukkah was instituted by the Maccabees who were leaders of the Jews who fought against the Syrian Greeks. The Maccabees took over as the priests of the Temple and as the rulers of the Jewish state that they founded. Songs and stories associated with the holiday therefore refer to the Maccabees, particularly to Judas Maccabee, and to their victory -- "the weak over the strong, the few over the many, and those who fear Thy Name over those who desecrate it".

Hanukkah is also called the Festival of Lights, the Feast of Dedication, or the Feast of Maccabees.

IP Information Sheet

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, is celebrated in the early fall 10 days after Rosh Hashanah, the New Year (Tishri 10 of the Jewish calendar). Yom Kippur is regarded as the Sabbath of Sabbaths and is marked by fasting, confession to God of sins committed during the last year, and prayers of forgiveness. Observance begins on Yom Kippur eve with the kil nidre service of repentance.

Originally, Yom Kippur was the only day of the year when the high priest entered the inner sanctuary of the Temple (the Holy of Holies) to offer sacrifice. A goat -- the so called scapegoat -- symbolically carrying the sins of the Jewish people, was then driven into the desert.

IP Information Sheet

Passover

Passover is one of the most important Jewish festivals. Celebrated in late March or early April, it commemorates the Exodus -- the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The name Passover is interpreted in the Mishnah to refer to the statement that God would pass over the houses of the Israelites in killing the firstborn of Egypt. In the Bible the name is applied to a festival involving the sacrifice of a lamb or kid and the eating of unleavened bread which was probably an ancient Spring festival.

The Passover is celebrated for seven days; however, traditionally observant Jews add an extra day. The first and last days are full holidays when work is not to be performed. Throughout the week only unleavened bread, matzo, is eaten. The scrupulously observant abstain from all leavened food and even from nonleavened food not prepared for the festival with special care. Samaritans still perform the ancient Passover sacrifice; however, all other Jews gave up this rite when the Temple was destroyed. Instead, the first two evenings of Passover are marked by a festal meal, called the seder, at which the story of the Exodus is retold through the reading of the Haggadah and the symbols of the occasion -- unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and others -- are explained.

The Christian feast called Easter in English is called Passover in many other languages. The Passover lamb is interpreted as foreshadowing the sacrifice on the cross of Jesus, the lamb of God.