

**REFLECTIONS NO. 28 (June 7, 2021)**  
**By Jerry McKelvy**

## **HORSE-SHOES AND LUCK**



Many of you probably have a horse-shoe hanging over your door to bring good luck. The horse-shoe has been considered a lucky symbol dating back many hundreds of years. Originally, it was considered a lucky symbol for soldiers and sailors. It could often be found on tent poles, on the sides of wagons, and on gun carriages to bring good luck in battle. Admiral Nelson had great faith in the luck of the horse-shoe and had one nailed to the mast of his ship.

In looking through old newspapers on this subject, I came across several interesting things regarding horse-shoes and luck.

One article said that in order to bring good luck, the horse-shoe must be found and not purchased. That article stated that finding any piece of iron in your path is a sign of good luck. That's good to know because the other day when we were digging a few potatoes, we found a rusty iron ring which was part of a harness for a horse, probably lost many years ago by the former owner of the place while he was plowing.

An article from 1912 mentioned the number of nail holes in a horse-shoe. Seven nail holes was considered to bring the most luck because the number seven is special. There are seven days in a week, seven seas, seven continents, seven colors of the rainbow, and the number seven is mentioned frequently in the Bible. Some believe that a horse-shoe with less than seven holes means less luck and one with more than seven holes will bring more luck.

An article from 1917 mentioned three reasons why the horse-shoe is considered to bring good luck—it is shaped in a crescent, it is part of a horse, and it is made from iron. According to that article, anything in the shape of a crescent brings good luck. Iron has always been regarded as a thing that gives protection, and the horse has always been regarded as a lucky animal.

Throughout the ages, there has been much debate about how to properly hang a horse-shoe to bring good luck. Most people hang it with the ends pointing up (U) which keeps the good luck from spilling out. Others hang them with the ends pointing down so that the good luck can spill out over those who enter the door that has a horse-shoe placed above it.

I found this poem published in a newspaper in 1896 that I thought was pretty good:

### THE LUCKY HORSE-SHOE

A farmer traveling with his load  
Picked up a horse-shoe in the road  
And nailed in fast to his barn door,  
That luck might down upon him pour.  
That every blessing known in life  
Might crown his homestead and his wife  
And never any kind of harm  
Descend upon his growing farm.

But dire ill-fortune soon began  
To visit the astounded man.  
His hens declined to lay their eggs  
His bacon tumbled from the pegs  
And rats devoured the fallen legs;  
His corn that never failed before  
Mildewed and rotted upon the floor;  
His grass refused to end in hay;  
His cattle died or went astray;  
In short, all moved the crooked way.

Next spring a great drouth baked the sod  
And roasted every pea in the pod;  
The bean declared they could not grow  
So long as nature acted so;  
Redundant insects reared their brood  
To starve for lack of juicy food;  
The staves from barrel-sides went off  
As if they had the whooping cough;  
And nothing of the useful kind  
To hold together felt inclined;  
In short, it was no use to try  
While the land was in a fry.  
One morn, demoralized with grief

The farmer clamored for relief;  
And prayed right hard to understand  
What witchcraft now possessed his land.  
Why house and farm in misery grew  
Since he nailed up that "lucky" shoe.

While thus dismayed o're matters wrong,  
An old man chanced to drudge along;  
To whom he told, with wormwood tears  
How his affairs were in arrears,  
And what a desperate state of things  
A picked-up horse-shoe sometimes brings.

The stranger asked to see the shoe  
The farmer brought it into view;  
But when the old man raised his head,  
He laughed outright and quickly said,  
"No wonder skies upon you frown,  
You've nailed the horse-shoe upside down.  
You turn it around and soon you will see  
How you and Fortune will agree.

The farmer turned the horse-shoe round  
And showers began to swell the ground;  
The sunshine laughed among his grain,  
And heaps and heaps piled up the wain;  
The loft his hay could barely hold,  
His cattle did as they were told;  
His fruit trees needed sturdy props  
To hold the gathering apple crops;  
His turnip and potato fields  
Astonished all men by their yields;

Folks never saw such ears of corn,  
As in his smiling hills were born;  
His barn was full of bursting bins,  
His wife presented him with twins;  
His neighbors marveled more and more,  
To see the increase in his store.

And now the merry farmer sings,  
“There are two ways of doing things,  
And when for good luck you would pray,  
Nail up the horse-shoe the right way.

Written by James T. Fields

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Comments from readers—

1. *Pennies are made of metal; is that why they bring luck?*

*At any rate, here's a poem your horseshoe story brought to mind.*

*Feel free to share.*

*Don*

**A Thought for Your Penny – by Don Mathis**

Fortune, I did not have any  
Then I found a lonely penny  
I don't really believe in luck  
Nevertheless, I picked it up  
And Franklin's lesson I have learned  
A penny saved, a penny earned  
But more than that, I realize  
Heaven's pennies give exercise

**REFLECTIONS NO. 29 (June 14. 2021)**

**By Jerry McKelvy**

**WEDDING OMENS**

Many couples choose to get married in the month of June. The month of June is named for the Roman goddess Juno who was considered to be protective of women in all aspects of their life, especially in marriage and childbearing. That was one reason for the custom of having a June wedding.

Another possible reason, according to some, is that back in medieval times, people usually took their annual bath in May or June. They probably bathed more than once each year back then, but this was the one time of the year when did a thorough cleaning. June brides still smelled relatively fresh, but just to be on the safe side, they carried a bouquet of flowers to hide their body odor. The custom has been passed down for the bride to carry a bouquet as she walks down the aisle.

Statistics show that 10.8% of couples have June weddings. The least popular month for weddings is January.

Only 22 percent of weddings took place in a church in 2017. This is down from 41% in 2009. The main reason is more couples are being raised without religion. Some couples choose strange places to get married. There have been several cases of couples getting married in a Walmart store. One couple first met in the checkout line at a Walmart, so they chose to have their wedding in the same Walmart where they first met. Another couple got married in the garden center at a Walmart because they both worked in the garden center at that Walmart. Other strange places where couples have gotten married include in a cemetery, at a Taco Bell, a gas station, while bungee jumping, and on an airplane flight. Some people just like to be different.

There have been about 250 cases on record of identical twins marrying identical twins. That could get confusing at family reunions.

It takes a lot of planning for a formal wedding ceremony. Some couples take the easy way out and just find a justice of the peace or a preacher to tie the knot.

Many people are superstitious about many things and weddings are no exception. Here is a list of wedding omens I found in a Minnesota newspaper published in 1896.

1. The bride who finds a spider on her wedding dress may consider herself blessed.
2. The bride who dreams of fairies the night before her wedding will be thrice blessed.
3. If the groom carries a miniature horse-shoe in his pocket, he will always have good luck.
4. No bride, if she would have good luck, should bake her own wedding cake. To do so invites ill-fortune.
5. No bride or groom should be given a telegram on the way to the church. It is positively a sign of evil.
6. Ship marriages are considered anything but lucky. Get married on land or don't get married at all.
7. Don't wear an opal when getting married. Some people declare that opals are lucky. History proves the contrary.
8. If the wedding ring is dropped during the ceremony, the bride may as well wish she was unborn, for she will always have evil luck.
9. Kiss a bride right after the ceremony and before the newly-made husband has had a chance to do so and you will have excellent luck throughout the year.
10. Maidens eager to wed should give dishwater heated to the boiling point a wide berth. It means they will not marry for a long time if they attempt to cleanse dishes in water so hot.
11. Night weddings are better than none, but they are by no means the best. The bride whom the sunshine cannot fall upon is sure to experience troublesome times. If she has children, they will die young.
12. Should a bride perchance see a coffin while being driven to the railroad station prior to departing on their wedding tour, she should order the driver to turn back and start over again or else she will surely meet with bad luck.

**REFLECTIONS NO. 30 (June 21, 2021)**  
**By Jerry McKelvy**

## Old Sayings

Here's a little quiz for you this week. Can you fill in the blanks in these old sayings? These were commonly heard in our area in the old days and some people still use them today. (Answers are at the bottom)

1. Living high on the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Dark as \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The pen is mightier than the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. An idle \_\_\_\_\_ is the devil's workshop.
5. Poor as Job's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Madder than a wet \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A stitch in time saves \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Dead as a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Happy as a dead \_\_\_\_\_ in the sunshine.
10. Scarce as \_\_\_\_\_ teeth.
11. Make \_\_\_\_\_ while the sun shines.
12. Crooked as a \_\_\_\_\_ hind leg.
13. Walking in high \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Don't cry over spilled \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Finer than frog's \_\_\_\_\_.
16. A watched pot never \_\_\_\_\_.
17. It went out like Lottie's \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Don't count your \_\_\_\_\_ before they've hatched.
19. A rolling stone gather no \_\_\_\_\_;
20. You can catch more flies with honey than with \_\_\_\_\_.
21. One man's \_\_\_\_\_ is another man's treasure.
22. Don't judge a book by its \_\_\_\_\_.
23. The early bird catches the \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Don't put the \_\_\_\_\_ before the horse.
25. Don't put all your \_\_\_\_\_ in one basket.
26. Birds of a feather \_\_\_\_\_ together.
27. An \_\_\_\_\_ a day keeps the doctor away.
28. Making a mountain out of a \_\_\_\_\_.
29. What's good for the goose is also good for the \_\_\_\_\_.
30. A \_\_\_\_\_ is only as strong as its weakest link.

Answers: 1. hog; 2. pitch; 3. sword; 4. mind; 5. turkey; 6. hen; 7. nine; 8. doornail; 9. pig; 10. hen's; 11. hay; 12. dog's; 13. cotton; 14. milk; 15. hair; 16. boils; 17. eye; 18. chickens; 19. moss; 20. vinegar; 21. trash; 22. cover; 23. worm; 24. cart; 25. eggs; 26. flock; 27. apple; 28. molehill; 29. gander; 30. chain

Comments from readers—

1. Great fun, I got all but one! – Teresa

## **REFLECTIONS NO. 31 (June 28, 2021)**

**By Jerry McKelvy**

### **A Dangerous Holiday**

Each year, Fourth of July celebrations result in many serious accidents or even deaths. It would probably be safe to say that the Fourth of July is the most dangerous of our holidays.

Celebrating Independence Day became a tradition soon after the Declaration of Independence in 1776. There were parades, firing of cannons, ringing of bells, speeches, and each year the celebrations became more boisterous, especially when fireworks became more common.

In 1911, a newspaper reported that there were 57 deaths that year caused by Fourth of July celebrations. Ten were caused by tetanus and 47 from fireworks. Of those 47, twelve were children burned to death, eleven died from gunshots, nine from explosion of powder or dynamite, two from giant firecrackers, five from exploding cannons, and eight from other types of fireworks.

The American Medical Association kept records for the previous nine years (1902 to 1910) which showed 1719 deaths and 37,410 injuries from Fourth of July accidents. The most serious injuries included 130 who were completely blinded, 517 who lost one eye, 462 who lost an arm, leg, or hand, and 1624 who had lost one or more fingers.

Traffic accidents were not a problem in 1911, but that is a major cause of deaths and injuries now. The Fourth of July is by far the most dangerous holiday to be on the road. The National Safety Council estimates there will be 400 deaths and about 50,000 serious injuries from auto accidents over the holiday weekend and that most of these accidents will involve someone drinking and driving.

Boating and swimming accidents are also greater on the Fourth of July holiday. Other things that can result in a trip to the ER include dehydration, heat stroke, and food poisoning caused by leaving spoilable foods out in the heat too long.

I'm afraid many Americans may not even know why we celebrate Independence Day. Some just see it as another day off from work and a time to have a good time. It is a day worth celebrating, but remember to be extra careful this year as you celebrate. Since the Fourth of July is on a Sunday this year, many may be celebrating on Saturday, Sunday or Monday. Be especially careful with fireworks, keep your food properly refrigerated, and be careful on the road. There will be many impaired drivers out there especially in the latter part of the day and remember those law enforcement officers and emergency room doctors and nurses who have to deal with all types of emergencies on this national holiday.

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I got several comments on last week's quiz about old sayings. Several said they had never heard the saying "out like Lottie's eye". My dad used to say that a lot. If a young kid went fast asleep, he might say "He's out like Lottie's eye". I asked my dad one time who Lottie was and how did her eye go out. He didn't have an answer for that.

Most think the phrase comes from a note the criminal Clyde Barrow of Bonnie and Clyde wrote to his sister. He wrote "I'm just going on 'til they get me, then I'm out like Lottie's eye" probably referring to his death. Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker died in Louisiana in 1934 when a posse fired about 130 rounds into the car they were in while it was moving. When the news got out that Bonnie and Clyde had been killed, a large crowd gathered and people began to collect souvenirs such as shell casings and pieces of their bloody clothing. One person tried to cut off some of Bonnie's hair and another man tried to cut off a piece of Clyde's ear with a pocket knife. The bullet-ridden car was towed to a funeral parlor with the bodies still inside. The mortician had trouble embalming the bodies because of all the bullet holes.

The population of the town where this happened went from 2,000 to 12,000 in a matter of hours as people flocked to the town hoping to view the bodies of Bonnie and Clyde. Bonnie was buried in a cemetery in Dallas but her body was later moved to another cemetery due to vandalism. Clyde was also buried in Dallas in another cemetery where other members of his family are buried.

The car in which they died was later displayed at carnivals around the country until it was purchased by a man from Las Vegas for \$250,000. (Source: Wikipedia)