



Holidays and Other Disasters

John G. Rodwan Jr.

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"Holidays and Other Disasters" considers the major U.S. holidays-Easter, Christmas, Opening Day, etc.-from an atheist's perspective. It examines explicitly religious holidays, those that have a definite if not always acknowledged religious thrust (Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving) and secular holidays that had religious elements added on (like Labor Day) by way of personal stories, usually the author's own. Where other people have especially revealing holiday stories, as is the case with Jack Johnson (the first black heavyweight champion) and the Fourth of July, novelist Salman Rushdie and Valentine's Day or labor leader Eugene V. Debs and Labor Day, Rodwan tell theirs. Of course, holidays aren't about religion alone, and Holidays and Other Disasters doesn't look narrowly at them as pageants of piety. Rather, the book considers the various issues holidays raise, including race and class, and discusses other forms of expressive activity, such as literature, music and sports, along with religion and holiday rituals.

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