

Rethinking of Old Orleans

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Keeping The Record Straight

No. 3

pl. XI

Is A Matter Of Speaking

Or This Historian's Pet Peeves

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The other day I received a notice from a rather prestigious organization from outside of the county, announcing an event which they billed as the First Annual.... I was immediately both amused and amazed at the wording "First Annual." The event being planned, which will occur in the spring, is the very first one of its kind; simply first, NOT first annual. If this event occurs next year in 1990, it will then be the first annual and 1991 the second annual and so on. This year it's only the first, just plain first, that is, if you want the record straight. The dictionary lists various definitions for the word annual, such as: "covering the period of a year - occurring or performed once a year - yearly - an event that occurs yearly."

Now this organization from which I received the notice is led by a PHD and run by a large board of well-educated directors, all of whom should know better. With tongue in cheek, I suppose I shouldn't pick on them, but then, this is one of this historian's pet peeves.

Fire companies, churches, fraternal organizations, schools, businesses, civic groups, etc. all do it. Now there's nothing wrong with having a first

was a delusion. Annual means yearly like the dictionary indicates. The first time you have an event it's not annual yet. I suppose the second year you have the event it could be called the second annual and you could refer back to the first one as the first annual. But to me that too is a delusion.

As a historian, I think it's important to know what year it is and how many annuals it may be. Unless we start off counting correctly, we are always going to be counting wrong. And maybe that's where the problem begins, we just can't count!

Having just come through the holiday season, I have another pet peeve. This too, is something people say which is incorrect. That is "Christmas Eve Day" or they will say "New Year's Eve Day."

Here is what the dictionary says about eve: "1. Evening, 2. the evening of the day before a special day, 3. the period immediately preceding." Now I can accept this from my friends but when radio announcers, T.V commentators and others who should know better, say this, I'm peeved. After all, Dec. 24 is correctly known as the day before Christmas or even as the dictionary states, may be referred to as Christmas Eve all day long. If you

officially want to refer to the morning and the