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**WHY EGGS FOR EASTER?**  
 By David Gunston  
 The giving of eggs at Easter time is no chance celebration of the season. To early man an egg was the symbol of the universe, of the all-powerful work of the Supreme Divinity, and there are traces in theology—in the writings of the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and Persians of the significance of eggs at the primitive spring celebrations long before Easter had a Christian significance. Even today the natives of Hawaii and the Australian aborigines still practise certain rites in which an egg figures prominently.

Since the Christian era the egg has symbolized the Resurrection, the coming of a living thing out of an apparently dead object by breaking through the captive walls. It is clear that the older races had the same basic idea behind their egg customs, and even today we still rightly regard the egg as something of a miracle. From the smallest eggs often grow the largest creatures.

Soon after the adoption of the egg as a symbol of Christian significance it became the custom to stain Easter eggs red to commemorate the blood of Christ, and eggs thus became bound up with Paschall sacrifices and ritual.

Also, before the Reformation eggs were first eaten again on Easter Day after forty days' abstention from such rich food during Lent.

The custom of giving one another Easter eggs is very old, and the recipient of such an egg was held to partake in the rebirth of life. In mediaeval times English bishops took hard-boiled eggs into church on Easter Sunday, and at the start of the Antiphon they would begin to dance throwing their eggs to the choristers who tossed them to one another until the music ceased. At the close of the service everyone adjourned to an Easter feast of gammon and tansy pudding. Parents would send eggs to church to be blessed for Easter and sprinkled with holy water by the priests. Unhallowed eggs were thrown at one another by the children.

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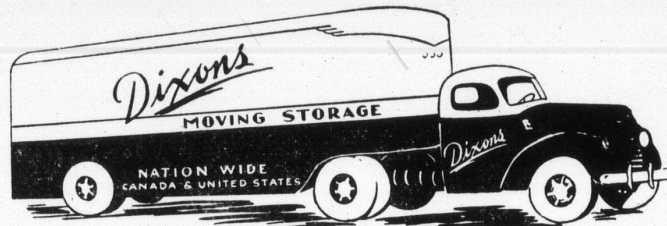
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