



Daylight Saving Time (DST)

The History of Daylight Saving Time

The idea of daylight saving in our country was first conceived by Benjamin Franklin during his sojourn as an American delegate in Paris in 1784, in an essay, "An Economical Project."

Some of Franklin's friends, inventors of a new kind of oil lamp, were so taken by the scheme that they continued corresponding with Franklin even after he returned to America.

The idea was first advocated seriously by London builder William Willett (1857-1915) in the pamphlet, "Waste of Daylight" (1907), that proposed advancing clocks 20 minutes on each of four Sundays in April, and retarding them by the same amount on four Sundays in September. As he was taking an early morning ride through Petts Wood, near Croydon, Willett was struck by the fact that the blinds of nearby houses were closed, even though the sun was fully risen.

Early British laws and lax observance

About one year after Willett began to advocate daylight saving (he spent a fortune lobbying), he attracted the attention of the authorities. Robert Pearce - later Sir Robert Pearce - introduced a bill in the House of Commons to make it compulsory to adjust the clocks. The bill was drafted in 1909 and introduced in Parliament several times, but it met with ridicule and opposition, especially from farming interests. Generally lampooned at the time, Willett died on March 4, 1915.

Following Germany's lead, Britain passed an act on May 17, 1916, and Willett's scheme of adding 80 minutes, in four separate movements was put in operation on the following Sunday, May 21, 1916. There was a storm of opposition, confusion, and prejudice. The Royal Meteorological Society insisted that Greenwich time would still be used to measure tides. The parks belonging to the Office of Works and the London County Council decided to close at dusk, which meant that they would be open an extra hour in the evening. *Kew Gardens*, on the other hand, ignored the daylight saving scheme and decided to close by the clock.

In Edinburgh, the confusion was even more marked, for the gun at the Castle was fired at 1:00 p.m. Summer Time, while the ball on the top of the Nelson monument on Calton Hill fell at 1:00 Greenwich Time. That arrangement was carried on for the benefit of seamen who could see it from the Firth of Forth. The time fixed for changing clocks was 2:00 a.m. on a Sunday.

Energy Savings

After World War I, Parliament passed several acts relating to Summer Time. In 1925, a law was enacted that Summer Time should begin on the day following the third Saturday in April (or one week earlier if that day was Easter Day). The date for closing of Summer Time was fixed for the day after the first Saturday in October.

The energy saving benefits of Summer Time were recognized during World War II, when clocks in Britain were put two hours ahead of GMT during the summer. This became known as Double Summer Time. During the war, clocks remained one hour ahead of GMT throughout the winter.

Little Known Facts about Daylight Saving Time

Births and Birthdays:

While twins born at 11:55 p.m. and 12:05 a.m. may have different birthdays, Daylight Saving Time can change birth order -- on paper, anyway. During the time change in the fall, one baby could be born at 1:55 a.m. and the sibling born ten minutes later, at 1:05 a.m. In the spring, there is a gap when no babies are born at all: from 2:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. In November 2007, Laura Cirioli of North Carolina gave birth to Peter at 1:32 a.m. and, 34 minutes later, to Allison. However, because Daylight Saving Time reverted to Standard Time at 2:00 a.m., Allison was born at 1:06 a.m.

Halloween Trick-or-Treaters:

Through 2006, Daylight Saving Time in the U.S. ended a few days before Halloween (October 31). A new law to extend DST to the first Sunday in November took effect in 2007, with the purpose of providing trick-or-treaters more light and therefore more safety from traffic accidents. For decades, candy manufacturers lobbied for a Daylight Saving Time extension to Halloween, as many of the young trick-or-treaters gathering candy are not allowed out after dark, and thus an added hour of light means a big holiday treat for the candy industry.

Chaos of Different Time:

Widespread confusion was created during the 1950s and 1960s when each U.S. locality could start and end Daylight Saving Time as it desired. One year, 23 different pairs of DST start and end dates were used in Iowa alone. For exactly five weeks each year, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were not on the same time as Washington D.C., Cleveland, or Baltimore--but Chicago was. And, on one Ohio to West Virginia bus route, passengers had to change their watches seven times in 35 miles! The situation led to millions of dollars in costs to several industries, especially those involving transportation and communications. Extra railroad timetables alone cost the today's equivalent of over \$12 million per year.

Radio Stations:

AM radio signals propagate much further at night than during the day. During daytime, more stations in neighboring areas can broadcast on the same frequency without interfering with each other. Because of this situation, there are hundreds of stations licensed to operate only in the daytime. Daylight Saving Time can affect the bottom line of these daytime-only radio stations: during parts of the year it can cause the stations to lose their most profitable time of day--the morning drive time. The gain of an hour of daylight - and thus broadcast time - in the evening does not fully compensate for the morning loss.

Voter Turnout in Elections:

Through 2006, the Daylight Saving Time period has closed on the last Sunday in October, about a week before Election Day, which is held the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The extension of Daylight Saving Time into November has been proposed as a way to encourage greater voter participation, the theory being that more people would go to the polls if it was still light when they returned home from work.

Amtrak:

To keep to their published timetables, trains cannot leave a station before the scheduled time. So, when the clocks fall back one hour in October, all Amtrak trains in the U.S. that are running on time stop at 2:00 a.m. and wait one hour before resuming. Overnight passengers are often surprised to find their train at a dead stop and their travel time an hour longer than expected. At the spring Daylight Saving Time change, trains instantaneously become an hour behind schedule at 2:00 a.m., but they just keep going and do their best to make up the time.

Violent Crime:

A study by the U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration found that crime was consistently less during periods of Daylight Saving Time than during comparable standard time periods. Data showed violent crime down 10 to 13 percent. It is clear that for most crimes where darkness is a factor, such as muggings, there are many more incidents after dusk than before dawn, so light in the evening is most welcome.

Indiana:

Indiana has long been a hotbed of Daylight Saving Time controversy. Historically, the state's two western corners, which fall in the Central Time Zone, observed DST, while the remainder of the state, in the Eastern Time zone, followed year-round Standard Time. An additional complication was that five southeastern counties near Cincinnati and Louisville unofficially observed DST to keep in sync with those cities. In April 2005, Indiana legislators passed a law that implemented Daylight Saving Time statewide beginning on April 2, 2006.

Oil Conservation:

Following the 1973 oil embargo, the U.S. Congress extended Daylight Saving Time to 8 months, rather than the normal six months. During that time, the U.S. Department of Transportation found that observing Daylight Saving Time in March and April saved the equivalent in energy of 10,000 barrels of oil each day - a total of 600,000 barrels in each of those two years.

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