

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading on the page.
3. Write a one-page reflection in your WN

The History of Halloween

Source: <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/holidays/halloweenhistory.htm>

Halloween is not exactly a typical holiday. Other holidays, like Christmas and Shavuot, celebrate an event. Halloween celebrates a lot of things, including the lives of people who aren't with us anymore.

The history of Halloween is not entirely a clear one. Here's how (we think) it started:

Many hundreds of years ago, a people called the Celts lived in Europe and on the British Isles. The Celts believed that the souls of the dead visited Earth on the last day of October. They had a festival in honor of these souls of the dead, and they called it Samhain.

In time, the Roman Empire conquered the Celts and took over some of their beliefs as well. This included Samhain. The Romans combined it with their own festivals. And since the Roman Empire spread across a great part of the known world, the idea that the souls of the dead visited Earth on the last day of October spread far and wide.

Many ideas from the Roman days still survive in the United States and in other Western countries. Halloween is one of them.

But how did we get the name Halloween?

In the 8th Century, the Catholic Church declared November 1 to be All Saints' Day. The church calendar had a number of days honoring saints already. November 1 was picked to be the day to honor all saints who didn't already have a day named in their honor. And the mass that the Catholic Church celebrated on November 1 was called Allhallowmas. This meant "mass of all the hallowed [saintly people.]" It was commonly called "All Hallows' Day." And somewhere along the line, the night before became known as Allhallowe'en, which was short for "evening before All Hallows' Day." It was then shortened to what we now call it, Halloween.

One last question: Why do people dress up as ghosts, goblins, vampires, and other scary creatures? The people who started all this Halloween business many years ago believed that if they appeared scary, they would scare away the spirits of the dead who were roaming the earth on All Hallows' Eve. These people also carried food to the edge

of town and left it there, hoping the spirits would eat that food and not come raid the village.

The History of the Jack-O Lantern

Jack, it seems, was a bad man. He kept all his money to himself. He wouldn't help people for all of his life.

When Jack died, he wasn't allowed into Heaven because he was such a miser: a person who wouldn't share his money.

It seems that Jack also had played tricks on the Devil, who wouldn't let him into hell, either. Jack was stuck. He had to walk the earth, holding a lantern, until Judgment Day.

This is the story that has been handed down to us by the Irish people who came to America in the 1800s. They carved their turnips into the face of "Jack-of-the-lantern" to remind themselves what happened to people who were misers. And in the fall, pumpkins are much easier to find than turnips.

So that's why Americans today carve their pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns.

Possible WN topics:

Recall a memorable Halloween.

Research the origins of other holidays