

ENTERTAINMENT

The complete history of Halloween

by tasha mayers

staff writer

Trick-or-treating, jack-o-lanterns, and witches are just a few of the symbols associated with the ancient festival of Halloween.

The origins of the Halloween celebration can be traced back to the time of the Celts, more than 2000 years ago, in which they celebrated a fall harvest and new year festival honoring the lord of death, Samhain. The Celts believed that Samhain would allow the souls of the dead to return home on October 31—the day before their new year. The Druids—the priests and teachers—took part in sacrificing crops, animals, and even humans as part of the celebration. The people took part in lighting

hearth fires, fortune telling—based on the examination of the remains of the sacrificed animals and dressing up in costumes made from the animal heads and skins.

When the Romans conquered the Celts in A.D. 43, they combined two of their festivals with the Celtic festival of Samhain. Faralia, one of the Roman festivals, was held in honor of the dead while the other one, honored Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees. It is believed that the latter is the source of the association of apples with Halloween.

Religion also plays a part in the origin of Halloween. In A.D. 800's, the church set aside November 1 as being All Saint's Day. This was done so that people could

continue their pagan customs, but now they would be celebrated as part of a Christian holy day. The Allhallowmas was the mass said on that day, and the evening before became known as All Hallow'een of Halloween.

Halloween is a day with many legends associated with its symbols.

For instance, according to Irish legend, the jack-o-lantern got its name from a man named Jack who could not enter heaven because he was a miser and could not enter hell because he played jokes on the devil, thus, he was doomed to walk the earth with his lantern until Judgement Day.

Trick-or-treating had its origins in Ireland. People begged for money and

food in a parade honoring one of their gods, Muck Olla. The leader of the parade dressed in a costume consisting of a white robe and an animal head mask.

The holiday is celebrated a little bit differently in each region.

In England, it is known as Nutcrack Night or Snap Apple Night, in which the families sit by the fire and tell stories while eating apples and nuts.

England is also considered the birthplace for the tradition of bobbin' for apples.

In the United States, the celebration need not be described because of the fact that it is and should be familiar to all of us.

Happy Halloween!



UNIVERSITY DANCE THEATRE — pictured are Choreographer Winston Hemsley and dancer Eliane Vivance. See Fine Arts briefs on page 11.



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