



Name: _____

THE HISTORY OF JACK-O'-LANTERNS



Jack-o'-lanterns are one of the most popular symbols of Halloween, but do you know where they come from? The history of jack-o'-lanterns goes back hundreds of years to an old Irish legend and a special vegetable that wasn't even a pumpkin!

The tradition of carving jack-o'-lanterns started in Ireland. According to an old Irish myth, there was a man named Stingy Jack. He was known for being a tricky and clever man who liked to play tricks on people. Because of all the tricks and mischief he caused during his life, Jack was forced to wander the world in darkness. Legend says Jack was given a single glowing coal to light his way. Jack put the coal inside a carved-out turnip and used it as a lantern. People began calling him "Jack of the Lantern," which was later shortened to "jack-o'-lantern." In Ireland and Scotland, people started carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes to ward off Stingy Jack and other wandering spirits on Halloween night.

When immigrants from Ireland and Scotland came to America, they brought this tradition with them. However, in America, they found pumpkins, which were larger and much easier to carve than turnips or potatoes. Pumpkins became the new choice for making jack-o'-lanterns.

Today, carving jack-o'-lanterns is a fun Halloween tradition for people all around the world. Families carve funny, spooky, or creative faces into pumpkins, place a candle or light inside, and use them to decorate their homes. While the story of Stingy Jack may not be as well known, the tradition of making jack-o'-lanterns lives on every Halloween.

1. Where did the tradition of carving jack-o'-lanterns start? _____

2. Why was Stingy Jack forced to wander around in the dark? _____

3. What vegetables were carved before pumpkins were used? _____
