

The **History** of the **JACK O' LANTERN**



Does your family carve a pumpkin for Halloween? If so, then you can thank the Irish for this tradition. Actually, the custom began with a turnip. People would hollow out turnips and place lighted candles inside their “Jack’s Lanterns” to scare off the evil spirits. When the Irish came to America they discovered pumpkins, which were more plentiful than turnips, and they used them as substitutes. For a fun activity use the turnip coloring page and make your own Jack’s Lantern or carve a turnip with adult help.

The Tale of the Jack’s Lantern

As the tale is told, a man named Jack, who was notorious as a drunkard and a trickster, tricked Satan into climbing a tree. Jack then carved an image of a cross in the tree’s trunk, trapping Satan up in the top of the tree. Jack made a deal with Satan that, if he would never tempt him again, he would let him down out of the tree.

The deal was made and Satan climbed down out of the tree and went about his business leaving Jack to live his life of drunkenness and tricks.

According to the tale, after Jack died, he was denied entrance to Heaven because of his evil ways. Satan then denied Jack entrance into hell because he had tricked him, but threw a single ember to Jack to help light his way through the frigid darkness of limbo. Jack caught the hot ember in the turnip he was munching on and that became Jack’s lantern. So, Jack wanders through eternity in limbo with only one ember in a hollowed out turnip to light his way.