



Jack-O-Lantern

The Irish legend of “Stingy Jack” When the Devil came to claim him, Jack, according to the story, invited the Devil to have a drink with him. Being stingy, Jack did not want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to pay for their drinks. Once the devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put the coin into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the devil from changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the devil under the condition that he would not bother Jack for a year and that, should Jack die, he would not claim his soul.

The next year, Jack again tricked the devil into climbing into a tree to pick an apple for him before he left this world. While the devil was up the tree Jack carved the sign of the cross into the tree so that the devil could not come down until he promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years.

Soon after, Jack died. God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The devil, keeping his word would not claim his soul and allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the earth ever since. Hence Jack of the lantern became Jack-O-Lantern.

The tradition migrating to America, the native pumpkin became the preferred container of Jacks night light as he is doomed to roam the netherworld between good and evil for eternity. You’ll see Jack at Halloween time when the veil between the living and the dead becomes porous and permeably thin.

