History of Halloween

Ancient – shades – throughout ancient history, shades meant the spirit of a dead

person residing in the underworld.

Ancient – carving gourds into elaborately decorated lanterns dates back thousands

of years to Africa

800-450 BC – the ancient Celts believed that wearing masks would ward off evil

Spirits

Pre-1st Century – The Festival of Samhain is a celebration of the end of the Gaelic

harvest season.

8AD – The original werewolf of classical mythology, Lycaon, a king of Arcadia who

was turned into a ravenous wolf by Zeus.

1st Century – Bonfires played a major role in the Festival of Samhain. Celebrants

wore costumes, mostly skins and animal heads, and danced around bonfires.

1st Century – Gaels believed that the border between this world and the

otherworld became thin on Samhein. Animals and plants were dying and it

allowed the dead to reach back through the veil that separated them from

the living.

34 AD – Romans had conquered much of Celtic territory. Two Roman festivals

were combined with the Celtic celebration of Samhain

8th Century – The festival of All Saints Day established to celebrate all saints and

martyrs. The pope was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead

with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday.

8th Century – Saint Boniface declared that belief in the existence of witches was

un-Christian

1000AD – The three Catholic celebrations: the eve of All Saints, All Saints Day, and

All Souls Day were called Hallowmas

1048 AD – The Catholic church made November 2nd All Souls Day, a day to honor

the dead

13th Century – Carved turnips in Ireland and Scotland are used as candle lanterns in

windows to ward off harmful spirits

14th Century – Witch hunts first appeared in large numbers in southern France and

Switzerland. Many believed that witches avoided detection by turning

themselves into cats

14th Century – Soul cakes were given out to soulers (mainly consisting of children

and the poor) who would go from door to door on Hallowmas singing and

saying prayers for the dead.

1431 – Count Dracula Vlad III the Impaler, Prince of Wallachia lived

16th Century – Halloween was officially used as part of the English language

1692 – Salem witch trials

1734 – First known use of the word vampire

19th Century – Children disguised in costumes going door to door for food and

coins was traditional at Halloween in Scotland and Ireland

1818 – Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein novel

1827 – Jane C. Loudon’s The Mummy novel

1846 – The Irish Potato Famine brings Irish Catholics to America, along with their

Haloween traditions.

1866 – The Jack-o-lantern is first associated with Halloween

1897 – Bram Stocker’s Dracula novel

1908 – Candied apples invented by William W. Kolb

1931 – Boris Karloff stars in Frankenstein movie

1931 – Bella Lugosi stars in Dracula movie

1932 – Boris Karloff stars in The Mummy

1934 – the earliest know use of the term “Trick or Treat”

1978 – Halloween movies begin the run

Present – Halloween is estimated as a 6.9 billion dollar industry