MADE WITH LITTLE STORYBOOK

Halloween, Then and Now

Walk through a museum of real objects and discover how one autumn holiday grew, traveled, and changed.



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CHAPTER 1

Autumn Gatherings and a Changing Calendar

Come on a pretend museum visit with a girl and her grandmother. The walk is make-believe, but every object here is real! Turnips, pumpkins, old newspapers, and costumes are all waiting. Let's discover how Halloween grew and changed, bit by bit.

A Night Deep in Autumn

Halloween comes on October 31. By then, autumn is deep. Think about walking home in late October. In many places, the sun sets earlier each week. Evenings grow darker. The air turns chilly, so you zip up your coat. Leaves crunch under your shoes, and many trees stand bare. Long ago, people noticed these changes too. A dark, cool evening felt like a good time to gather indoors with family and neighbors.

IN THIS PICTURE

The same farm in early autumn and on a darker, cooler October 31.





Harvest In, Winter on Its Way

Picture a farm family long ago in Ireland or Scotland. All summer, they grew food. Then came harvest, the time to gather crops from the fields. Turnips, cabbages, and grain went into the shed. Winter was coming! Some people held special gatherings as the seasons turned. One old festival was called Samhain. You say it like "SOW-in." Many people think all of Halloween came from Samhain. Actually, only some roots connect to it.



IN THIS PICTURE *An evening turns to morning as a long name folds up shorter.*

A Long Name Gets Squeezed Short

Look at the two days in this picture. November 1 is All Saints' Day. It is a church day to remember very good, holy people called saints. "Hallow" is an old word for saint. "Eve" means the evening before. So October 31 was called All Hallows' Eve. What a mouthful! Over time, people squeezed it shorter, like folding an accordion. It became Hallowe'en. Later, the little mark dropped away. Now we say Halloween.



IN THIS PICTURE *Layers of Halloween history stack up inside one museum case.*

Halloween Grew Like a Layer Cake

Did Halloween have one birthday? Not really! It grew more like a layer cake. Grandma points to the bottom layer: old autumn harvest gatherings. On top sits the name All Hallows' Eve. Next come turnip lanterns and guising, which means dressing up to visit neighbors. The top layer holds pumpkins and parties. Each layer came at a different time. Something people do again and pass along is a tradition. Traditions pile up and change.

Clues Hiding in Old Newspapers

How do we know about Halloween long ago? We look for clues! Old newspapers are great clues. A huge library in the United States, called the Library of Congress, keeps very old papers. Some come from the 1800s. That is more than 100 years ago, back when your great-great-grandparents were young. These papers tell about Halloween stories and parties. A real thing from the past that teaches history is an artifact.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Grown-ups searching old newspapers try spellings like "Hallowe'en" and "All Hallow Eve," because people long ago wrote the name in different ways.

IN THIS PICTURE
Yellowed old newspapers rest safely behind glass, with one party scene enlarged.





CHAPTER 2

Lanterns and Costumes on the Move

Long ago, many families sailed from Ireland and Scotland across a huge ocean to North America. They packed clothes and pots. They also packed something you cannot hold in your hands: their traditions. Traditions are things people do again and again and pass along. In new places, those traditions began to change. Let's follow them across the sea!

Wait, That Lantern Is a Turnip?

Look closely behind the glass. Is that a pumpkin? Nope! It is a turnip, a lumpy root vegetable that grows under the ground. In Ireland and Scotland, some people made lanterns from turnips. A lantern is a holder for a light. This one is an artifact, which means a real object that helps us learn about the past. It is a model kept by the National Museum of Ireland. It shows a lantern people in County Donegal remembered from around 1900.

> **WOW FACTS**
> The museum got this turnip lantern model in 1943. That is more than 80 years ago!

IN THIS PICTURE
A pale turnip lantern model rests safely behind museum glass, far from any flame.



IN THIS PICTURE
A small turnip lantern from then sits beside a big pumpkin from now.



Why Did Pumpkins Win the Job?

Many people think pumpkins took over because America had no turnips. But actually, turnips grew there too! Pumpkins were just handy. In North America, they grew big, and there were lots of them. A big pumpkin also has plenty of room for a face. So people adapted the tradition. Adapt means changing something so it works in a new place. It is like playing tag at a new park. Same game, new hiding spots!

Knock, Knock! Who's in Disguise?

In Scotland, children dressed up in shawls, hats, and masks. Then they visited their neighbors' homes. Nobody could guess who they were! This was called guising, because the children were in disguise. The children were called guisers. At the door, a guiser might sing a song, say a rhyme, or tell a joke. A neighbor might give them apples or nuts. The girl claps when she sees it. Does it remind you of anything?

IN THIS PICTURE
Scottish guisers in homemade costumes share a rhyme at a neighbor's cozy door.



IN THIS PICTURE

Children in early-1900s costumes stroll a city street on a chilly November day.



Costumes on Thanksgiving? Really!

Here is a surprise. Traditions do not always travel in a straight line. Sometimes they hop sideways! Around 1910, in parts of the United States, some children dressed up on Thanksgiving. That is a different holiday, in late November. They wore baggy grown-up coats, paper hats, and masks. Then they visited neighbors. So dressing up was not only a Halloween thing. People mixed and moved customs like puzzle pieces.

Wow Wall of Real Evidence

1. A real museum treasure can be a turnip lantern! The National Museum of Ireland keeps a model of one from County Donegal.
2. In Scotland, a turnip lantern had a funny nickname. People called it a tumshie.
3. Old newspapers are evidence too. Some printed Halloween stories more than 100 years ago, like papers from 1861 and 1899.
4. Around 1910, some children in the United States dressed up and visited neighbors on Thanksgiving, not Halloween.





3

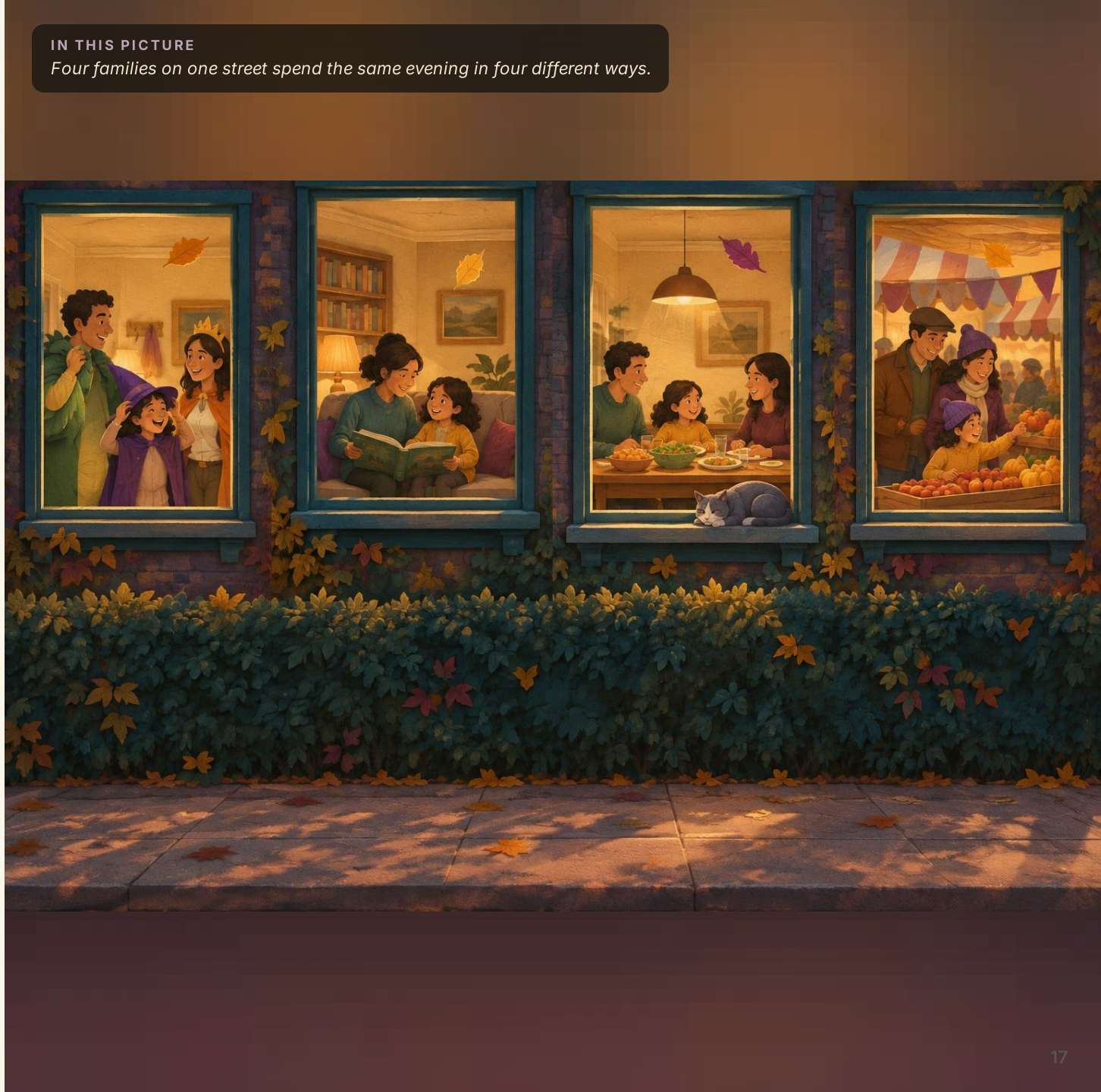
CHAPTER 3

How Families Celebrate Now

Our museum walk has reached the very last room. It is bright and busy! Today, many people dress up, go to parties, decorate, and share stories. These are new layers on a very old tradition that keeps changing. Let's peek inside!

Four Windows, Four Different Evenings

Look at four windows on one street, on the same October night. One family tries on costumes. One reads a storybook on the sofa. One eats a cozy dinner, just like any other night. One visits a harvest festival. Many people think every family does Halloween the same way. But actually, families choose differently. It depends on where they live, what they believe, and what feels comfortable. Some families do not celebrate at all. Every choice deserves kindness and respect.



IN THIS PICTURE

The same porch on Halloween night and the next morning, with a photo album.



What Stays After the Pumpkins Go?

At midnight, October turns into November. The next morning, grown-ups take the pumpkins and paper garlands down. The porch looks plain again. But some things stay. Photos stay. Memories stay. Stories about the buzzing bee costume or the funny dragon stay too. And next year? The tradition will change a little again. It is like a story that grows a bit each time someone tells it.

> **WOW FACTS**
> November 1 is All Saints' Day. That is why the night before was called All Hallows' Eve, the name that became Halloween!

TRY IT!

Then or Now? You Be the Expert

Traditions change as people carry them along, so can you sort these museum treasures into Then and Now?

1. Look at all the paper treasures floating around the sofa.
2. Point to the things from long ago. Which basket holds the 'Then' objects?
3. Now point to the things from today. Which basket holds the 'Now' objects?
4. Hunt for the tiny painted leaf. Where did it land?
5. Ask a grown-up to read the quiz at the back of the book with you, and talk about your answers together.

Do this together with a grown-up.



Check your wonder

1 **Did Halloween begin on one single birthday?**

- **A.** Yes, someone invented it on one day long ago
- **B.** No, many customs piled up over time like layers
- **C.** Yes, it started the day pumpkins were first grown

2 **Where does the name Halloween come from?**

- **A.** From All Hallows' Eve, the night before All Saints' Day
- **B.** From an old word for pumpkin
- **C.** From the name of a famous Scottish guiser

3 **Why did pumpkins become the popular lantern in North America?**

- **A.** Because turnips could not grow there at all
- **B.** Because people were not allowed to carve turnips
- **C.** Because pumpkins were big and plentiful, so people adapted the tradition

4 **Which of these is true about how families celebrate Halloween?**

- **A.** Every family celebrates it the very same way
- **B.** Families celebrate in different ways or not at all, and that deserves respect
- **C.** Only families in Scotland are allowed to celebrate

ANSWERS 1-B 2-A 3-C 4-B

1. Halloween grew slowly, as people from different times and places added customs layer by layer. 2. All Hallows' Eve was the evening before November 1, and that name slowly became Halloween. 3. People changed the old turnip lantern custom so it fit their new home, and big pumpkins worked well. 4. Some families dress up, some do other things, and some skip it, and every choice is okay.

New words

Tradition
Something people do again and again and pass along, like a favorite family game.

Adapt
To change something a little so it works in a new place or time.

Harvest
The time when people gather food crops from fields and gardens.

Samhain
An old festival in Ireland and Scotland held as harvest time turned toward winter. You say it like "SOW-in."

All Hallows' Eve
The evening before All Saints' Day on November 1. Its name slowly became Halloween.

All Saints' Day
A Christian feast day on November 1 when some churches remember very good, holy people.

Lantern
A holder for a light. In this book, old lanterns stay unlit behind glass.

Guising
A Scottish custom of dressing in disguise and visiting neighbors, often with songs or rhymes.

Artifact
A real object from the past that helps us learn history.

Museum case
A safe glass box that lets you look closely without touching.

Where we looked

We checked trusted places on the web, like the National Museum of Ireland, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Library of Congress, to make sure every fact is true.

Search Strategies & Selected Articles - Halloween: Topics in Chronicling America - Research Guides at Library of Congress
guides.loc.gov

CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: All Saints' Day
newadvent.org

Ghost turnip | National Museum of Ireland
source.museum.ie

Masking and Mumming for the Holidays, Thanksgiving Style! | Folklife Today
blogs.loc.gov

Ireland: The Home Of Halloween | Samhain In Ireland | Ireland.ie
api.ireland.ie

Samhainn and the Scottish traditions of Hallowe'en - Historic Environment Scotland Blog
blog.historicenvironment.scot

Now you know Halloween grew like layers, from turnip lanterns and guising to pumpkins and parties. Traditions keep changing as people carry them to new places. What new layer might your family add someday?

THE END

Which tradition will your family carry and change next?

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