

## Obituary for Jack O' Lantern

- Richard Paul Jones



*Author's Note: Halloween is a whimsical holiday that is celebrated on October 31 in the U.S., U.K., Ireland, Canada, New Zealand, parts of Australia, and in some Latin American countries. It is also known as All Hallows Eve, All Saints Eve, and in Spanish as Noche de las Brujas (Night of the Witches). Irish immigrants brought the holiday to North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The holiday is traditionally observed by children dressing up in “spooky” costumes and going house-to-house, “trick-or-treating”, or to parties where they play games, tell ghost stories, visit make-believe haunted houses, or carve jack-o-lanterns from pumpkins. In recent years, some adults enjoy costume parties as well. The following mock obituary is one of those “spooky” stories.*

One of our most revered citizens, Jack O'Lantern, left all of us poor mortals in his wake last Tuesday night when he went to the big pumpkin farm in the sky – or did he? Mr. O'Lantern has raised pumpkins on his 246-acre farm for as long as anyone can remember – for at least as long as the county has kept farm records.

He lived alone, and could always be spotted among his pumpkins by passers-by – happily planting or weeding or watering or harvesting his precious pumpkins and always waving to everyone and sharing his joy through a broad smile. Everyone who met Mr. O'Lantern said he especially loved to see the smiling faces of little children when they came to see his big, orange pumpkins.

It is very likely that every person who is alive today – or who has lived anytime in the last two or three hundred years has experienced the sheer joy of carving a fanciful face on one of Jack O'Lantern's pumpkins.



Courtesy of Wikipedia

On Halloween night, when the harvest moon was full and bright, Mr. O'Lantern hefted his largest and most perfect pumpkin into his old wooden wheelbarrow and placed it beside a roaring bonfire he had built in the nearly empty field. As he began to carve a scary face upon the giant pumpkin, the wolves began to howl and a powerful wind swirled faster and faster with each cut of his long, sharp knife.

When he was satisfied with his handiwork, Mr. O'Lantern placed a large candle inside the new jack-o-lantern, and at that very instant, a streak of lightning flashed downward to light the candle, and was followed by a violent crash of thunder that seemed to rumble endlessly through the valley.

A neighbor says that after the lightning flash, Jack O'Lantern was no longer sitting there in the field, and since he has not been seen since, he is presumed to have passed on. But others just smile and say that when the spring rains come, passers-by will again be able to see him in the field, happily planting another season's Halloween joy.