

# THE INDO-CANADIAN

## BY JOAN MAYO

NEW COMERS TO OUR COUNTRY MUST FIND SOME OF OUR CUSTOMS VERY STRANGE. ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN IS THE ANNUAL HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION. THE CUSTOM OF DRESSING UP IN STRANGE COSTUMES AND GOING DOOR TO DOOR ASKING FOR CANDIES AND TREATS.

HALLOWEEN STEMS FROM THE ANCIENT PAGAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL AND THE FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD.

THE CELTIC FESTIVAL OF SAMHAIN, THE CELTIC LORD OF DEATH, IS PROBABLY THE SOURCE OF THE PRESENT DAY HALLOWEEN CELEBRATIONS. THIS CELEBRATION MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON OF COLD, DARKNESS AND DECAY. THE CELTS LIVED MORE THAN 2000 YEARS AGO IN WHAT IS NOW GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND AND FRANCE. THE CELTS BELIEVED THAT SAMHAIN ALLOWED THE SOULS OF THE DEAD TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES ON OCT. 31 AT THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR. THE DRUIDS WHO WERE THEIR <sup>PRIESTS</sup> ~~PRIESTS~~ AND TEACHERS ORDERED THE PEOPLE TO PUT OUT THEIR HEARTH FIRES ON THAT DAY. THE DRUIDS THEN BUILT A HUGE NEW YEAR BON FIRE WHERE THEY BURNED CROPS AND ANIMALS AS SACRIFICES. AND THE CEREMONIES THE PEOPLE RE-LIT THEIR HEARTH FIRES FROM THE BON FIRE.

IN THE YEAR 800 A.D. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ESTABLISHED ALL SAINTS DAY ON NOV. 1 SO THAT PEOPLE COULD CONTINUE A FESTIVAL THEY HAD CELEBRATED BEFORE BECOMING CHRISTIANS. THE MASS THAT WAS SAID ON THAT DAY WAS CALLED ALL-HALLOW-MASS. FROM THE WORD HALLOW WHICH MEANS HOLY. THE EVENING BEFORE THE MASS BECAME KNOWN AS ALL HALLOW-EVEN OR HALLOWEEN. IN THIS WAY THEY MADE THEIR OLD PAGAN CUSTOM PART OF THIS CHRISTIAN HOLY DAY.

SOME OF OUR OTHER HALLOWEEN CUSTOMS ALSO CAME FROM THE CELTS. IN IRELAND PEOPLE BEGGED FOR FOOD IN A PARADE THAT HONOURED MUCH ALLA, A GOD.

IN SCOTLAND PEOPLE PARADED THROUGH VILLAGES CARRYING TORCHES. THEY LIT HUGE BON FIRES ON HILLSIDES TO DRIVE AWAY WITCHES AND OTHER EVIL SPIRITS.

JACK-O-LANTERNS, HOLLOWED OUT PUMPKINS WITH A FACE CUT INTO ONE SIDE, CAME FROM IRELAND. ACCORDING TO IRISH LEGEND, JACK-O-LANTERNS WERE NAMED FOR A MAN CALLED JACK WHO COULD NOT ENTER HEAVEN BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN SUCH A MISER. HE COULD NOT ENTER HELL EITHER, BECAUSE HE HAD PLAYED JOKE ON THE DEVIL. AS A RESULT, JACK HAD TO WALK THE EARTH WITH HIS LANTERN UNTIL JUDGEMENT DAY.

PEOPLE ONCE BELIEVED THAT GHOSTS ROAMED THE EARTH ON HALLOWEEN. THEY ALSO THOUGHT THAT ALL WITCHES MET ON OCT. 31ST TO WORSHIP THE DEVIL. THESE SUPERNATURAL BEINGS REMAIN SYMBOLS OF HALLOWEEN.

DURING THE EARLY 1800'S MANY SETTLERS CAME HERE FROM ENGLAND AND OTHER CELTIC REGIONS AND THEY BROUGHT THEIR VARIOUS CUSTOMS WITH THEM.