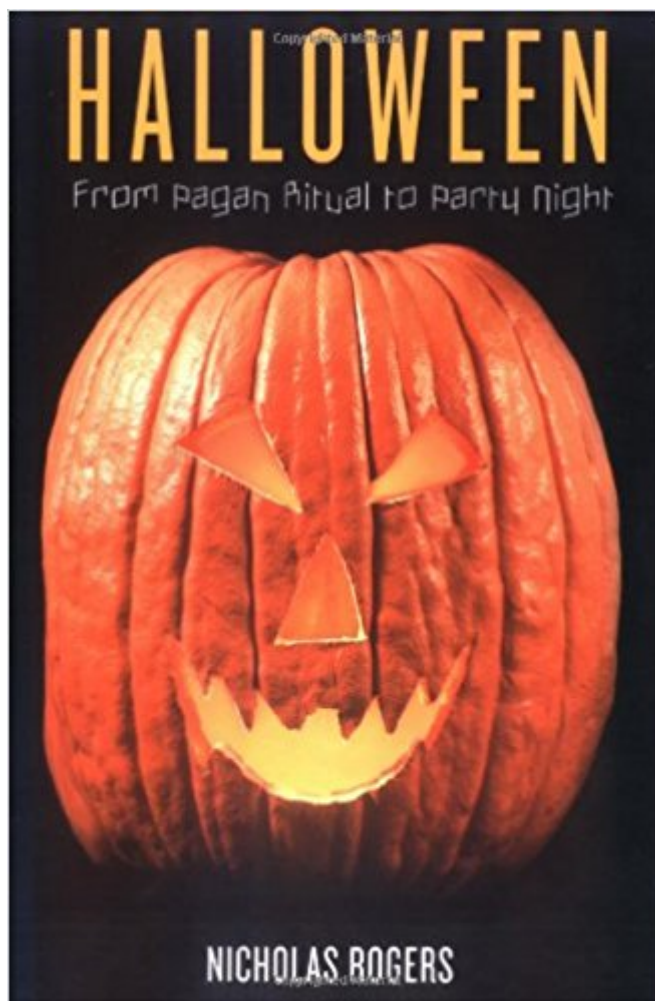




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Halloween: From Pagan Ritual To Party Night



Synopsis

Boasting a rich, complex history rooted in Celtic and Christian ritual, Halloween has evolved from ethnic celebration to a blend of street festival, fright night, and vast commercial enterprise. In this colorful history, Nicholas Rogers takes a lively, entertaining look at the cultural origins and development of one of the most popular holidays of the year. Drawing on a fascinating array of sources, from classical history to Hollywood films, Rogers traces Halloween as it emerged from the Celtic festival of Samhain (summer's end), picked up elements of the Christian Hallowtide (All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day), arrived in North America as an Irish and Scottish festival, and evolved into an unofficial but large-scale holiday by the early 20th century. He examines the 1970s and '80s phenomena of Halloween sadism (razor blades in apples) and inner-city violence (arson in Detroit), as well as the immense influence of the horror film genre on the reinvention of Halloween as a terror-fest. Throughout his vivid account, Rogers shows how Halloween remains, at its core, a night of inversion, when social norms are turned upside down, and a temporary freedom of expression reigns supreme. He examines how this very license has prompted censure by the religious Right, occasional outrage from law enforcement officials, and appropriation by Left-leaning political groups. Engagingly written and based on extensive research, Halloween is the definitive history of the most bewitching day of the year, illuminating the intricate history and shifting cultural forces behind this enduring trick-or-treat holiday.

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press (October 31, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195168968

ISBN-13: 978-0195168969

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.4 x 5.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.3 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #635,408 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Holidays](#) #367 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Fairy Tales](#) #24577 in [Books > History > World](#)

Customer Reviews

If America is a melting pot, then Halloween is the stew that simmers in our national cauldron. In this

fascinating study, Rogers shows how the holiday is a hodgepodge of ancient European pagan traditions, 19th-century Irish and Scottish celebrations, Western Christian interpretations of All Souls' Day and thoroughly modern American consumer ideals. At its heart, he says, Halloween is a celebration of the inversion of social codes-children have power over adults, marauders can make demands of established homeowners and anyone may assume a temporary disguise. Canadian professor Rogers is a fine cultural historian, who carefully sifts through complex social and religious data to tease out meanings and trajectories. One excellent chapter illuminates Halloween and Hollywood, while a chapter entitled Border Crossings discusses Halloween observance among non-Anglo populations in North America, including Mexico's "Dia de los Muertos." Rogers's is the best study to date of the history and growing significance of Halloween. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"The best work so far on this increasingly important holiday."--Publishers Weekly
"Performs the heroic service of taking all the stuff in stores seriously, as instruments in the creation of a new unreligious holiday of some significance, if the retailers are to be believed.... They say that the devil is in the details, and Rogers is a connoisseur of delicious tidbits of macabre."--New York Times Book Review
"Halloween is a rich mix of historical detail and keen cultural observation about the holiday in North America. He reaches far back to the festival's pagan roots and follows its development into a unique celebration of liminality, cultural borrowing, and outrageous invention. Halloween is surely an important contribution to a growing literature that takes seriously our moments of play."--Penne Restad, author of Christmas in America: A History
"This book paints its subject in very broad strokes, giving us a glimpse of an increasingly significant holiday over a vast expanse of space and time. How delightful, too, to read about an event through a North American, rather than strictly American perspective."--Jack Kugelmass, author of Masked Culture: The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade

This is straight-up social history, tracking the various incarnations of the holiday we call Halloween through the ages. It's fascinating. Like all social history. Why we do the silly things we do and how we do them. I knew that in the 20's and 30's the pranks were more rowdy than now, but not why, until I read this book. I didn't know where the odd-ball spin-off of "devil's night" or "hell night" as we call it here (the 30th of October, when lots of nuisance fires are lit--and then have to be put out--in the city) but now I do. Or why adults often have Halloween parties, even after its rebranding as a kids' holiday. I picked this book up after the last Halloween, when very few trick-or-treaters showed

up, even in the development where I live, where as few as 10 years ago I'd have hundreds. Seems the Halloween I remember--the one in which kids were allowed out, into the dark, to be 'scared' but also 'safe,' has gone the way of the Dodo, partially due to religious objections, partly to overblown fears, and partly to the general trend of 'kid control.' Who knew? I found the book very well-written and entertaining, and would recommend it to anybody who likes to sit and absorb history as painlessly as possible. I would, in fact, read any other book written by this author.....

This was one poor excuse for a history of Halloween. The author starts out relating a gay Halloween parade he attended and it goes downhill from there. Many of the photos looked like the author ran out on the street and snapped a few pics of kids and adults who had dressed up. I had to jump to the sections to find out the info I was looking for. There have to be better books than this.

This book was exactly what I was looking for: a well researched and well written history of Halloween. Roger's book is strengthened by his Canadian perspective that allows the reader to get a broader understanding for how Halloween developed in all of North America. On nearly every paper Roger draws upon primary sources from the time periods under consideration to give the reader firsthand accounts of how people through the centuries celebrated and viewed Halloween.

not what i expected. no bible references, not enough pagan history..more watered down version of halloween

First let me say that this book is like a history book on the history of halloween. If you are looking for a quick halloween story or costume and party information, then this book is not for you. This book deals with the actual history of this wonderful holiday, where it came from and how it adapted to what it is now. I found this book to be a great source of information on the history of my favorite holiday. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants an in depth read of the history of Halloween.

So far what I have read is interesting. I have not finished yet but look forward to learning more about Sowein rituals and fun.

You need to love the history of HALLOWEEN in order to appreciate this book. It takes you back 3,000 years ago when HALLOWEEN began with the Celts and was called Samhain. It talks about how HALLOWEEN came to America. It talks about when people put poison in apples and gave

them out as treats. (I transported that into a HALLOWEEN movie I made called 'Pumpkin Man.) It even talks about the HALLOWEEN film series, although I noticed a mistake when it came to that. If you love the holiday, you'll love HALLOWEEN: FROM PAGAN RITUAL TO PARTY NIGHT!!!

I bought this for my husband. Listening to him talk about the book makes me want to read it when he finishes. The book was in good condition and was shipped in a timely fashion. Would recommend to other buyers.

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