

# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

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## WIVES FOR SALE

Shana Whisenant  
Contributing Writer

"Times are hard and we have to downsize," is what a father tells his little girl. "It is time to get rid of some things in your closet," he says. The little girl starts thinking of all the things she does not want anymore. She knows she may have to give up her favorite shirt or most worn pair of jeans, but she is content as long she has her family. Her father is a farmer in rural India and does not have much money. Her mother stays home to take care of the children since there are five of them. Her father starts to contemplate items that he can sell. The farmer knows he needs a large sum of money or he may potentially lose his house, his car, and everything he has worked for thus far. The farmer knows the one accessory that will earn him a sufficient sum of money: his wife.

According to CNN.com, a farmer's harvest often determines feast or famine and a farmer will go to crazy measures to survive the bad years.

In a region called Bundelkhand, spanning over the two northern India states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, famine, debt, and desperation have caused people to take extreme measures according to CNN.com. Farmers turn to the "Paisawalla" as means of getting loans for survival. The loans that these lenders provide usually have a high interest rate. When interest accumulates, lenders demand their money. Some farmers work as laborers for a lifetime to pay off their debt. Others know that because of the drought and failing harvests they are forced to give the

lenders whatever they ask for. This can sometimes mean their wives according to CNN.com.

The selling of a woman may seem harsh but according to Ranjana Kumari with India's Center for Social Research, "The exploitation of women is common in this region." And, when women do have the courage to tell, there is little support for them. According to Kumari, if a family decides not to help these women, the system is not sympathetic towards them. Women usually dismiss their case. According to an Indian government report in 1998, the "region is prone to what it calls 'atrocities,' including the buying and selling of women." Social workers say it is not just about poverty but how women have a low social status in pov-

erty-stricken areas like Bundelkhand. Women in poverty are "vulnerable to physical and sexual exploitation," says Kumari. Violence against women is also high in these areas.

It is hard to believe that women could be treated as nothing more than something you sell at a yard sale. Clothes, jewelry, or an old pair of shoes are all things you might sell to make a few extra dollars, but not your wife! In America, women are equal to men and should be treated that way. In India, the government and charities are trying to help women, but their status still remains low due to the fact they are seen as a financial burden. We, as Americans, should be grateful for the freedom we have.

## THE HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

Jennifer Cash  
Staff Writer

Halloween is the one time of year people get to dress up in costumes and eat as much candy as they want, but Halloween didn't originally originate for this purpose. According to the History Channel, Halloween dates back 2000 year to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The area which is now Ireland, along with the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated New Year's on November 1. This day marked the end of the summer and harvest and the beginning of the cold winter, a time that was associated with human death.

The Celts believed that the night before the New Year the boundary between the worlds between the living and the dead became blurred. On October 31, they would celebrate Samhain during the time which they believed the ghosts of the dead returned to Earth. The Celts believed that the presence of the spirits of the dead would help Druids (Celtic priests) make predictions about the future. The Celts depended on the predictions as a source of comfort and direction during the long winter.

Druids would build scared bonfires where the people would gather to burn crops and animals as a sacrifice to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, Celts wore costumes, usually consisting of animal heads and skins. They would also attempt to tell each other's fortunes. At the end of the celebration, they would take fire from the sacred bonfire to light their own fires at home. They felt the fire from the sacred fire would help protect them during winter.

By A.D. 43, the Romans had conquered the majority of the Celtic territory.

During the four hundred years that the Romans ruled the Celts, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the celebration of Samhain. The first was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day honoring the Roman goddess of fruit and tress, Pomona. The symbol of Pomona is the apple, and during this time people bobbed for apples during the celebration of Samhain.

By the 800's, the influence of Christianity spread into the Celtic land. During the seventeenth century, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1 All Saints Day, a time to honor the saints. Sources say the Pope was trying to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a more church related holiday. The celebration was also called All-Hallows and the night before was called All-Hallows-Eve. Eventually the named changed to Halloween.

During A.D. 1000, the church went on to make November 2 All Soul's Day, a day to honor the dead. The All Soul's Day celebration was similar to the festival of Samhain. There were big bonfires and parades and people dressed in costumes as saints, angels and devils. Together the three holidays were called Halloweenmas.

Later on, once Europeans started coming to America, they brought with them their varied Halloween customs. The rigid Protestant belief system in New England made the celebration of Halloween in colonial times limited; it was more common in Maryland and the Southern states. The Europeans

and Americans Indians meshed their customs and beliefs together. The first celebration included play parties, public events held to celebrate the harvest where people would share stories of the dead, tell each other's fortune, dance and sing. This festival also included the telling of ghost stories. By the middle of the nineteenth century, mid autumn festivals were common.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, America was flooded with immigrants. The majority of these new immigrants were the Irish escaping from the potato famine of 1846. The Irish helped popularize the celebration of Halloween as we know it today. They combined their traditions with those of the Americans. The Americans began dressing up in costumes and going from house to house asking for food or money, known today as trick-or-treating. Young women believed that on Halloween they could divine the name or appearance of their future husband by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings, or mirrors.

In the late 1800's, America decided to make Halloween a holiday about community and neighborly gatherings rather than about ghosts, pranks and witchcraft. Halloween parties became the most common way to celebrate the day. The parties focused on games, the food of the season and festive costumes. Newspapers encouraged parents to take anything frightening or grotesque out of Halloween celebrations. Because of these efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitions and religious overtones during the early

twentieth century.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Halloween had become a community centered holiday with parades and town-wide parties. By the 1950s it evolved into a holiday for the young. Due to the fifties baby boom and the large amounts of children, parties were moved from the community into the classroom or the home. Between 1920 and 1950, the practice of trick-or-treating was revived. Trick-or-treating became an inexpensive way for the entire community to celebrate Halloween. Treats were given to neighborhood children to prevent them playing tricks on people. This grew into the American tradition we know of today.

Today, Americans spend an estimated \$6.9 billion annually on Halloween; \$2 billion is spent on candy alone, making Halloween the second largest commercial holiday after Christmas. Remember to have a safe and fun Halloween!



Photo courtesy: <http://www.dotcomwomen.com/images/crafts/halloween/bat-pattern.gif>