ST. PATRICK'S DAY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

This holiday is celebrated every year on 17 March, honouring the Irish patron saint, St. Patrick. The celebrations are largely Irish culture themed and typically consist of wearing green, parades, and drinking. Some churches may hold religious services and many schools and of㜀ces close in Suffolk County, the area containing Boston and its suburbs.

People all over the world (insert citation) celebrate St. Patrick's Day, especially places with large Irish-American communities. Feasting on the day features traditional Irish food, including corned beef, corned cabbage, coffee, soda bread, potatoes, and shepherd's pie. Many celebrations also hold an Irish breakfast of sausage, black and white pudding, fried eggs, and fried tomatoes.

# Common traditions include:

Parades – This event is most often associated with the holiday. Cities that hold large parades include Boston, New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Savannah, and other cities worldwide.

Drinking – Since many Catholics are Irish-American, some may be required to fast from drinking during Lent. However, they are allowed to break this fast during the St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Dying water or beer green – Chicago dies its river green for the festivities, and many bars serve green-dyed beer. The White House fountain is also dyed green.

Other incorporations of green – In Seattle, the parade routes are painted in green. Observers are supposed to wear green or else risk being pinched. Parade – floats and decorations will feature the colour green.

Religious services – Those who celebrate the holiday in a religious context may also hold a feast. Outside of this context, overindulgence tends to revolve around drinking.

Pea planting – In the Northeast, many celebrate by planting peas. This is largely due to the colour and time of year (prime pea-planting conditions).

# Saint Patrick – The Missionary and Bishop of Ireland

St. Patrick, or the 'Apostle of Ireland' actually started out in the pagan religion. While not much is known about his early life, as many of his life's details were lost to folklore, letters from St. Patrick reveal that he was captured in Wales, Scotland, or another close area outside of Ireland and taken to Ireland as a slave. Years later, he escaped and returned to his family, who were Romans living in Britain, going back to Ireland for mission work after 㜀nding a place as a cleric and then Bishop within the Christian faith. He was born around 460, and by the 600s, he was already known as the Patron Saint of Ireland.

There are many legends associated with St. Patrick. The symbol of the shamrock is very commonly used for St. Patrick's Day. The three-leafed plant coincided with the Pagan religion's sanctity of the number three and is the root of the green colour theme.

Another popular belief is that St. Patrick banished the snakes from Ireland. The story says that while St. Patrick was fasting, snakes attacked him, so he chased all snakes into the ocean. However, there have never been snakes in Ireland during the post-glacial period. The absence of snakes and symbolism involved with snakes is believed to explain the story, although it could have been referring to a type of worm rather than snakes. One legend has St. Patrick sticking a walking stick into the ground, which turned into a tree.

# The History of St. Patrick's Day and why it's celebrated

St. Patrick's Day was 㜀rst celebrated in America in 1737, organised by the Charitable Irish Society of Boston, including a feast and religious service. This 㜀rst celebration of the holiday in the colonies was largely to honour and celebrate the Irish culture that so many colonists had been separated from.

Early celebrations continued this modest tradition. In New York, the 㜀rst celebration took place as a small gathering at the home of an Irish protestant. St. Patrick's Day parades started in New York in 1762 by a group of Irish soldiers in the British military who marched down Broadway. This began the tradition of a military theme in the parade, as they often feature marching military unites. The holiday eventually evolved from the modest religious dinner into the raucous holiday we know today.

# Worldwide St. Patrick's Day Parades and Celebrations

Parades and wearing green have always been a traditional part of St. Patrick's Day celebrations, but the events will vary based on the city:

Boston St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Boston bring over 600 000 visitors to the city, which has a large Irish-American community. The city has one of the largest parades, which many veterans take part in, and events are held in the large number of Irish pubs in the city. The Irish Cultural Centre holds a celebration, and many events feature Irish food, such as corned beef.

New York New York City is the place of the oldest civilian parade, which boats over 150 000 participants. This may include veterans along with 㜀re㜀ghters, policemen, and cultural clubs. It is led by New York's 69th infantry regiment.

Scranton This Pennsylvania city's parade is one of the oldest and largest. Since 1862, this parade has been one of the most popular, with current celebrations attracting around 150 000.

Chicago The Irish community makes up a large part of Chicago's celebration. Chicago dyes the Chicago River green and holds the South Side Parade, which has actually had to be scaled back in recent years due to the celebration growing too large for the Irish groups that hold the parade.

New Orleans This coastal city was the largest point of immigration for the Irish. St. Patrick's Day celebrations are typically held at the community or neighbourhood level.

Ireland This celebration is more religious in nature, as it is considered a religious feast day. While it was made an of㜀cial holiday in 1903, the 㜀rst Saint Patrick's Festival was held in 1996. During these recent years, the event has become more cultural and consists of many celebrations in the streets.