

Rip Van Winkle

I have Rip Van Winkle as part of my Literary Characters collection. To date, these three are the only ones I have, but the idea of the Rip Van Winkle story is interesting...

Rip Van Winkle is a story by the American author Washington Irving published in 1819, as well as the name of the story's fictional protagonist. Written while Irving was living in Birmingham, England, it was part of a collection of stories entitled *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*.

You might classify this world famous story as Historical Fantasy, since it's set amidst the American Revolution. There are several references to actual events and people. Rip and other men are said to gather around a portrait of George III. George Washington appears in letters on the pole by the old inn. The Battle of Bunker Hill is mentioned by the haranguer. Brom Dutcher is said to have fought in the Battle of Stony Point. And, Henry Hudson is said to have known the Hudson River was inhabited by strange beings.

Interesting side points:

-The choice of "Van Winkle" for the character's name may have been influenced by the fact that Irving's New York publisher was C. S. Van Winkle.

-The story is also similar to the ancient Jewish story about Honi the Circle-Maker who falls asleep after asking a man why he is planting a carob tree which traditionally takes 70 years to mature, making it virtually impossible to ever benefit from the tree's fruit.[citation needed] After this exchange, he falls asleep on the ground and is miraculously covered by a rock and remains out of sight for 70 years. When he awakens, he finds a fully mature tree and that he has a grandson. When nobody believes that he is Honi, he prays to God and God takes him from this world. Note also that the family name of Honi is as well a term

of geometry ('M'agel' is Hebrew for 'circle maker'), as well as the family name of Rip ('Winkel' is German for 'angle').

[<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

