

Story Setting: Sleepy Hollow, NY

Story Date: The 1780's

Publication Date: 1819

Washington Irving: 1783-1859

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
by Washington Irving

Ichabod Crane, the schoolmaster in Washington Irving's classic tale, is one of the earliest portrayals of a country schoolmaster in U.S. fiction -- and very possibly the best. The tale captures the essence of the town, its inhabitants, and its comic schoolmaster with skill, insight, and humor.

<http://www.schooltales.com/sleepyhollow/title.html>



Illustration by Michael Garland © 1993

Spoilers end here.

The characters from "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" are based on actual early 19th century residents of North Tarrytown, New York, and the character of Ichabod Crane was based on a local schoolteacher there. Irving most likely borrowed the name from a real-life Ichabod Crane, a colonel in the US Army during the War of 1812, who is buried in Staten Island, New York.



Spoiler warning: *Plot and/or ending details follow.*

Ichabod and his rival Brom Bones court Katrina van Tassel. Dismissing the legend of the Headless Horseman, Crane later flees in terror from the Horseman (or perhaps Brom Bones masquerading as the Horseman). Crane is chased over the bridge near the (actual) Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and meets his end soon afterwards.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/ichabod-crane>



Photo courtesy Don Mitchell

Was Ichabod Crane, the scrawny schoolteacher who met the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's classic "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" a real person?

Of course he was, and he rests in peace in Staten Island.

Or rather, his namesake does. This isn't the Ichabod Crane of fantasy and fiction, but rather, an army major who lived in the early and mid 19th Century. He is buried in a corner of the otherwise overgrown and mostly Forgotten New Springville Cemetery in the Bulls' head section of Staten Island.

Crane and Washington Irving were contemporaries at least for a few years. Apparently they met and Irving used his name, without permission, in The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Reportedly, Crane was horrified.

In the 1840s, Ichabod Crane was not all that unusual a name. There are two more Cranes buried in New Jersey.

<http://www.forgotten-ny.com/CEMETERIES/morestat/ichabod.html>