Robin Hood

was a legendary English outlaw who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. He is the subject of countless ballads and stories, some dating as far back as the 1300's. He treated poor people kindly and fought the sheriff of Nottingham, a corrupt official who persecuted the poor. Robin Hood thus became a hero of the common people and a symbol of "right against might."

Robin Hood lived with his merry band of followers in Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire. His best-known companions included Friar Tuck, Little John, and Maid Marian. Friar Tuck was a fat, jolly priest. Little John stood more than 7 feet (210 centimeters) tall and was known for his great skill with a bow and arrow. Maid Marian was Robin Hood's sweetheart.

No one knows whether the character of Robin Hood was based on a real person. According to one scholar, Robin Hood was actually the Earl of Huntingdon, and his real name was Robert Fitzooth. However, many other scholars believe that Robin Hood is a fictitious character.

The oldest written reference to Robin Hood appears in the Vision of Piers Plowman, which is a long poem that was written about 1378. However, the earliest surviving stories of Robin Hood were ballads written a century later. The first detailed description of his activities was the Lytell Geste of Robin Hood (about 1500). Robin Hood also appears as the character Locksley in Ivanhoe (1819), by the Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott.

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