The real Dracula dates back to the 15th century – and the history of the real Dracula is pretty shocking. Read about the real Dracula and Bram Stoker’s novel.

Accounts of Vlad Tepes’ cruelty have been distorted throughout history, and Stoker’s adaption seemed to help perpetrate these distortions. The prince was bestowed with the surname “Tepes” (“Impaler”) based on his fondness for impaling victims. It was his father from whom he proudly took the name “Dracula” (“Son of the Dragon”). Tepes was no vampire, although one historic account details how he drank a victim’s blood [source: West Grey Times]. And Tepes certainly wasn’t immortal (it’s unclear how he died), as Stoker’s Count Dracula (ˈdrækjʊlə, -jələ) is the title character of Bram Stoker’s 1897 gothic horror novel Dracula. He is considered to be both the prototypical and the archetypal vampire in subsequent works of fiction. Some aspects of the character are believed to have been inspired by the 15th-century Wallachian Prince Vlad the Impaler, who was also known as Dracula, and by Sir Henry Irving, an actor for whom Stoker was a personal friend.