

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

USU Student Folklore Fieldwork

Student Folklore Fieldwork

Fall 11-2018

Sukkot

Lily Ward

lily.mo.ward@aggiemail.usu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all

Recommended Citation

Ward, Lily, "Sukkot" (2018). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 538.
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/538

This G1: Holidays is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Folklore Fieldwork at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in USU Student Folklore Fieldwork by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



Sukkot

Holiday Customs

Informant:

Francis Caplan is a third-grade elementary school teacher here in the valley at Bear River Charter School. When she is not with her students, family, or friends she enjoys being outdoors, reading, and gardening. The encounters I have memories of Francis consisted of her always being extremely serious, assertive, and direction-oriented.

Context:

Francis Caplan has been a longtime family friend. My parents were friends growing up and she has two children around the same ages as my sister and I. From what I can remember I have known Francis the majority of my life. Because of this, I had been to her home previously and consider her a friend. Both of her kids have moved out of the home and are attending colleges in different states. During our interview at her home in Logan she mentioned that since becoming an empty nester, her and her husband haven't been that active in their religion

Text:

We just celebrated Sukkot which is an eight festival that comes after the high holidays. The high holidays are Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and then after that come Sukkot which is a fall festival [nods head in reassurance] like a harvest festival. Even though we no longer do as much now, compared to what we did when the kids were little it's [um...] still very important. At the beginning of Sukkot we build this [uh...um..] it's sorta like a little a temporary building and it's small and it's open, well [uh...] it's not that it doesn't have any roof because if it rains it still has some protection but you use like branches and little pieces of food so you can see. You have to be able to see the stars. This temporary building is called a Sukkah. So it's three sided and then you decorate the sukkah with vegetables and fruits because it's harvest session. So you know, like pumpkins, pears, and apples... The decoration of the sukkah is very [um...uh...] rustic [chuckles]. And then you're supposed to eat all the day's meals in the sukkah and sleep over night as well. The significance of Sukkot and the sukka is the physical representation of the many traditions of Judaism, yeah... [long, uncomfortable pause. I asked her if there were any specific foods they prepared during this celebration]. Hmmm.... There are really no food

traditions around Sukkot which is kind of strange because all our other holidays have really strong food traditions. Part of going, being, and praying in the sukkah is you pray with [um...] so there is this citrus fruit called an Etrog which looks like a very large lemon. And then there is this [um] lulav which is a collection of three different plants—myrtle, willow, and then a really long grass that I forgot the name of. Anyways you have these collections of plants and then the Etrog in your hand and then you recite a prayer in each of the four directions. [um...] which is just a blessing of Sukkot and a blessing for life. As you can imagine the connotation behind the harvest changes depending on where you are in the world. For instance, in Israel they are praying for rain for the harvest to like [um...] make it better. It's all agrarian based holiday essentially.

Texture:

The several encounters I have had with her have been mostly professional. I did an internship in her third grade classroom and know how tough, loving, and strict she can be. Due to my past encounters with Francis, I went expecting a more informative interview. However, during our interview she was extremely joyous, laughable, and energetic. Perhaps this is because her husband Arthur was home with her at the time and was chiming in here and there by elaborating on some of the ideas brought up.

Lily Ward
Utah State University
Engl-2210-001
Dr. Lynne S. McNeill
Fall 2018

