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## Don't Forget the Blindfold

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John Merriam

Logan, Utah

November 2018

## **Don't Forget the Blindfold!**

### **Tradition**

#### **Informant:**

John Merriam, also called Papa John, is my dad. He grew up in Cuzzart, West Virginia, and has lived in Utah for the past 30 years. He met my mom in Salt Lake City and they have been married 28 years. He is the middle child and only son of 5 children in his family. He grew up on a farm and learned very quickly how to work hard. John loves to garden, be outside, and spend time with his wife, children and grandchildren. He is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

#### **Context:**

I interviewed John around the kitchen table at his home after playing an epic game of Five Crowns. I had told him to be thinking of how to tell me this story because I told him, along with other members of my family, that I would need to interview them about a piece of folklore. There were other family members that were listening to the interview, but there was minimal sound in the background. The feeling of the interview was very casual because my dad likes to tell these kinds of stories a lot, especially when we are together as a family. My dad is great at telling stories and his sense of humor definitely shows while he is telling them.

John doesn't remember exactly when this tradition started, but he knows that it has been going on at least as long as the deer has been in the cabin. This tradition did not happen to John and his wife Leica (pronounced Lisa) because they did not honeymoon on Lake Niatous in Maine. There are some people in John's extended family on his dad's side that have experienced this tradition. The last time my family was up on Lake Niatous, which was summer 2018, my dad introduced this tradition to one of my younger brothers, Stewart. Stewart and my dad then blindfolded the deer a couple coming to the cabins right after my family was there for their honeymoon.

#### **Text:**

As you know we have a couple of islands in Maine on Niatous Lake which is about two hours or an hour outside of Bangor Maine, so central Maine. The uh and as a r— years ago somebody shot a deer it was I think an 8-point buck or four on points on each side and it's mounted in the cabin. Well, because Maine is a nice — especially in the summer a great place to get away and it's very secluded and lots of honeymooners go there, well for some reason now don't ask me how

the tradition got started so when that the – before the honeymooners arrived at the island in the main cabin somebody would go in a head of time and blindfold the deer, and if you want further explanation beyond that you'll have to talk to your mother [laughter]. Thus, the tradition of blindfolding the deer for honeymooners came about in Maine.

**Texture:**

John told this tradition to me in a way that he thought it was funny and his sense of humor definitely showed. John has a natural interviewing voice that is deeper than his normal talking voice that he used during the interview. Occasionally, John would use his hands as he talked, but that is something he normally does anyways, so that wasn't anything that added to the story. He was also in a very relaxed position as I was interviewing him making the feeling of the interview more causal. John seemed to be very familiar with this tradition even though this never happened to him, which to me implies that he has been the one to blindfold to the deer more than once.

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