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Christmas Eve Candles

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Megan Monson
Logan, Utah
December 5, 2018

Christmas Eve Candles Holiday Custom

Informant: The informant was Megan Monson, an English Major at Utah State University. We met in our ENGL 2210 Intro to Folklore class. She writes grants as part of her job. She is part owner of a company that makes storage racks for winter sports equipment. She has three brothers and a dog names Mia. She and her family belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. She hates Christmas music but likes Christmas traditions.

Context: This tradition was gathered as part of series as we walked from Ray B West to Huntsman hall across campus, through the snow, after Megan offered to help me with the collection project after figuring out how badly I procrastinated. I used my cellphone to record the audio as the video followed our feet through the snow. Even with all the people we walked past, Megan stayed remarkably focused on the interview. This tradition takes place over multiple weeks preceding Christmas Eve, but the climax occurs as part of a series of tradition on that night. This tradition comes from Swedish origin, as Megan's father served a mission in Sweden and her family has traditional Swedish ancestry. Megan mentioned her adult siblings all fight to participate in this tradition, implying that this is something that has maintained a central place in the family's holiday season.

Text: Another Swedish thing that we do is, we have, it's kind of like a menorah, but it only has four candles, and there's one for each Sunday leading up to Christmas, but then on Christmas Eve you light them all [pause] again so you have all four lit. And then we always have-I don't know why, you know, we're all adults now, but we still sorta have this fight over who gets to blow out the candle, luckily there's four children in my family and four candles so it always works out, it's perfect.

Texture: It was this tradition that Megan seemed to know the least about, she did not have a true name for the tradition that she told me, and she did not mention any sort of background for the significance of it, in a cultural context. However, the part of our interview in which this piece of folklore was shared carried a lot of weight in Megan's voice, as if it is something that is very important to her family and herself, even if she could not tell you why. She treated this tradition with less sarcasm than some of the others, and gave the description care and an almost reverence, as if trying to ensure that I understood exactly what she was talking about. There was fondness in her voice throughout the whole of the interview, even as she mocked and questioned the why

behind many of the traditions her family partakes in. As with the rest of the interview, she kept her words clear and concise, as if aware of the process of transcription I would be undertaking.

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ENGL 2210: Introduction to Folklore
Dr. Lynne McNeill
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