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Christmas Eve Cinnamon Trees

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Madeline Thomas
Smithfield, Utah
November 29, 2018

Christmas Eve Cinnamon Trees **Holiday Custom**

Informant: Esther Williams is a 21 year old recent graduate of Utah State University. She was raised in Smithfield, Utah, and is the oldest of five sisters. She currently lives at home with her parents and two of her sisters, and is getting married in December. She graduated with a degree in human development and family science.

Context: I collected this after a Christmas party that we both attended, standing in the parking lot in approximately 25 degree weather while we both froze, but she knew I needed a few more traditions for my assignment so she was willing to talk really fast while being recorded. There was snow on the ground and we had just been listening to Christmas music, getting us into the mood. Esther talks in her interview about where this tradition came from, but when I probed further she told me that she knows for sure that her grandmother learned it from her great grandmother, and that the family is fairly certain it extended before then. I chose to classify this as a custom instead of under foodways as a recipe because, to Esther, I think that the making and delivering of the thing was much more important than the thing itself. Also, because I know she doesn't enjoy cooking at all, it is spending the time with her family. Additionally, it is important to know that the Williams are a super competitive bunch.

Text: Another one that we do we learned from my Grandma Williams and we make cinnamon roll dough and make them into a triangle and cover them in cinnamon and sugar then fold them up, cut the edges, twist them into a Christmas tree and we decorate them with candy and icing and then we'll take them out to neighbors. And it's the best because its super tasty cause we usually keep some for ourselves and its super warm cause we're inside and everyone is usually super happy unless we're fighting over whose tree is best and then there are arguments and people steal other peoples candy. And a lot of times we'll listen to Christmas music while we do it.

Texture: Parts of Esther's telling of this tradition was very straightforward and to the point, specifically when she talked about the actual process for making the food. It was when she was talking about the fighting that happens between the family that she got the most excited and

worked up, a shadow at what I see when she is desperate to win a game that we are playing. She laughed and felt awkward when she talked about how warm it was, because I asked her to specify the feeling surrounding the tradition. She talked really fast throughout the whole interview, because we were standing outside and it was freezing.

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ENGL 2210: Introduction to Folklore
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