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Midsummer

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Sejla Hodzic
Willard, Utah
November 10, 2018

Title: Midsummer

Genre: Holiday Custom

Informant: Sejla Hodzic is a foreign exchange student from Sweden. She is being hosted by my family who lives in Willard, Utah. She is 18 years old. She has lived in Sweden her entire life, but her parents are from Croatia. She lives with her father and her brother. She came to the United States of America for the first time at the beginning of August 2018.

Context: I collected this piece when I went to visit my family. Sejla and I went into our basement so that we could sit and talk with minimal interruption. Our basement is usually pretty quiet during the day and it has comfortable seating. I had given her previous information about what I was going to ask her, so she knew what traditions that she wanted to talk about. This tradition was shared in a collection of other Swedish customs. She began talking and had little trouble recalling specific details regarding her interaction within the tradition, as well as the interaction of collective groups. Midsummer is a tradition that occurs in Sweden around the summer equinox and is a greatly celebrated holiday.

Text:

Sejla: In Sweden we celebrate, like, Midsummer. That's a really big tradition in Sweden. So [pause], that's like, originally it was always June 24 [unsure]. That's cuz it is the longest day in Sweden. But like nowadays it's like, [jumbled sounds]. So, like, Sweden decided that Midsummer, eh, cuz they wanted Midsummer to always be like on a Friday, so now the date depends. But I remember when, so when we have Midsummer, we are usually outside and we have like a big like maypole that we'll like decorate with flowers, and flowers in our heads. And a lot of flowers. And a lot of food. Then we'll like sing and dance and just dance around the maypole [laughs], and we'll dance. It was a big thing when I was younger cuz we always danced and held hands and like just sing songs and dance around, I don't know why. But that's like, that's almost, that's probably one of the biggest traditions in Sweden. I mean some, cuz like some of my friends they think the Midsummer is like a bigger deal than Christmas. So...

Alana: So do you do it with your families or is it within city/communities?

S: Both. So, I know, we always have like, erm. So, in my city if, I mean, if you go to the parks, you will see a maypole, like a big maypole in like every park. And we have like a huge one in the middle of the city. But I know that every family has has a small one in like their yard and stuff. Just outside their house, they have a smaller one. [Changed to details about Sweden's Independence Day. Details can be found under "Sweden's Independence Day"]. So we have like a cake that is mostly cream and strawberries that is called Midsummer Cake, so if you don't have that, if you don't eat Midsummer cake on Midsummer, you aren't from Sweden [laughs]. So everyone has that cake. And you only eat that cake on Midsummer, cuz like if I were to eat that cake now, people would be like "Um, excuse me? What are you doing?" [laughs] So, [diverts back to details about Independence Day].

A: So you mentioned the Maypole, are there other games and stuff or...

S: Not really games. It's just like we have a lot of songs about Midsummer that we always sing at the same time as you like dance around the Maypole holding hands and stuff. And that's like songs about Midsummer. Eh. Hmm [pause]. And I remember when I was in Kindergarten we started to prepare for Midsummer like a month before. Like doing the Maypole cuz we always do it like by ourselves, and picking all the flowers. That was fun. And, it's like, so the girls, they always wear dresses or skirts. You can't wear pants on Midsummer. You have to wear a skirt or a dress.

A: Are they like springtimey summertimey dresses?

S: Ya. It is, usually with like flowers on them.

A: What's your favorite part of Midsummer?

S: It's like, cuz, probably just that you meet all your friends and family. Cuz we usually I know many people do it like this that during the day you celebrate with your family and like when it gets later, you meet up with your friends and you like celebrate with them. So that's fun.

A: What kinds of things do you do to celebrate with your friends?

S: Eat food [laughs] and we, so like you have to have like a barbeque on Midsummer too. More food [laughs]. And ya, people usually drink a lot on Midsummer, like the grownups. So the can and ya I know that it is it is um I don't know if it's wine I think it is wine, but it is like a special brand that the stores only sell for Midsummer, cuz you are supposed to drink that wine during Midsummer.

Texture: Sejla spoke of Midsummer with a lot of fondness and nostalgia. She laughed a lot at the memories that she has associated with the holiday. She was happy to share details with me. As she was recounting the typical events of the holiday, you could tell that she values this time with family and friends and enjoys the festivities that go on during this time. She talked about how this tradition is treated with a lot of respect and is an important tradition in Swedish culture.

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