Nate Herbst

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Sociology-1

Family History

My Cultural Project

Culture is defined as shared products of human groups that include physical objects and the beliefs, values, and behaviors shared by the group. Culture is everywhere. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the signs you see, etc. Here in the United States, we are either blessed, or cursed (depends on how you want to look at it), with all the cultural flow we have in or society. We are a relatively “opened door” when it comes to new ideas and ways of life here in America. We have a continuous amount of immigrants brining in their ways of life into this country; especially a long Interstate 80, which is right by my family and me.

I could spend a single day at a place such as Wings of America, located in Avoca, Iowa, and see all types of different people with different ways of life. I could see aspects of everyday life that are similar amongst all the people and profile it as a culture, and I could look at certain people and pick out smaller subcultures where norms and values differ from various subcultures.

The Herbst family originates in Germany, for Herbst means "autumn" in Germany. I can only go back to my great grand parents on the Herbst side that are from Iowa and whose names were Agnus and Elmer Herbst. My great grandparents had 10 children: Carol, Jan, Jeanie, Bill, Danny, Don, Ted, Jim, Diane, and Peggy. All of their kids moved across the country and only Don and Danny still live in Iowa. Besides Danny and Don, I have only met my other great aunts and uncles one time ever and that was at a family reunion in 2011, so I do not know very much about them at all. Danny lives in Portsmouth and has three children whom are all in their mid forties. The one I know best is Tim, for he lives in Harlan and I see him quite often. He is married to Kristy and they have three little boys all under the age of five: Trevor, Caden, and Gavin. Don is the other child of Agnus and Elmer that still lives in Iowa, and he is my grandpa.

Elmer and Agnus raised their 10 children on a small farm in rural Iowa. Here is where they learned the value of hard work and cooperation since they were very young. Many cultural values have been passed on from all these early-learned traits such as what is depicted as right and wrong. Family traditions such as meeting every major holiday have been passed down to all the 10 children. Also, having a big family reunion every few years has also been done for quite some time.

Don Herbst married Shirley Foxhoven in 1961. Shirley, my grandma, comes from a very catholic family and her sister is a nun. I do not know much more about the Foxhoven side other than that. The Foxhoven’s, however, are very religious and close knit. This strong religious presence is a norm that the Foxhovens have that keep them so close and maintain the values they have amongst them.

Don and Shirley Herbst had three children; Rick, Dean, and Kathy. My uncle rick lives in Harlan and has two children. His daughter Beth Herbst lives in Council Bluffs and is the most hilarious/awesome cousin anybody could ask for. Her and her gay roommate, Jeff, are some of the coolest people I know. Rick’s other daughter, Brittany, lives near Houston, Texas and is also a very awesome person. My aunt Kathy lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and is married to Nick Klein. Nick and Kathy have two sons named Ben and Tom; I see these two maybe twice a year.

I have now come to me. My dad, Dean Herbst, married Christine Attanasio in 1988. They have lived in Council Bluffs, Portsmouth, and Persia, Iowa; moving so much mainly because of work. In 1990 they had my brother Josh, and he currently lives in Omaha. In 1992 they had my sister, Kelsi, whom also lives in Omaha. Finally, in 1997, my mother birthed the COOLEST MOFO in the world named Nathan Herbst. I currently live with my parents still.

On my moms side of the family, I can only go back as far as her parents because even my mother does not know her grandparents. My mothers mom was Wilhelmina Zevenbergen, and she was a immigrant from Holland, which is a region of the Netherlands. My grandmother met my grandfather, Augustus Attanasio when he was in the Netherlands during his service in the marines. She came back with Augustus to New York City where they had three children: Peter, Steven, and Christine. New York had far more different cultural traits back then compared to small town Iowa culture. People kept a lot more to themselves since trust was not as common in the Queens of New York. I am sure my grandparents had to deal with many languages and people of all types in a city of millions like New York City.

My grandmother died due to lung cancer when my mother was 11 years old. Augustus moved to Shelby, Iowa after his wife’s death because he was a truck driver and drove near Shelby every week. Augustus married Sharon Swisher of Shelby, Iowa and my mother began to attend Shelby-Tennant High School where she graduated in 1986.

My uncle Pete has three children: Jade, Jesse, and Justin. Justin lives in Alaska and has no children but does have a nice girlfriend. Jesse is single and lives in Omaha, and Jade is married to Jacob Hammer and has two children named Analina and Emilia. They all reside in Omaha. Pete also lives in Omaha and has a New York accent and it is awesome.

My uncle Steve has four children. He has two with his first marriage and two with his current marriage with his wife Kelly. His first two kids are Ashley and Anthony, and his next two with his new wife are Brooke and Megan. Brooke and Megan go to school in Denison.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, much of the original 10 Herbst siblings were still in Iowa, and they used to meet up quite often for reunions. However, with change of technology and people going where they need to go because of jobs and such, the siblings have moved and reunions are as annual as they used to be. The siblings have aged quite a bit now and they see less and less of one another, but they still keep in close contact with new technologies such as phones and the computer. Many of the original values taught by Elmer and Agnus have seeped down the generations. Hard work and wits have found their way into all the Herbst I would like to think, but also other values like being an inviting person and outgoing and knowing right from wrong have made it’s way to most the Herbst also.

Although I do not know much about the Attanasio side of my family, I know that traditions such as great cooking of old family recipes have made their way to my household now. Also, lending a hand to help your family has also been stressed upon on the Attanasion side, for we always help my cousins and uncles.

My culture could be defined to me in my own terms as catholic, English, Caucasian, small town American values, etc. My culture is not foreign to me in any way, but with where I live I do see very different ones. It is important me to be adaptive to these other cultures, otherwise I cannot grow in values by shutting other peoples ideas and ways of life. My family’s culture has shaped every aspect of my life, from the food I like to where I live, and the clothes I wear.

