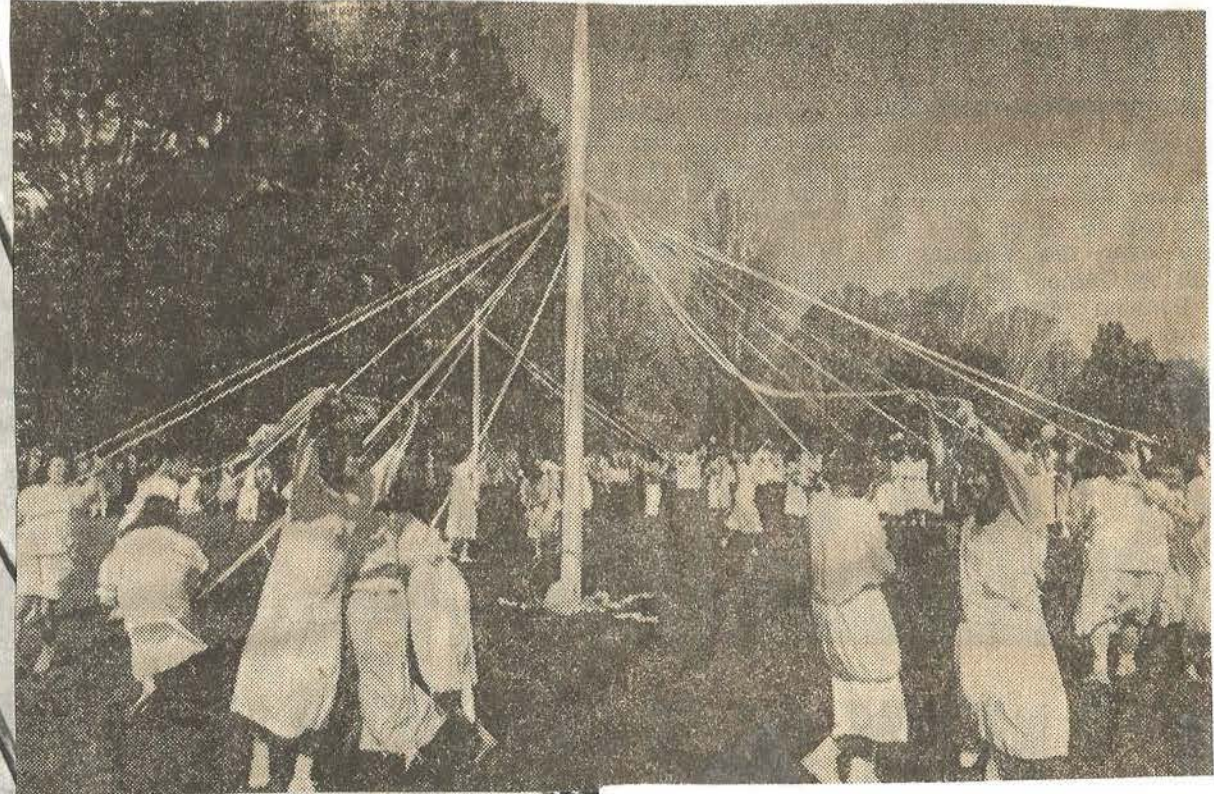
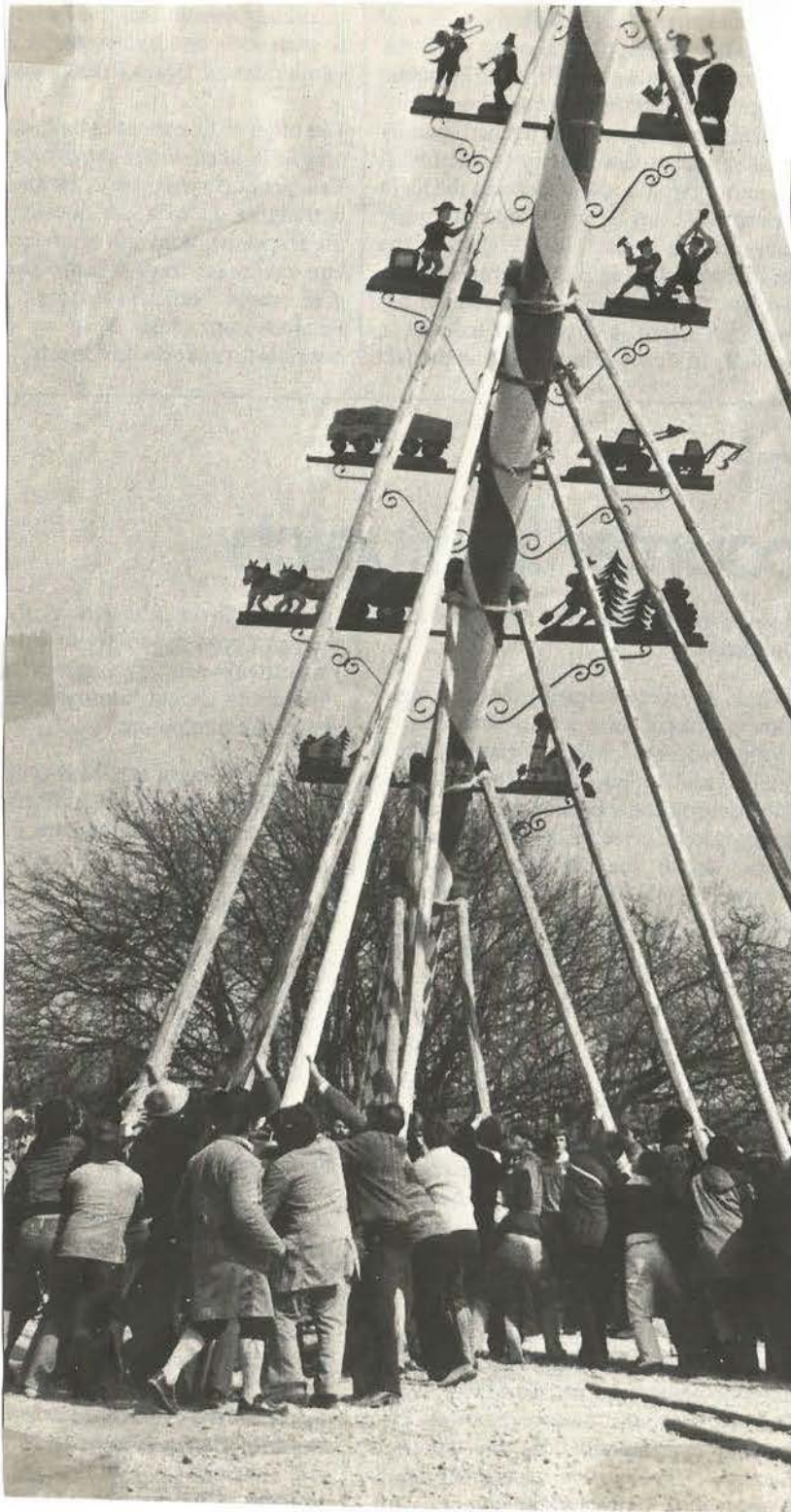


May Day Customs :

Maypoles



Der Maibaum

In Austria and many parts of Germany, especially in Bavaria, the tradition of raising a Maypole (**Maibaum**) on May 1 still serves to welcome spring as it has since ancient times. Similar Maypole festivities also can be found in England, Finland, Sweden, and the Czech Republic.

A Maypole is a tall wooden pole made from a tree trunk (pine or birch), with colorful ribbons, flowers, carved figures, and various other decorations adorning it, depending on the location. In Germany the name *Maibaum* ("May tree") reflects the custom of placing a small pine tree atop the Maypole, which is usually set up in a town's public square or village green. Traditional dances, music, and folk customs are often associated with the Maypole. In small towns virtually the entire population turns out for the ceremonial raising of the Maypole and the festivities that follow, with *Bier und Wurst* of course. In Munich a permanent *Maibaum* stands at the Viktualienmarkt.