MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF FOLKLORE  
Boatbuilding Questionnaire  
Q79A

In Newfoundland, where fishing and water-borne transportation have always been of great importance, boats represent an integral part of the culture. Boats can be found in nearly every coastal community, and, in many places, boatbuilding traditions can be traced back hundreds of years. Even though boatbuilding and boat use are widespread in the province, little information has been collected and preserved about the details of boatbuilding.

By answering the following questions you can provide valuable data that will aid scholars in the study of boatbuilding in Newfoundland.

Please answer each question as fully as you can, giving details whenever possible. If you need more space for your answers, or want to add additional comments, use separate pieces of paper.

If you are not familiar with boatbuilding in your home community, feel free to send a copy of this questionnaire to someone in the community who is more knowledgeable. Completed questionnaires may be sent directly to the Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, A1C 5S7.

All information will be permanently filed in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive.

YOUR NAME: ____________________________________________

HOME COMMUNITY: _______________________________________

BIRTHDATE: _____________________________________________

PRESENT ADDRESS: _______________________________________

PRESENT TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____________________________

TODAY'S DATE: __________________________________________

1. In your home community, when a fisherman needs a new boat, what course of action does he generally take? (Check one)

___ (a) builds one for himself
___ (b) hires someone in the community to build one for him
___ (c) hires someone in another community to build one for him
___ (d) searches around the bay for a new or used boat
___ (e) other (Please explain) ________________________________
2. Which of the following best describes your community? (Check one)
   _ (a) it is an active boatbuilding community
   _ (b) it is a community where boatbuilding skills are dying out
   _ (c) it is dependent upon other communities for boats
   _ (d) other (Please explain) ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Approximately how many fishermen live in your home community?

4. Approximately how many boats are kept in your home community?

5. Which of the following boat types are used by residents of your community? (Check as many as apply)
   _ trap skiff  _ punt  _ speed boat
   _ flat  _ motor boat  _ rodney
   _ row dory  _ long liner  _ skiff
   _ cod seine skiff  _ jack boat  _ dinghy
   _ bully boat  _ schooner  _ sail boat
   _ wherry  _ snapper boat  _ smack
   _ Cape Islander  _ motor dory  _ shallop
   _ other (please explain) ____________________________________________________________________________________

6. Which of the following boat types are regularly built by residents of your community? (Check as many as apply)
   _ trap skiff  _ punt  _ speed boat
   _ flat  _ motor boat  _ rodney
   _ row dory  _ long liner  _ skiff
   _ cod seine skiff  _ jack boat  _ dinghy
   _ bully boat  _ schooner  _ sail boat
   _ wherry  _ snapper boat  _ smack
   _ Cape Islander  _ motor dory  _ shallop
   _ other (Please explain) ____________________________________________________________________________________

7. Of all of the boat types represented in your community, which one is the most numerous? ____________________________________________________________________________________

   Approximately how many of this type are in the community? _
8. During the fishing season, where do fishermen in your community keep their boats? (Check as many as apply)
   ____(a) on a mooring in the harbour
   ____(b) tied up at a wharf
   ____(c) tied up at a fishing stage
   ____(d) hauled out daily on a launch-way
   ____(e) hauled out daily on the shore
   ____(f) other (please explain) ____________________________

9. Where is boatbuilding carried on in your community? (Check as many as apply)
   ____(a) in stores (store rooms)
   ____(b) outside, on the shore
   ____(c) outside, on the property of the builder
   ____(d) in buildings used only as boatshops
   ____(e) in garages
   ____(f) in basements
   ____(g) other (please explain) ____________________________

10. If you had to select one person as the best boatbuilder in your community, who would that person be? _______________
    What types of boats does this person build? _______________

11. If you had to select a person as most knowledgeable about the history of boatbuilding in your community, who would that person be? _______________

12. Are there any persons in your community who work full-time as boatbuilders? ___yes  ___no
    If YES, what are the names of these individuals? ____________

13. Are there any boatshops or boatyards in your community which employ two or more full-time employees? ___yes  ___no
    If YES, give names of shops or yards. __________________________

14. Which of the following is most typical of the way boatbuilders in your community go about their work? (Check one)
    ____(a) builders work alone
    ____(b) builders hire one or more helpers
    ____(c) Builders receive occasional assistance from friends and neighbors, but work alone most of the time
    ____(d) other (please explain) ____________________________

15. In your community, how does a person usually go about learning about how to build a boat? (Check one)
(a) obtains information from father or other male relative
(b) goes to the most skilled builder in the community for assistance
(c) takes a course from the College of Fisheries
(d) visits boatbuilders in other communities
(e) learns by trial and error
(f) other (please explain) ______________________________

16. When designing a boat to be built and, later, projecting a design to full-size, builders use various methods. In your community do boatbuilders use any of the following? (Check as many as apply)

(a) wooden half-models
(b) full-size moulds for timbers
(c) gates
(d) three-piece adjustable moulds (hollow mould, rising square, and breadth mould)
(e) blue prints or plans drawn on paper
(f) other (please explain) ______________________________

17. In what way do builders usually obtain wood for boatbuilding? (Check one)

(a) they go into the woods, in their community, and cut trees
(b) they go into the woods, in another community, and cut trees
(c) they hire someone to cut trees for them
(d) they purchase wood from a sawmill
(e) other (please explain) ______________________________

18. What woods do boatbuilders in your community use for boatbuilding? (Check as many as apply)

spruce balsam fir birch
oak var cedar
larch pine juniper
other (please explain) ______________________________

19. After trees are cut into boards, boatbuilders sometimes dry the boards before moving on to build a boat. In your community, which is the most common procedure for drying boards? (Check one)

(a) boards are used immediately, without drying
(b) boards are dried less than one month
(c) boards are dried 1-3 months
(d) boards are dried 4-6 months
(e) boards are dried 7-12 months
(f) boards are dried longer than 12 months
20. Which of the following woods are most commonly used for planking in your community? (Check as many as apply)

- spruce
- balsam fir
- birch
- oak
- var
- cedar
- larch
- pine
- juniper
- other (please explain)

21. Which of the following woods are most commonly used for timbers? (Check as many as apply)

- spruce
- balsam fir
- birch
- oak
- var
- cedar
- larch
- pine
- juniper
- other (please explain)

22. Which of the following woods are most commonly used for stems, keels, and stern posts? (Check as many as apply)

- spruce
- balsam fir
- birch
- oak
- var
- cedar
- larch
- pine
- juniper
- other (please explain)

23. In your community, what types of fastenings are used to attach planks to timbers? (Check as many as apply)

- common steel nails
- common steel finish nails
- common galvanized nails
- galvanized wire nails
- galvanized boat nails
- copper rivets and burs
- bronze screws
- stainless steels screws
- Everdur screws
- copper boat nails
- other (please explain)

24. Do any of the following boatbuilding materials have to obtained outside of your home community? (Check as many as apply)

- engines
- fastenings
- paint
- caulking material
- lumber
- oars
- oar locks
- chafing gear
- propellers
- shafts
- other (please explain)

25. What fisheries are pursued by fishermen from your home community? (Check as many as apply)
lobster  crab  cod trap

cod-hand line  cod--trawl  capelin

squid  salmon  herring

turbot  hake  halibut

sole  scallops  shrimp

other (please explain)

26. On the average, during what month do fishermen put their boats in the water to begin the fishing season, and during what month do they take their boats out of the water to end fishing?

Begin during:  End during:

27. Are boats given names in your community?  yes  no

If YES, what types of boats are given names? (e.g. trap skiffs, long liners, etc.)

28. If yes, give examples of boat names:

29. Often, boats built in a particular harbour or region are recognized as originating from that harbour or region because of certain distinctive characteristics. Do boats built in your community have characteristics that distinguish them from boats built elsewhere? (You might want to consider such factors as: quality of workmanship, seaworthiness, colours, stem profile, length vs. width, inside or outside rudder, etc.)  yes  no

If YES please explain in detail.

30. Sometimes certain ceremonies are attached to the launching of boats, such as the breaking of a bottle or liquor over the bow, or a party held on launch day. Are any boat launching ceremonies practised in your community?  yes  no

If YES, please describe in detail.

31. Aside from your community, what community in the area has the best reputation for being the home of skilled boatbuilders?
Do builders in this community have a better reputation than builders in your community?  __yes  __no

If YES, why? ____________________________________________________________

 ____________________________________________________________

32. Please add any further information about boatbuilding in your community that you think would be helpful. ________________________

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