

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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DEPARTMENT OF FOLKLORE

KOMATIK

You can help us to preserve the folklore of Newfoundland.

This traditional material is part of the unwritten history of the province which the university is attempting to record.

Every community is rich in many areas of folklore, so if you have any information on the subjects in which we are interested or can get it from someone else, please find answers for our questions.

General Instructions.

1. Write down the information exactly as you learned it or as it was told to you. Use the exact words and phrasing of the informant. Do not attempt to "correct" the form of the information.
2. Write in black or blue ink, or type (double-spaced).
3. Write on one side of the paper only.
4. Number pages in the upper right hand corner.
5. Complete the following information requested at the end of each item, as illustrated.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| Informant's name | age | occupation | |
| Home community | Sex | religion | |
| Learned from | community | relationship | |
| When | | | |
| Student's name | age | Course number | Home community |
| St. John's address | | | Date |

6. Indicate clearly if you or your informant want any names withheld.

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

NEWFOUNDLAND FOLKLORE ARCHIVE

A GUIDE FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION ON KOMATIK

With the help of as many informants as possible (preferably people over sixty), try to find the answers to the following questions regarding the Komatik.

Craft of making Komatik.

1. How many could make the 'komatik' in the past? _____

2. How many can make 'komatiks' now? _____

3. Could the 'komatik' be made only by certain specialists? _____

4. Was the ability or craft of making 'komatiks' sort of inherent in certain families? _____

5. What families were noted for their ability to make 'komatiks'? _____

6. If there were a person who had become a specialist in the craft of making the komatik, how did he gain the position of specialist?
 - (a) By observing some other specialist? _____
 - (b) Through experience by trial and error? _____
 - (c) As an apprentice to some craftsman? _____
 - (d) From family tradition? _____
8. How long would it take a craftsman to make a komatik after the runners had been cut, carved out and dried? _____

Form of komatik.

9. How many bars were attached to the runners on the average size komatik?

10. How wide, long and thick were the average bars? _____

11. How far apart were the bars placed? _____
12. From what were the bars made? _____

13. Were there holes through the bars for sewing them to the runners?

14. Were there cases where the bars were sewed on with one long strip of leather or rope cord for each runner or were the bars in all cases sewed individually? _____

15. Was it customary to throw hot water on the leather to tighten up the bars and make the komatik more stable? _____

16. With what were the bars sewed to the runners?
 (a) With leather? ^{Yes} () ^{No} (). If so, then why was leather used?

- (b) With fishing twine? ^{Yes} () ^{No} (). If so, in what cases would this be used? _____

- (c) With flexible wire? ^{Yes} () ^{No} (). If so, in what cases would this be used? _____

16. (d) Were nails ever used to fasten bars? (Yes) (No). If they were in what cases and were they effective? _____

17. Did the typical komatik have a cross-bar attached to the turned-up nose? (Yes) (No). If so, for what were they used? _____

 Was it fastened in the same manner as the other bars? _____

18. Were there loop-ropes attached to the nose of the komatik? (Yes) (No). If so, how were they attached and what purpose did they serve? _____

19. Were the holes in the runners through which the bars were sewed in a straight line, or were they in zig-zag fashion like this, in order not to weaken the wood in the runners by placing them in the same grain?

20. How were the holes in the runners through which the bars were sewed, made?
 (a) By auger? _____
 (b) By hand drill or brace? _____
 (c) By some other method? _____
21. Were the runners made from a single piece of timber? (Yes) (No)
 If not how was the high nosed spliced to the runner? _____

22. What type of wood was used in making runners? _____

23. What were the depths of runners on the average komatik? _____

24. On the average komatik, what was the distance between the main bar on the front and where the nose turned upwards? _____

25. Were there always halters to which the dog traces were connected, or, were the traces sometimes tied to the main bar? _____

26. Did most konatiks have a rope along each runner, passed through holes in the runner, through which the lashing rope was passed? (Yes) (No). If so, what were these ropes called? _____

27. What type of shoes were attached to the runners?
(a) Iron? (Yes) (No). If so, were they effective? _____

(b) Was whale-bone ever used? (Yes) (No). If so, when and why? _____

(c) Was galvanized iron ever used to shoe the konatik? (Yes) (No). If so, was it found useful? _____

28. How long was the average konatik? _____

29. For any additional comments on aspects of the konatik which I have failed to include in these questions, would you kindly write them below?

Procedure of preparing wood and making komatik.

30. Where did the wood for making the bars come from? _____

31. Where did the wood for making the runners come from? _____

32. How was it cut and prepared? _____

33. What tools were used? _____

34. Did the craftsman use cross-cut saws or axes to make runners? _____

35. Were the runners straight on the bottoms, or were they curved upwards on the ends for easier handling? _____

36. Did some komatiks have notches rather than holes in the bars for sewing them to the runners? (Yes) (No). If so, what were the advantages or disadvantages? _____

37. How were the bunks attached to the komatik? _____

38. What was the average length of the horns in the bunks? _____

39. Were any parts of the komatik ever purchased from some other community? _____

Functions of komatik.

40. What were the functions of the komatik? e.g., For hauling firewood?

41. Were komatiks ever used for commercial purposes, such as to carry passengers? _____

42. Were the bunks removed from the komatik when it was used for some purpose other than hauling wood? _____

43. Was a riding box used when people went for long rides or hunting?

44. What was the size of the average riding box? _____

45. For what was the riding box used other than to sit on? _____

46. Would you add any further remarks on the function of the komatik in the space below? _____

History and analysis of komatik.

47. How long has the komatik been in use in your community? _____

48. Was it brought to the community or was it invented there?

49. Was the high nose brought in with the komatik or was it invented within the community? _____

50. Approximately what year did the komatik become part of the material culture of your community and why did it gain such popularity? _____

51. How useful was it years ago and how useful now? _____

52. Are there any changes in the form of the komatik so that it can be used as a ski-doo trailer? _____

- If it is not used with the ski-doo, why not? _____
53. How long have iron shoes been used on komatiks? _____

54. What type of sled was used before the komatik? _____

55. How much would a completed komatik have cost to make? _____
_____ To buy? _____

Dogs and equipment.

56. How many dogs were used to haul the average komatik? _____

57. Did the number of dogs vary when the komatik was used for different purposes? _____

58. Did each dog have his own trace? _____

59. How were younger dogs broken in? _____

60. How were dog harnesses made? _____

61. Did each dog have his own harness, if so, why? _____

62. Was a female dog always used as leader? If so, why? _____

Additional remarks on the komatik.

Miscellaneous Questions.

63. Was great pride taken in the making of komatiks? (Yes) (No).

If so, what did the builder do to show his pride, e.g., did he paint different designs on the runners or bars? _____

64. Why was the high nose adapted as one of the main features of the komatik? i.e., what advantages did it have over the low-nosed komatik?

65. Did people use the komatik for short distance hauling or was a smaller sled used for these purposes? _____

66. Was greenheart ever used for shoeing a komatik? (Yes) (No).

If so, when and why? _____

67. Did older people look at the komatik as being a very important part of life? _____

