

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND FOLKLORE AND LANGUAGE ARCHIVEDEPARTMENT OF FOLKLORENEWFOUNDLAND COURTSHIP/DATING CUSTOMS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain information on contemporary courtship in Newfoundland. Courtship and dating play major parts in our everyday lives, especially between the ages of 13-25, but yet there is very little information on how people meet each other and how they interact. This questionnaire focuses on non-verbal communication between two people who are more than casually interested in each other. These non-verbal signals are referred to as a "code of courtship behavior". The questionnaire also includes a section on verbal expressions as they relate to courtship. Because male/female relationships are so much a part of our daily lives it is important that we make every effort to try and better understand just how it is we communicate with one another.

All information will be permanently filed in the Folklore and Language Archive (E-4038) in strictest confidence.

Male _____ Female _____ Age _____

Home Community _____ Bay _____ Approx. size _____

Religion _____ Ancestry (eg. English, Irish) _____

1. Have you ever heard of or used the phrase "up for sale" as it relates to dating behavior? Yes _____ No _____ Here are two examples of its use: "If a girl walks on the right side of her boyfriend it will be commented on that she is "up for sale", meaning she is free to go out with another male. Another example follows: "Sometimes if the girl changed her mind about going out with you she would stay on your right side. This meant you had her up for sale and any fellow could come and take her from you". If you have experienced this or know of the practice or the phrase please explain its use in your community.

2. Have you ever used the following in order to determine whether or not a male or female was sexually interested in you? "If a boy wants a girl to have intercourse with him he will scratch the palm of her hand, if she does not want to she pulls her hand away, if she does she scratches back or rubs her thumb against his". Yes _____ No _____ If yes please explain the circumstances or give any other similar hand signals.

3. Have you ever heard of or done the following for dating purposes? "If a girl stepped on your toe [deliberately] it was a sure sign that she was interested in you. There would be no trouble to get a date with the girl and according to belief she would sleep with you that night". Yes _____
No _____ Any other comments?
4. Have you ever winked at a person in whom you were interested in order to see whether or not they would wink back, meaning they were interested in you? "...wink at a girl and if she winked back you had a date". Yes _____
No _____ Additional comments?
5. Are there signals that you feel are male only or female only? Do females ever initiate such signals or is it the males who always do the asking? Please explain.
6. Please describe in detail any other similar kinds of non-verbal signals you have either used in the past or are currently using, which help you determine whether or not a person may be interested in you. Also include items you may have heard of but do not necessarily use yourself.
7. Associated with courtship and dating are expressions and phrases used either by the couple or members of their community. The following are examples of such phrases: "take company", "chattin' him", "talking", "beating around". All four denote a male/female relationship that is of a private nature. Have you ever heard of or used these or other expressions to refer to personal relations between males and females? Yes _____ No _____ Which ones?

8. In a similar way there are words used which imply an intimacy between two people, or express sexual activity. "Gulching" and "grassing" are two such words. Have you ever used these or other words in this manner? Yes _____
No _____ If yes, what are they?

9. "On the paths", "on the roads", "vanicking", "Leating the roads" are phrases used to describe social activities which take place along roads and lanes, usually during evening hours. Very often this socializing is the only time young people can walk together in couples or in groups without too much interference from adults. Did you ever use this time as an opportunity to meet a male/female in whom you were interested? Yes _____ No _____ Did you have a phrase which you used to describe the walking? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, what was it? Can you briefly describe the event?

Any other information you feel is relevant to courtship and dating that you would like to write about is welcome and would be appreciated.