

Q80A

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Department of Folklore

Church Bell Questionnaire (Q80A)

There is very little information available at present on the church bells in Newfoundland. Many communities have, or have had, bells which, by the nature of their inscriptions, dates and founder's marks, can add considerably to our knowledge of the history of Newfoundland. For example, in St. Peter's Anglican Church in Twillingate there is a bell with the inscription "In Memory of the Great Haul, 1862", a reminder of the unusually prosperous seal fishery in Notre Dame Bay in that year. Not all bell inscriptions are of such an historical or secular nature, some are in memory of Bishops, Ministers, Church Wardens, or Parish members, while some are dedicated to Saints or to the work of the Christian Church. Some bells are marked with only the name of the founder, and the date they were made, while others have no markings whatsoever. All, however, are important in piecing together the tradition of church bells in Newfoundland.

I have taken this subject as the topic of my thesis, and am looking for information on the whereabouts of the bells in Newfoundland, how they came to be there, and when and how they are used. I would greatly appreciate your help by completing the attached questionnaire. This may be a little time consuming, but will of great value in my work.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Completed questionnaires may be sent to the Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 5S7. All information will

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

Please answer every question as fully as you can, giving details whenever possible. If you need more space, or wish to add further comments, please use separate sheets of paper.

PLEASE NOTE

If you do not now live in the community in which you grew up, and there is a bell tradition in your childhood community, I would greatly appreciate your taking the time to fill in another questionnaire on that community also, or, if you prefer, including this information on separate sheets of paper.

YOUR NAME:

BIRTH DATE:

HOME COMMUNITY:

PRESENT ADDRESS:

RELIGION:

TODAY'S DATE:

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. List each church, and its denomination, found in your community and specify whether it has a) a bell, b) an electronic chime system, c) a record/tape system d) no sound-making equipment.

2. For each church that has a bell, please specify whether it is:
  - a) in a tower attached to the church
  - b) in a tower separated from the church
  - c) on a stand outside the church
  - d) inside the church, please give location
  - e) lying in the church grounds
  
3. If the bell is on an outside stand, what is the name given to this?
  
4. Please supply as much of the following information as possible for each bell, specifying which bell you are discussing.
  - a) the date the bell was placed in the church
  - b) the name of the company that made the bell
  - c) the name of the individual or group who paid for the bell
  - d) the cost of the bell and installation
  - e) the weight/size/note/pitch
  - f) the inscription on the bell



Wedding:

Death:

Funeral:

For each occasion, please indicate how long the bell is rung, by whom, and the reason for ringing it at this time.

9. Is the bell rung on any of the following special days?

Christmas Eve:

Christmas Day:

New Year's Eve:

New Year's Day:

Twelfth Night:

Candlemas:

Shrove Tuesday:

Lent:

St. Patrick's Day:

Palm Sunday:

Holy Week:

Good Friday:

Easter Saturday:

Easter Sunday:

Easter Monday:

Whitsunday:

May-Day:

Thanksgiving:

Hallowe'en:

Rememberance Day (Nov. 11th):

For each occasion, please indicate how long the bell is rung, by whom, and the reason for ringing it at this time.

10. Is the bell rung on any of the following occasion?  
Please . a) fire. b) mine disaster. c) accident  
in the community. d) for men lost on the ice. e) for  
men lost in the woods. f) shipwreck. g) arrival of  
important visitors, eg. Bishop or Premier. h) Coronation.  
i) end of either of the World Wars, please specify  
which \_\_\_\_\_. j) election of a Pope. k) election  
of a Bishop. l) confirmations. m) graduation.  
n) any other occasion, please specify \_\_\_\_\_.
11. If the bell rang at any other time than those you  
have stated above, what would it mean to you.
12. If there is a bell in your church which is not rung,  
why is this?
13. If your church changed from a real bell to electronic  
chimes, or a record/tape P.A. system, please give  
details of:
- a) when and why this happened.

- b) from where the machine was bought.
- c) the cost.
- d) the name of the person or group who paid for it.
- e) when it is used.
- f) what became of the old bell.
- g) your feelings about an electronic system vs. a bell.

14. If, in your community, there are bells in places other than the church, eg. in someone's back yard, or discarded on church property, please give details of location and how it came to be there.

15. Do you see church bells as: (please  all that are appropriate.

- a) unnecessary noise makers.
- b) a sacred item to be treated with all due respect



- c) an important means of communication \_\_\_\_
- d) an important part of the religious life of your community \_\_\_\_
- e) an important part of the everyday life of your community \_\_\_\_
- f) other, please specify.

16. Are there any rocks/shoals/bays/coves/streets etc. in your area with any of the following names?

Bell:

Belfry:

Bell-Rope:

Clapper(s):

Tongue:

Chime:

Ring:

Any other bell related name:

If the answer to any of the above is yes, please give details of the location, and why the place is given this name.



20. Why do you think a bell is referred to as a 'she'?
21. As a child did you sing any songs/nursery rhymes about bells? If yes, please give the words, details of when and why it would be sung, and any actions performed with it.
22. As an adult do you sing, or know anyone in your community who sings songs about bells? If yes, please give the title of the song, the words, and the name of the singer.

23. Do you have a bell in your house, or know of anyone else in the community who has a bell in their house, which is used for any specific reason, eg. protection from thunderstorms? If yes, please give details.

24. If your community has no bell or electronic chime/P.A. system, is any other form of call to worship used, eg. flags, gunshots? If yes, please give details.

Q80A  
SMB  
GLP