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Folklore 3420  
Mr. L. G. Small

Mr. Howard Morry: Acknowledged as one  
of the greatest storytellers of Ferryland; the  
southeast coast of the Avalon Peninsula,  
Newfoundland

MS: 28 written pages  
tapes: 1 cassette<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: According to Patricia Fulton, the archivist at MUN who obtained permission from the authors to use this text, the cassette mentioned contained commercial recordings. Apparently it was inadvertently recorded over or misplaced and replaced by another that did not contain the interview with "Mr. & Mrs. William L. Morry" (Uncle Bill and Aunt Pat). Also note that Uncle Bill's middle initial is not "L" but "M" for Minty.

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*Story-telling in Ferryland, in Howard*

*Morry's time, was concentrated at two places, at his house and at Ned Haley's house. The reason for this was because Howard Morry, his wife and Ned Haley, were one of the few reasonably well-educated people at that time. The people of Ferryland would go down to Morry's and they would all sit around on benches or on the floor around the fireplace while Howard would tell stories or sing songs.*

*The type of stories which Howard would tell were either adventure stories or funny stories; nothing which had depth, so the people would not*

*be able to understand. While Howard would tell his stories, the fishermen would have their twine with them and they would knit three or four needles of it for their traps while they listened to him. Howard's wife, who was from Edinburgh, Scotland, would also be on hand to play the piano and start the singing. Before anyone knew it, someone had the rum out and the gathering had started into a swinging party! The fiddler would drop in and everyone would begin singing and dancing.*

*Mr. William Morry was quick to point out that those days brought out some sort of talent in everybody. Everyone had to contribute*

*something to the party, If you couldn't play the fiddle, the mouth organ, or the accordion, then you would either tell stories, dance and sing songs.*

*Nowadays, the television and the radio do most of the singing and other forms of entertainment for us.*

### *Some Background of Ferryland*

*Ferryland at the present, has a population of approximately 900 people. Its people are mainly predominantly Irish and its reputation has been one of a major, prosperous fishing community.*

*Years ago, the primary source of employment was fishing, but nowadays the so-called "real*

*fishermen” is a scarce breed of men in Ferryland.*

*Today, the people of Ferryland are either working in St. John’s, or are employed with the Federal Government on a L. I. P. project.*

*Howard Morry – Some Background Information*

*Mr. Howard Morry was born in Ferryland in 1890 and died in 1973<sup>2</sup> at the age of 83. He served in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War and was one of the lucky survivors of the famous Battle of Beaumont Hamel.*

*Through my own personal recollection of Howard Morry, the word gentleman described him perfectly. The unlined complexion, the erectness*

*in his stature, even at the closing years of his life,  
made him look ten or fifteen years younger. He was  
very firm in his convictions and was loved by  
everyone who knew him.*

*At the conclusion of World War I, Howard  
Morry returned to Ferryland, but on his way back  
from overseas, he met and married his wife who  
was from Edinburgh, Scotland.<sup>3</sup> When he returned  
to Ferryland, he worked as a fish merchant and  
also had a general store. Mr. Morry continued his  
work until he was in his seventies, and then he  
turned to telling stories and songs. He also made  
frequent trips back to Scotland, in his closing years  
of life.*

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<sup>2</sup> Editor's Note: Actual dates of birth and death are: Born 24 July 1885; Died 8 Feb. 1972. He was not quite 87 when he died.

<sup>3</sup> Editor's Note. Actually they met and married on June 2, 1915, before he went into action at Gallipoli.



*The material which we have accumulated for this major term paper, was collected on tape on two separate occasions, at the residence of William L. Morry in the community of Ferryland, which is located approximately 50 miles outside of St. John's, on the Southern Shore.*

*We also collected a considerable amount of material through the use of two taped interviews, which CBC did of Mr. Howard Morry in the month of May 1973.*

*Our first interview with Mr. William Morry was Saturday, March 15 and the second was April 3, 1976.*

*The stories which we have used for the nucleus of our paper, are mainly the stories that were told by Howard Morry when he was alive. Howard's son, Bill, has in turn told us these stories which were handed down to him by word of mouth from his father.*

### *Stories*

*In the early 1900s, a great amount of rum smuggling took place in Newfoundland. Howard Morry and his brother decided one night to row down in their boat to the man who was smuggling in the rum, and buy a ten gallon keg for Christmas. When they reached the man's house, they went in and had a drink*

*with him and then he led them to the barn. The man moved away the horse dung and hay and then pried up a few planks which revealed to them a rum cellar. The man told them that it was just as well that they take three or four kegs because he was expecting a raid. Howard and his brother hastily paid the man the price of one keg for three and then left to return back to Ferryland. As their day[sic] approached the wharf, they saw the policeman, Ned Flaherty standing on the wharf. Both Howard and his brother turned to each other and his brother said, "We're caught, what are we going to do?" Howard replied, "Nothing, leave the boat here and come on."*

*Howard and his brother then walked up by the policeman and Ned jokingly turned to them and said,*

*“Ah, boys, you’ve been smuggling tonight, eh?”*

*Howard replied, “Yes, we were down and got three or four kegs. Go down and see.”<sup>4</sup>*

*The policeman, who thought that they were obviously fooling around didn’t check the boat, so Howard and his brother went back to the wharf later on that night and got their rum.*

### *The Commercial Traveler*

*This event took place when Howard Morry was a young boy and he was lying on the couch in*

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<sup>4</sup> Morry, Howard; (The Rum Smuggling Story)  
(Personal Memoirs)

*the living room, sick with the flu.*

*A commercial traveler had come to town and had dropped into Howard's father's store. His father invited the man into the living room. the man produced a flask of whiskey from his pocket and asked his father if he'd have a snort with him. Howard's father (Tom), not a smoking or drinking man, obliged him kindly but refused. The man then asked him if he would like a cigar, but again his father said no. The man, obviously surprised by his reply then said,*

*“Tell me something, do you ever step out with the women?”*

*Tom replied, "No sir, I don't."*

*"My God, he said, my God old man, you're losing out on an awful lot of fun."<sup>5</sup>*

*After the man had said this, Howard's flu had left him completely, He was lying on the couch in an absolute fit of hysteria!*

### *The Lightkeeper's Story*

*This story is indeed true and not fictitious. It was told to us by Bill Morry and it occurred in the time of Howard Morry's boyhood.*

*In the early years, the time to kill animals for their meat, was late in the fall. The reason for*

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<sup>5</sup> Morry, Howard, The Commercial Traveler, (Personal Memoirs.)

*this was because there were no artificial refrigerators. The meat or rather the animals, were cut into four quarters and hung on pegs and put in a meat shed, for refrigeration.*

*The story goes that a lightkeeper's family lived alone on a small island with the closest neighbour about two miles away by boat. The husband had taken ill and his wife had set out in the boat for the doctor, leaving her two sons home with their father. When she returned, a day later, she could not find her husband. She asked the boys where he was and they told her that he had died, so they had cut him up into*

*four quarters and hung him on pegs in the  
meatshed.*

*These boys had done this because they had  
never seen a human die before, therefore they  
figured that the same thing was done to them, as  
was done to sheep, pigs and chickens, etc.*

*Admiral's Cove Dance* |

*This story was told to us by Mr. William  
Morry, and the event took place approximately  
forty years ago.*

*To the people of Ferryland and other  
neighbouring communities, a dance, back in the  
earlier years, was something rare and precious  
because of the stringent*



*rules the church had about Lent. From the beginning of Lent right up to St. Patrick's Day, there was to be no dances or partying.*

*The story goes that there was supposed to be a dance down in Admiral's Cove which is in Fermeuse. Many of the people in Ferryland went to go to the dance but when they got there, they found that it had been cancelled. Dejected, Bill Morry, his wife and numerous other people sat on the bridge looking as if the world had disowned them. At this point a man came along and noticing that they were disheartened, asked the reason why. No sooner had they finished telling the man that the dance had*

*been cancelled, he took the keys to his house out of his pocket and told them to go to his place and have a dance. They left for his house, gathered up the fiddler and some more people and according to Bill Morry, had the best dance he ever saw.*

*“The Irish Youngster”*

*The “Irish Youngsters” were young fishermen sent out by the Irish government, to come over to Ferryland and fish for a period of two years. After the two year term expired, these fishermen were given their money and sent back to Ireland.*

*This story has to do with a man who lived*

*in Ferryland and had hired one of these young fishermen for a period of two years. When the term had expired, the fisherman could not afford to pay the "Irish Youngster" the fee for his services. He persuaded his wife into helping him try to avoid paying the fisherman his money.*

*One morning, he invited the young fisherman up to his house for breakfast. They ate breakfast and then the man told the young fellow that he was going outside for a few minutes and to stay and make himself comfortable. As soon as he left, the wife, who was still upstairs in bed called the young fisherman upstairs. The woman lured*

*him into bed and instantly her husband was back with about nine or ten witnesses. the Irish Youngster was flogged and paid nothing.*

*Irish Wake For Bill.Kavanagh*

*This event took place in Howard Morry's boyhood. The story was told to us by Bill Morry.*

*As most everyone knows an Irish wake was and still is an occasion for people to get together to pay their respects to the deceased and then have a few drinks, which usually resulted in a party.*

*The story goes that when Bill.Kavanagh, a fisherman of Ferryland died, he left some money for an Irish wake.*

*The coffin was laid in the living room and the people from Ferryland came to pay their last respects to Bill. They had rum and whiskey on hand to drink and eventually the wake turned into a party. The place really crowded up and people who had a few drinks in, started or tried to open the coffin. In the end, the people took the coffin of Bill Kavanagh out of the living room and stood it upright against the wall in order to make room for dancing and singing songs.*

### *Discussion*

*In between his stories and songs, Howard Morry comments on the vast difference in the customs and*

*manners of today, as compared to yesterday. He goes back to the time when he led a court case in which three young fellows stole an iron bake pot out of a boat and sold it to six different people the same night and each time, for liquor. These young fellows were sentenced 100 lashes at different flogging posts and then they were deported. Howard commented that nowadays, the sentence for the same offence would probably be a warning not to do it again.*

*Howard remembered the times when his friends and him had to walk 7-8 miles for a dance. Today however, people take a taxi if they don't have a car.*

*According to Howard, modern science and technology, has made man forget himself to a certain extent. The spirit of lending a hand to a person in trouble, is not so evident these days. In Howard's time, if a person's net was damaged by a storm, all of the other fishermen would help him mend the nets right away, so he wouldn't lose money. If a family was stuck for food supplies in the winter, because the father had taken sick, then Howard would go out on his horse and sleigh to other people's houses and they would throw on a sack of potatoes, some flour or butter etc., in order to help the family out. Mr.*

*Morry recalls that it cost him twenty-five dollars to build his house, because everyone helped in building it.*

*Mr. Howard Morry concluded his discussion by mentioning that this great spirit of friendship, which the people had back in the early years, is not prevalent as much today. He says on the tape,*

*“I wonder if the gain is as good as the loss.”<sup>6</sup>*

*Song – “Goodbye My Lovely Annie”*

*This song is just one of many which Howard Morry sang on the tapes.*

*Goodbye my lovely Annie*

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<sup>6</sup> Morry, Howard; Discussion on life in his time,



*Ten thousand times I hurt you.*

*I'm going away tomorrow morning.*

*Once more to part from you*

*Once more to part from you fine girl.*

*You're the one that I adore*

*But still I live in hopes to see*

*Old Newfoundland once more.*

*Oh now I'm on the ocean*

*And you are far behind*

*Kind letters I will write to you*

*All the secrets of my mind.*

*All the secrets of my mind fine girl*

*You're the one that I adore.*

*But still I live in hopes to see  
Old Newfoundland once more.*

*There is a storm a rising now  
You can see it drawing nigh.  
The night is dark and stormy too  
You scarce can see your hand.*

*Our good ship she is tossed about  
And her rigging is all torn  
But still we live in hopes to see  
Old Newfoundland once more.*

*Oh now were safely landed  
And now were safe on shore*

*We'll drink success to those we love*

*And the girls we do adore.*

*We'll drink strong ale and brandy too*

*And we'll make those taverns roar*

*And when our money is spent and gone*

*We will go and work for more.*

*We'll drink strong ale and brandy too*

*And we'll make those tavern's roar.*

*And when our money is spent and gone*

*We will go and work for more.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Morry, Howard; Song – “Goodbye My Lovely Annie”  
(Personal Memoirs)

*The cassette tape, which is included with our term paper<sup>8</sup>, contains stories about the early 1900s of Ferryland. the voices on this tape, are those of Mr. & Mrs. William L. Morry; Howard Morry's son and daughter in law.*

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<sup>8</sup> Editor's Note: See footnote 1 on the first page regarding the loss of this tape.