

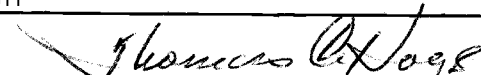
AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Patricia White Johnson for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Interdisciplinary Studies in Anthropology, History, and  
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Title: Dress and Acculturation among the Russian Old  
Believers in Oregon

Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Thomas C. Hogg

The Russian Old Believers in Oregon maintain a manner of dress which distinguishes them in the communities in which they live. Originating as a group because of a schism within the Russian Orthodox Church in 1666, the Russian Old Believers migrated to the edge of the Russian Empire and beyond in order to maintain a life style which would allow them to retain their traditional ways without persecution. In 1962 some of these Old Believers began immigrating to Oregon from China and Turkey via several intermediary countries and States. At that time each subgroup, as defined by their point of emigration, wore garments that reflected their respective histories and their cultural heritage from Russia. Their dress symbolised identity as Russian Old Believers.

Dress is both an individual and cultural expression of taste, social organisation, aesthetics, emotions and historical development. Among the Russian Old Believers

traditional forms of dress, a shirt for men and a dress or jumper and shirt for women, are essential parts of rites of passage and overtly define boundaries with non-Old Believers. Dress distinguishes among the ritual, holiday and practical intentions of the wearer and also reveals age, sex, marital distinctions, devotion to religion, group membership and accommodation to a bicultural living situation.

Old Believer dress evinces acculturative processes. Contemporary attire shows combinations of elements of dress from three sources: the historic dress of the subgroup, the larger society in which the Old Believers live and contemporary dress of other subgroups. Dress for ritual events remains close to historic Old Believer dress, while everyday dress, whose function is primarily practical, is more amenable to American influences. Variations in the retention of Russian dress can be related to differences in age, sex, exposure to American education, language use, residence and date of immigration. In recent years combinative forms of dress have been developed which exhibit both American influences and traditional Old Believer forms. This transitional dress obscures subgroup differences and shows development of a Russian style rather than adherence to Russian tradition. The functions of the dress and the nature of the situation determine the dress which Old Believers wear.

Dress and Acculturation Among  
the Russian Old Believers in Oregon

by

Patricia White Johnson

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APPROVED:

*Thomas C. Hoge*

Professor of Anthropology in charge of major

*Conrad L. Smith*

Chairperson of Department of Anthropology

*Thomas C. McClintock*

Professor of History in charge of minor

*Ruth E. Gates*

Professor of Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts in  
charge of minor

*John C. Ringle*

Dean of Graduate School

Date thesis is presented 9 December 1982

Typed by Patricia White Johnson

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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Hypotheses	5
Methods	5
2. Dress and Culture	8
Dress in Society	8
Acculturation in Society	15
Dress and Acculturation	20
3. Background of the Old Believers	24
Present Setting	24
Religious History	26
History of the Oregon Old Believer Groups	35
4. Old Believer Historic Dress	41
Turkish Old Believer Dress	42
Harbin Old Believer Dress	52
Sinkiang Old Believer Dress	57
General Characteristics	60
5. Dress in Old Believer Society	62
Ethnographic Review	62
Dress in Rites of Passage	68
Cultural Functions of Dress	73
6. Surveys of Dress and Acculturation	90
Introduction	90
Adult Survey	90
Findings of Adult Survey	93
Middle School Survey	101
Findings of Middle School Survey	102
Kindergarten Survey	103
Discussion of the Findings of the Surveys	103
7. General Findings: Old Believer Dress and Acculturation	108
8. Conclusions	120
Bibliography	125
Appendices	
Appendix 1	133
Appendix 2	134

## List of Figures

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
4.1. <u>Dunaiki shubka</u> , front and back view	45
4.2. <u>Dunaiki</u> woman's shirt	46
4.3. <u>Talichka</u> , front and back bodice view	47
4.4. <u>Kasyak</u> , scarf and back view	48
4.5.    Turkish <u>rubakha</u> for men	48
4.6. <u>Kuban'tsy rubakha</u>	50
4.7. <u>Kuban'tsy balakhon</u>	51
4.8. <u>Kuban'tsy zavieska</u>	51
4.9. <u>Kharbintsy sarafan</u> , front and back view	54
4.10.   Sleeve of <u>Kharbintsy rubakha</u>	55
4.11. <u>Kharbintsy</u> apron	55
4.12. <u>Kharbintsy rubakha</u> for men, front and back view	56
4.13. <u>Sinzhantsy sarafan</u> , unbelted	58
4.14. <u>Sinzhantsy</u> woman's shirt	59
5.1.    Modern <u>talichka</u>	79
5.2. <u>Shashmura</u>	82
5.3. <u>Eliak</u>	85
6.1.    Use of Russian dress for men and women in non-secular and secular situations	94
6.2.    Use of Russian dress for women by age in non-secular and secular situations	95
6.3.    Use of Russian dress for women by subgroup in non-secular and secular situations	96
6.4.    Use of Russian dress for women by education in secular and non-secular situations	97

6.5.	Use of Russian dress for women by language in secular and non-secular situations	97
6.6.	Use of Russian dress for women by date of immigration in secular and non-secular situations	98
6.7.	Use of Russian dress for women by residence in secular and non-secular situations	99
6.8.	Use of Russian dress for women by birth order in secular and non-secular situations	99
6.9.	Use of Russian dress for women by marital status in secular and non-secular situations	100
6.10.	Use of Russian dress for women by food preference in secular and non-secular situations	100
7.1.	Russian man's shirt	113
7.2.	Modern <u>rubashka</u>	113



## PREFACE

The diverse histories of the Russian Old Believers created clothing customs and traditions which varied even within subgroups. For instance, one Sinzhantsy woman reported that it was forbidden to have back openings in dresses because if they died, "they would not be turned to God." Her friend, another Sinzhantsy, had never heard that reason, but she knew that they never put openings in the backs of dresses. The study attempts to separate the essential form and function of the garment from what may be family folklore and individual idiosyncrasy. It strives to present a basic description of the historic dress of each group while recognising that variations in individual traditions occurred. Thus, the actual form and function of an item of dress may vary from what is presented here.

The illustrations of Russian Old Believer garments were prepared from sketches that were drawn on site, photographs and/or extant garments.

Many Russian terms are used in this study. Some of these terms, such as "shubka," "talichka," "garbach," "rukava," and "eliak" are words typical of a particular subgroup and the meanings do not necessarily conform to modern Russian. The terms which designate the subgroups are used adjectivally as well in describing the garments of that group. Russian terms are used in the nominative case throughout the study.

Clothes--they mean everything  
to us. It's slipping away  
from us now.

Russian Old Believer woman  
9 March 1982

# DRESS AND ACCULTURATION AMONG THE RUSSIAN OLD BELIEVERS IN OREGON

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

Immigrant groups very often face a steady erosion of their traditions and ways of life in a larger society. Clothing and manners of dress are aspects of traditional material culture which are subject to strong acculturative influences when immigrant people face a new culture. The purpose of this study is to investigate the traditional dress of an immigrant group, the Russian Old Believers, as its members encounter the influences of American society.

The Russian Old Believers are one of the Pacific Northwest's most visually distinctive peoples. Although scattered by time and space prior to immigration to the United States, they have developed a community in Oregon which they base upon adherence to a common religion. Ever since the first Old Believers arrived in Oregon twenty years ago, they have attempted to lead a life style that will allow them to follow their old ways; this has included wearing the clothing and following the manners of dress of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Russian peasantry. Despite the availability of ready-made American clothing, the Russian Old Believers have continued to wear

distinctive styles of clothing even though fabrics, trims, trends in American fashions and Old Believer ingenuity have altered the forms from the styles that were prevalent at the time of immigration to the United States. A number of Old Believers have adopted general use of American clothes but have retained certain aspects of Old Believer dress such as hair style, cross and belt which distinguish them as Old Believers.

During a time when changes are occurring rapidly, it is urgent to document the old ways before they are lost, substantially altered or irretrievably forgotten. Residence in new countries has already altered some of the textile and construction skills of the Russian Old Believers. No longer living in isolated communities as they were in Russia and China, and slightly less so in Turkey, they have selected designs and methods from their environment and from each other to supplement or replace their traditional designs, styles and techniques. Old Believers wear some American ready-made clothing in place of traditional items of dress. Some consider traditional Russian dress from twenty or thirty years ago "old-fashioned" and consign it to the bottoms of their trunks or discard it. Skills have been lost in their moves to the United States. Only a handful of women still knit stockings. Even fewer know how to card and spin the wool for knitting and weaving. Some old men retain the knowledge of shoemaking from Russia, but no Old Believers from Turkey can weave

their traditional belts. Only one or two of the older women who were born in Russia can recall the special dress that once all Old Believer women wore. Nylon ski jackets have become standard outer wear in the wintertime in Oregon; few remember the thick quilted jackets that Old Believers wore in Turkey to keep warm in winter. Embroidery has been enchanced by designs, colours and methods from China, Brazil and United States. As Old Believer women have added new techniques to their embroidery repertory, the traditional cross-stitch designs in red and black have disappeared. Russian men now wear embroidered shirts with cowboy styling and women wear one-piece dresses with flounces in the skirt. The clothing heritage which the Old Believers brought with them is slowly disappearing. The changes in Old Believer dress can only be understood if the dress which they wore at a baseline period of time is known; the historic dress needs to be recorded before it is gone.

Dress is central to Old Believer identity. Far more than physical protection from the environment, it is an overt symbol of an Old Believer's participation in Old Believer traditions. Dress plays an essential role in Old Believer rites of passage. Within Old Believer society clothing provides a system of communication among its members. The function of dress in maintaining Old Believer identity, therefore, requires investigation.

The Old Believer community seeks to preserve the old ways and styles in an inimical setting. Although they would like to live by themselves and renounce all contact with the dominant culture, their children have to go to school, and they must find jobs which put them in contact and competition with both Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans. The public school system provides extensive culture contact, but a host of other events and processes such as birth and death, health care, fishing and hunting, building homes, buying farms and setting up businesses, driving automobiles, law enforcement and fire protection systems impinge upon the traditional Old Believer order.

All aspects of their traditional way of life have been subject to change since immigration to the United States, but not all of these have changed equally. Some traditions have been maintained while others have disappeared. Likewise, not all aspects of dress have changed in a uniform manner. Hair style has been particularly resistant to change, but traditional winter outerwear has totally disappeared. Men wear American work shirts and jeans to work while they wear traditional Russian clothing to church. It is useful, in order to understand the nature of contact between cultures, to record the continuity and change in Russian Old Believer dress and thus better understand the processes of acculturation.

The objectives of this study, therefore, are threefold:

- 1) to document the historic dress, the traditional dress prior to immigration to the United States, of the Russian Old Believers,

- 2) to determine the functions of dress in Old Believer society, and

- 3) to show how dress reflects acculturative processes.

### Hypotheses

It is expected that various factors will influence the current dress of the Russian Old Believers.

- 1) Current dress will reflect their adherence to Old Believer religion and culture.

- 2) Current dress will reflect acculturative influences from American culture.

- 3) Current dress will reflect consolidation processes at work within the Old Believer group.

### Methods

The data on which this study is based come from visits to the Woodburn area between November 1981 and September 1982. In order to gain entrance into the Russian Old Believer community and to meet its members, I initially contacted the Woodburn Middle School, the Marion County Health Department and a fabric store in Woodburn.

These institutions provided situations where Russian Old Believers could be observed at various tasks in the community. From these contacts came interviews with selected Old Believers who discussed their dress and shared their traditions. The majority of the information on historic dress and the cultural functions of dress came from such interviews. In addition the Old Believers shared photographs and extant costumes from prior times as they were available.

Surveys were used to supplement the general observations on dress which had been gained from interviews and participant observation. These included questions on the use of Russian and American clothing, demography of the informant and the extent of participation in activities which have been used in previous studies of immigrant populations to indicate acculturation. A copy of the survey is included in the appendices. Originally it was hoped to administer the survey to a large group of Russian Old Believers at language or citizenship classes. Unfortunately no such classes were held during the study. Surveys were completed during or after interviews which were held in the Health Clinic, Marion County Learning Center, the Middle School, and various shops and homes. The survey was shortened for use with Russian Old Believer students in four of the classes that had been observed over a period of five months in the Middle School. Surveys were completed for a total of thirty adults and



thirty middle school students. In addition, a survey on the extent of use of Russian Old Believer dress in a Russian language kindergarten class was included. Due to the small size of the sample and the lack of a random sampling technique, it was not possible to make a Chi-square analysis of the survey data.

Photographs were not included in this study for a variety of reasons. Although individuals will allow their pictures to be taken, many of them do not wish to have these brought to public attention. Previous unauthorised use of photographs of Old Believers have made them reluctant to grant permission to use photographs. Many Old Believers wish to remain aloof from American society and anonymity is one way of preserving their privacy. Thus they resent casual visitors with cameras. Additionally, during fasts many Old Believers do not want their pictures taken. Fasts are times for devotion to religious matters, and picture-taking is not appropriate.

The study has three thrusts: the historic Russian Old Believer dress, the current Russian Old Believer dress and the acculturation processes in dress. Chapters two and three review the literature on these subjects. Chapters four and five present the findings related to the first two of these emphases. Chapter six presents the findings of the surveys on the use of Russian dress. Chapter seven analyses the acculturation processes in Old Believer dress and chapter eight concludes the study.

## 2. DRESS AND CULTURE

### Dress in Society

Dress is one of the universals of human society. Variouslly called costume, body decoration, personal appearance, attire, adornment or dress, it refers to all that is put on and done to the body. It includes temporary and permanent body modifications as well as garments worn over the body (Gates 1981). Dress allows the wearer to express both individual taste and identification with a social group (Polhemus and Procter 1978:11). It makes statements about peoples, their environment, social organisation, history and forms of artistic expression.

Dress may be studied in a number of different ways. Early anthropologists often described dress as an item of material culture; in their studies they emphasised its form. Later anthropologists, concerned with a more holistic approach to culture, have discussed dress in context with its uses and functions. Heider (1969) emphasises the importance of both functional attributes, and frequency and situational norms in understanding dress. Other disciplines may emphasise the historical record of dress, the artistic expression of dress forms, production of items of dress or the social conditions surrounding the

manufacture and wear of dress. All of these contribute to an understanding of the role of dress in society and provide clues for interpreting the nature of society.

Studies of dress show that dress reveals historical change and social patterns. Kroeber measured skirt widths, hemlines, waistlines and décolletage in women's dress in an early methodical study of dress and found that women's dress follows deliberate, systematic cycles that are symbolic of social change (1919:260). Scarce (1980) documented alterations in a nineteenth century Turkish costume which gave the garment a more western fit; these alterations coincided with rapid westernisation in the Ottoman Empire. In West Africa the technology of cotton cloth accompanied conversion to Islam because of the increased need for cloth to fulfill the religious and cultural requirements of Islamic costume (Johnson 1980:201).

Dress communicates information about individuals and their society. Hair styles of the Yoruba in Nigeria reveal a vast range of information about both society and the individual (Houlberg 1979:395). Traditionally certain hair styles are part of rites of passage. In addition they convey information about kinship affiliation, political and occupational roles and religious systems. Kuper notes that the clothing of the Swazi in southern Africa communicates the social identity of the person wearing it; it establishes the relationship of individuals to each

other and makes the social structure of Swazi society visible and tangible (1973:365). Levi-Strauss observes that the facial paintings of the Caduveo in Brazil confer human dignity upon the wearer, express status differences within the society and also are a graphic way of expressing social contradictions (1974:195). In her study of Yao (Mien) costume Adams comments on the role of dress in making statements about a culture. Yao (Mien) costume represents responses to the environment, stage in life cycle and cosmological forces. The designs and techniques that are used in a given costume are a "literal parallel to the individual's command of the culture" (1974:64). Dress, then, is a manifest expression of society and the individual's participation in it.

Sumptuary laws have long specified dress appropriate to one's rank, class or nationality in society. They represent an attempt to order society through dress. Ottoman sumptuary laws prescribed dress according to one's governmental position, millet (nation) and occupation. When Sultan Selim III (1797-1807) ascended to the throne in the late eighteenth century, he reimposed the old sumptuary laws, believing that the political and social problems of the times would be solved if each person knew the rank and position of other people by their appearance (Shaw and Shaw 1977:33). Aztec sumptuary laws strictly regulated the manners of dress so that a person's status could be determined by appearance. These laws did not

dictate what people wore for everyday dress, but provided rules for ritual and ceremonial occasions (Anawalt 1980:43). Ancient Peruvian sumptuary laws detailed elaborate mortuary rituals. Analyses of preserved mummy bundles reveal the status of the individuals and the stratification of society (Vreeland 1977:176).

Dress may be used to facilitate social and political changes as well as communicate them. In the decades prior to Indian independence the wearing of traditional garments made of hand-woven cloth acquired the significance of commitment to political independence for India and endorsed the non-violent approach of Mahatma Gandhi and the revival of cottage industries. Garments of indigenous cloth provided a symbol of unity of purpose among Indians, unifying people of differing political entities, castes and languages in effort toward a common goal. The Nigeria Drive Right hair style, in which hair veered dramatically to the right, coincided with the conversion to right hand driving in Nigeria, thus easing the transition with a symbolic reminder of the new way to drive (Houlberg 1979:362).

Frantz Fanon (1959:35) observes that clothing can be the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness and that the first clue to a person's social group is usually revealed by dress traditions. The veil in Algeria was such a societal symbol. The turban among the Sikhs of India and elsewhere is a similar symbol. Such items of

dress may become rallying points for cultural and societal unity. The French attempted to destroy Algerian society's resistance to colonialism by "lifting the veil" of Algerian women. Algerians took advantage of the French view of the veil by first using unveiled women as messengers and intelligence gatherers for the revolution, and later, after the French caught on to this ruse, to using veiled women for similar purposes as well as carrying supplies and ammunition.

Governments may use dress to present a certain orientation to the rest of the world. Peter I of Russia required western dress of his followers among the aristocracy to emphasise his intention to westernise the country. Atatürk did likewise in Turkey in 1935. He abolished fezzes and turbans "to encourage modernism in minds" (Shaw 1971:385). Tanzania's attempts in the 1960s to put trousers on the Masai were intended to present a modern, unified, nationalistic view of the country. At the same time other Tanzanians adopted Chinese dress to show their support of Chinese revolutionary principles (Mazrui 1970:22, 28).

Various religious groups use dress to convey both religious ideals and membership in a particular religious sect. To the Amish styles of grooming and dress express their obedience to God and their denial of a proud, disobedient world. Within Amish society dress symbolises group unity and an individual's role within the social

structure (Hostetler 1980:234). Hasidic Jews have a society that is stratified on the basis of intensity and frequency of religious observances. Their dress identifies them as members of a particular religious sect and also indicates their social status, that is, the degree of their observance of religious practices (Poll 1962:59-69). Rastafarians likewise display membership in their group with dress. They wear their hair in dreadlocks, and the red, green and yellow colours of the Ethiopian flag and Lion of Judah emblem on their garments symbolise their beliefs in the deity of Haile Selassie and an eventual return to Africa.

A number of researchers have noted the similarity of language and dress. Pear (1935) notes similar functions in clothing and speaking. Dress, like speaking, may reveal wealth, narcissism, regionalism and power. He compares voice and speaking to body and clothing. Barthes (1967:27) finds a similar connection between language and speech and clothes that people wear. He likens costume to language and clothing to speech. Bogatryev analyses the folk costume of Moravian Slovakia on a linguistic model. Dress, like language, can have functions beyond the practical functions of the object (the item of dress or signifier) and indicate various aspects of life (signified). Practical and aesthetic functions of dress relate to the dress itself, but other functions relate to the same object. Dress is both object and signified; it

must be read as a sign system in the same way that a language is understood (1971:81-82). Nigerian hair styles, for instance, convey messages beyond the practical function of the particular style. So does the shamma (wrap) which the Amharas of Ethiopia drape in varying manners communicate friendliness, sadness, grief or pride in addition to providing warmth. The type and size of cloth and width of the border show regional, wealth and rural-urban distinctions (Messing 1960:558-60). The method that the Tuareg of North Africa use to wrap the veil likewise may convey messages of elegance, aloofness, gaiety, arrogance or irritation (Murphy 1964:1266). Lurie in the Language of Clothing (1981) compares clothes to a sign system. Clothing has not only vocabulary (wardrobe), but foreign words (ethnic clothes), slang (fads), adjectives (accessories), dialects (age and sex differences) and free speech (fashion). Despite the ethnocentric manner of presentation and the tendency to equate "literacy" with quantity of clothes, Lurie emphasises that dress does communicate messages in a non-verbal and somewhat unconscious manner.

Dress follows a transition from everyday to holiday-ceremonial to ritual. Bogatryev relates these to changes in emphasis and strength of various functions (1971:43-44). The practical function of everyday dress is foremost while social status, aesthetic and regionalistic functions are of lesser importance. In holiday-ceremonial costume,



holiday function is primary while aesthetic, ritual, nationalistic, social status and practical functions are of lesser importance. Ritual function is most important for ritual dress, with lesser consideration being given to the holiday, aesthetic, regionalistic, social status and practical functions of dress.

Dress, then, may be examined both as an object and for its significance to the wearer. It has meanings and functions as a system of signals on national, societal, group and individual levels. Combinations of functions of dress with varying importance and the nature of the situation allow members of society to communicate through dress. As an individual may establish his identity and send messages through dress, so may a people use dress to express their ideas and feelings and to separate themselves from other peoples, thus creating with dress an overt symbol of their cultural identity.

### Acculturation in Society

When cultures come into firsthand continuous contact, changes may occur in the culture patterns of either or both groups. Acculturation is the process of change resulting from contact between cultures (Redfield, Herskovits and Linton 1936:149).

Acculturation does not occur evenly through time and space. Cultures do not share their culture patterns equally when contact occurs as frequently one culture is

dominant over the other. Contact may be non-directed in that the dominant society does not interfere with the culture system of the subordinate society. Directed contact involves interference in various ways with the subordinate society's cultural system (Linton 1963; Spicer 1961).

Spicer (1969:529-34) identifies four types of processes at work when cultures come into contact. In "incorporation," aspects of one culture are simply added to and integrated into already existing patterns so that they enhance the organisation of the second culture. Contrasted to incorporation is "assimilation;" the subordinate society accepts forms of the dominant culture as well as its meanings within that culture. Although new culture patterns are accepted in both forms of integration, in the former the subordinate society accepts them in their own terms, whereas in the latter they accept them in terms of the dominant society. Elements of two distinct systems become united into a single system in "fusion." The governing principles of the new system are distinct from those of the old systems. In "compartmentalisation" new elements lack integration within the accepting culture. To these possibilities Moone (1981) adds "persistence" or maintenance of existing traditions.

Not all aspects of a cultural system are equally susceptible to change in an acculturative situation. Herskovits (1941), in his study of African survivals in

the New World, finds that African slaves often disregarded the outer forms of their traditions, but retained the old meanings in new forms. Keesing (1958:410) suggests "zones of culture" which have varying receptivity to change. The zones of culture which are most persistent in the face of culture contact are those in which rules for behaviour are clearly defined, are associated with ritual and symbolism, are stressed in formative years and/or are backed by powerful sanctions. Among these persistent zones of culture are the essentials of organic maintenance, which include some aspects of dress; essentials of communication; and essentials of ideological security (religious practices and assumptions.) Conversely, in malleable zones of culture, such as economic activities and artistic self-expression, flexibility and change are encouraged. This suggests a hierarchy of change, with greater change occurring in secular aspects of a cultural system, less change occurring in religious aspects.

Some societies may be less susceptible to change than others. The size of the group and its relationship to the environment may affect the degree of change. Cultures with many boundary-maintaining mechanisms; rigid internal structures; and smooth-functioning, self-correcting mechanisms are least susceptible to change (Social Science Research Council 1954:978). Spicer (1971) notes that the persistent people in the world have a set of symbols which is based on a system of beliefs and

sentiments concerning historical events. These symbols, plus participation in organisations for achieving shared understandings about the symbols, create a stable cultural identity. Such people have been able to maintain through time an enduring sense of peoplehood.

Within a culture not all individuals participate equally in the process of change. Barnett (1954:378-9) notes three factors in the acceptance or rejection of a new item of culture: 1) whether the new item satisfies a want better than an item in the existing culture, 2) the tastes, preferences and experiences of the individual and 3) an individual's attitude of dissatisfaction. Individuals who are estranged from their culture are more susceptible to change (ibid.:410).

McFee suggests that a linear model does not apply to individual acculturation; new ways can be learned without abandoning the old ways. While individuals may not participate completely in the culture patterns of both groups in a bicultural situation, they participate in a percentage of each culture's activities. He dubs such individuals "150 per cent" people (1968:1096). Johnston notes that second generation Polish immigrants to Australia identify themselves in a combinative manner as Polish, Australian or some mixture of these (1969:88).

Processes at work in ethnic groups bring about change in the way they perceive themselves (Kozlov 1978). Extensive migrations may divide ethnic groups. Other

factors are at work to unite them. These include consolidation of several ethnic communities, usually of kindred origin; absorption of alien ethnic groups into a dominant ethnic group; and integration of diverse ethnic groups into a larger political entity.

Immigration to another country signifies a dramatic change in the life of an individual. The person often emigrates for political, economic or social reasons. Estranged as he may be from his own culture, he will, in addition, be confronted with demands from the new society. He may have to acquire a new language. Most immigrants are forced into situations, where, at least initially, they must accept new ways to survive. They are immediately thrust into the position of subordinates in a dominant society. Accompanying this may be the loss of traditional culture because of impracticality or difficulty in retaining the old ways.

Researchers of various immigrant groups point out the tendency of people to participate differently in acculturative processes. Johnston (1969:87) indicates that factors which affect acculturation are age of the immigrant, ethnic background, marital status and level of education. Eisenstadt lists additional factors which affect the "absorption" of immigrants. These include the motivation for immigration, the social structure of the immigration process, ability of the structure and institutions of the host country to react favourably with immi-

grants, the pluralistic structure of the specific community and the development of disintegrative forces (1955:256ff.) Women are more likely to cling to traditional ways than men (Wenzel 1968:246; Hurh 1979:95-6; Johnston 1969:51). The attitudes of children toward acculturation reflect those of their parents (Riegert 1953), but children are more favourably disposed to accepting change than their parents. This may be especially so when a new language is involved.

One of the difficulties with acculturation studies is the problem of finding acceptable indices to use in measuring acculturation. Among those which have been used are education in public schools (knowledge of a national language and national values), intermarriage, rate of naturalisation, decline of the immigrant press, crime rates, change of names, economic adjustment and lower birth rates. Johnston (1969:31) finds food preference a major indicator of assimilation in children. Language may not be an indicator but an agent of acculturation (Elkholy 1969:69). Others point out that language may not be an important factor in cultural identity (Apte 1978:230; Spicer 1980:344). Religiosity is not necessarily a factor in acculturation (Elkholy 1969:63).

#### Dress and Acculturation

The dress of folk people is often regarded as static and unchanging. Despite this perception folk costume does

evolve into new forms through time and space. Klumpp observes that the dress of the Masai of East Africa has "undergone dramatic changes in the last hundred years while not changing at all" (1981:95). The apparent contradiction is resolved by noting the continuity in designs and styles which persist to reinforce Masai cultural integrity while many of the products and techniques are new. Bogatryev (1971) corroborates this when he comments on the stability of folk costume which may take on the features of current fashion while it continues to give the impression of unchanging tradition.

Spicer (1980) notes that one of the keys to maintaining cultural identity has been a common understanding about meanings of sets of symbols. The persistent people about whom Spicer writes do not maintain an everyday dress which is distinguishable from the people among whom they live. In ritual events, however, dress is worn which is symbolic of their cultural identity. The dance costumes of the Yaqui of Mexico, for instance, are part of their shared symbolism. Even though all dress may not be part of the cultural identity of a persistent people, some dress forms, however altered from their distinctive dress at a given period in time, may be part of their shared meanings of symbols and their collective participation in their culture.

The processes of colonialisation and modernisation have spread western styles of dress around the world.

Some have argued that western dress may, in fact, be the most lasting legacy of western colonialisation. In the Third World countries western dress, regardless of appropriateness to climate or life style, has come to represent a commitment to western ideals and modern urban life. After substantial contact with western colonialism, very few societies have retained traditional dress for everyday dress. Seldom has there been a return to the widespread use of traditional dress following attempts to revive a traditional way of life. The recent return to the veil in Iran following the Islamic Revolution has not, for instance, been accompanied by a return to traditional Iranian dress under the veil for those who have already adopted western modes of dress.

Dress has seldom been keyed to acculturation among immigrant groups. Part of this may be due to the prevalence of modes of western dress in many of the urban areas of the world. In order to determine the role of dress in acculturation in an immigrant setting, it is necessary to find a culture for which western dress is not part of the normative clothing pattern. Another reason for the scarcity of information on dress and acculturation is that dress is generally conceded to be the domain of women; predominantly male researchers have ignored what is, in western culture, a feminine subject.

Immigrants with traditional dress have various options. They can adopt prevailing dress in an attempt to



merge with the new society in which they live, or they may find security in traditional dress which has meanings that they understand and forms that they find comfortable. Royce (1982:147) suggests that ethnic groups may develop styles rather than continue slavish devotion to tradition. Style implies choice and flexibility and contrasts to the conservatism and conformity to historical accuracy of tradition. In the United States the acculturative processes in dress have been telescoped so that rarely has the traditional dress of immigrants been retained beyond the founding generation. Despite the loss of traditional costume among most of the immigrants to the United States in the last two centuries, the transitional process from traditional dress to standard American dress has been, for the most part, undocumented.

### 3. BACKGROUND OF THE OLD BELIEVERS

#### Present Setting

Most of the Russian Old Believers in Oregon live in or around Woodburn, a medium-sized town of approximately 11,000 in Marion County between Salem and Portland. The region around Woodburn was one of the first settled by Europeans in Oregon. Originally called French Prairie, it is an area of fertile soil between the Pudding and Willamette Rivers. Farming is important to the local economy; the major crops are berries, hops, grass seed, fruits, nuts and vegetables. The town has a traditional downtown business center plus commercial developments along the interstate highway and a major north-south highway which pass through the east and west edges of the town.

Woodburn's ethnic composition is unique among Oregon towns. Its English-speaking population, known as Anglo, maintains political and economic power by controlling the government bureaucracy and town businesses. Woodburn also has sizeable Hispanic and Russian populations. While the majority of the Russians are Old Believers, two other Russian dissident religious groups, the Molokans and the Pentecostals, form noticeable minorities in the area. Most Hispanics are Mexican-Americans and Mexicans who

originally came to Woodburn as farm labourers. In the 1960s they began to settle permanently in Woodburn in large numbers. In addition to these groups, one of Oregon's largest retirement communities, Senior Estates, is in Woodburn. Since its establishment in the early 1960s the retirement population has tended to vote down budgets for schools and other social services; this has caused considerable dissension within the community. Woodburn's mixture of one-quarter Anglo, one-quarter Hispanic, one-quarter Russian and one-quarter Senior Estater produces an unusual political and cultural blend.

The Russian Old Believer population has grown rapidly in the twenty years it has been in Oregon. Chosen because an Old Believer family on its way from China to Brazil heard, while in Los Angeles, about Russians who were farming successfully around Woodburn, the town has become a settling out place for Old Believers from around the world. The population has grown from 550 in 1966, 3,000 in 1971 to approximately 5,000 in 1982. Old Believers continue to come while others leave for places which they consider more suitable for maintaining their traditions. Thus, the Old Believers have not only a sizeable community in Oregon, but also have sister communities in Alaska, Canada and Brazil and maintain contact with a world wide scattering of Old Believer communities in Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Russia and other parts of the United States.

Occupations of the Old Believers are diverse. Many of the Old Believers own their farms where their major crops are berries. A few who were fishermen in Turkey have special carp fishing permits. Others combine farm work and fishing with work in factories and the woods. Furniture factories, sewing factories and plant nurseries in Portland and vicinity employ many Old Believer men and women. Some Old Believers do contract work with forestry departments in tree thinning and tree planting, and a few are in the construction business.

Despite disparate political histories, the Old Believers share a common religious heritage to which they have tenaciously clung since a schism with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1666. This shared history transcends differences in dialect and material culture among the Woodburn Old Believers. It is necessary to examine briefly Russian religious history in order to understand the Old Believer capacity for holding fast to the old ways.

### Religious History

Russia became officially Christian in the tenth century after the Russian King Vladimir received the hand of the Byzantine Princess Anna in exchange for his support of the Emperor Basil II during a civil war (Vasiliev 1952:323). The Byzantines exerted strong influence on the early Russian Church; ritual, customs and doctrine came from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, liturgical books were soon translated into Slavonic, a written

Slavic language which the ninth century Byzantine missionaries to Moravia, Cyril and Methodius, had developed. Thus, from its beginnings the Russian church had its own language. Russian clergy seldom learned Greek in order to read the original texts, and the church grew to assume an increasingly Russian flavour. As it developed it tended to identify the substance of religion with its form (Miliukov 1942:11).

Events led to an increasing isolation from the Greek Church. The rise to power of the Ottoman Turks threatened Constantinople, and in order to receive aid from the West, the Greeks in 1439 accepted union with Rome. Reaction to this deed in Moscow was one of horror and disbelief. The Russian prelate who went with the Greek delegates to Rome was promptly deposed. Viewing the subsequent fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 as punishment for the Greeks of their betrayal of orthodoxy (Bolshakoff 1950: 40), the Russian Church broke with the Greek Church over this act of apostasy. Increasingly the Russians looked upon Moscow as the "Third Rome" and as preserver of the true faith.

At the same time a fundamentalist group gained control of the Russian Church hierarchy. Under their leadership the Church achieved official independence from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This group, the Josephites, so called for their founder Saint Joseph, insisted upon a literal, divine interpretation of the Bible and the

first seven Ecumenical Councils. They believed in rigid adherence to the rites, fasts and ritual of the Church, and any departure from the liturgy was heretical (ibid.:46). Uniformity in the rite was an essential element in their faith. Their concern with errors in translations of their liturgical books and with differences in ritual with the Greek Church led to a church council (the Stoglav Council, the Council of the Hundred Chapters) in 1551 which confirmed the Russian translations and rites; this marked the existence of the Russian Church as an independent, national church (Conybeare 1962:53). Among other decisions, the Council ruled in favour of a double "alleluia" and the use of two fingers to make the sign of the cross (ibid.:51). It declared that shaving a beard was an "outrage to the image of God" (Miliukov 1942:30). The Council followed the guide of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 A. D., "Let the ancient prevail" (Conybeare 1962:6).

Despite the Council's efforts to create a uniform liturgy within the Church, errors abounded. The general state of illiteracy among the priesthood and the incompetency of the copyists, who frequently incorporated marginal comments into the texts, continued to provide sources of heresy (ibid.:34). The introduction of the printing press made the Russian Church even more determined to eliminate nonconformity within the Church and to create a common rite.

The various attempts to create a uniform rite were unsuccessful until 1649 when Tsar Alexis initiated attempts to reform the rite by assigning scholars to the task of translating the Bible from the Greek original (ibid.:40). He imported codices and scholars from Greece for the task and sent a Russian clergyman to Asia Minor to report on the Greek rites. In 1652 Nikon, who with imperial favour had risen rapidly in the Russian religious hierarchy, was chosen Patriarch of All Russia. He sought to introduce the uniformity that his predecessors had vainly sought to attain. He hastened the tempo of Greek influence with the introduction of Greek architecture, vestments, chants, paintings and other religious artifacts (Miliukov 1942:35). His reforms were primarily those of form. He proposed 1) performing the sign of the cross with three fingers instead of two, 2) singing "alleluia" two times instead of three, 3) leading the processions against the movement of the sun (counter-clockwise) instead of with the movement of the sun and 4) spelling the name of Jesus with two i's (Iisus) instead of one. A church synod in 1655-56 endorsed the reforms.

The reforms, despite their concerns with ritual and not dogma, enraged clergymen. The more fundamental and nationalistic elements within the church felt that the very nature of Christ had been altered with changes in the form of worship. They despised the Greek Church because it was tainted with the Latin heresy and the Turkish domination. Among the dissenters was the Archpriest

Avvakum who immediately challenged Nikon's reforms. As discontent spread rapidly to the populace, Nikon fled to safety in a monastery away from Moscow, but not before exiling Avvakum to Siberia where he went, spreading the work of the defamation of the true faith as he went.

Following Nikon's fall from power the old ways temporarily held sway. The dissenters, or raskolniki, as they were called, came to power, and Avvakum returned from exile in Siberia. However, a council summoned by imperial decree in 1666 upheld the reforms while condemning Nikon. The following year an ecclesiastical council held with the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria in attendance sustained the decisions of the previous year and anathematized all those who resisted the reforms and adhered to the practices of the Stoglav Council of 1551. The dissenters became not only enemies of the official Russian Church, but enemies of the state as well and, therefore, subject to persecution.

In the early days of the schism the followers of the old ritual believed that the end of the world was in sight. Not only had Moscow, the Third Rome, fallen, but the Book of Faith foretold of the advent of the Antichrist in 1666 and the end of the world in 1669. In 1668 people neglected their fields and spent nights in coffins awaiting the trumpet call of the Archangel (Miliukov 1943:43). When the world did not end, religious leaders found errors in the Book of Faith which postponed the coming of the Antichrist for 33 years.



In the meantime persecutions of the believers in the old ritual, or Old Believers as they came to be called, continued. Avvakum was burned at the stake in 1682. Other groups found persecutions too great to bear and chose to burn themselves rather than accept capture by government troops. As many as 20,000 may have died in self-immolations from the beginning of the schism to 1689 (Conybeare 1962:88).

The return of Peter I from western Europe in 1698 confirmed Old Believer fears that the end of the world was at hand. He not only ignored the religious ceremonies which traditionally accompanied the return of the tsar to Moscow, but he immediately began shaving the beards of his boyar followers (Miliukov 1942:43-45). These actions convinced Old Believers that the Antichrist had indeed arrived, and they prepared again for the end of the world.

The westernising reforms which followed Peter I's return further antagonised the believers in the old ritual. All male members of the ruling class were required to shave their beards (Cherniavsky 1966:34); a tax on beards of 100 rubles a year was levied on townspeople, and peasants who entered town to sell produce paid a fee of one kopek for the right to wear their beard in town for the day. Peter I also mandated western clothes. An English traveller to Russia in the early eighteenth century observed that

A pattern of clothes of the English fashion were hung up at the gates of the city of

Moscow--all persons (except common peasants) should make their clothes according to the English patterns. Whosoever should disobey and should be found passing through the gates of the city in their long habits, should pay either 2 grevens (20 pence) or be obliged to kneel down at the gates of the city and have their coats cut off just even with the ground. . . many hundreds of coats. . . were cut accordingly. . . broke the custom of wearing long coats near Moscow and places where the czar went (Perry 1952:39).

In 1714 laws forbade the sale of Russian-style clothing and boots; punishment was whipping and hard labour in Siberia. Old Believers were forced to wear clothes of a special cut marked with the lettering H. R. A. (Heretic, Raskolnik, Apostate)(Conybeare 1921:227) and a distinct marker of yellow cloth on their outer garments (Call 1979:62).

Other laws changed the old ways. Women were required to participate in social activities such as dances and parties which Peter I had observed women doing in the West. He adopted the Julian calendar and the new year began in January rather than September. Peter I set days of obligatory church attendance in the official Russian Church and required priests to report seditious acts from church confessions. Officially unpersecuted, the Old Believers were forced to pay double taxes and were denied the right to hold public office and live in cities.

Although most rebellions in the last part of the seventeenth century in Russia were fought in the name of the old ritual, the Old Believers had other grievances besides the religious ones. The peasants had been com-

pletely enserfed in 1649. The growing power of the central government with its western orientation angered the Old Believers. Increasingly they began to flee from the "Antichrist" Peter I to northern Russia, Siberia, the Cossack lands and the Urals, away from the power of the central government, where they could live their lives relatively free from government interference (Cherniavsky 1966:4).

Shortly after the schism the raskolniki, or Old Believers, faced the problem of securing priests. For a time they were able to acquire priests from the pool of priests who had been ordained before the schism, but as these priests died, this source disappeared. The Old Believers developed two types of solutions to this problem. The priestists (popovtsy) and the priestless (bezpopovtsy) form two major divisions within Old Believer groups.

In order to preserve church tradition and maintain apostolic succession three levels of church hierarchy are required: bishops, priests and deacons (Miliukov 1942:48). Unfortunately for the Old Believers only one bishop joined their cause, and he died before he was able to establish a hierarchy. Therefore, the Old Believers had no one who could ordain priests. Without priests the sacraments could not be observed, so they devised several methods of obtaining priests.

The beglopopovtsy accepted fugitive priests who left the official church. This provided an uncertain source of

priests as it depended upon the political climate of the time. In the early years of this century two bishops joined this group and founded a hierarchy in Russia (Kolarz 1962:140).

In the nineteenth century Old Believers obtained a hierarchy outside Russia in Austria. A wealthy Old Believer family gained permission to establish a monastery at Bela Krinitza among an Old Believer population there and secured a bishop, the deposed Orthodox Metropolitan of Bosnia, Ambrose. He was willing to be rebaptised as an Old Believer and found a hierarchy. This hierarchy still exists at Breila in Romania.

A movement within the official church, the Yedino-verie, in 1800 allowed Old Believers to use the old ritual while still under the authority of the official church. It has its own hierarchy for ordaining priests.

The priestless or bezpopovtsy tended less to organisation. They developed a form of church government by elders and administered the sacraments of baptism, confession and extreme unction to each other. The issue of marriage divided them; some felt that marriage was impossible without a priest and therefore they could not marry. Others allowed the elders to administer the sacrament of marriage. The Vyg community led by the Denisovs became an influential Old Believer community in north Russia. The various priestless groups remained small and split easily. They tended to develop in the sparsely

populated regions of northern Russia where the priests had always been in short supply, and priestless traditions had developed before the schism (Bolshakoff 1950:70).

### History of the Oregon Old Believer Groups

The Old Believers who settled in and around Woodburn, Oregon, represent immigrations from three areas of the world. They are known among themselves as Turchanie, from Turkey, Kharbintsy, from Harbin in Manchuria; and Sinzhan-tsy, from Sinkiang Province in China. Informally they call themselves turkeys, monkeys and fish, respectively. The history and traditions of each group vary.

The Turchanie came to the United States from two provinces in Anatolia, Turkey; they represent separate migrations into the Ottoman Empire. In 1708 an Old Believer Don Cossack, Ignatius Nekrasov, fled to the Kuban River on the eastern shores of the Black Sea and asked for protection from the Khan of Crimea, then under the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultanate. Most of this group eventually settled in Ottoman territory in the Dobrudja. They received a firman from the Porte which granted them complete religious freedom and the right to use their own clergy in exchange for a pledge to fight against Russia (Call 1979:144). Many of these Old Believers eventually settled in Anatolia. In 1962 members of this group, who are known as Nekrasovtsy or Kuban'tsy, lived in villages near Lake Manyas in Bandırma Province and in Istanbul.

The other group of Turkish Old Believers, known as Dunaiki or Lippovan, came from the Ukraine and settled along the banks of the Danube. When conflicts arose within the church over union with the official Russian church, many of these Old Believers resettled in Anatolia (Ambrose 1978:10). In 1962 members of this group lived in Kazakköy on Lake Akşehir in Konya Province. Although these two groups had different origins, they had frequent contact and intermarried.

Following World War II the Turkish Old Believers asked several times to be allowed to resettle in United States. These requests were denied. However, the Soviet government initiated a campaign for the return of Russians to their homeland. Nearly two-thirds of the Turkish group, primarily Kuban'tsy (Nekrasovtsy), left in 1962 for resettlement in Russia. As not all wished to live in an atheistic country, the exodus split families, and the remaining families were unable to find marriage partners for their youth among the population that stayed in Turkey. Again they sought to settle in the United States. This time the United States responded favourably and, with the aid of the Tolstoy Foundation, the Old Believers immigrated to the United States. In 1963, 224 Turkish Old Believer men, women and children arrived in New York. The Kuban'tsy settled near Seabrook in New Jersey and associated with Yedinoverie Old Believers already in the United States. The Dunaiki lived in scattered areas in Millville and Patterson, New Jersey. Their early years

were difficult, and they regretted their inability to keep their community together. They were unable to maintain their old ways and felt their youths were slipping away from them in the city. Thus, when they heard of Old Believers moving to Woodburn, they sent a group to investigate the possibility of a move. Upon arrival in Woodburn, they purchased a farm which they divided into plots for the members of their community, and in March 1966 many of the Dunaiki in New Jersey moved to Oregon.

The other Oregon Old Believer groups represent migrations to Siberia and Kazakhstan during times of persecutions. These groups, known as chasovenniki, or chapelists, fled to obscure, far-off places where they could maintain their religion and way of life. Their exact history is obscure. Many settled in the Altai Region and Kazakhstan; others settled in the Russian Far East near the Chinese border. In 1927 Soviet ethnographers found several priestless Old Believer villages in the Bukhtarma Valley in the Altai Region where Old Believers were living a traditional North Russian way of life (Kolarz 1962:143). Some of those are now part of the Oregon group (Ambrose 1978:9). In the 1920s and 30s many of these Old Believers felt threatened by Soviet atheism and economic policies and crossed into China.

Land was free in China and the Old Believers were able to live in relative isolation from other people. The Old Believers from Altai settled in fertile river valleys

near Urumchi in Sinkiang Province. Originally from the Russian-Polish border, they farmed and sold honey and wheat to Chinese villagers (Smithson 1976:144-146). They had little contact with other people except Kirghiz nomads, but conflicts with Chinese people occurred and some Old Believers were forced to return to Russia.

Old Believers from the Russian Far East crossed into valleys around Harbin, Manchuria. Most of them had originally lived near Kiev or Moscow, but they had settled in Siberia during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55). Some had been with the Vyg community of Old Believers. Near Harbin they established villages and continued their self-sufficient farming ways. The men were notable for their success in hunting; they were particularly adept at acquiring live tigers for zoos. They had little to do with the Chinese except for occasional trade. They did have infrequent confrontations with Chinese bandit gangs, and during the war years some worked for the Japanese or Russians on the railroads (ibid.)

Old Believers had few problems in China until the turmoil in China following World War II. Old Believers near Harbin in 1947-48 and in Sinkiang Province in 1949-51 were the targets of uprisings, and some Old Believers lost their property. The Russian government made attempts to repatriate the Old Believers at this time, and many returned to Russia (ibid.:153). In an attempt to deport all the Russian minorities, the Chinese promised Old Believers an opportunity to migrate to Paraguay in 1952. This did



not materialise, but in 1958-59 they were allowed to go to Hong Kong to await resettlement in another country. In Hong Kong the Old Believers received assistance from the Intergovernment Committee for European Migration which paid their transportation, and the World Council of Churches which purchased 6000 acres in Brazil for their resettlement (Ambrose 1978:9). Most went to Brazil, Australia or Argentina, but others went to New Zealand, Paraguay, Uruguay, Canada and the United States.

On their way to Brazil the Old Believers passed through Los Angeles where the event occurred which would eventually direct them to Oregon. Some Molokans, Russians of another Raskol sect, met them at the dock and told them of some relatives who farmed successfully near Woodburn. Later when farming proved to be difficult in Brazil because of the hot, dry climate; the poor soils; the need for mechanised agriculture; unsettled markets; and the corrupt tax structure, the Old Believers remembered what they heard about farming in Oregon and tried to emigrate. With the aid of the Tolstoy Foundation, which found sponsors for the Old Believers, and Pan American's "fly now, pay later" plan, the Old Believers began to leave for Oregon in 1962. By 1969, 250 Kharbintsy and Sinzhantsy families had moved to Oregon from Brazil (Hall 1970:15).

For many Old Believer families, Oregon was not the panacea that they had hoped for, and by 1967 some families were already looking for another place to live where they

could maintain their cultural identity and religious integrity. They wished to be spared the influences of television, movies, tobacco, alcohol and drugs. In the spring of 1968 several families moved to the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska. Since that time the Kenai community has grown to several communities and a considerable population. Other Old Believers have moved to Canada where they live in several communities. Still others are returning to Brazil where living conditions have improved. Recently several families moved to Bolivia.

Old Believer groups of the diaspora continue to travel to Oregon. In 1974 Old Believers from Argentina began arriving. They continue to come, leaving the Argentine community with just five families. Families from Australia, Uruguay and New Zealand have come to Oregon. A family of Kuban'tsy has moved from New Jersey. Some Old Believers have visited relatives in Russia, and Russian Old Believers from Russia have visited in Oregon. Thus Old Believers in Oregon maintain an international network in their efforts to keep their faith and way of life viable.

#### 4. OLD BELIEVER HISTORIC DRESS

Despite the diaspora, the Russian Old Believers kept their clothing traditions alive. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the Old Believers began the moves which were to bring them eventually to Oregon, their dress had changed but slightly from that of the seventeenth Russian peasantry. They had had some access to new products and techniques because of improved transportation to the isolated communities in which they lived, and techniques of clothing construction from urban centers had penetrated to the farthest village. These had brought about slight changes in their garments. Still the many war years of the twentieth century kept most of the Russians poor and, of necessity, self-sufficient. They lost neither their traditional techniques nor their traditional dress.

The dress of the various Old Believer groups had many similar characteristics despite their many years of isolation from each other and from their traditions in Russia. Men invariably wore straight-legged trousers, a thigh-length tunic and a belt. Although they wore their beards full, they cut their hair generally short but left a longer fringe in front and at the temples. Women wore a dress or jumper, a shirt and a belt. They did not cut their hair; their particular hair style indicated their

marital status. Married women wore a marriage cap, a small cap which enclosed their coils of braids. They covered this with two scarves, the outer one tied under their chin. Their similarities in dress far outweighed their differences; they could be readily identified as Russian Old Believers whatever their place of origin.

Despite these similarities in dress, varying amounts of modernising influences upon Old Believer dress in Russia, Turkey and China, plus their different heritages, produced diversity in costume among the Old Believers. The basic costume for men and women of each subgroup is defined at the time of immigration to the United States for those from Turkey and at the time of exodus from China for those whose sojourn to the United States took them through another country or two before immigration to Oregon. This establishes variations among the groups that reflect their separate histories and provides a baseline for a study of the acculturative processes at work upon their dress.

#### Turkish Old Believer Dress

The dress of the two groups of Turkish Old Believers differed considerably. Although intermarriage between the groups was frequent, women adopted the dress style of the village of the man whom she married. Since most of the Old Believers in Oregon represent the Dunaiki, that dress style predominates in Oregon.

Prior to World War II Dunaiki women wore a jumper (shubka, Figure 4.1) with a shirt (rubashka or rubakha, Figure 4.2) and a belt (poyas). The shubka had a single front piece which was gathered with small pleats above the bust and a back piece whose fullness was gathered with small pleats into a top band just above the waist. The folding of the straps where they joined in the center of the back created a triangle of a contrasting colour which symbolised the Trinity. The rubashka, made of rectilineal pieces, was gathered at the neck and wrist with small pleats. The pleats at the wrist were held in place with ribbons or tape. A narrow collar at the neck opened at the center front where the garment was slit, the length of the slit depending upon the convenience and needs of the wearer. Frequently a length of fabric was added to the lower edge of the rubashka, producing a full-length undergarment. The underarm gusset was essential; it not only made the shirt more comfortable, but also expressed religious sentiment. Shirts were occasionally decorated with cross-stitch embroidery or rows of ribbon or tape at the wrist, sleeve, shoulder and/or collar. Following the war women enclosed the bodice of the shubka to form a new garment, the talichka, (Figure 4.3). This garment had the appearance of a sleeveless, collarless dress. Dresses were ankle-length and usually worn with an apron (fartuk or zapon) whose fullness was gathered into a band at the waist in small pleats and tied at the back. Brightly coloured, flowered prints were favourite fabrics. Married

women wore a marriage cap (shashmura); all women and girls wore scarves tied under their chins. In addition, women wore a triangular scarf (kasyak, Figure 4.4) which tied at the back of the neck, producing three triangular folds in the back. The three folds of the kasyak and the three head coverings which married women wore symbolised the Trinity. Newspaper photographs of Dunaiki women disembarking in New York City show that they wore both the talichka and the shubka at that time.

Men wore a slightly flared tunic (rubakha or rubashka, Figure 4.5) with a left side opening in the top yoke. The shirt buttoned at the opening on the upright collar. Shirts, often made of polka dot fabric, frequently had cross-stitch embroidery at the front and back yokes, collars and sleeve ends. The shirt was worn over straight-legged, dark-coloured trousers. The belt, worn over the shirt, tied at the right side because the sign of the prayer was given with the right hand.

Handicrafts were many. Clothing was frequently embroidered in cross-stitch, usually in red or green colours. Belts were woven on looms, braided or hand-crocheted around a fixed object, frequently a toe. Women spun wool and knit their own stockings, mittens, hats, gloves and sweaters. Quilted jackets (katsaveika), which were filled with wool, were made for the cold winters. Few of the old items survive. As one Old Believer pointed out, "We were poor and we wore everything out."

Figure 4.1. Dunaiki shubka, front and back view

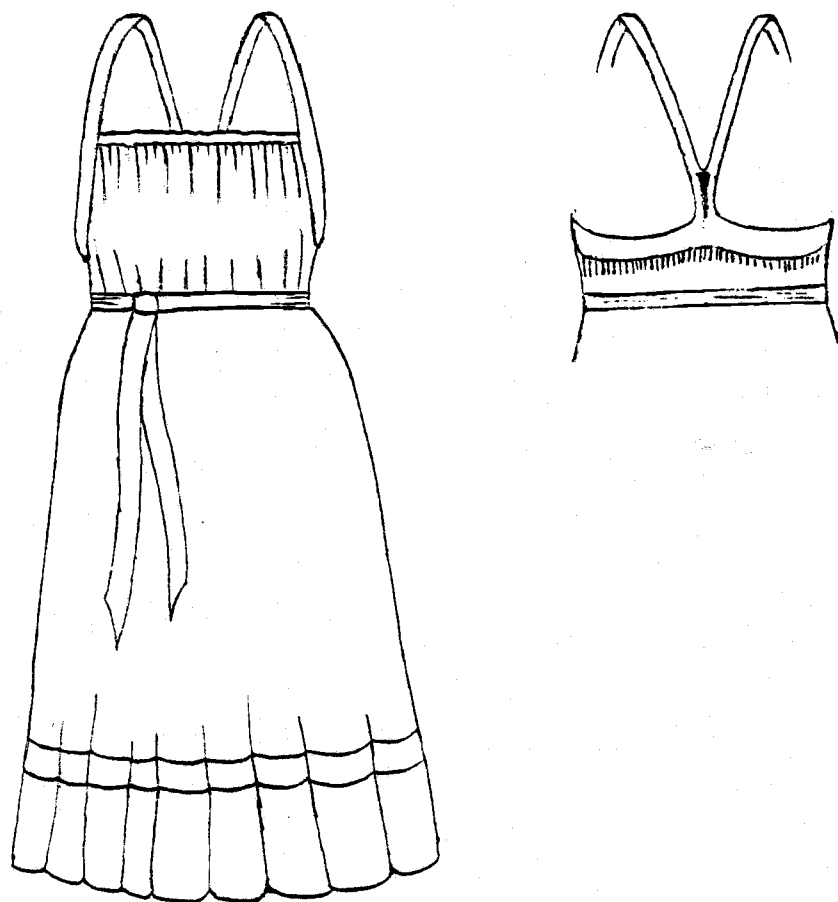


Figure 4.2. Dunaiki woman's shirt

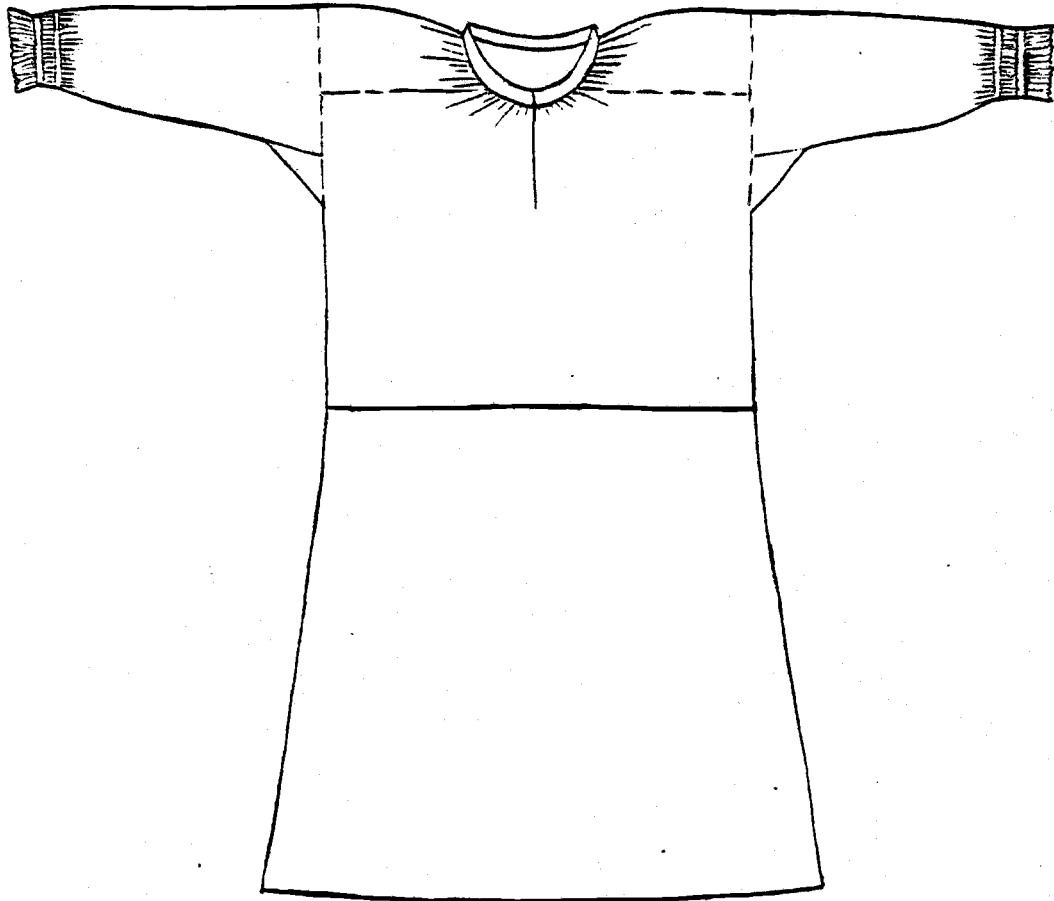




Figure 4.3. Talichka, front and back bodice view

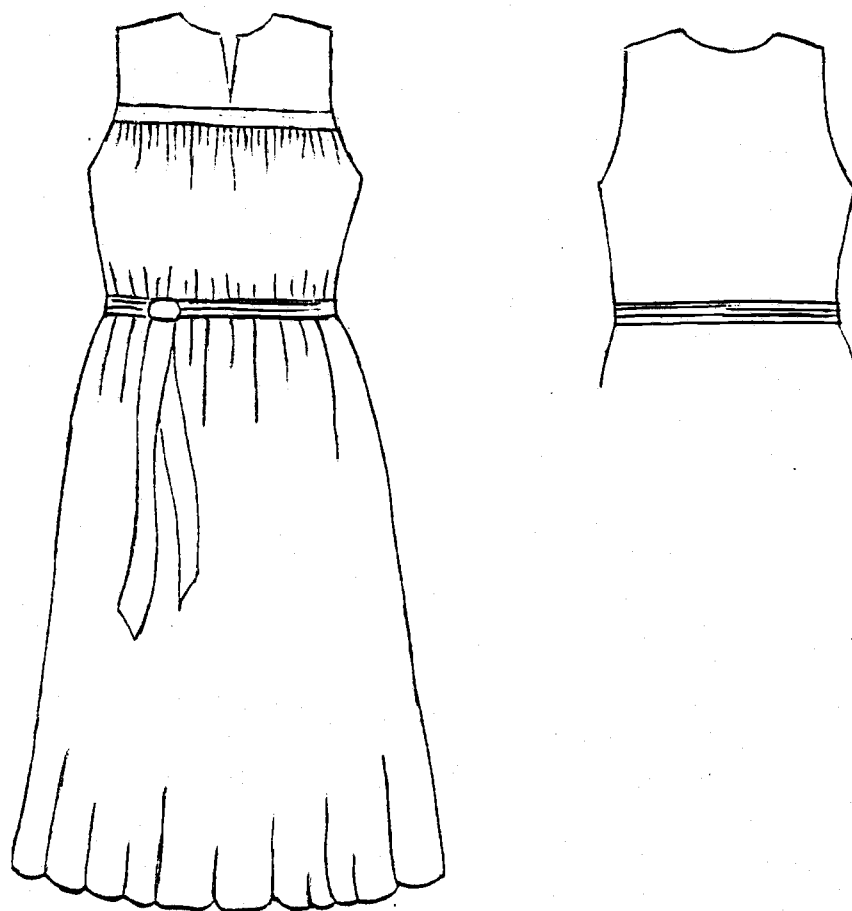


Figure 4.4. Kasyak, scarf and back view when worn

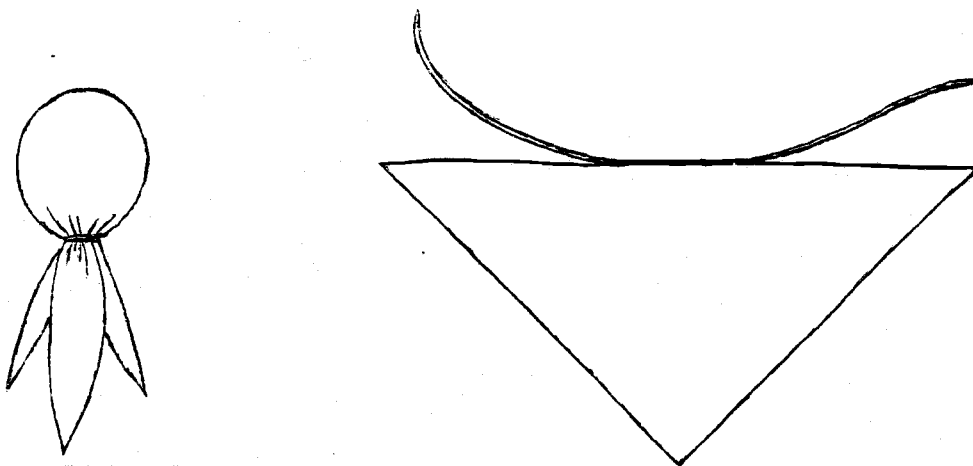
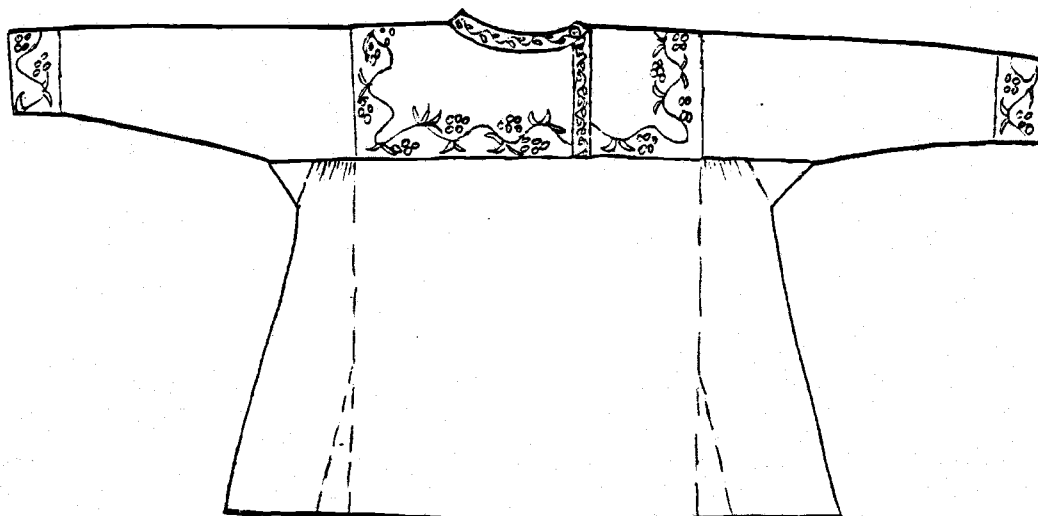


Figure 4.5. Turkish rubakha for men



Although most Kuban'tsy men had adopted western styles of dress, the women retained their old dress from the Kuban River region. The dress had two main parts, the rubakha and the balakhon (Figures 4.6 and 4.7). The rubakha was a long shirt with full sleeves (rukava) from just above the elbow to the wrist and a gathered flounce (padol) at about knee level. The parts of the rubakha which showed, the rukava, the padol and a section around the neck, were made of brightly coloured, expensive materials that contrasted to the less expensive materials of the rest of the rubakha. Made of striped fabric, the knee-length jacket (balakhon), covered all parts of the rubakha except those made of the expensive material. The tight-fitting sleeves were made of six strips of plain, brightly-coloured fabric. The balakhon buttoned down the front from the neck to the waist with twelve buttons. At the neck edges of the balakhon and rubakha were narrow (about 2 centimeters wide) collars of hand-made braid and embroidered fabrics. At the waist was a brightly coloured apron (zavieska, Figure 4.8) which tied at the waist with fringed ties made of pieces of fabric. A red and/or yellow scarf completed the costume; its ends were crossed under the chin and tucked in at the back. As most of the Kuban'tsy live in New York or New Jersey, this costume is rarely seen in Oregon.

Figure 4.6. Kuban'tsy rubakha

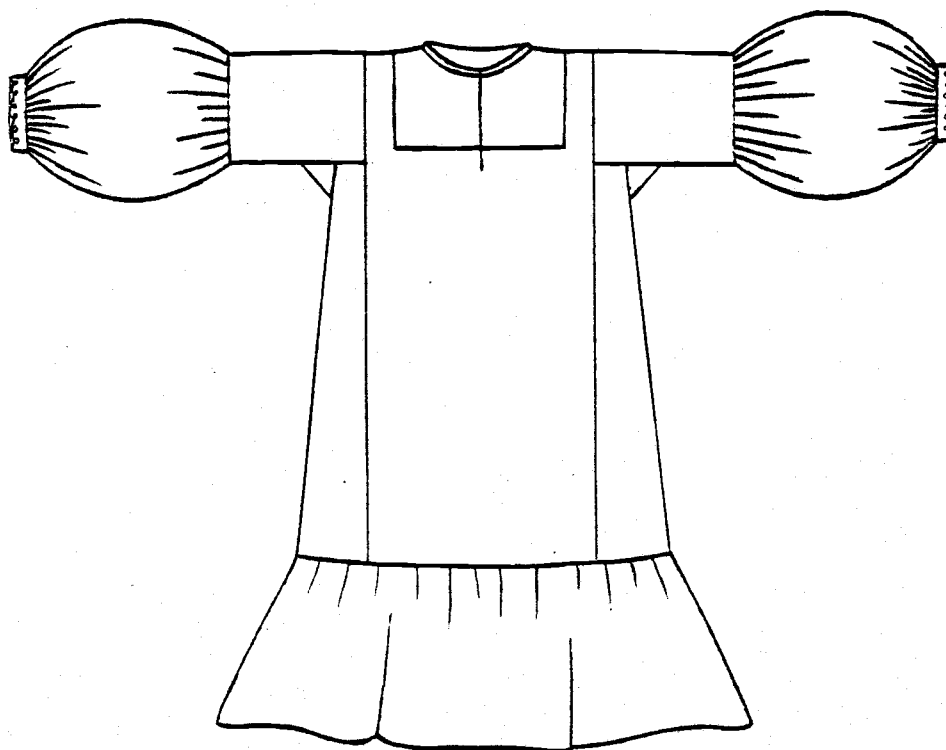


Figure 4.7. Kuban'tsy balakhon

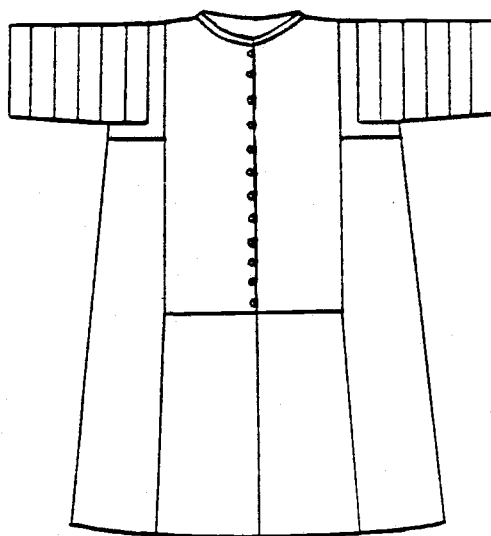
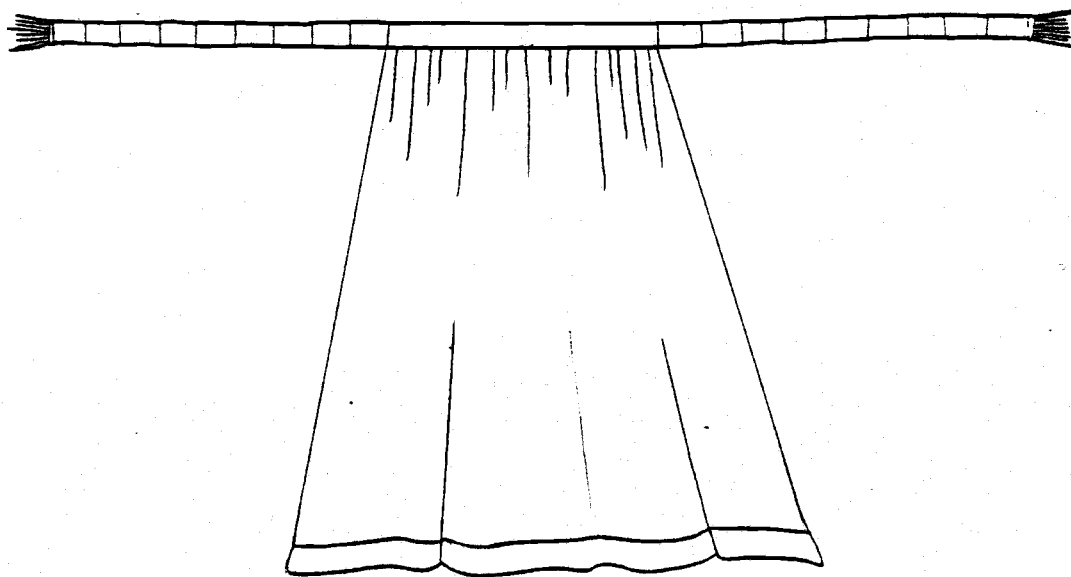


Figure 4.8. Kuban'tsy zavieska



### Harbin Old Believer Dress

Kharbintsy women wore a jumper (sarafan) and shirt (rubakha). The fullness of the sarafan (Figure 4.9) was held in place by tiny pleats gathered into a narrow band, about five centimeters in width, which fit tightly around the body just under the arms. Two straps joined in the center of the back. This was similar to the shubka except that with the sarafan the band encircled the body and was higher than on the shubka. The back fullness of the sarafan was held in place with four to eight rows of ribbon or tape. The rubakha resembled the Turkish rubakha except that it did not have a gusset, but rather a long, wedge-shaped piece in the sleeve (Figure 4.10). Originally intended to compensate for narrow widths of cloth, it remained as a feature of the traditional rubakha. A skirt was added to the lower edge of the rubakha to create a long undergarment. For special occasions the shirts were embroidered or decorated with tapes and ribbons on the collar, sleeves and shoulder. Occasionally women wore a garment called a garbach. Originally worn in nunneries in Russia, this garment resembled a talichka except that it sometimes had fullness in the back as well as the front from the yoke. They wore an apron (fartuk or zapon) with a gathered bodice (Figure 4.11). Married women wore a shashmura; all women and girls wore scarves.

Men wore a tunic shirt (rubakha or rubashka) which opened in the center and had an upright collar. The

sleeves were usually tapered and faced back with contrasting fabric at the wrist. Shirts were frequently partially lined; some shirts had embroidery on sleeve ends, collar, front opening and lining lines (Figure 4.12).

Handicrafts were essential to their costume. Belts were made on backstrap looms, cards, standing looms and bottle looms. Belts tended to be three or four centimeters wide and often had extra fringe on the ends. They also finger-braided belts. Kharbintsy women used three techniques of embroidery: cross-stitch (krestikom), satin stitch (gladiu) and punch needle (igolochkoi). The latter two techniques they learned while they were in China. The men adapted the hypodermic needle for use in punch needle embroidery. Women wove linen cloth from flax which they raised, but they also purchased cloth from the Chinese whenever they could. They spun wool for stockings which they knit, and men made shoes of leather.

Figure 4.9. Kharbintsy sarafan, front and back view,  
belted

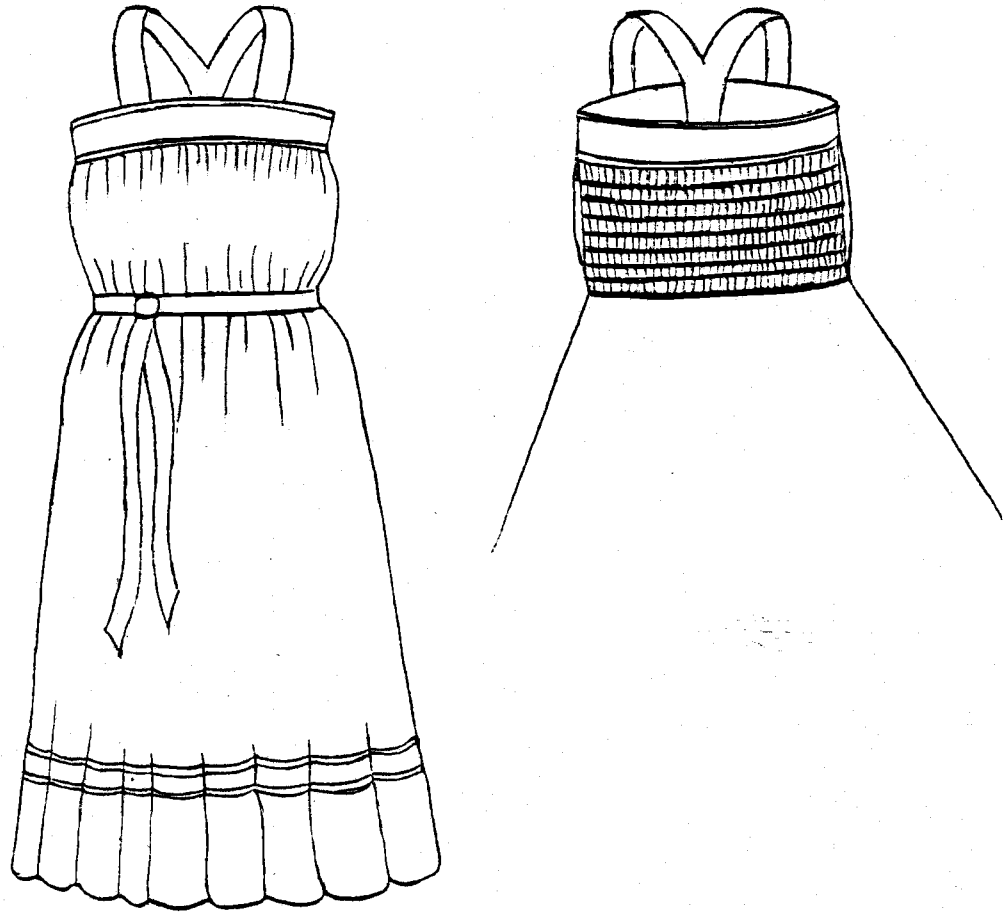




Figure 4.10. Sleeve of Kharbintsy rubakha

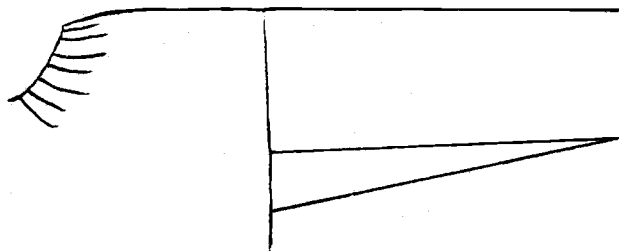


Figure 4.11. Kharbintsy apron

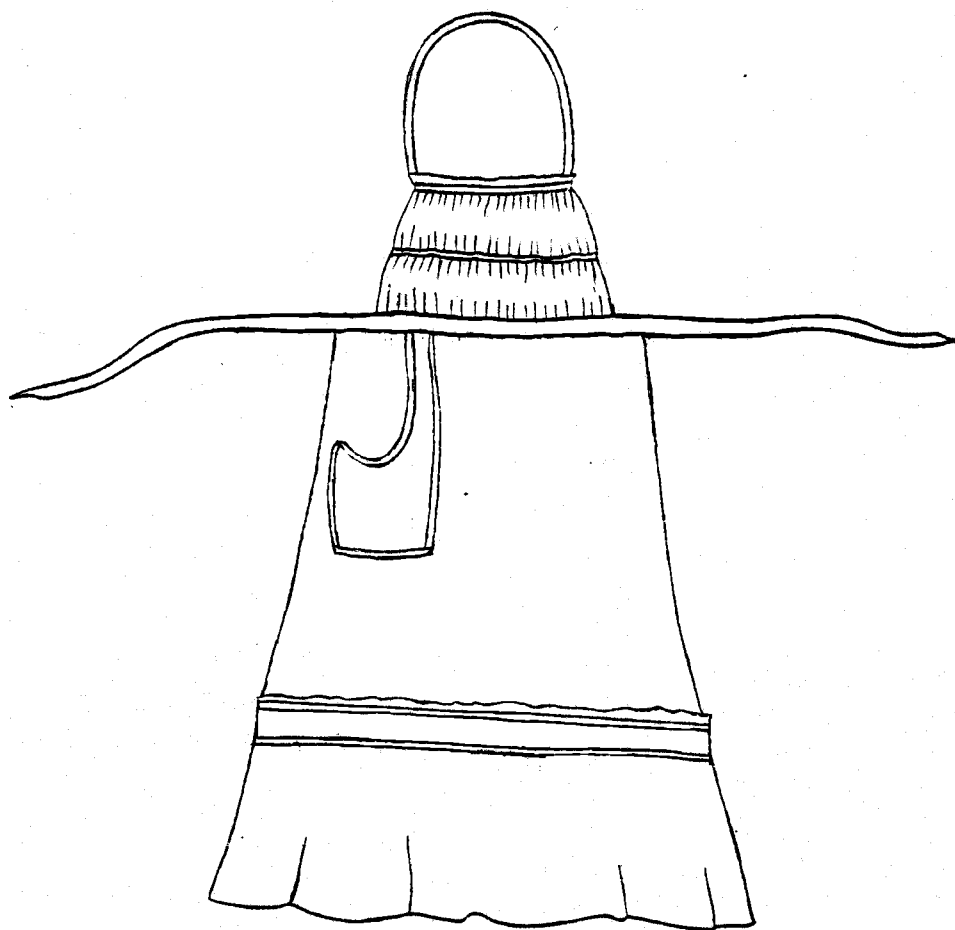
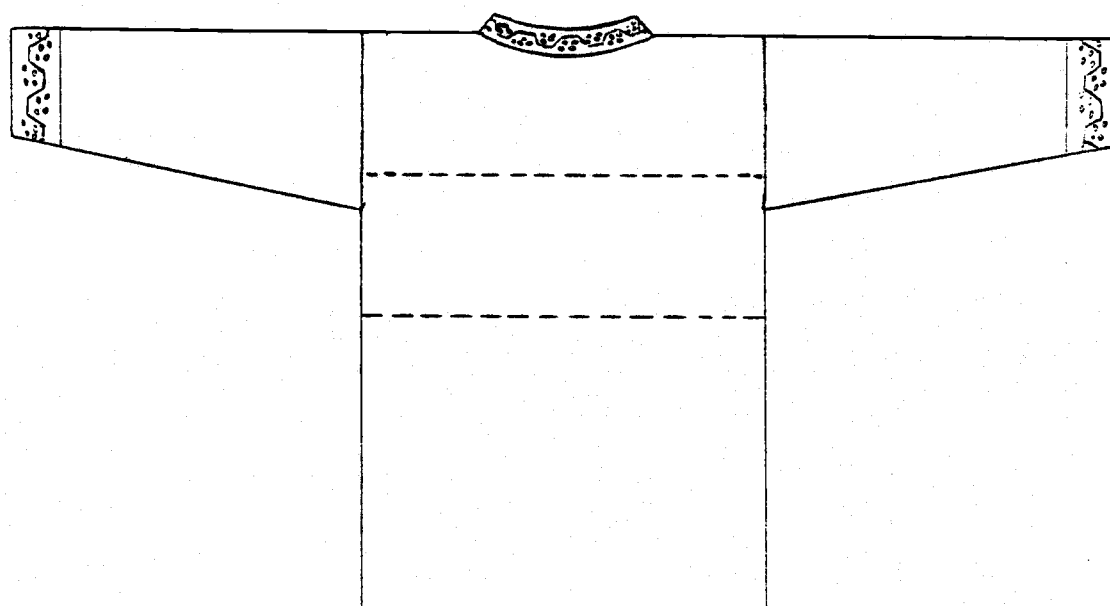
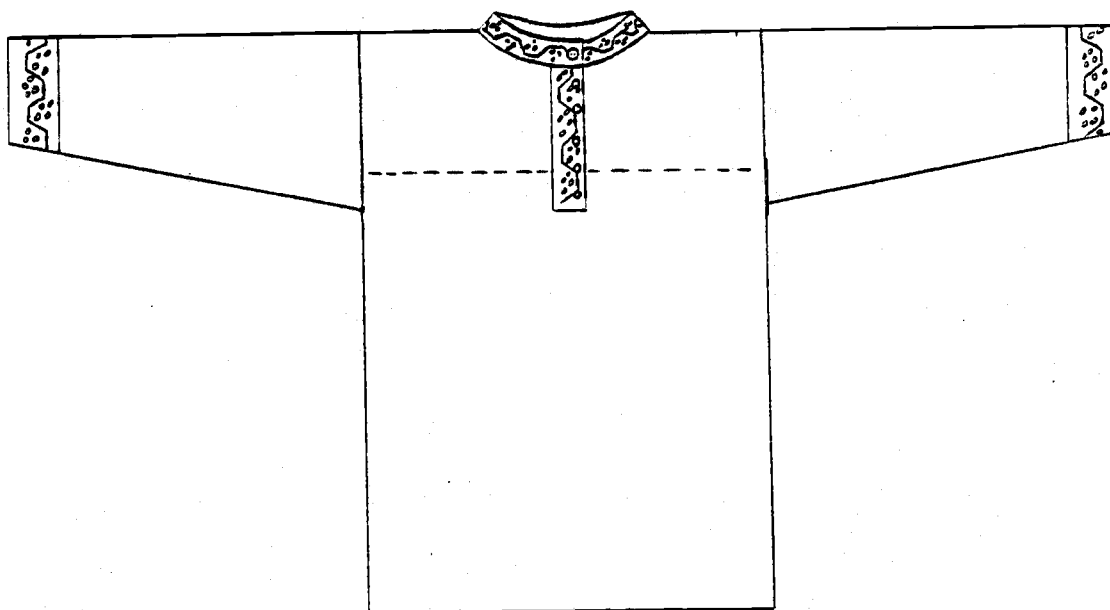


Figure 4.12. Kharbintsy rubakha for men, front and back view. The dashed lines indicate possible locations for lining stitches.



### Sinkiang Old Believer Dress

Sinzhantsy Old Believers wore a dress similar to that of the Kharbintsy Old Believers. Their sarafan, though, had only two rows of ribbon at the top of the band which encircled the garment (Figure 4.13). The woman's rubakha, which the Sinzhantsy call rukava, had very full sleeves and either a narrow upright collar or a small, turned down collar (Figure 4.14). Their apron, which did not have a bodice, tied at the waist. Married women wore a shashmura and all women and girls wore scarves. Men wore a center-opening tunic with an upright collar. Belts, which were woven on a backstrap loom or a standing loom, were ten to twenty centimeters wide.

Trims and decorative elements further distinguished Sinzhantsy dress. Women did cross-stitch embroidery, usually in red and black. They embroidered the front vent of the man's rubakha and also the area around the opening. They embroidered the collars, pleats, shoulders and/or sleeves of the woman's rukava. Trims at the lower edge of the Sinzhantsy sarafan tended to be wider than trims of the Kharbintsy sarafan. They were fond of combining bright colours and bold designs in their clothes. Both men and women showed a preference for wearing boots.

Figure 4.13. Sinzhantsy sarafan, unbelted

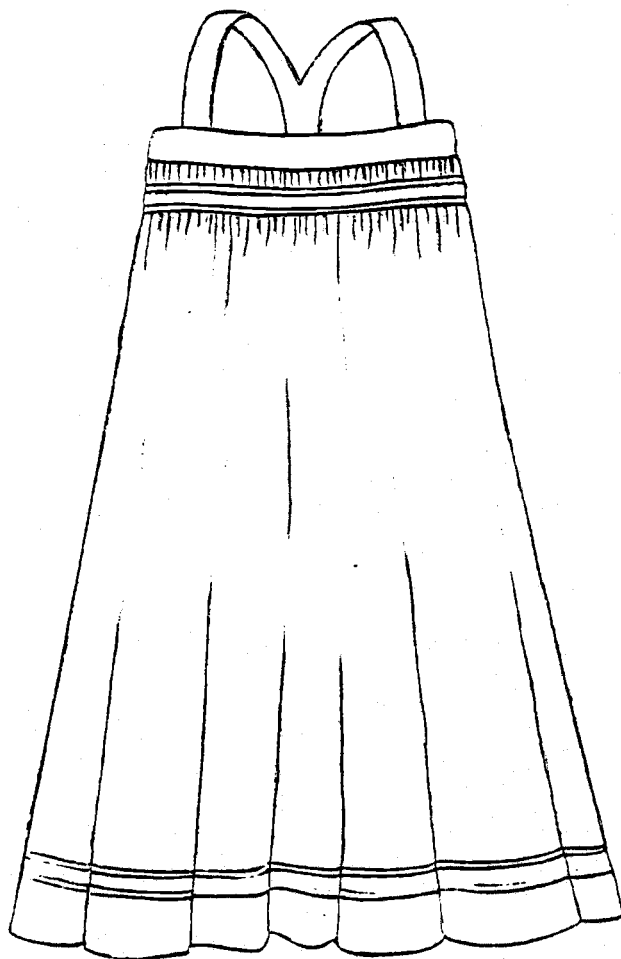
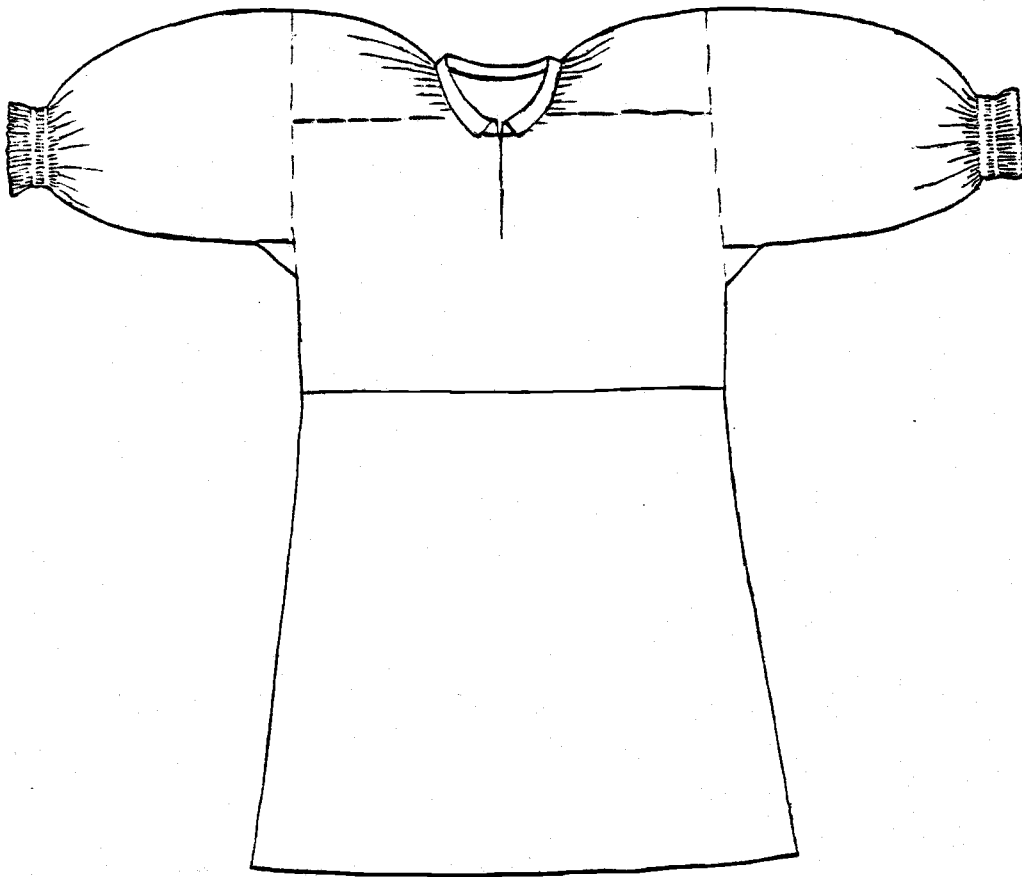


Figure 4.14. Sinzhantsy woman's shirt



### General Characteristics

Economy of fabric was a general feature of Old Believer dress; the parts which were not seen did not have to be of beautiful or expensive cloth. The front part of the Kuban'tsy balakhon, which was covered with an apron, was made of plain, inexpensive fabric. Likewise, only the sleeves, flounce, collar and a small piece around the neck of the Kuban'tsy rubakha were of expensive, new fabrics. This was characteristic of all the groups. Frequently only those pieces of the rubakha that were visible were of good fabric, and the front and back pieces might be extremely short and attached to a long skirt of old material. Hems were invariably faced back with recycled and frequently contrasting fabric. Thus new garments could be created economically from the old.

The historic dress of each group shows their cultural heritage, diverse history and slow change brought about by contact with other peoples. All the groups had had contact with tailored garments, and the beginnings of garments which conform to body contours can be seen. Although at times it was necessary to weave cloth in China, for the most part the Old Believers had access to factory-produced cloth. The wider widths of fabric that were available to them did not, however, change the structure of most of the garments. Handicrafts had both useful and decorative functions. All the groups wove belts on looms and made hand-braided or crocheted belts in some

way. Knitting, spinning and weaving skills were necessary in providing cold weather garments and embroidery provided aesthetic embellishment to their dress.

## 5. DRESS IN OLD BELIEVER SOCIETY

### Ethnographic Review

The Russian Old Believers base their way of life on their religious books and traditions of seventeenth century Russia. Reverence and respect for the old ways are recurring themes in their daily life. Religious Holy Days dominate the daily and annual cycle of events and determine the nature of their economic activities. Religious principles direct their home life and govern their relationships with people outside their religious faith. Although they readily accept modern technology in their daily lives, they maintain customs and practices whose origins lie deep within ancient Russian and early church traditions.

Religious books from the early church councils outline rules for conduct. These stipulate behavioural regulations for the maintenance of religion. According to these each person must:

- 1) observe the four major fast periods,
- 2) wear Old Believer clothing,
- 3) wear his/her hair in the prescribed way,
- 4) observe dietary restrictions,
- 5) drink no alcoholic beverages except braga (fruit wine),



- 6) observe the Sabbath and Holy Days, and
- 7) participate in the sobor (parish) in a state of ritual purity (Colfer 1975:29-30).

Although Oregon Old Believers have no priests and lay elders (nastoyately) conduct their church services, they represent both popovtsy and bezpopovtsy traditions. Some among the Oregon Old Believers are seeking to acquire priests through the Old Believer bishopric at Breila, Romania. Brother Ambrose of the Old Believer Chapel in Mt. Angel, Oregon, is seeking ordination as a bishop through the same hierarchy. In the meantime, the Old Believers continue as they have for many years and maintain their traditions in a priestless fashion, out of necessity if not of conviction.

The priestless Old Believers' religious system allows them to administer sacraments without a priesthood. Exactly when and how their system developed is not clear, but the sobor has taken over the functions of a priesthood. The sobor assumes responsibility for communication with God. In order to do this, the sobor must retain its purity. This can be done only if individuals within the sobor maintain a state of ritual purity (ibid.:31). Non-Old Believers are excluded from the sobor as well as Old Believers who are not adhering to the prescribed patterns. Women who are menstruating or in the forty day period following childbirth are impure and may attend the sobor only in the antechamber of the hall. An Old Believer must

have been absolved from sin and be in a state of good will toward his fellow sobor members.

In order to be pure, Old Believers must be wearing Old Believer clothing and wearing their hair in the prescribed manner. Elders periodically check the dress of fellow sobor members, especially that of adolescents, to see that they are wearing clothing which meets Old Believer standards. They may check the hair of girls to see whether it has been cut. Since their hair is covered in church, this must be done during visits to homes. The elder may pull back scarves and tug at the hair in front to see that it has not been cut. People violating hair and dress standards will be admonished to mend their ways; they may be brought up before the sobor for public notification of their violations.

Old Believers attend church (actually a prayer hall since the buildings have not been consecrated by a bishop) on Sabbath and Holy Days. Sabbath services are celebrated from approximately five to six on Saturday evening and one to seven or eight on Sunday morning. Holy Days are traditional days for visiting and socialising among kin and friends. Since Old Believers keep at least eighteen major Holy Days during the year, and some keep many of the minor Holy Days as well, their year is interspersed with many breaks. This creates problems with public school officials and places of employment. Generally these disputes have been resolved in a manner which allows Old Believers to continue to practice their religious Holy Days.

The four major fasting periods of the religious calendar dominate their family life and regulate their religious life. Lasting up to seven weeks, the major fasts are prior to and end with the holidays of Easter, Saints Paul and Peter (Fast of the Apostles), the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God (Assumption Fast) and Christmas. During the fasts meats, eggs, dairy foods and oils are forbidden. On some fast days fish, or fish and oils, may be eaten. It is the responsibility of women to see that their families follow the fasts and to provide meals that meet the requirements of the church calendar (Morris 1981:132). Wednesdays and Fridays, even in non-fasting periods, are days without meat and dairy products. All people observe the fasts except children under three; pregnant women and sick people may eat vegetable oil on fast days when it is not permitted by fasting rules.

Apart from fasts certain other dietary restrictions must be observed. Only meat from cloven-footed animals, fish and hard-shelled shellfish may be eaten. Old Believers may only eat food prepared by other Old Believers; much of the supermarket food, especially convenience food, is forbidden. Some sobory interpret this injunction so strictly as to allow its members to purchase only staples such as flour, sugar, salt and fresh fruits and vegetables from grocery stores. Because of a prohibition against eating from the same utensils as non-Old Believers, many will not purchase soft drinks or beer in returnable bot-

bles. Others interpret the injunction against alcoholic beverages strictly and will consume only their homemade braga. Eating in restaurants is not sanctioned, and if a person must eat in a restaurant, penance may have to be performed before participation in the sobor.

Old Believer families tend to be large, and families with eight or ten or more children are common. As Old Believers do not practice birth control, it is not unusual for a girl who marries at fifteen to have five or more children by the time she is in her early 20s. For the families which have farms and/or which depend upon farm labour for income, children are economic assets; at an early age children can work on farms to supplement family income.

Although few continue through high school, children usually attend public school through fifth or sixth grade. Old Believers do not value education and feel that it is wasteful to spend years in school when the children could be earning money. Vasily Kelsiev observed a similar disinterest in education among the Nekrasovtsy (Kuban'tsy) in the Dobrudja in 1860 (Call 1979:147).

Old Believers speak Russian in the home, and many speak no other language. The speech of the three groups varies as a result of their life on the periphery of the language group (Hall 1973:109). Nowadays some newly married couples find it easier to speak in English, especially when one spouse is of the Turkish group, until they are both acquainted with the Russian that is spoken in the

household in which they live. Parents may teach their children to read and write in Russian. In recent years there have been a number of attempts to organise community-wide Russian classes for this purpose. Parents also strive to educate their children in Church Slavonic, the language of their religious books and church services, and to provide religious training. Both parents and god-parents assume responsibility in teaching children the moral values and traditions of Old Believer society. Children attend classes which elders hold in their homes, or parents themselves may teach the children. Their languages are closely allied to their religious and secular traditions, and they attempt to transmit this heritage to succeeding generations.

Children learn from their parents the physical skills that they will need as men and women in Old Believer society. Girls learn to cook, garden, clean house, sew and care for children from their mothers and other female relatives. They begin to learn embroidery skills early, usually when a girl is six to nine years old. Clothing construction skills involve cutting or tearing pieces for their garments from cloth after taking rough measurements from another garment and making adjustments as necessary. Young girls may make doll clothes or baby clothes, but usually clothing construction skills are learned after a girl finishes school, and often not until a girl marries (even though her dowry may well include a sewing

machine.)). All girls learn to make belts of some kind, but not all learn to make woven belts. Boys acquire skills from their fathers that will allow them to earn a living; this is increasingly difficult where fathers work away from home.

Marriage traditionally occurs in the late teens. Morris (1981) notes a trend toward marriage at an earlier age than in the past and attributes this to the Old Believer desire to put adolescents firmly in the Old Believer camp before they are tempted by non-Old Believers into participation in the drugs, drinking, clothing and sex practices of American adolescents. Marriage and raising a family effectively end the irresponsible adolescent period.

Newly-married couples frequently move in with the boy's parents and live there until they have enough money to establish a residence of their own. Often this period is a year or two, at the end of which there is usually a baby or two and perhaps another newly-married son to move in with the parents. Youngest sons traditionally remain with their parents; it is the responsibility of the youngest son to care for his parents in their old age.

#### Dress in Rites of Passage

In Old Believer society dress plays an important role throughout the lives of its members. Prescribed by religion, it plays a significant part in their rites of passage. Dress creates a sense of identity among the Old

Believers and separates them from other groups in the community.

Baptism is the first ceremony in which an Old Believer participates. Usually this occurs within eight days of birth. A child wears only swaddling wraps and diapers until baptism. Parents select a name from the list of acceptable names reserved for its birth date in religious books. At baptism the child receives a shirt (rubashka), a cross and a belt. Baptism confers upon Old Believers the right to wear a rubashka or rubakha. The cross and belt are indispensable and must be worn together throughout life. During baptism the pastor places the baby's right arm in the shirt, and signifying her role in the religious training of the child, the godmother places the left arm in the shirt. The baptismal shirt is a simple, white, unembroidered shirt. A Latin cross on which is inscribed an Old Orthodox cross is worn on a cord around the neck. For a baby the belt may be a ribbon, a simple crocheted or braided cord, or a string.

Coming of age among the Old Believers is not a specific event but rather a series of activities that begin with parental permission for young adolescents of fourteen or fifteen to go out with other adolescents and young adults on a major holiday, usually Easter. It frequently follows dropping out of school and full time entry into the job market. This also marks the beginnings of courtship and a period of active flirtation with Anglo and

Chicano elements in the community. Boys and girls go out to the park, the video games arcades, movies, pizza parlours and other places to meet and have a good time. Flamboyance in dress for both sexes is characteristic of this period, and adolescents have extensive wardrobes. During the week of Easter, from Easter Sunday to the following Sunday, they aspire to have a new dress or shirt for each day. Not all reach this ideal without exchanging with friends, relatives or siblings. This aspiration has a religious basis as washing clothes is an unclean act and, therefore, is prohibited during the eight day long Easter holiday. Adults and younger children, however, do not have the quantities of clothes that adolescents have.

Clothes for the Easter period and to a lesser extent for the other major holidays as well are subject to annual changes in fashion for adolescents. Each group of girls tries to outdo others in embroidery skill, colour choice and variations of style each Easter season. Since many girls do not construct their own garments they must rely upon mothers or other female relatives to sew their imaginative clothing. Boys get their new shirts from sisters, aunts and mothers, although an occasional boy embroiders his own shirts. Many of the garments that are made for this season are secular and do not meet sartorial requirements for ritual (church) dress.

Old Believer adolescents often have dress that does not distinguish them from non-Old Believers of the same age. They reserve this dress for events in Portland or



Salem in which they wish to participate, but among people to whom they do not want to communicate their ethnic background. Boys often do not let their beards grow and girls use makeup and are tempted to cut and perm their hair. Their dress may cease to identify them as Old Believers.

Marriage is often the culmination of the adolescent coming-of-age period although an exceedingly early marriage occasionally circumvents the period. Dress plays a significant role in this event as well. When a couple decides that they want to get married, they approach their parents for approval. If that is forthcoming, plans for the marriage proceed. Both men and women may have to let their hair grow to meet religious requirements for marriage within the church. The woman embroiders a marriage shirt for her husband-to-be, and presents him other embroidered shirts as well.

Prior to the wedding is a week of partying for the bride- and groom-to-be and their friends. Girls meet to sing songs and embroider items for the trousseau. They prepare a kroseta, a bridal headdress made of ribbons and fabric flowers, which the prospective bride wears until her marriage.

The wedding ceremony is a religious event; the marriage couple wears ritual garments suitable to the group into which the girl is marrying. In the past girls wore the traditional talichka in a Turkish wedding, but

increasingly girls, even those of a Turchanie background, are choosing to wear a sarafan for their wedding. A sarafan is suitable dress for Kharbintsy and Sinzhantsy weddings.

An important part of the religious ceremony is the changing of the girl's hair. Before marriage a girl can wear her hair only in a single braid. During the wedding her svaki, female assistants, braid her hair into two braids. These are coiled at the side of the head and a shashmura and scarf are placed over the braids. Henceforth, her hair can be seen only by her husband or female friends and relatives. She will wear the shashmura until death.

Items of dress are traditional gifts of marriage. Besides the gifts of shirts to the groom, the bride's family presents belts to male members of the groom's family and aprons and scarves to female members of his family.

Traditional elements of dress are important at death. Certain members of the Old Believer community are called in to wash the body. Following this the body is dressed in a white, ankle-length rubakha, a cross and a belt. A married woman wears her shashmura. White cloth is then wrapped around the body. Persons are buried in the dress to which they are entitled from their baptism.

### Cultural Functions of Dress

Morris (1981) identifies four boundaries which Old Believers maintain to separate them from other groups. These are food (fasting and drinking), clothing, home life and language. Of these boundaries, clothing is the most overt; it provides an obvious distinction between Old Believers and other Russian groups, the Molokans and Pentecostals, as well as other groups in the Woodburn community. Inside the boundaries that dress defines are changing cultural forms of dress which have functions within the Old Believer community.

Old Believer clothing shows sexual differences from infancy. Although babies are tightly swaddled in asexual wrap, their hats may indicate their sex. Girls' hats may be pink and embroidered or decorated with flowers; they have two pieces, one in back and another one over the ears and the top of the head. A boy's hat is shaped more like a helmet and is usually white or blue. Girls wear a dress (plat'e) or talichka from an early age. Some young mothers may dress their daughters in pants during the crawling stage, but in more conservative families girls wear only dresses or talichki. Boy babies wear the dress of men, the rubashka and long pants, although in hot weather, they may wear only a rubashka. By the time a child walks she/he wears miniature versions of adult dress, although young girls may wear long pants under their dresses. On one occasion an Old Believer girl wore

a matching pants and shirt outfit to the Russian language kindergarten. She received considerable negative comment from her classmates and did not wear pants again to school.

Although adult women may wear pants when they are outside the range of the Old Believer communication network, they do not wear them in the community, not even at home unless they are in a tightly guarded situation. The strong sexual dichotomy in clothes reflects the well-defined roles of men and women in Old Believer society. Women who might wear pants on certain occasions are those who fill non-traditional roles in the Russian community such as working or studying away from the home and community.

Dress indicates marital status. Young girls may wear their hair in a number of ways -- pulled back into a pony tail, braided into a single braid, or braided at the sides into a pony tail or single braid at the back -- but they may not wear their hair in two braids. That style is reserved for married women even though the two coils of braid are always covered by the shashmura and scarf. Women's hair is always constrained in some way; their methods of fixing hair are typical of nineteenth century Russian peasants (Dunn 1967:118).

The shashmura indicates that a woman is married or has been married in the Old Believer faith. Divorced and widowed women continue to wear the shashmura. A married

woman will wear the shashmura even though the remainder of her observable dress is not Russian. It is the most visible reminder of her role in the Old Believer community. Often overlooked by non-Old Believers, it conveys an easily read message to Old Believers. Old Believer women who marry outside the faith or when one or both of the marriage partners are not in union with their religion may not wear the shashmura. Children born to such couples may not be baptised and may be denied the right to wear Russian clothes.

Informally hair style may reveal the marital status of men. Although unmarried men may have beards, some shave and do not cut their hair in the general Old Believer style. Before marriage men must let their beards grow. Since marriage implies an acceptance of Old Believer ways, the state of a young man's beard suggests his marital status.

Dress may indicate age. The adolescent period is a gay and ornate period, and this carries over into the early marriage period. Men wear pink, black, purple, green, bright blue, turquoise and orange shirts which may be embroidered in flowers or fruits of equally bright colours on the cuffs, lining lines, vent, collar, hem and, as one woman said, "in no place at all." Shirts may have turned down collars, tie openings at the neck or "cowboy" shirt yoke markings. Women wear dresses with flounces, ruffles, sailor collars, fake straps, tiered skirts and a variety of trims. Sleeves, hems, collars and cuffs may be

embroidered and embellished with ribbons and tapes. Pleats of the sarafan may be sewn down with a variety of ribbon and trim patterns. Both men and women select belts which complement their dress or shirt fabric and embroidery in some way.

With increasing age the amount of embroidery and trim diminishes, and the colours darken. Old people seldom wear embroidered garments and they tend to select dark or muted fabrics. Some older men wear strings rather than woven belts. These are not recent American phenomena but ones of long standing. In old Russia "the number of patterns and colours gradually decreased and fabrics used for headdresses got simpler" after the birth of each child (Klimova 1981:11). The use of dark colours is more observable among men than it is among women.

Older members of the community tend to maintain the old styles rigidly. Only the older Turkish men, for instance, still wear shirts that open at the side. Shirts for younger men are shorter than those for older men who still wear the thigh-length versions. Fashionable Old Believer styles in dress are rarely seen on anyone over 40 years of age, and frequently only the older people maintain their distinctive regional styles.

The way of wearing their scarves separates the younger from the older women. Older married women generally wear two scarves over their shashmura. The first one covers the shashmura and ties at the back of the neck.

The second scarf completely covers their hair and part of their forehead. They tie the second scarf loosely under their chin. Younger married women, by contrast, will wear only one scarf and this may be worn so far back on their head that much of their hair may be seen. The second scarf, if it is worn, may not cover their hair completely. Although older unmarried women will probably wear a scarf, especially when they are outside the home, young unmarried girls rarely wear a scarf at all.

Fabric selection varies with age. Middle-aged women prefer brightly coloured, flowered acrylic prints with turquoise, magenta, red-orange, dark red, bright yellow and bright blue backgrounds. Teen-aged women nowadays tend to select more subdued colours; silky, polyester jacquard fabrics; and fabrics with small and/or muted designs. It should be noted that the trend toward subdued colours and prints among the young may be temporary fashion for historically the young prefer bright colours. The fluorescent colours that were popular five years ago are rarely seen on adolescents, although the very young and older people continue to wear them. Some girls report that they prefer the gray and brown prints that their mothers selected for themselves. The Old Believer practice of buying whole bolts of cloth at a time means, though, that families tend to be colour-coded for a period of time, whatever an individual's preference.

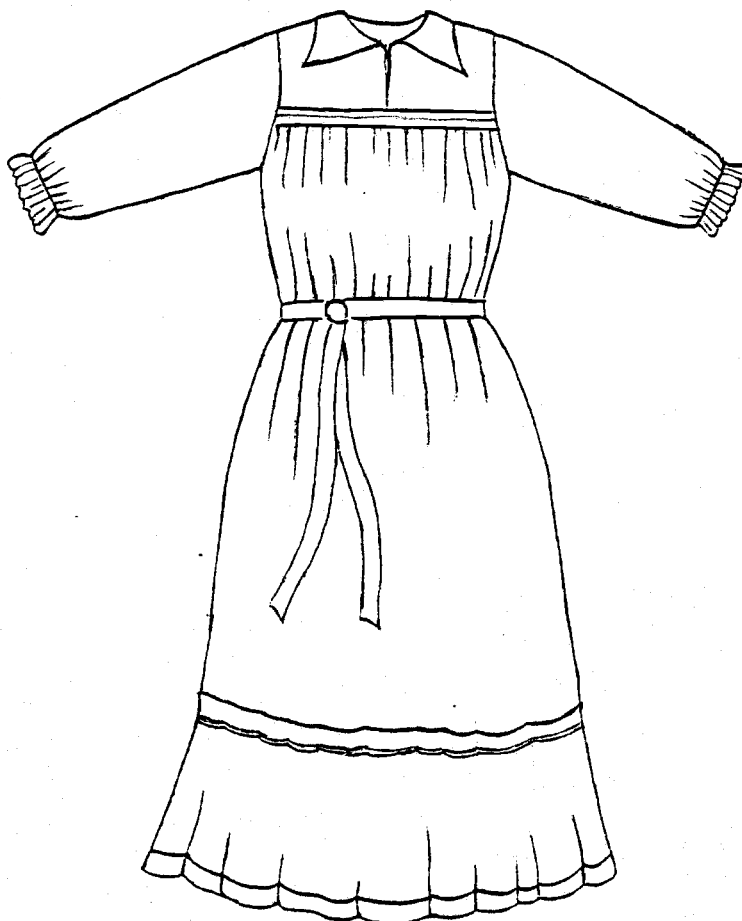
The form of dress may also be an indicator of age. The younger, female members of the Old Believer community

have developed a new dress which, although it is called a talichka, must be distinguished from the talichka that is traditional with the Turkish group for the roles of the two dresses are quite different. In the mid-seventies, several Kharbintsy women who worked at a sewing factory, including one who had married into the Turkish group, added sleeves and a collar to the talichka and created a new garment (Figure 5.1). When it is necessary to distinguish between the two talichki, they will be called modern talichka and traditional talichka.

Old Believer women can describe in detail the first modern talichka that they ever saw. All recall that the first one appeared six years ago (1976). That act of innovation altered the dress patterns of the three groups. Women of all groups wear the modern talichka, although it is primarily the young women and girls who have adopted it as Russian dress. Freed from the constraints of centuries old form, the modern talichka follows the dictates of fashion and can have flounces, laced fronts, ruffles, sailor collars and other decorative elements from American dress. Although banned from church as too American, it has achieved widespread usage. At the present time few women over 30 years of age wear the modern talichka; when older women wear it, it indicates the nature of the person's intended activity. For school girls it has become near standard dress style.



Figure 5.1. Modern talichka.



The form of dress may also indicate membership in subgroup as defined by the place of emigration. Although most young girls and women may wear the modern talichka, only Turchanie women and girls wear the traditional talichka. Young girls who wear sarafany to school are probably Kharbintsy or Sinzhantsy, or their mother is. Sarafany among the older women, but not among the young, may distinguish between Sinzhantsy and Kharbintsy; the widths of trim and belt may differ. The Sinzhantsy adopted the multiple rows of ribbon at the back of the sarafan early in the contact of the two groups; presence of the back ribbons by themselves are not now a distinguishing characteristic of the Kharbintsy.

When the Sinzhantsy first emigrated they were noted for their bright colour combinations. This difference has been obscured in this country although the prevailing stereotypes still attribute to Sinzhantsy women a preference for bright colours and wild combinations of colours and designs.

Other differences among the groups are the sleeve of the Sinzhantsy woman's rubakha (rukava) which still is wider than the sleeve of the rubakha of the other groups. The Kharbintsy sleeve does not have a gusset as do the sleeves of the other groups. Other dress features which characterise a particular group are the apron with a bodice of Kharbintsy women, the side-opening rubakha of Turchanie men and the cord belts which Turchanie wear.

The shashmura of the Turchanie women differs from that of Sinzhantsy and Kharbintsy women (Figure 5.2). Since the shashmura is not visible, the ridge under the scarf/ves from the front rim of the Sinzhantsy and Kharbintsy shashmura may provide a clue to the identity of a woman who is wearing a non-classificatory modern talichka or an item of dress not typical of her group. A woman may wear the shashmura of her natal group, not of her marital group. Recently the Turchanie shashmura has fallen into disfavour as the other shashmura "looks better" under the scarf. Table 5.1 summarises the distinctive features of the dress of each subgroup.

Table 5.1. Distinctive Features  
of Each Subgroup

Turchanie Old Believers

cord belts  
traditional talichka  
shubka  
shashmura with no front ridge  
side-opening rubakha (men)

Kharbintsy Old Believers

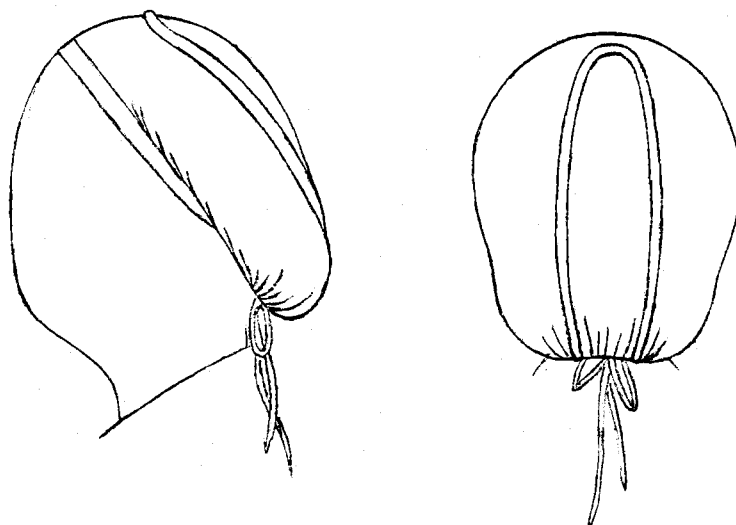
apron with bodice  
no gusset on women's rubakha  
shashmura with front ridge  
sarafan

Sinzhantsy Old Believers

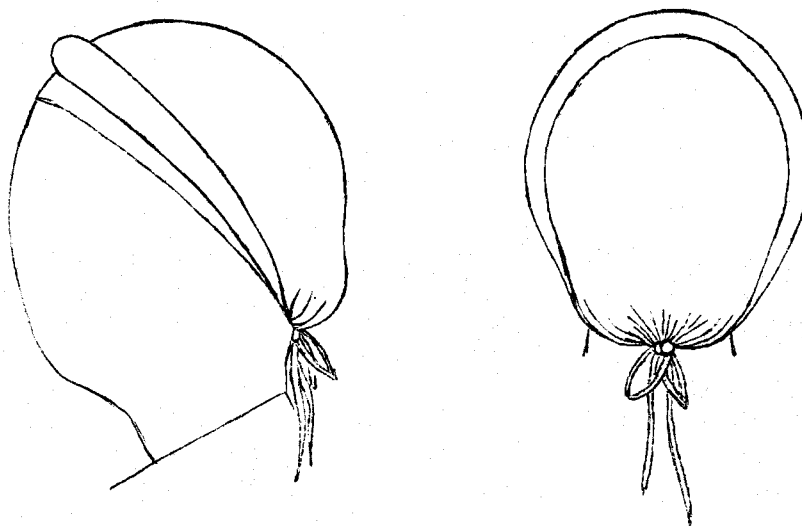
rubakha (rukava) with full sleeves  
sarafan with two rows of ribbon at top band  
embroidery on man's rubakha around vent  
shashmura with front ridge

Figure 5.2. Shashmura

Turchanie shashmura



Sinzhantsy and Kharbintsy shashmura



Old Believer clothing has ritual and holiday functions. Ritual dress, that is, dress worn to church for various occasions including wedding ceremonies, is distinguished from holiday dress which is worn during major holidays and at wedding feasts. The practices of ritual events come from Russian ecclesiastical traditions. Holiday events have their origins in Russian secular traditions. Holiday and ritual clothing vary in their use of decorative elements, choice of colours and, to a lesser extent, the form of the garment.

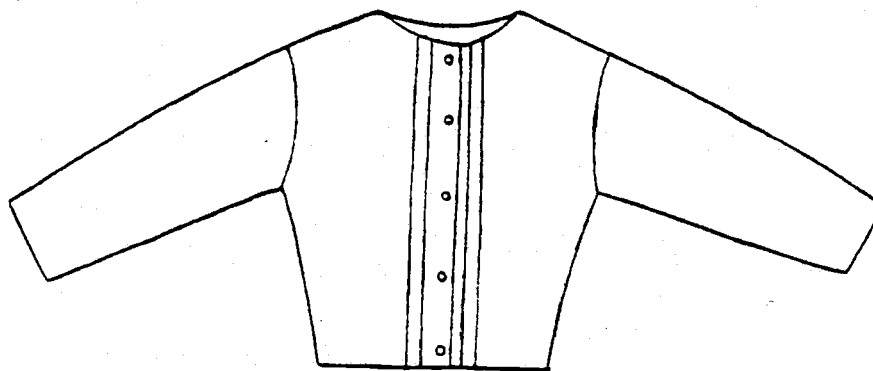
The required ritual garments closely resemble the historic garments of each group. Men in all groups wear a rubakha with an upright collar. Over this they wear a black, knee- or midcalf-length coat (kaftan). Their trousers are straight-legged and of a dark colour. The kaftan is long-sleeved, fitted at the waist and buttoned from the waist to the neck. The lower part is full; it may have gathers at the waist. In a pocket they carry a small prayer pad and rosary or prayer ladder. The kaftan is the former outer garb of Russian males (Potapov 1964:170). No longer worn for warmth, it has been retained for ritual occasions. Although the cut of the kaftan varies slightly among and within the groups, the general form and colour are constant. The kaftan, while not exactly prescribed except for the nastoyatel' who leads the service, is the preferred garb. A man may attend without wearing one, but he will not take a leading role in religious ritual. Boys may begin wearing kaftany to religious services when they

are four or five years old. It is less obligatory for younger males than older males.

Women wear garb traditional to their group to church. For all women, dark fabrics and untrimmed, ankle-length dresses are preferred. Sinzhantsy women are required to wear a black sarafan and a white rubakha. These have little or no trim. Turchanie wear the traditional talichka, or perhaps a sarafan. Recently one young Turchanie woman, wishing to keep to the old ways, made a shubka for Easter. Over their dress the Turchanie wear a waist length, long-sleeved, tight-fitting jacket (eliak) (Figure 5.3). All women and girls wear a heavy shawl over their dress and regular scarf. This is worn over the forehead and wraps around the shoulders. Shoes are low-heeled black or brown tie shoes. Although not all women wear dark fabrics and leave their garments untrimmed, they aspire to this in ritual dress. Table 5.2 shows the garments and characteristics of ritual dress.

Table 5.2. Characteristics of Ritual Dress

Traditional talichka  
eliak (Turchanie women)  
Shubka  
Sarafan  
 Shawl  
 Little or no embroidery  
Kaftan  
Rubakha (shirt) with upright collar  
 Plain dark shoes  
 Dark colours

Figure 5.3. Eliak

Adherence to forms which most closely resemble ritual dress in everyday and holiday dress reveals the piety of the wearer. Although a pious Old Believer would not normally wear garments specific to church attendance, she/he would wear dark coloured garments of a simple cut with little or no embroidery or trim.

Although religious/ritual dress is prescribed for the wedding ceremony, in Oregon the bride and groom often wear white forms of ritual dress. A bride may wear a white sarafan and the groom a white embroidered rubakha.

The clothes that Old Believers wear for ceremonial and holiday occasions such as the Easter season, feasts after the major holidays and wedding feasts, adhere in general to forms of historic dress, but they may have many of the newer decorative elements. Ceremonial-holiday

dress contrasts with the fidelity to form and the sombre colours of ritual dress. Women may wear the modern talichka, and traditional garments such as the traditional talichka and the sarafan may have flounces, ruffles and other embellishments. Clothes tend to be brightly coloured and gaily decorated. Metallic threads in belts, dress fabrics and scarves have been favourites in recent years. Women young and old may wear flowers in their hair. The young may wear ribbons in their braids. Adolescents wear holiday forms of dress during their years of meeting and courtship.

In Oregon the Old Believers have had to accommodate to another culture. Children who go through the school system lead American lives by day, Russian lives by night. People work, shop and play among Americans. Their dress then must function to accommodate the bicultural situation in which they live. A woman who never wears anything but a sarafan and rubakha may, when she has a doctor's appointment, wear a modern talichka. Another Old Believer will know, upon seeing her, that she is engaged in a non-Old Believer activity. A person outside Old Believer society will probably not pick up the message in the costume. Other slight changes in dress, such as the shedding of an apron or removal of a head scarf, may show accommodation to the cultural context of the situation.

Other situations reveal the accommodating function of dress. An Old Believer general contractor may wear a



golf shirt, slacks and boots, appearing to the community in which he works to be a member of the larger society. Old Believers will notice this accommodation to American culture, but they will also notice that he wears a belt and a beard and that his hair is cut in an Old Believer manner. The message is "I'm really one of you, but I have to work among Americans." In another situation a young, divorced Old Believer woman with an American boyfriend wears American dress almost exclusively. However, she continues to wear her shashmura. Her situation in Old Believer society is ambiguous, but she works among them and her shashmura says that she identifies with them. When her brother married, she received an apron from the bride's family, as did all the female members of her family, but hers was of a different fabric from the rest. Many of the people who dress in such a combinative manner -- American garments with essential Old Believer accessories -- are the culture brokers, those Russians who can bridge the gap and interpret American society to the majority of the Old Believers whose participation in American activities is peripheral.

Old Believers engage in everyday work and their everyday dress reflects those activities. Bogatryev (1971:43) considers the practical function of everyday clothes their most important function. Whereas ritual and holiday dress is made at home or within the Old Believer community, everyday dress can be purchased at thrift stores and clothing stores since adherence to traditional

form is less important in everyday dress. Practical and utilitarian aspects are as important in procuring everyday clothing as in its wearing. Old Believer women report that they wear American clothes (pants, skirt and shirt; or pants under a sarafan or talichka) only when they are picking berries. To be cool and comfortable in the berry fields is more important than to wear traditional garb. Another woman wore American dresses when she worked with the cattle because she didn't care what happened to those clothes. Some women keep the sarafan because of its obvious practical aspects: adapting easily to a pregnant figure, carrying fruits and vegetables from the garden in the full skirt, wiping children's faces, nursing babies (with a slit cut in the front fullness). Other women have adopted the modern talichka because, in addition to these benefits, it is also easier and more comfortable to wear. They complain that the rubakha pulls up too easily, doesn't always fit comfortably and requires more undergarments. Others report that they wear Old Believer clothes at home in the wintertime because Old Believer clothes are warmer, but that they wear American clothes in the summertime. Men frequently wear T shirts or work shirts to work, reserving their embroidered rubakha for visiting friends and attending church.

The dress of the Old Believers communicates their distinctiveness as a people to each other. Old Believers who do not live among other Old Believers tend not to wear

Old Believer dress, even on ritual occasions. Old Believers who have lived in Australia report that while there they wore Australian clothing. The same is true for Old Believers who spend extended periods of time away from Old Believer society in New Jersey, New York, Hong Kong or elsewhere. When they resume residence among other Old Believers, they generally resume Old Believer dress. In the absence of "listeners," Old Believer dress has no cultural functions and it is not worn. Their dress has functions which signify meanings to each other. In Oregon dress continues to manifest these functions despite the bicultural situation in which the Old Believers live. The separate functions of dress are part of the whole that is their identity as Old Believers.

## 6. SURVEYS OF DRESS AND ACCULTURATION

### Introduction

Several surveys were used to supplement the interviews and observations on Old Believer dress. The purpose of the surveys was 1) to clarify the use of Old Believer dress in diverse situations, 2) to furnish information on various indicators of acculturation and 3) to provide demographic data on the informants. The surveys covered three different age groups -- adults, middle school students and kindergarten students -- in the Old Believer population.

### Adult Survey

The survey of adults attempted to determine differences in the extent of use of Russian Old Believer dress in a variety of situations. These situations represented both persistent and malleable zones of culture (Keesing 1958) and were, in order of non-secular to increasingly secular content: attending church, attending a wedding, visiting friends, going to a movie, shopping for groceries, going to school or work and staying at home. Informants were asked to state whether they wore Russian, American or both types of dress on each of these occasions. It also sought the characteristics of individuals who exhi-

bited the various patterns of dress and the extent of their participation in other cultural activities which could be used as indicators of acculturation. These included food preference, endogamy, language use, observance of religious holidays and church attendance.

The survey had several limitations. One of these was the difficulty of defining "Russian dress." Nearly all Old Believers in Woodburn wore some identifiable element of Russian dress. It was quite possible, for instance, to identify Old Believer men by their beard and hair style even though they wore non-Old Believer clothing. Likewise, the shashmura and hair style identified Old Believer women and girls. Although Old Believers did not agree on what was precisely Russian dress (some women denied that the modern talichka was Russian dress), it was held that wearing a Russian shirt for a man and a sarafan or talichka for a woman constituted "Russian dress." The category "American dress" did not imply acceptance of the forms, standards and values of American dress, but merely the absence of certain aspects of Russian dress. Although the responses to the survey did not include either situation variables within a category or the non-clothing aspects of Russian dress, they did indicate, in general, use of Russian dress in various contexts.

The sample was biased toward certain segments of the population. Women predominated in the surveys as did young people. Several reasons account for this. Men

tended to disappear when I, being a woman, appeared. This was especially so for unmarried men. No single men were included in the survey. In addition, the topic of discussion, dress, was generally regarded as the realm of women. Thus the survey included 25 women, but only five men. Young people, especially women, tended to be in the places where I initially made contacts with Old Believers. As some of these young people knew English, these contacts were more easily initiated and sustained. It needs to be noted, too, that all Russian Old Believers in the survey were married or had been married within the Old Believer community. Although some Old Believers have married non-Old Believers, none of these were included in the sample.

The interview situation was sometimes less than ideal as it was not always possible to control the circumstances under which a survey form was completed. Sometimes interviews were truncated or rerouted by visitors, hungry babies, blown fuses, too much braga, among various reasons. In the clinic the appointment time sometimes arrived before the interview was completed. Inconsistencies were apparent. One young bride, for instance, who answered the door wearing cut-off jeans and a halter top, insisted that she always wore Russian clothes at home. (She did change to a talichka for the interview.) With a new husband and a bevy of in-laws looking on, it may have been difficult to answer in less than ideal terms.

Despite its limitations, the survey indicated trends in Old Believer dress patterns. It substantiated what

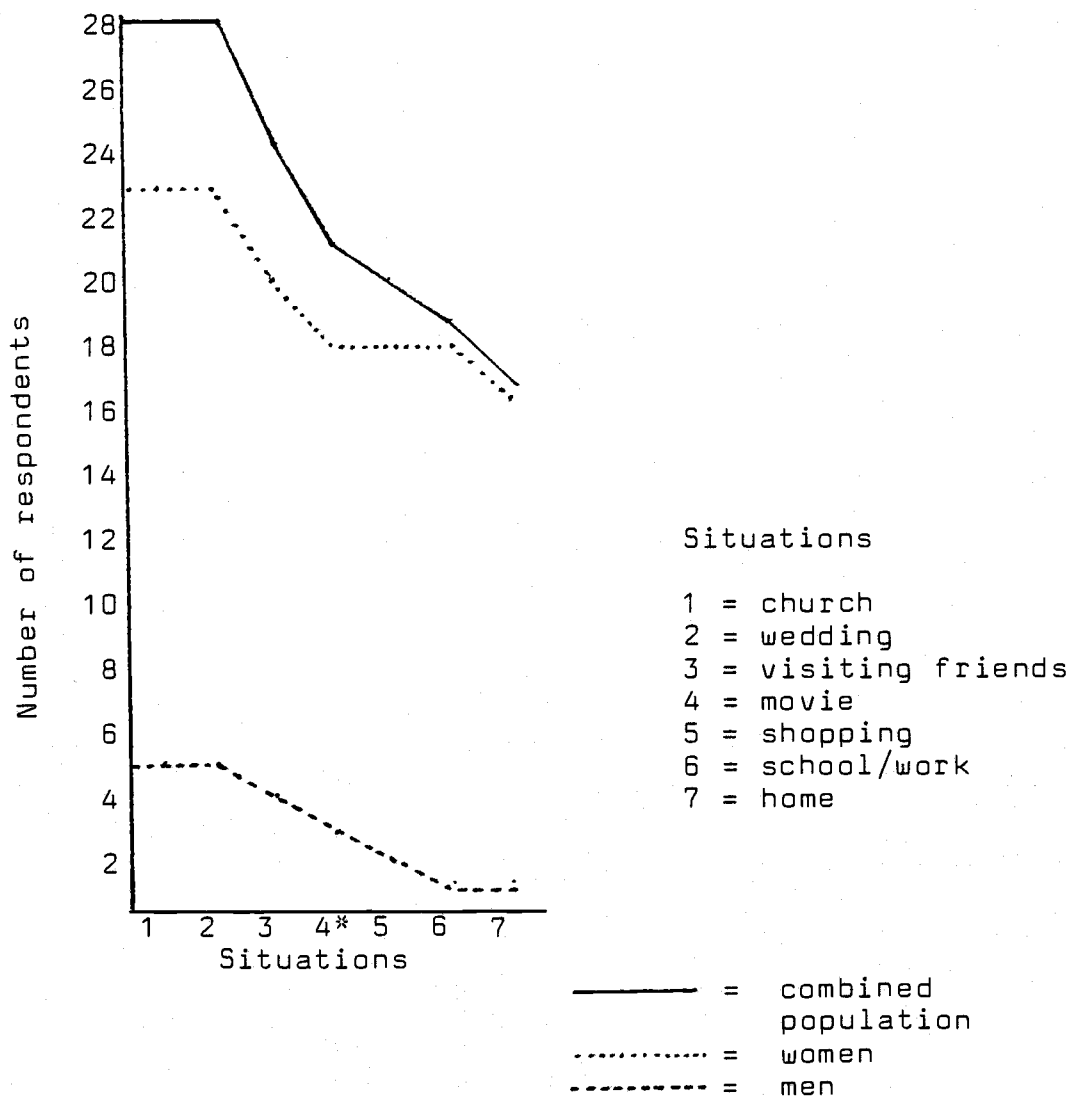
could be readily observed among the Old Believers and pointed out the characteristics of the individuals who exhibit the various patterns.

### Findings of the Adult Survey

The extent of use of Russian dress varied with the situation. Figure 6.1 shows a gradual decline in the use of Russian dress for men, women and a combined population as the events proceed from the church/wedding (non-secular) situations to the shopping/work/home (secular) situations. Almost all (93 percent) wore Russian dress on religious occasions and over half (58 percent) wore Russian dress on all occasions.

Deviations in the general patterns did occur. Variables which may also function as indices of acculturation or be related to the process of acculturation were analysed separately where a sufficient sample size allowed analysis. Included among these variables were age, language use, education, subgroup membership, food preference, birth order, marital status and length of residence in the United States. Because of the small population sample of men, this section involved only female informants. The analyses were one-dimensional in that they dealt only with the "Russian dress" category. Since they ignored the categories "Both" and "American dress," they did not include the two women who did not wear Russian dress and who were only marginally integrated into Old Believer society in Woodburn.

Figure 6.1. Use of Russian Dress for Men and Women in Non-secular and Secular Situations.

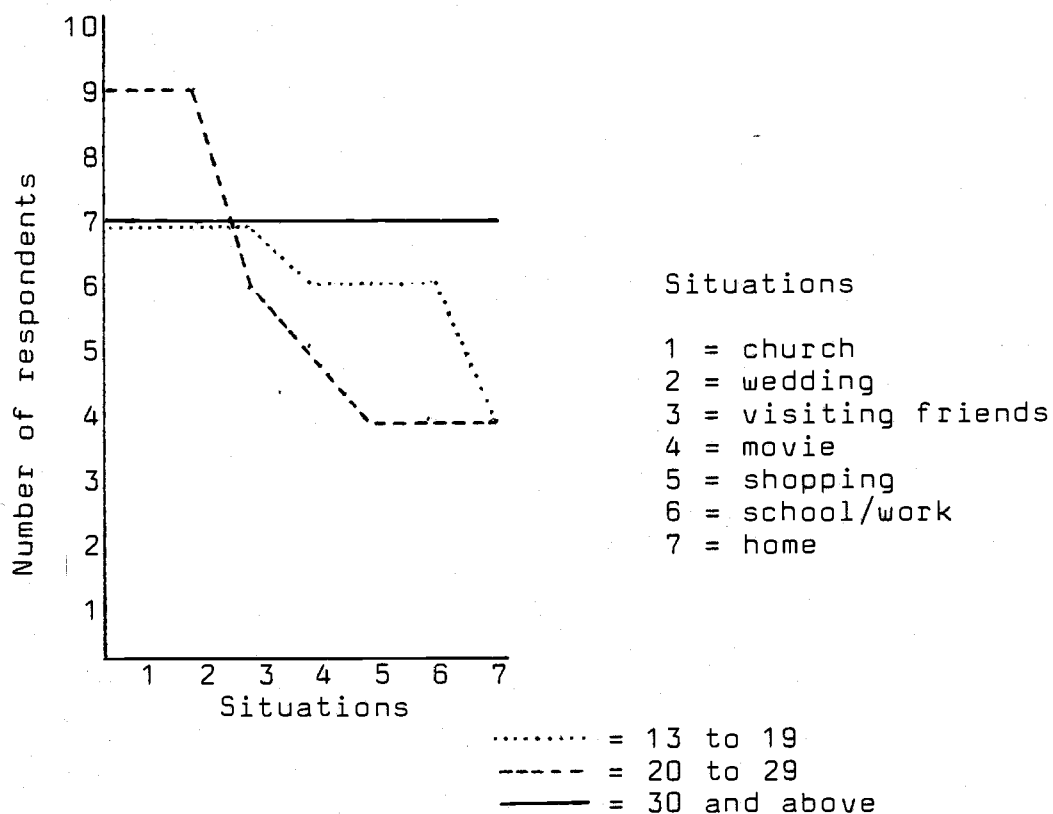


\* Category 4 (movie) has four respondents for men, a total of 27 for the combined population.

Of the age groups, women 30 and over show the greatest consistency in the wearing of Russian dress (Figure 6.2). Women aged 20 to 29 show a rapid decline in the use of Russian dress on secular occasions. The decline is more gradual for women aged 13 to 19.



Figure 6.2. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Age in Nonsecular and Secular Situations.



Variation in use of Russian dress occurs among the subgroups (Figure 6.3). Turchanie women show the greatest stability in the use of Russian dress; all Turchanie women except one in the sample wore Russian dress all the time. Both Kharbintsy and Sinzhantsy women show a decline in the use of Russian dress on secular situations.

Greater participation in the American educational system combines with a decrease in the use of Russian dress on secular occasions (Figure 6.4). Women with no American education wore only Russian dress on all occasions while those with at least some exposure to the American educational system show less use of Russian dress

on secular occasions. Similarly those who speak only Russian wear only Russian dress on all occasions (Figure 6.5). People who speak English as well as Russian are less likely to wear only Russian clothes on secular occasions.

Figure 6.3. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Subgroup in Non-secular and Secular Situations.

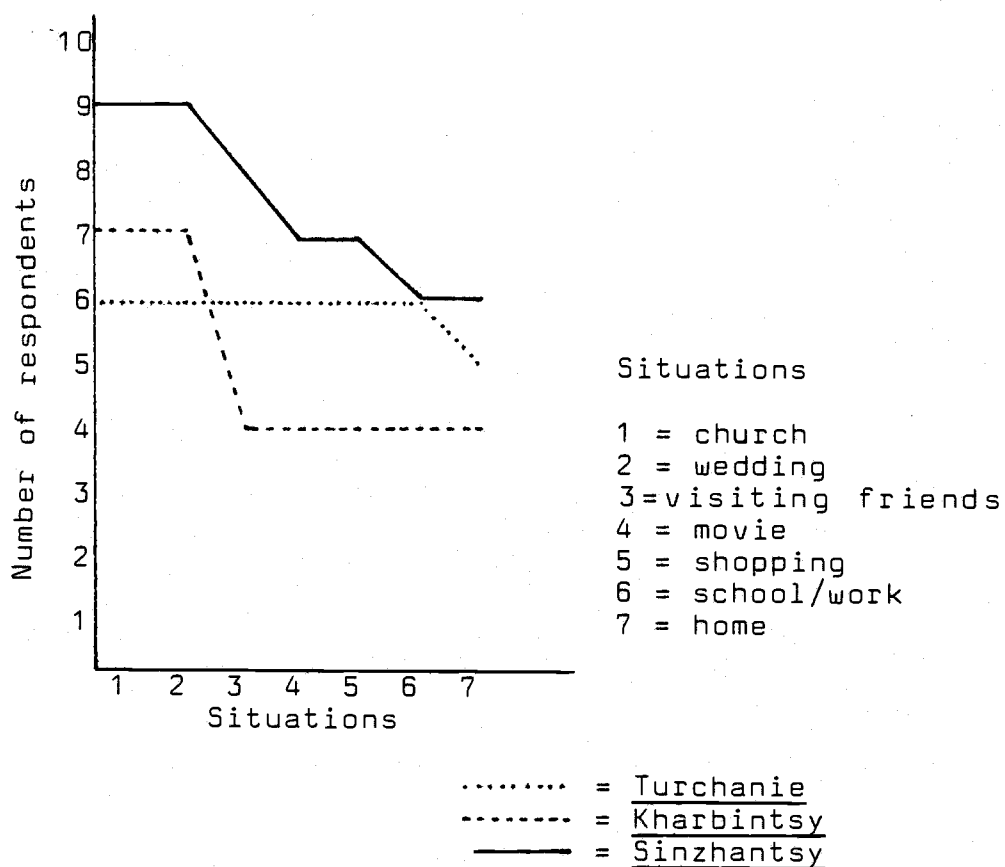


Figure 6.4. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Education in Secular and Non-secular Situations.

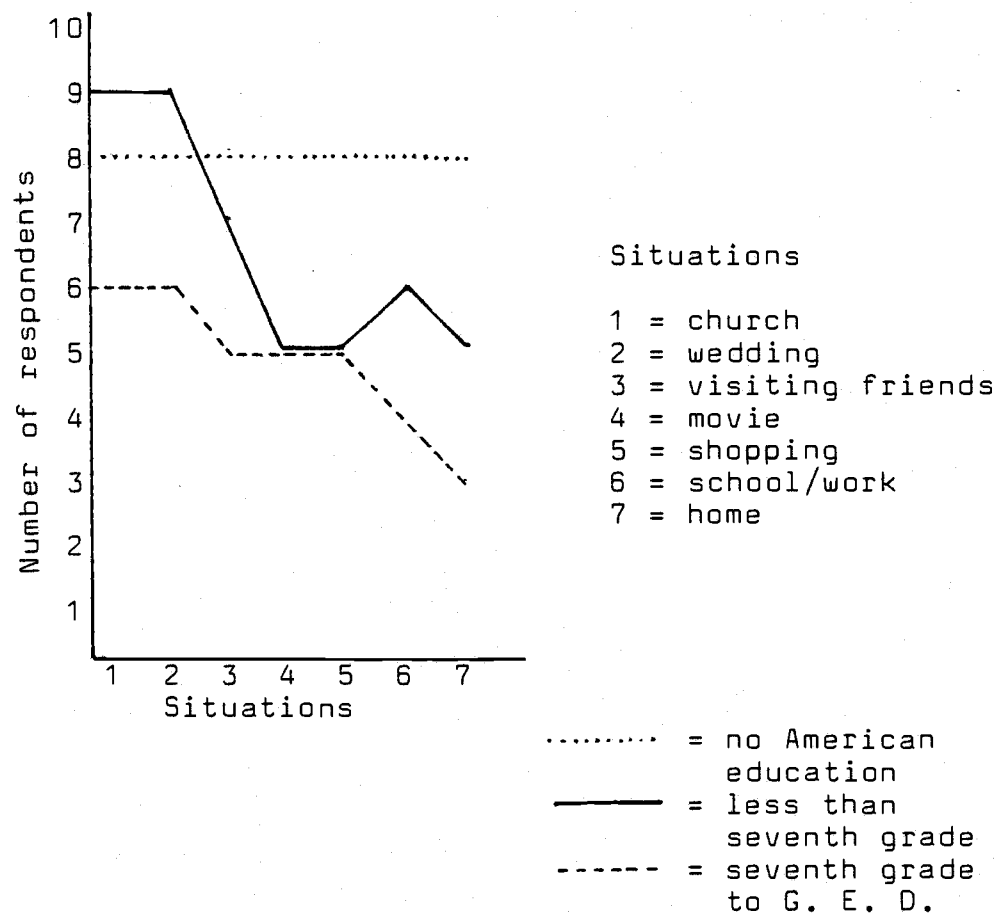
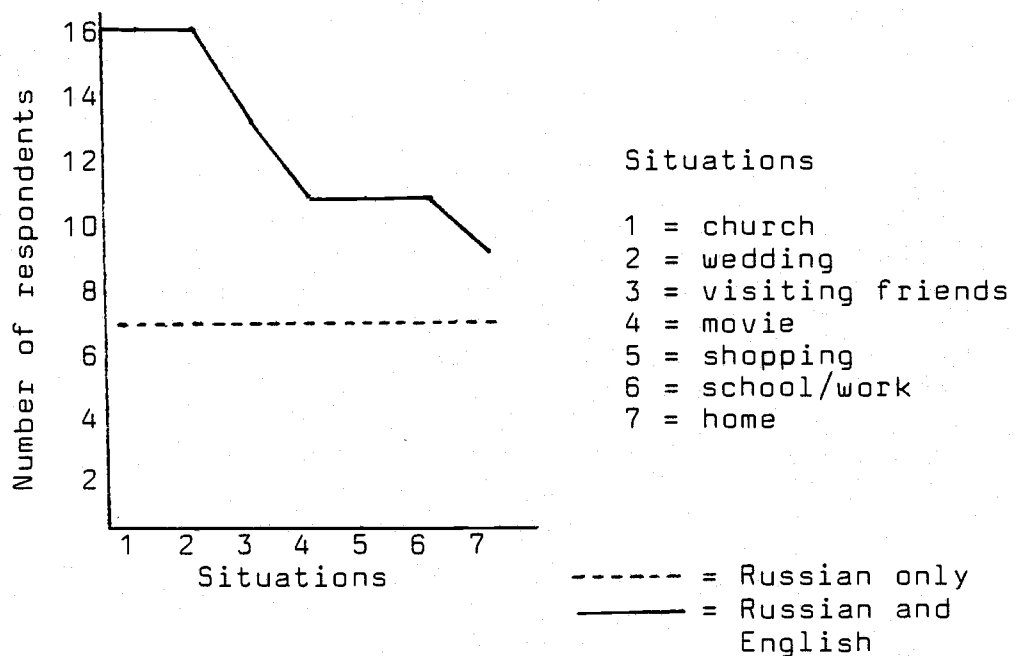


Figure 6.5. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Language in Secular and Non-secular Situations.



Differences in the extent of use of Russian dress show within other variables. The date of immigration is a factor in the continued wear of Russian dress (Figure 6.6). Later immigrants are more likely to wear Russian dress on all occasions than are those in the earlier migrations who have adopted a pattern of dress that shows a declining use of Russian dress from non-secular to secular occasions. Russian women who live in town (Figure 6.7) show a more rapid decline in the wearing of Russian dress on secular occasions than do Russian women who live in the country. Birth order, marital status and food preference (Figures 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10) do not show differences in patterns of use of Russian dress according to their internal categories.

Figure 6.6. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Date of Immigration in Secular and Non-secular Situations.

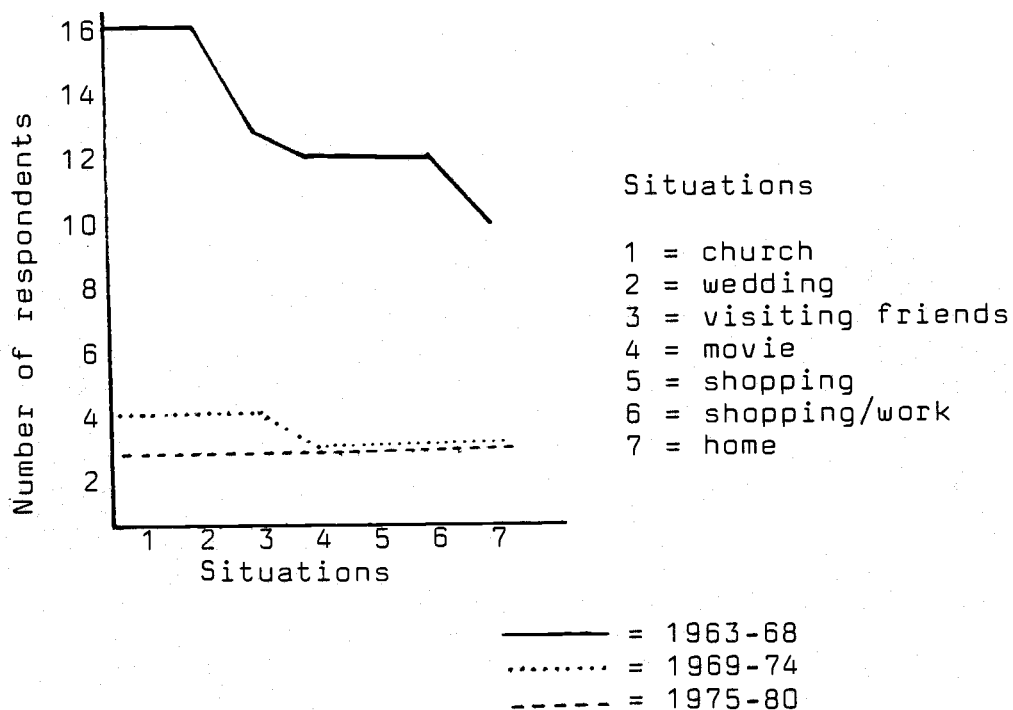


Figure 6.7. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Residence in Secular and Non-secular Situations.

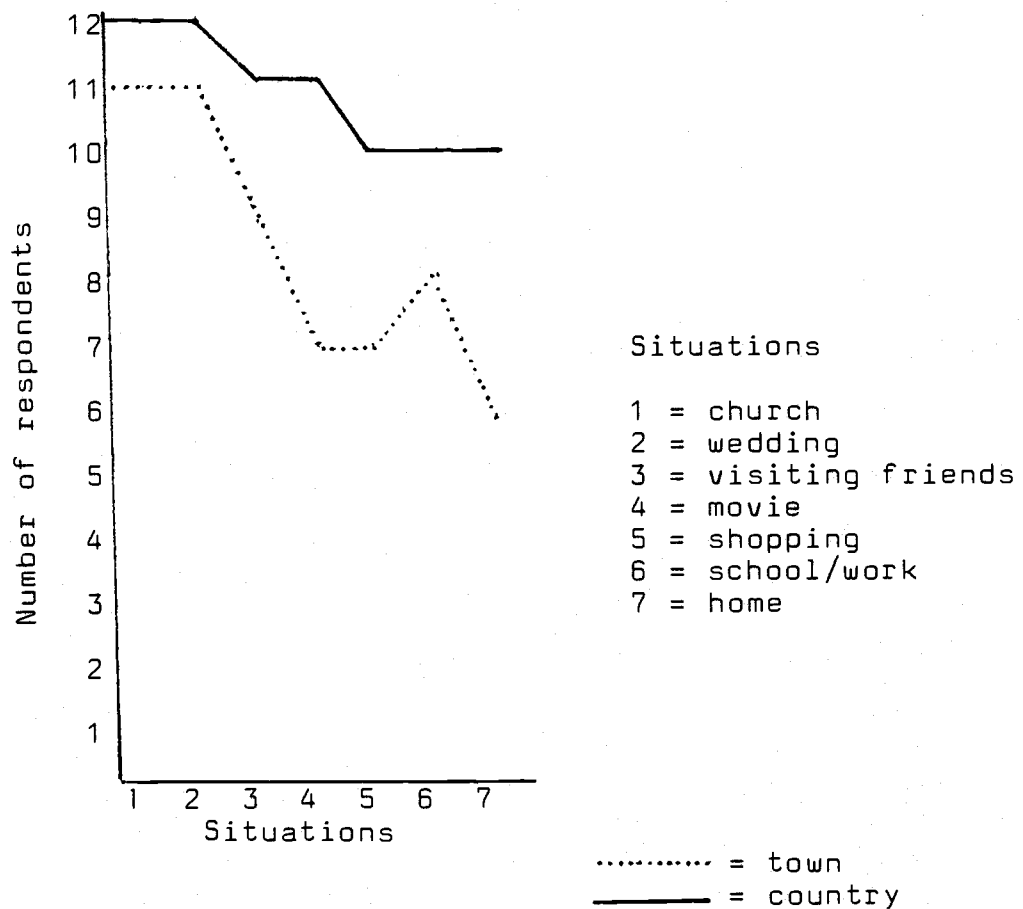


Figure 6.8. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Birth Order in Secular and Non-secular Situations

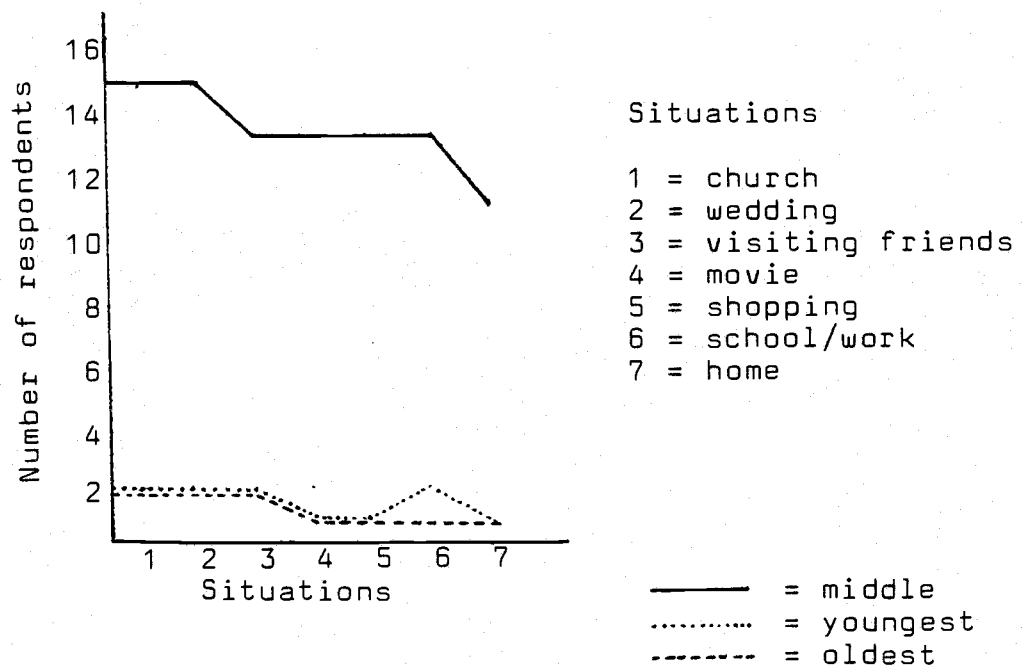


Figure 6.9. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Marital Status in Secular and Non-Secular Situations.

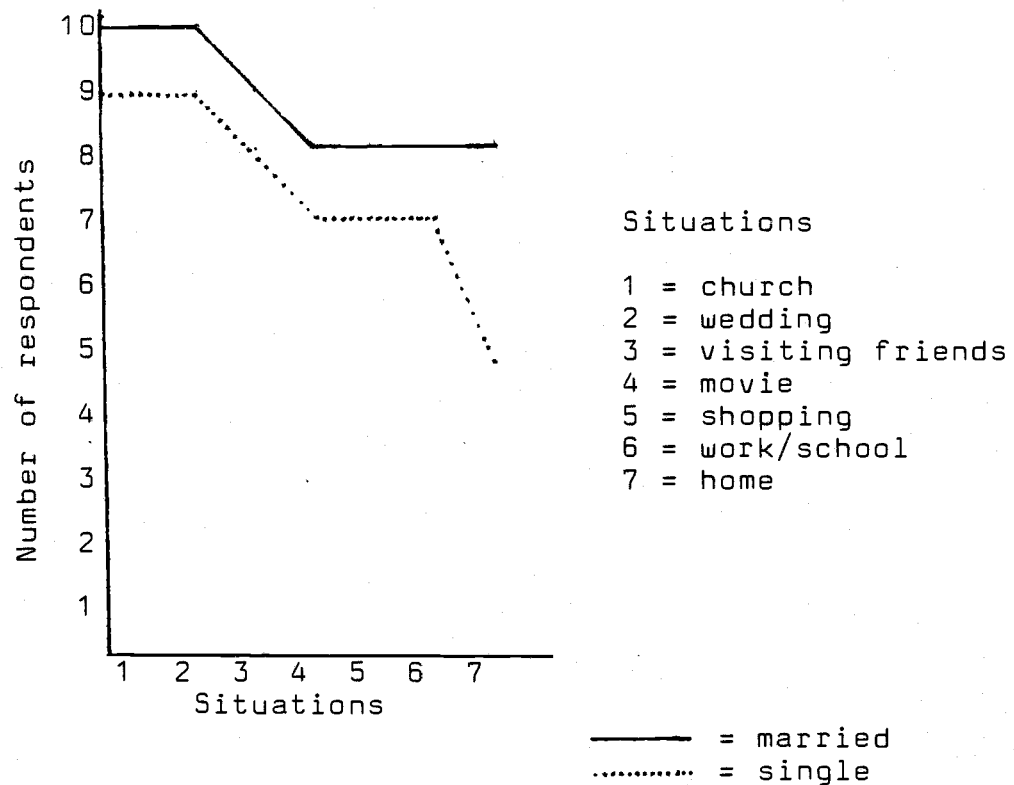
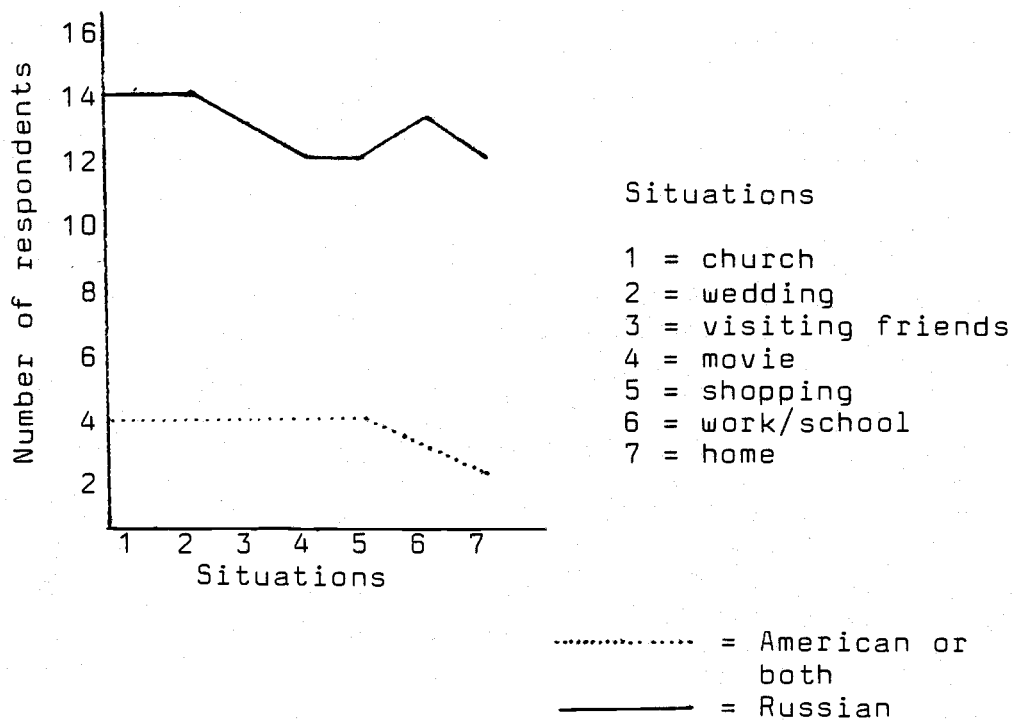


Figure 6.10. Use of Russian Dress for Women by Food Preference in Secular and Non-secular Situations.



### Middle School Survey

The Middle School survey was based upon observations of Russian Old Believer middle school students over a period of five months. Its purpose was to relate the use of wearing Old Believer dress in a school situation to variables such as sex, place of residence, food preference and birth order. Although I interviewed and observed many students at the Middle School, only students who were in the four classes that I assisted were included in the survey. This provided a relatively random sampling. There were a minimum of six observations on the dress of each student in the sample. On the basis of these observations students were placed in one of three categories according to their dress: 3 = all Russian; 2 = both Russian and American; and 1 = all American. Although hair styles identify Old Believers who wear American clothes as Old Believers, a Russian shirt for a boy and a sarafan or talichka for a girl were the bases for judging a costume to be Russian. At the end of the school year I obtained demographic information on as many of the students in the sample as I could. Some were absent, one had moved and one did not want to answer questions.

The final survey included thirty students, fourteen boys and sixteen girls. Fourteen were fifth graders and sixteen were sixth graders. All but three had been born in Oregon and only four had not spent all their lives in the United States. The sample included fourteen Kharbin-

tsy, six Turchanie and three Sinzhantsy. Six were from "mixed" subgroup marriages. The presence of twice as many students in the "youngest" category (ten) as in the "oldest" category was interesting. This was true despite the possibility of twice as many "oldest" candidates as both oldest girl and oldest boy might be in that category, whereas "youngest" was an absolute category regardless of the sex of the older children.

#### Findings of the Middle School Survey

Most Russian Old Believer students wore Old Believer clothing to school. Twenty (67 percent) wore only Old Believer clothing, and six (20 percent) wore both American and Russian clothing. Only four (13 percent) wore predominantly American clothes. Students in all categories showed a marked preference for American food when asked to name their favourite food. However, no students who wore both American and Russian dress chose a Russian food as their favourite food, and the four students who wore only American clothes preferred American food. Students who lived in town showed a tendency to select American clothes (categories 1 and 2 combined) (44 percent) more than did those who lived in the country (21 percent). Similarly boys had a stronger tendency to wear American clothes (50 percent) than did girls (19 percent). No tendency to wear a certain category of clothes related to birth order could be discerned. Tables are included in the appendices.



### Kindergarten Survey

The third survey involved observations in the Russian language kindergarten. These observations were of a general nature and merely noted whether a child wore American or Russian dress. Boys were considered to be wearing Old Believer dress if they wore either a Russian shirt, a Russian belt or both. Girls were considered to be wearing Old Believer dress if they wore a sarafan, talichka or plat'e (a longish dress which is acceptable dress for young girls.). Attendance in the class was irregular, and the few non-Old Believer children who were in the class were not always separated from the totals, thus making the precise numbers inaccurate. Old Believer girls almost always wore Russian clothes to school, and their hair was pulled back into a braid or a ponytail. Fewer than half of the boys regularly wore distinguishing Old Believer clothing.

### Discussion of the Findings of the Surveys

The surveys support the general observation that Russian Old Believers wear Old Believer clothing much of the time. They show, however, a decline in the use of Russian dress from religious to secular situations. Within this general pattern are variations based upon age, language use, place of residence, length of time in the United States, education and subgroup membership.

Some findings were expected; many of the results may be interrelated. Women who are over thirty years of age, for instance, are less likely to have gone to American schools and to know English. They are more totally immersed in Old Believer society and less exposed to American values and standards. They are the ones who must maintain the dress traditions of Old Believer society. Thus it was expected that women over thirty years of age would show a greater use of Russian dress than younger women. The decline in use of Old Believer dress among those with more than a seventh grade education was expected. Colfer (1975:69) observes that the higher Old Believer children go in school, the less chance they have of remaining Old Believer. We can add that they also have less chance of wearing Old Believer dress.

Old Believers who live in town show greater use of American dress in secular situations than do those who live in the country. This is true for both women and middle school students. Farming is a traditional occupation; the difference in dress may reflect the non-traditional economic activities of town families as well as greater exposure to American society.

Newer immigrants show a greater consistency in the use of Russian dress than earlier immigrants and those born in Oregon. This may be the result of the desire of the new immigrants to live among other Old Believers rather than dispersed as they may have been in Argentina, Australia and other countries. This is true despite the

fact than many of the newer immigrants did not wear Old Believer dress in their previous residence.

It was expected that men would show less use of Russian dress than women. That fact was easily observable and Old Believers generally acknowledged this to be true. This sexual difference in clothing patterns begins at an early age; it was readily discernible in the kindergarten class and evident as well among the middle school students. Old Believers gave various reasons for this. Some attributed it to the fact that men had to be away on business and did not want to look "funny." Others ascribed it to the fact that Russian clothing for men was not so very different from American clothing. Middle school students said that girls wore Russian dress because they were girls and boys didn't so much because they were "wild." Old Believers perceive rigid distinctions between male and female roles; pants for men, dresses for women represent this dichotomy. It is easier for an Old Believer male to wear jeans than it is for an Old Believer female to wear jeans. Opposite sex roles occur among Hasidic Jews where males are responsible for the maintenance of religious purity and their dress shows the degree of their participation in religion. Unmarried Hasidic women, however, do not wear dress which distinguishes them from the larger community. Poll (1962:43) observes that "control over unmarried women has presented a greater problem than control over Hasidic young men."

The responsibility of Old Believer women for the maintenance of ritual purity for the home and family predicted the greater use of Old Believer dress for women than for men.

Other results were unexpected. Turchanie women showed a more consistent use of Old Believer dress than other groups of women did. This may be the result of the sample bias although the possibility exists that other factors cause this to be true. Turchanie have a long history of living in a bicultural society where dress is a means of distinguishing among ethnic groups. Thus they may find little difficulty in using dress to set themselves apart from American society. They, too, are the only group which maintains an enclave. This may encourage the use of Old Believer dress.

Marital status does not appear to be a factor in the use of Russian dress. Both single and married women showed the same pattern, except in the "at home" category where single women showed greater freedom in choosing non-Old Believer dress styles. Marriage implies an acceptance of Old Believer ideals and standards; however the dress patterns of married and unmarried women do not show any differences despite the different roles of single and married women in maintaining these standards.

The middle school survey on dress in school correlates well with the work/school category of dress in the adult survey. Twenty middle school students wore Russian clothes, six wore both American and Russian clothes and

four wore American clothes. This is remarkably similar to the adult sample in which nineteen wore Russian clothing, five wore both Russian and American clothing and six wore American clothing. This suggests that the dress behaviour of children reflects that of their elders.

Different patterns emerged in other areas. Although no relation could be seen between food preference and Russian dress among women, the middle school survey indicated that dress may be related to food preference among Old Believer children. Although Old Believers readily admit to stronger pressures on older children than on younger children to behave and act "Russian," this did not show itself in varying dress patterns based upon birth order.

## 7. GENERAL FINDINGS: OLD BELIEVER DRESS

### AND ACCULTURATION

Russian Old Believer society is conservative. It has a strong, internal structure based upon religious principles and ancient Russian traditions. It has devices for maintaining its boundaries and for allowing errant people back into societal membership. To the Old Believers their faith is the true faith. This attitude gives them a feeling of moral superiority to American society. They face an acculturative situation in which numbers made them subordinate, a dominant society interferes with their internal structure, but virtue makes them superior. Thus, Old Believers, despite their immigrant status, are resistant to acculturative influences.

Dress is one of the Old Believer mechanisms of boundary maintenance; it has, in addition, religious and cultural symbolism. The forms of their costume come from the seventeenth century, the date of the schism and the origins of the Old Believers as a separate social group. Included in their costume are constant reminders of the doctrines of their religion. Their dress is a symbol of the old ways to which they adhere. In communities where they live, it is additionally a symbol of their intention to remain apart from the dominant society. One would

expect, then, that Old Believers would retain their traditional dress. This is so. Most Old Believers wear Old Believer clothing most of the time, and almost all wear elements of dress which identify them as Old Believers to each other all the time.

Although Old Believers have maintained traditional dress, changes have occurred. Two sets of acculturative forces have been acting on their dress patterns. One is from American society; another is other subgroups. We can identify trends toward Americanization of Old Believer dress at the same time that we can identify a consolidation process at work in Old Believer dress.

The modern talichka show these two acculturation trends. The set-in sleeves, turned-down collar and flounces in the skirt are influences from American dress styles. So is the colour coordination. The front and back, however, preserve the form of the traditional talichka. The style transcends regional differentiation; it has become standard Old Believer dress for women and girls of all groups. Older women recognise its value as transitional dress, neither American nor Old Believer, but a form between the two cultures. They find it suitable for those times when they must participate in American activities. Because the modern talichka is not an acceptable ritual garment, women have considerable freedom in its construction, choice of fabrics and decoration. This allows it to be easily adapted to current styles.

Belts, too, have undergone considerable change. Only the symbolism of the belt, not its form, is prescribed. Thus individuals may wear a string under their garments and a woven belt over the shirt or dress. Alternatively, they may wear only a string over their shirt. The distinctive types of belts that each group wore before joining in Oregon have been obliterated by the widespread use of the card-woven or backstrap-woven belts. These have spread throughout the community because of intergroup marriage and their easy availability for purchase from beltmakers. Young people are fond of American belts which fill the symbolic function of the belt adequately and also allow individual expression of taste. One Middle School student wore an elasticized "jeans jeans" belt to school everyday over his embroidered rubashka.

Men's shirts evidence both strong American influence in style and consolidation of regional forms in producing a distinctive shirt of Russian style (Figure 7.1). Traditional shirts have center or side openings and upright collars. To these shirts women have added turned down collars, known as "devil's ears" and prohibited in church; decorative stitching in imitation of western shirt styles; and cuffs with buttons or snaps. The shirt does not, however, fit in the same manner as a western style shirt. Russian Old Believers continue to wear their loose-fitting shirts tunic-style over their trousers and tied at the waist with a belt. Shirts, though, are shorter now than they were before immigration to the United States. Women



continue to modify the shirts; some have added under collars to the upper collars and separate front and back yoke pieces, often outlined with contrasting piping. One of the recent shirt styles has a front opening with eye-lets along each side that are laced with a tie. Few men wear shirts nowadays which distinguish them as a member of a particular group.

Women and girls (and some boys) select freely their embroidery styles and designs. Traditional cross-stitch from Russia has been supplemented with punch needle (igolochkoi) and satin stitch (gladiu) embroidery. Originally adopted by the Kharbintsy in China, these methods have spread through intermarriage to all groups. Designs, too, are different from the red and black geometric and animal designs from Russia. Women now employ bright vibrant colours in their embroidery. Unable to obtain suitable thread in the colours and weight that they prefer, they will unravel synthetic cloth for thread, or if they are fortunate, have some sent from Brazil. Old Believers who spent some years in Brazil added brightly coloured, realistic floral and animal designs to their repertory. Women continue to develop new embroidery designs from greeting cards, design books, children's books and printed fabrics; these they share freely among themselves. Some have added fabric painting to their repertory of design techniques.

The traditional woman's shirt has changed little and continues to be worn, although changes have been made.

The long, narrow, wedge-shaped piece of the undersleeve on the Kharbintsy rubakha is rarely seen, but the forms of the Sinzhantsy and Turchanie sleeves remain the same. Some have added cuffs and used elastic at the wrist in place of the traditional method of gathering in the fullness of the sleeves with pleats and sewn down with ribbons. Other Old Believers have adopted a simpler form of shirt consisting of only four pieces: a front, back and two raglan sleeves (Figure 7.2); the neck and wrists are usually gathered with elastic. This modern version of the rubashka has undoubtedly been borrowed from the American "peasant" blouse style.

Standards of fit and beauty vary with current American standards, especially among the young. Girls now want to be thin, a change from the plumpness that Russians traditionally desire. Some girls wear makeup when they can. Others cut and perm their hair. Young, unmarried girls rarely wear scarves. Skirts or dresses may rise to midcalf, and young women and girls seldom wear aprons except when working in the kitchen. Women may add a tuck or gathers to the side seam of the upper front of their sarafan so that the hem will hang straight. Darts may be added to the bodice of the talichka to give it a snugger fit. Some women use foundation garments to alter the shape of their body. Except for changes in hair style, forms remain generally constant, but subtle differences reveal altered standards of beauty and fit.

Figure 7.1. Russian man's shirt

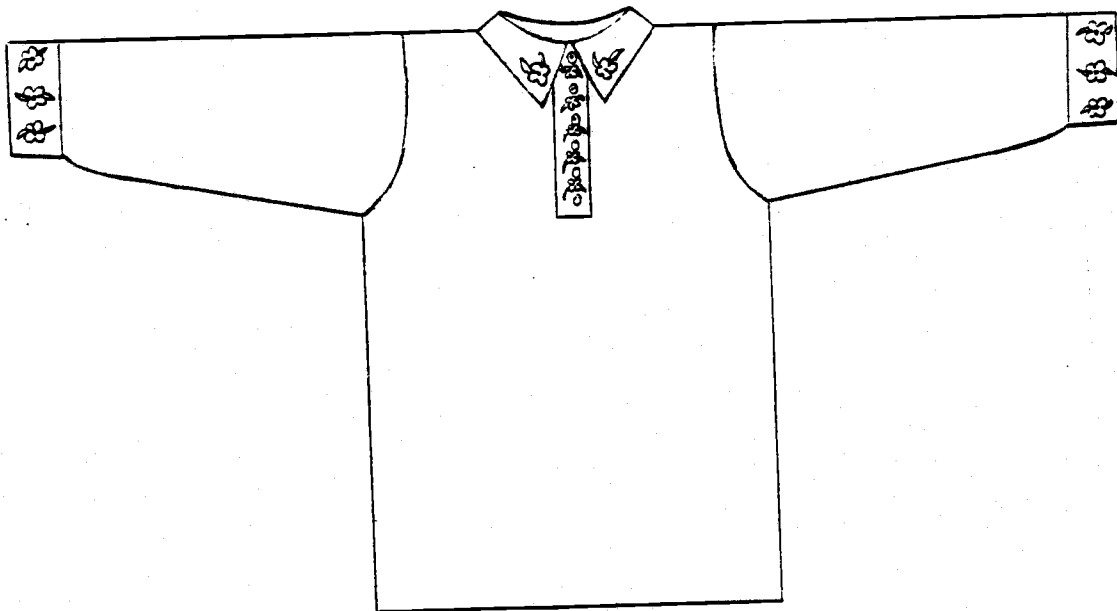
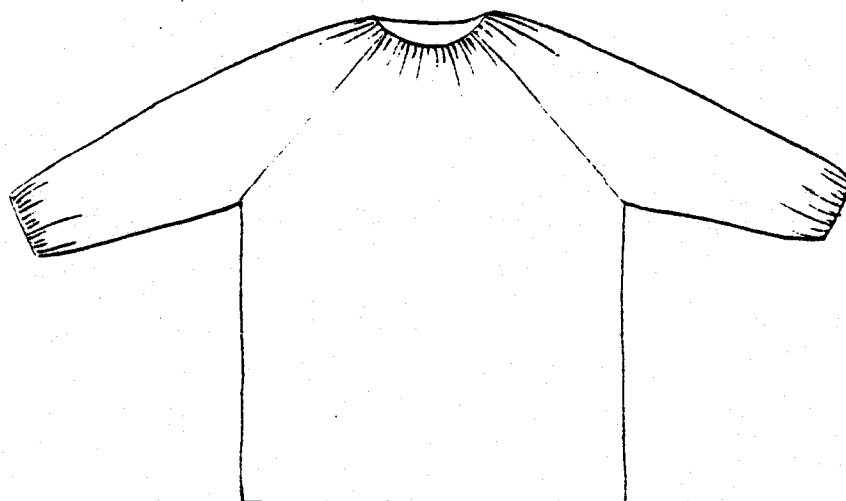


Figure 7.2. Modern rubashka



Although most changes have occurred in secular forms of dress, religious garments have been modified slightly. Each group accepts the ritual forms of dress of other groups. As Kharbintsy and Sinzhantsy women have moved into the Turchanie group through intermarriage, the sarafan has become more common among Turchanie women.

Old Believers combine American elements with Russian dress in various ways. They may incorporate an American form, as with the modern rubashka, and use it exactly as they would use a traditional rubakha. The same is true of American belts. Design elements may be added in a similar fashion. However, when young women adopt American standards of beauty by dieting to be thin and cutting and perming their hair, they also adopt the American expectation that doing so will make them more beautiful. Often not accepted by parents and older Russian Old Believers, these standards have acceptance only within a certain age group.

Other items of dress fuse American and Old Believer dress elements. The modern talichka shows such fusion. So do many of the men's shirts. Neither traditional nor American methods of construction guide the creation of these garments; a new set of methods has been devised for sewing the new clothes.

In other cases American garments are adopted and subsequently replace traditional Russian garments. The nylon ski jacket is one such garment; it has universally replaced traditional winter outerwear in Oregon. Old

Believer acceptance and use of ski jackets, trousers for men, shoes and stockings correspond with that of Americans.

It was noted earlier that Old Believers dress to accommodate their bicultural living situation. They do this by adapting their clothing to American situations. Some do this rarely and may only wear a modern talichka or wear one scarf instead of two. Others who regularly work among Americans may wear American clothes in those situations as a matter of course, yet they remain total participants in Old Believer society in all areas except dress. In McKee's terms these are 101 percent, or 130 percent or 150 percent people. Their dress reflects their participation in both cultures.

Since Old Believer immigration to the United States certain trends in garment construction have become evident. Traditional garments were made of rectilineal pieces. Originally related to the width of the loom, the pieces retained their traditional dimensions and forms despite the availability of wider fabrics which made the traditional construction obsolete. The retention of the undersleeve of the Kharbintsy woman's rubakha is one example. The trend away from garments sewn from rectilineal pieces was evident before emigration in the fitted arm holes of the traditional talichka and the set-in sleeves of some of the men's shirts from China and Turkey. This trend toward garments which conform more to body contours

has been escalated in recent years. The traditional construction methods of measuring and tearing pieces has worked to preserve old styles while the jobs which women have found in sewing factories has increased their exposure to the construction of tailored garments and hastened the process of change. The younger generation traditionally learned construction techniques from the older generation. The presence of innovators in the community who make the new style garments has altered that format; a girl nowadays is as likely to learn to sew from her sister-in-law or sister as she is from a mother or mother-in-law. The result is changing form and fit in Old Believer garments.

The practice of handicrafts has been altered in recent years. No longer are the strictly utilitarian skills such as weaving cloth, spinning and knitting needed. Although many of the older women still knit socks to wear as slippers around the house, younger women do not knit and cloth and knitting wool are purchased in stores. Handicrafts with aesthetic appeal have not disappeared. Although school and jobs impinge upon time that a girl would have spent on embroidery in past times, it remains a skill which all girls learn. Belts, too, although woven less frequently nowadays by young women, remain important handcrafted items of dress. These traditional handicrafts have varying historical traditions. Knitted garments were not common in Russia until Peter I brought them back from western Europe, and prior to the end of the seventeenth

century knitwear was seldom a part of Russian national dress (Turnau 1973:8). On the other hand weaving and embroidery are much older traditions. Weaving on back-strap looms has been known in Russia since Neolithic times (Kushner 1967:240) and embroidery has an old tradition (Klimova 1981:6). The handicrafts which remain are those which combine ancient histories and contemporary aesthetic appeal. In Oregon Old Believers have shown a great deal of versatility in adapting handicrafts to new conditions.

The bases on which Old Believers select their dress are the strengths of the functions of dress and the nature of the situation. On ritual occasions the selection of garments which have ritual function is foremost. Of all their garments these most rigidly follow the form of their historic garments. Maintenance of ritual dress is near universal among Oregon Old Believers. The persistence of traditional hair styles may be explained by the religious bases for their hair practices.

Aesthetic and holiday functions dominate dress for holiday occasions. Although such dress generally follows Old Believer standards for dress, it does so more in maintaining a Russian style rather than Russian historic tradition. The use of Old Believer types of clothing on such occasions is high.

Old Believers do not, however, rigidly maintain Old Believer clothing for everyday dress. The primary function of everyday dress is practical, and many opt for

American clothes on these occasions. Practical function refers to the characteristics of physical protection and suitability to the work, but among Old Believers other factors such as the cultural context of the situation are practical considerations. This can be seen in the use of dress to accommodate to a bicultural situation.

In an acculturative situation the persistence of forms of dress on some occasions and their loss on other occasions may be explained in terms of the predominant function of the dress and the interrelation of the functions of dress. Dress whose functions are ritual and holiday are more persistent in form than everyday dress whose function is practical. The interrelation of functions produces variations in persistence of dress forms among the Old Believers based upon sex, age and role. The aesthetic function of holiday dress results in varieties of forms not possible in ritual dress because artistic expression is allowed greater flexibility within the traditional norms. The ritual functions of women in everyday life are reflected in their greater use of Old Believer dress on everyday occasions than men. The ritual functions are so strong that some Old Believer women wear American garments (such as a skirt) only when they engage in unclean (polluting) activities such as washing clothes.

Dress acts as a communications system, but unless the situation involves people who understand the signs that the wearer intends, the message is lost or misunderstood. Thus those Old Believers who work among Americans will be



more inclined to wear American clothing than those who work among Old Believers. Old Believers in Australia did not wear Old Believer dress, even on ritual occasions, because they did not live in a community of Old Believers who responded to the messages. Some Old Believers maintain wardrobes of American clothes to wear when they are away from Woodburn and Old Believer society. Teenagers might wear American clothes to a rock concert in Portland but Russian clothes to the video games arcade in Gervais. The existence of an audience to understand the message is essential to the maintenance of Russian styles of dress.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The study began with an inquiry into how the Russian Old Believer immigrants to Oregon use dress to indicate their membership in their ethnic group and how dress reflects acculturative influences from the American way of life. Dress at the time of emigration from Turkey and China was sought as a baseline for the study of acculturation.

The hypothesis that Russian Old Believer dress will reflect their adherence to Old Believer religion and culture is accepted. Dress for ritual occasions adheres closely to the traditional dress of each group of Old Believers at the time of emigration from China and Turkey. The Russian Old Believers maintain handicrafts which have ancient histories in Russia, and hairstyles resemble those of eighteenth century Russian peasants. Almost all Old Believers retain Old Believer styles of dress for their social and ceremonial life, rites of passage and religious holidays. Dress distinguishes among the ritual, holiday and practical intentions of the wearer; it also reveals age, sex, marital distinctions, devotion to religion, group origins and accommodation to a bicultural living situation.

The hypothesis that Russian Old Believer dress will reflect acculturative influences from American culture is accepted. American fashions are frequently sources of design elements for style changes in Russian dress. One example is the Russian "cowboy" shirt. Schools, work, entertainment and shopping are activities often performed within an American cultural context, and American clothing or modern Russian styles of clothing are frequently worn on such occasions. When the primary function of dress is practical, American dress, or aspects of dress, is more likely to be worn. Likewise, Russian Old Believers are more likely to retain Russian dress on non-secular than on secular occasions. Variations which occur are related to greater or lesser exposure to American culture.

The hypothesis that Russian Old Believer dress will reflect consolidation processes at work within the Old Believer group is also accepted. The three groups have minimised their differences and created a common dress, the modern talichka for women and center-opening shirts for men. Decorative elements no longer reflect their separate origins. The generation that has come of age in Oregon produces clothing that is neither traditional Russian nor contemporary American, but transitional between the two. Old Believers have created a Russian style that does not show rigid conformity to the historic traditions of their individual groups.

Acculturation processes may be observed in the various ways that American and subgroup elements of dress are combined in current Old Believer dress. Elements of dress have been added both with and without the meanings from the donor society, and distinctively new manners of dress have been developed.

Changes in dress have not occurred evenly throughout Old Believer society. Dress associated with ritual resists change as do the cross, belt and shirt which symbolise religious affiliation. The role of dress in communication reinforces the resistance of dress to change. Dress related to economic activities, such as work/study activities and shopping, is more amenable to change. Some elements of the traditional dress, such as stockings, shoes, fabric and winter outerwear, whose predominant function is practical, have been replaced by mass-produced goods from the marketplace. Embroidery skills are still highly valued, and although designs and styles are far different from the traditional embroidery forms from Russia and Turkey, nearly all women embroider. Aesthetic self-expression remains open to a variety of cross-cultural influences. Thus the functions and roles of the item of dress affect its proclivity to change.

All individuals do not participate equally in change. Women retain Russian dress because it fits the needs of their life style and their expected role within Old Believer society. Men continue to wear Old Believer dress on ritual and social occasions, but they are allowed

greater latitude than are women in choosing for other occasions from American sources. Within these categories are variations related to personal preference, age, education, date of immigration and residence. Although recent times have somewhat changed the traditional roles which put women in the home and men in the world, most young men mix with American society and are more likely to work alongside Americans than are women. The greater intensity of their acculturative situation contributes to their greater susceptibility to American forms of dress. New immigrants tend to maintain traditional styles of dress in Oregon whatever their previous dress patterns. The wearing of Old Believer dress reflects their need to affirm their adherence to Old Believer religious precepts and their membership in Old Believer society in Oregon. In a bicultural environment individuals may participate in the dress patterns of both societies, depending upon their ability to participate in the particular activities of that society. Although Russian dress remains persistent among the Russian Old Believer population, the use of American dress and elements of American dress represents the expanded activities of some Russian Old Believers.

Dress is therefore a manifestation of the cultural identity of the Russian Old Believers. It has been used since the time of Peter I to distinguish Old Believers from non-Old Believers. The preservation of their faith and the maintenance of their old manners of dress through

300 years of persecution and migration attests to the strength of their persistence as a people. Their shared traditions of dress have contributed to their sense of peoplehood and continue to be a part of their collective identity.

The self-selection process by which conservative Old Believers move on to places more amenable to the practice of the old ways may leave a community in Oregon that maintains Russian Old Believer dress for ritual and social events but increasingly accepts American and American styles of dress for everyday dress and events which occur within American society.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

## SURVEY

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
2. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
5. Birth Order \_\_\_\_\_
6. Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
7. Country(ies) where raised \_\_\_\_\_
8. Date of arrival in U. S. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Arrival in Oregon \_\_\_\_\_
10. Number of years attended American schools, including English language classes \_\_\_\_\_
11. Languages: 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Subgroup: circle one Harbintsi Sinziantsi Turchanii
13. Do you live in town or country? town country
14. Do you belong to a sobor? yes no  
Do you attend sobor regularly? yes no
15. Do you speak English? good----medium----poor----not at all
16. How much do you speak Russian?  
all the time most of the time seldom never
17. What do you wear to a wedding?  
to church?  
to visit friends?  
to a movie?  
to shop for groceries?  
to school or work?  
at home?
18. What are your favourite foods? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Is your spouse Russian? \_\_\_\_\_
20. What Russian holidays do you observe? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you keep the fasts? all the time some of the time  
only briefly never



## Appendix 2

Table 1. Dress of middle school students according to food preference.

		3	2	1	Total	<u>Dress</u>
<u>Food</u> <u>Preference</u>	Russian	7	0	0	7	
	Both	5	3	0	8	
	American	6	3	4	13	
	Total	18	6	4		

Table 2. Dress of middle school students according to birth order.

		3	2	1	Total	<u>Dress</u>
<u>Birth</u> <u>Order</u>	Oldest	3	1	1	5	
	Middle	11	3	1	15	
	Youngest	6	2	2	10	
	Total	20	6	4		

Table 3. Dress of middle school students according to residence.

		3	2	1	Total	<u>Dress</u>
<u>Residence</u>	Town	9	5	2	16	
	Country	11	1	2	14	
	Total	20	6	4		

Table 4. Dress of middle school students according to sex.

		3	2	1	Total	<u>Dress</u>
<u>Sex</u>	Male	7	4	3	14	
	Female	13	2	1	16	
	Total	20	6	4		

Key for Dress: 3 = all Russian  
 2 = both Russian and American  
 1 = all American