

ADAPTIONS FOR AMERICAN FOLK DANCE COSTUMES  
FROM AUTHENTIC EUROPEAN FOLK DRESS

by

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# ADAPTIONS FOR AMERICAN FOLK DANCE COSTUMES FROM AUTHENTIC EUROPEAN FOLK DRESS

## CHAPTER 1

### FOLK DANCING IN THE UNITED STATES

Folk dancing has become an increasingly popular recreation in the United States within the past two decades, drawing enthusiasts from young and old, native or foreign born, of all levels of society. Historically, folk dancing probably was done in America from the time of the early European settlements, and kitchen dances were held in New England until the latter part of the eighteenth hundreds. It remained for Elizabeth Burchenal to pioneer in the assembling and spreading of knowledge of folk dances. She was one of the founders in 1916, of the American Folk Dance Society, which has since carried on a continuous program of educational promotion of the use of folk dancing. (10, p.iii)

While the early popular interest in folk dancing dates back almost a half century, it is only within recent years that a great nationwide movement has developed. This interest has been furthered through evening school classes, 4-H groups, and folk dance clubs. From these groups have developed statewide festivals, which in many cases have become annual events, bringing together hundreds of



dancers. When in 1917, Miss Burchenal wrote that every effort should be made to preserve and assimilate the folk dances of the nationalities which make up the people of our country, she could not have foreseen so complete a realization of her wish. (9, p.v) The continuing immigration of ethnic groups to the United States has provided additional opportunities to learn international dances at first hand.

Americans have made tours to Europe to attend international folk dance festivals, where dancers from many countries convene to perform their native dances. Such a festival was held last year at Biarritz, France. Accounts of the color and pageantry of this event assure us it was a thrilling spectacle.

Much of the interest attached to folk dancing is provided by the opportunity to wear colorful costumes. Europeans have their folk costumes which have evolved naturally with their cultural, and historical development. We have nothing in our brief history that corresponds to European folk dress. There are some isolated instances of groups such as the Mennonites, who have retained their early nineteenth century dress, but their clothing is no more typical of American apparel than Indian garb or early pioneer dress. Since we do not have folk dress of our own, it seems logical to borrow from the European



countries, because our cultural heritage stems from them. Perhaps nowhere else in the world would it be possible to find the willingness to put on the "symbol of peasantry," as folk dress has sometimes been described, as in America. That may be because we are less conscious of social class distinctions than most other peoples.

Because authentic folk costumes are usually colorful and comfortable in style, they seem admirably well suited to the needs of American folk dancers. Surely they are more appropriate than some of the outlandish combinations, worn by dancers who have not been influenced by the charm of national costumes, possibly because details for their construction have not been available. A glaring example is shown on Plate 1.

#### A Definition of Authentic Costume

It would be well to preface a discussion of folk dress by defining what is meant by an "authentic costume." A folk costume is a collection of apparel put together over centuries by the people of a country. It is a mixture of tradition and passing novelty, distinguishing it from sophisticated fashionable dress, which is contemporary. It springs from the geographic, economic, and historical aspects of the country, together with the cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic characteristics of its

PLATE 1  
INAPPROPRIATE COSTUMING  
FOR FOLK DANCING



inhabitants. (68, p.8) A folk costume develops slowly and takes different forms in various regions of the same country, depending on geographic and social isolation, economic and political influences, as well as climatic conditions. (48, p.11)

People of widely separated regions have developed similar costumes. Given comparable raw materials to work with, country folk have progressed through similar stages of artistic expression. For some peasants, folk dress has been described as almost the only avenue for their artistic creativeness. (65, p.3) Peasant costumes are thus an important expression of the cultural currents of a country.

Authentic costume is not period dress, but during its development it has retained elements of historic fashions, because it is influenced by current fashion trends. Whereas contemporary fashion changes can be measured by seasons, influences on folk costume are more likely to be perceptible from one generation to the next. The slowness of this change is pointed out by Heirerli, who says,

"characteristic clothing worn by the farmer can always be traced back to world fashions of the past. A fashion in high vogue among the nobility can be found about fifty years later among the artisans and tradesmen of the cities, whence it is slowly passed on to rural people. The farmers change the style according to their own tastes and the costume may remain in vogue for centuries." (25, p.9)

It must be remembered that from Medieval times, peasants lived in isolated communities and had little opportunity for following fashions in the way townspeople could. It is in this way that authentic costume has retained traces of ancient customs. What following of town fashions there was done by the country people, took place in a fragmental way. (2, p.9) Nylen explains that it was difficult for the peasant to understand and follow contemporary trends in Paris. Consequently, he might buy a new kind of hat or have a coat made in the town fashion, which he would then wear with more dated garments, indicating a different conception of the style from that of followers of current fashions. In the same way, elements of fashion were retained long after they had ceased to be fashionable at their source. (48, pp.10-12) It is in this manner that costumes developed which are truly characteristic of the country people.

It is possible to trace some of the elements of folk dress to their origin in Medieval times, the Renaissance or through to the nineteenth century. Men's short coats, a part of so many costumes, have their origin in the Middle Ages. Details changed through the centuries as the peasants adapted them to their needs. The laced bodices of the women's costumes are adaptations of the corsets of the court lady. The peasant woman could not manage the lacing



in the back, since she had no maid, therefore the lacing was placed in the front. (68, p.8)

Tight knee-breeches existed in the fashionable world in the seventeenth century, but were not commonly worn by peasants in many countries until the following century, taking nearly a hundred years to gain acceptance of popular taste. Military influence can also be traced in men's folk dress in headgear, frequent use of red and blue, high boots, and military braids.

Superstition has definitely figured in the development of folk costumes. Lepage-Medvey has analyzed this facet of folklore thus: "If the edges of collars and cuffs are adorned with lace, it is principally because it forms geometrical patterns, or floral designs which are a protection against misfortune." The peasantry, often extremely poor, devoted untiring labor and an inordinate amount of their meager means, not only to the production of handsome garments adorned with protective symbols, but also to the acquisition of ornaments of precious metals. A shining object defeats the evil eye, consequently, a metallic thing is a talisman. (37, p.12) One of the explanations for the common use of red and blue in costumes is that they are protective colors, particularly when used in combination with certain embroidered symbols.

It has already been indicated that peasant dress was

influenced by the costume of the ruling classes or the fashionable world. That the upper classes wished to prevent the common people from imitating their dress, is attested to by the records of sumptuary laws which were passed in numerous countries, restricting the use of rich fabrics and ornamentation. Upon the rescinding of these restraints there was a tendency for costumes to become very elaborate. (50, p.19) The clergy also exerted some influence on the apparel of the peasantry by requiring dress for some church ceremonies to be different from that for great holidays such as Easter or Christmas.

The bright gay colors of folk costumes indicate the delight in color which formerly prevailed in all classes. This lack of inhibition in the use of colors produced surprising, but delightful effects, not the least part of the charm of folk attire.

European folk costumes are steadily falling into disuse for daily wear, and in numerous countries even festival dress is brought out only for very special occasions. As the rural population is exposed through newspapers, radio, and communication, to the ways of city dwellers, they tend more and more to give up their traditions. At the same time, modern industry furnishes fabrics, hats, and ornaments that quickly replace the slow, delicate, artistic productions of formerly self-sufficient villages.

With the acceptance of mechanization, Europeans have relinquished much of the color and distinctiveness of their dress, because factory-made garments lack the individuality characteristic of hand workmanship.

European folk costumes generally have become somewhat static and are likely to remain so, in view of their continuing disappearance from popular use. There had been little interest in folk art, of which peasant dress is one expression, until fairly recent times, when it was discovered that it was disappearing. (5, pp.9-10) As a result, existing examples of folk dress are now being preserved in ethnological and folklore museums of most countries. This has stimulated new interest in folk costume and given it a prestige it previously had not known.

Aside from the consideration that European folk dress provides an excellent design source for American folk dance costumes, there is the chance that good will may be engendered by our interest. In these times of mistrust, anything which will reduce resentment and remove barriers to international understanding is to be encouraged.



## CHAPTER 2

## PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this work is to present some examples of European folk costumes from which inspiration may be taken, for the design and construction of folk dance dress. A dancing costume must allow ample freedom to the body. It has to be of sufficiently cool material to remain comfortable during the vigorous exertions of spirited dance routines. Further, an easily launderable fabric is almost imperative if a costume is to be returned to a fresh condition. Perspiration is an unavoidable accompaniment of many dance patterns, consequently, non-washable fabrics are impractical.

It is not intended that an exact copy of the European costumes be attempted. It is impossible to reproduce authentic dress without genuine materials, trimmings, and handwork, which are unobtainable except in the country of origin. What is intended, is that costumes in the spirit of the originals may be created by adapting them in American materials. This means making them more suitable through simplification of the ornamentation, sometimes a reduction in the number of colors in the costume, and unifying of the design detail when that seems to create a more pleasing effect. In the water color plates,

the adaptations from the original illustrations have already been made. The photographs show the original garments, and suggestions for their modification are incorporated into the directions for their construction. The more modern costumes, such as those of Finland, are already so simplified and well put together that design changes seem unnecessary.

Very attractive garments can be made by adjusting the colors, design, fabrics, and trimmings to retain the characteristic features of the original costume, while eliminating the disadvantages of cumbersome fabrics, intricacy of ornamental detail and difficult design. The selections included in this thesis were made from hundreds of illustrations studied, with this purpose in mind.

A word should be said about the cost of creating these costumes. Fortunately, those fabrics and trimmings which best meet the requirements, are also reasonably priced. This means that the American folk dancer's wardrobe may represent only a fraction of the investment, in time as well as money, of the original European costumes from which they were adapted.

### Limitations of the Study

The pictorial selections in this thesis are not offered as an exhaustive coverage of a comprehensive

subject. Rather, they are intended to suggest the many possibilities offered for folk dance costume construction, by reference to the vast area of European folk dress. They are only a sampling.

Study of the information available on European folk costume reveals that many of the sources are in the language of the country, often without a French or English translation. An extensive study of published material requires a background in European languages. The scope of this work was limited in part by these language barriers. The fact that illustrations lend themselves to interpretation even without benefit of linguistic support, minimized this difficulty somewhat.

A further limitation was presented by the suitability of the available material for the purposes of this work. Consequently, representations from every European country are not included. It was found that a few countries have not had what can be identified as national folk dress.

Finally, a limitation was presented by discovery of the existence of authentic costumes for photographing. Suitable garments photographed are offered as an original supplement to published illustrations.

#### Method of Procedure

The plan of work included first procuring information

from which useful material about folk costumes could be taken. Numerous possible sources of information were explored and those which proved helpful are given below.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization sent a list of Information Services and European Embassies in the United States. Contacts were made with these, and some were able to supply pictorial information or periodicals. A few suggested published works, or sent addresses in Europe where requests for material could be directed.

The Detroit Public Library was consulted because they have a published list of books on costume. They sent a very valuable list of titles from which much of the most useful information was gained. These publications and others as well, when not available in the Oregon libraries, were obtained through the Pacific Northwest Bibliographical Center in Seattle. The holdings at the Oregon State College Library also proved helpful.

The National Geographic Magazine supplied a list of colored photograph series in which folk costumes were represented. Those included in the bibliography contain illustrations in color, of folk dress of many of the countries included in this study. They offer little explanatory material, however.

The advisers to foreign students at both Oregon

State College and the University of Oregon, provided names of those who had brought a folk costume with them from Europe. These students graciously consented to be photographed in their native dress. They often could supply helpful information about their costumes.

Through the International Institute in Oakland, California, the names of persons in possession of authentic dress in that region were obtained. They too, cooperated by permitting their costumes to be photographed. The owners of these costumes, particularly if foreign born, were also able to relate some of the interesting folklore associated with their native dress. A few additional photographs were supplied from the writer's collection taken in Europe.

Examples of contemporary fabrics and trimmings used in Austrian, Finnish, German, Hungarian and Swiss folk costumes were obtained through correspondence. A few samples of European handwork were received through gifts and purchases. From stores in Corvallis, samples were purchased of currently available fabrics and trimmings, suitable for use in adaptations of the costumes illustrated.

Choosing the costumes included herein was difficult, because almost every costume has attractive aspects. With the principles enumerated in the purpose of this study in mind, the selections were made. Admittedly, the

choices are subjective. The water color plates were adapted from the original sources. They were rendered in a relatively flat manner in order to make the design details more easily read. Fifty-six different costumes are illustrated and described with suggestions for their construction.

Keeping in mind the well-known American admiration for speed and "getting things done," the suggestions incorporated in this thesis are based on the use of a minimum of handwork and a maximum of aids to quick construction. Commercial patterns for general style shapes are advocated. The use of ribbons, braids, rickrack, and any other devices to give the decorative effect of handwork are recommended. Some idea of the types of ready-made trimmings now available is given in the following sections. A few examples of suitable washable fabrics are also included.

Since folk dance costumes are not made commercially on a large scale, their construction is likely, for the present at least, to continue to be done by the home seamstress, or the few specialty shops offering that custom service. It is conceivable that in time some clothing manufacturers will recognize the commercial possibilities that lie in production of adaptations of folk costumes for folk dance wear, as they do for sports



and other specialized purposes.

### Pattern Sketches for Construction Details

In order to clarify the style details and suggested alterations of commercial patterns, sketches, designated Figures 1 to 15 are given. Although not referred to in every section, they should be helpful in many instances.

### Fabrics and Trimmings

This section includes a few examples of contemporary American fabrics which are suitable for creating adaptations of European folk costumes. There are dozens of attractive, washable fabrics which are acceptable for this purpose. Those that suggest a handwoven appearance are particularly suitable. Examples of contemporary European fabrics are included in the sections on Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, and Switzerland.

Trimmings are now quite plentiful. They are especially helpful in simulating handwork decoration on the costumes. Those included are typical of American trimmings. They are different from European braids, examples of which are included in the sections on Austria and Germany. These may be purchased in the United States from shops which sell folk costumes or from large department stores. A few examples of European handwork are also included in the sections to which they pertain.



FIG. 1 BODICE PATTERN

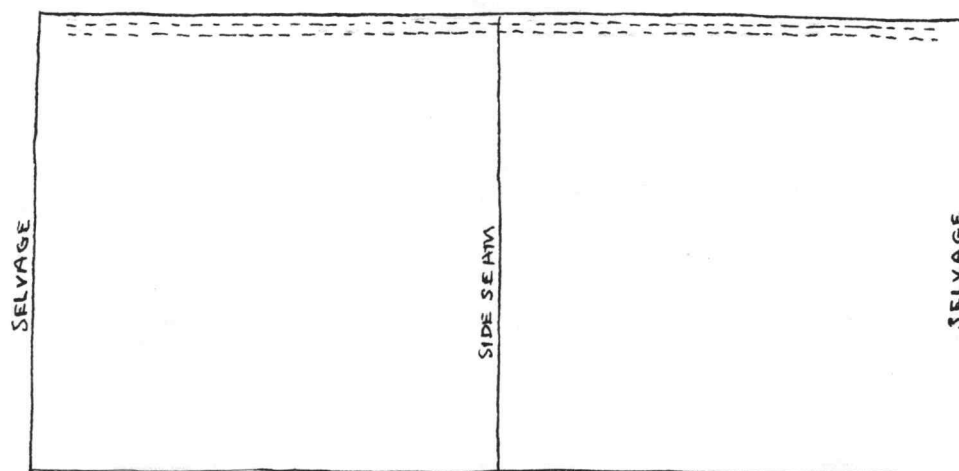


FIG. 2 GATHERED SKIRT

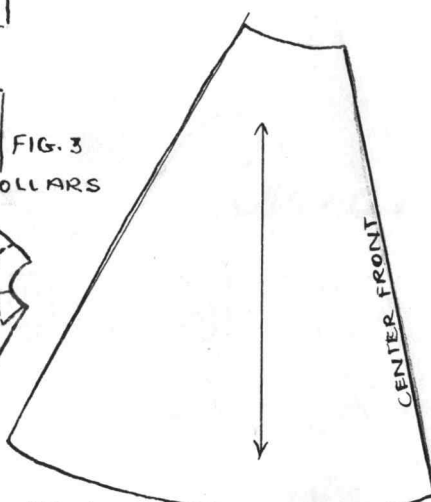
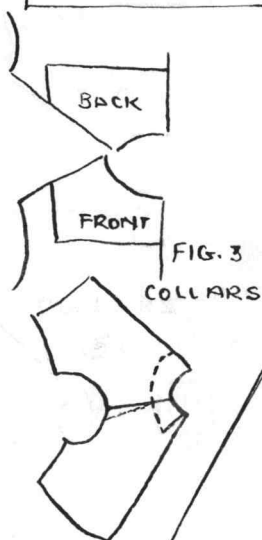


FIG. 4 FOUR-GORE SKIRT

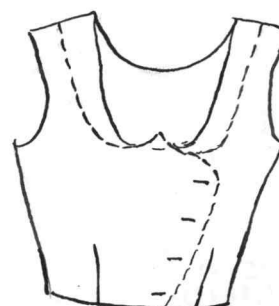


FIG. 5 BODICE



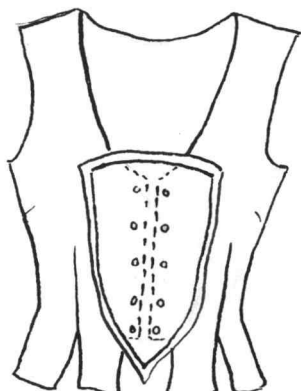


FIG. 6 BODICE

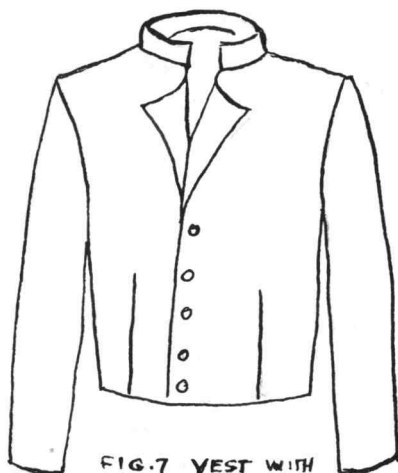
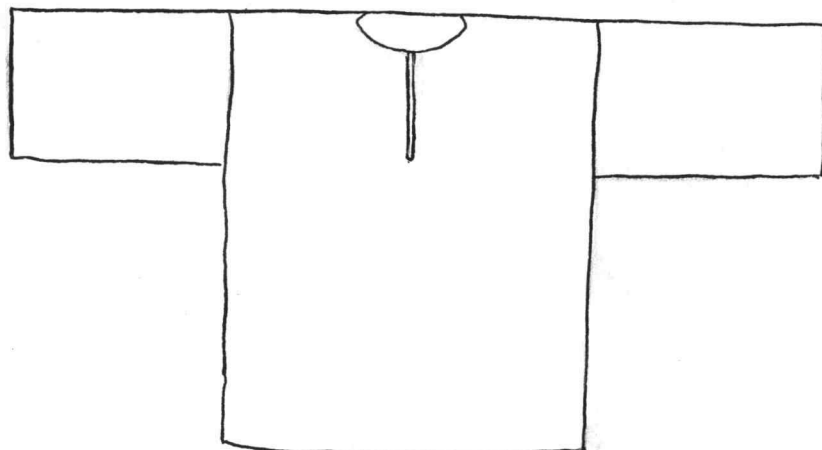
FIG. 7 VEST WITH  
SLEEVESFIG. 8 PEASANT  
BLOUSEFIG. 9 PEASANT  
BLOUSEFIG. 10 TUNIC OR  
PEASANT SHIRT



FIG. 11 BODICE

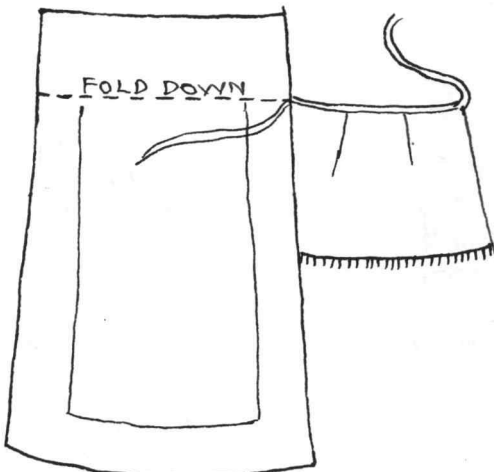


FIG. 12 APRON



FIG. 13 SHORT JACKET



FIG. 14 OVERBLOUSE

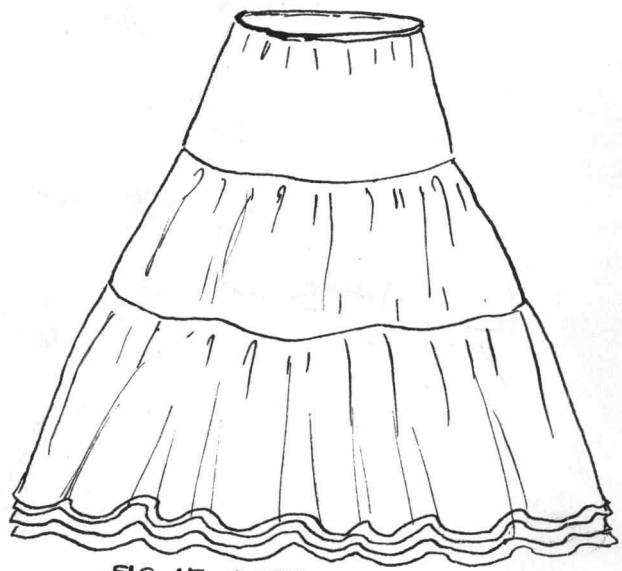


FIG. 15 PETTICOAT

FIGURE 16  
AMERICAN RIBBONS AND BRAIDS



FIGURE 17  
AMERICAN EYELET AND BRAIDS





FIGURE 18  
AMERICAN DENIMS





**FIGURE 19**  
**AMERICAN EMBOSSED COTTON AND SAILCLOTH**



FIGURE 20  
AMERICAN DENIMS





FIGURE 21  
AMERICAN DENIM WITH HANDWOVEN LOOK







## PLATE 2

WOMAN'S COSTUME FROM SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

## PLATE 3

MAN'S COSTUME FROM SALZBURG, AUSTRIA



## CHAPTER 3

## AUSTRIA

The wearing of folk dress in Austria went into a decline during the last century, after the railroad put rural communities in touch with the cities. The young men exchanged their "lederhosen" or leather shorts, for more comfortable trousers and the women substituted hats for kerchiefs. After the first World War when Austria lost some of her empire, a revival of patriotism seems to have set in, and in the rural regions, folk dress is commonly worn to this day, especially on Sundays and festive occasions. It is one of the picturesque experiences afforded by an event such as the annual Salzburg Music Festival, to see the native populace in gay folk dress. This region is probably as close to any of being the origin of the popular gathered skirt known as the "dirndl." (6, p.8)

Perhaps a parallel might be drawn between Austria and France at this point. Folk costumes are still being worn in these countries whose capital cities, Vienna and Paris, in spite of being leading fashion centers for much of the western world, have not stifled the traditional dress and pride in its use of their country people.

On Plate 2 the young Austrian girl is wearing a costume of the Salzburg region. It is entirely of

handwoven and hand-blocked linen. Austrian costumes may also be made of silk, rayon, or cotton. Suggested fabrics for this costume are linen-like rayon, or cotton broadcloth. The blouse may be constructed from a pattern with puffed sleeves and fullness through the bust. The fullness may be adjusted above the bodice top by a drawstring. Lace may be applied to the edge of the sleeves and neckline.

The bodice is shaped with a semi-square neckline, trimmed with a corded piping and closed with hooks and eyes down the center front.

The dirndl, which is lined at the bottom to give it body, is of moderate fullness and the apron worn over it is also gathered and tied in front. While Austrian women, and those from other countries as well, like more than one print combined in a costume, it is suggested that the fabric of either the skirt or apron be a solid color, with any decoration confined to a band of color matching that in the bodice.

The man's costume shows the typical leather shorts which are worn for folk dancing and warm weather. They are attached to suspenders decorated with a carved deer-horn medallion. His grey flannel jacket has four pockets which are lined with bright red. They have an applique of a green oakleaf around the opening. The jacket has deer-horn buttons. A pattern for a man's sport jacket may be

used as a guide for construction. Denim or corduroy are acceptable fabrics, and sateen is suitable for lining. The shorts may be made of corduroy, sailcloth or denim. The suspenders may be decorated with a band of braid of the type shown in Figures 16 and 23. A trouser or shorts pattern arranged in front like sailor blues will be helpful. Corded piping may be added at the edges of the closing. The Austrians wear either knee-length stockings or a short knitted band over just the calf of the leg, with this costume.

Examples of contemporary Austrian fabrics and trimmings are given on the following pages.

FIGURE 22  
AUSTRIAN FABRICS USED IN COSTUMES



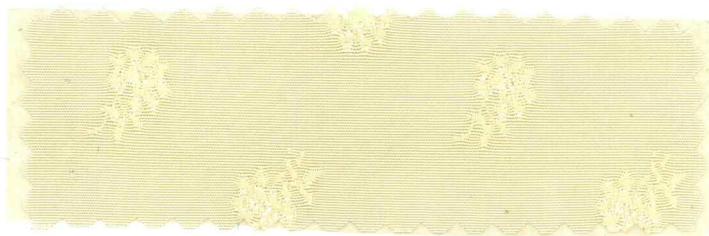
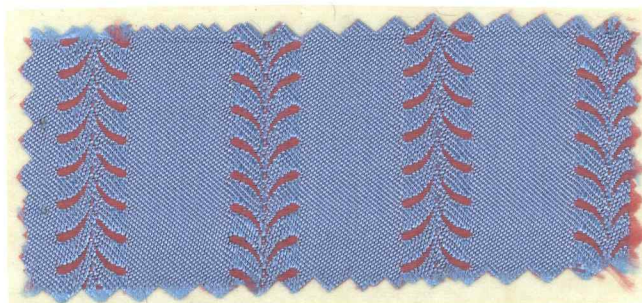


FIGURE 23  
AUSTRIAN BRAIDS USED IN COSTUMES



## PLATE 4

WOMAN IN WINTER DRESS FROM DIMITROVO;  
AND MAN FROM SOFIA, BULGARIA





## PLATE 5

WOMAN'S SUMMER DRESS FROM KIUSTENDIL;  
AND MAN'S ENSEMBLE FROM IHTIMAN, BULGARIA





PLATE 6  
WOMAN FROM KARLOVO;  
AND MAN FROM BELA, BULGARIA



## CHAPTER 4

## BULGARIA

The elaborate native dress of this Balkan nation is one of the most important expressions of its culture.

(65, p.3) The climate is one of extreme contrasts and this is reflected in its clothing. In summer, the Bulgarian woman wears a chemise-like dress, embroidered in countless colors. During the winter, she wears an over-dress of thick material, usually dark blue, decorated with red braid and richly embroidered around the hem, neck, and bottom of the sleeves. The men wear richly ornamented ensembles with gaily colored cummerbunds. (41, p.92)

Following industrialization of the country's economy, many traditional garments have vanished, some have undergone changes or been superseded by more modern versions. The costumes always tell something about the wearer. A Bulgarian woman's marital status is revealed by her headdress, a maiden goes bareheaded while a matron wears a kerchief. Her dress may also show what part of the country she is from. A man's occupation is often indicated by his dress. (65, p.23)

The costumes shown on Plate 4 are of a woman in winter dress from the district of Dimitrovo, and a man from Sofia. The authentic costumes are very highly

ornamented. The adaptions shown may be decorated for folk dancing by use of braids and similar aids. The woman's dress may be made from a simple jumper pattern, altered if necessary, to correspond more closely to the illustration. Braids are applied vertically to the bodice front. The armholes are bound with bias. A six-gore skirt has long godets inserted about seven inches below the waist to increase the fullness. These seams are then decorated with braids or embroidery stitches. A belt of ribbon, braid and rickrack is matched by a series of bands and rickrack applied to the bottom of the skirt. Suggested fabrics for the dress are wool-like spun rayon or pinwale corduroy.

The blouse is made from a tunic style suggested by Figure 10. It has wide cuffs which are trimmed with more braids and rickrack, such as shown in Figures 16 and 17. The stand-up collar is made from a straight piece attached to the neckline and bound with a corded piping. Pique or muslin are suggested materials for the blouse.

The man's costume is typical of the "white" style commonly worn. His shirt is like a tunic with very full sleeves which are covered with much handwork, but may be simulated with the ever useful braids and rickrack suggested above. The front and collar of the shirt are also decorated with braid. Linen-like rayon is suggested shirt fabric.



His straight-cut jacket may be made from McCall's 4476 which is a pajama pattern. The sleeves need to be cut off about the middle of the upper arm. The front is altered to an oval shape as shown. The jacket is worn open, therefore the fronts should not overlap, but merely meet. A generous application of braids, rickrack and binding enhance the interest of the jacket. It may be constructed of denim or sailcloth.

For the white trousers use duck, or sailcloth. The pajama trousers may serve as a pattern guide, but the legs will need to be narrowed and a patch stitched on, from the knees to the ankles in the manner shown. At the waist, a very wide cummerbund is worn, made of plain and plaid spun rayon or similar fabric. It may be reinforced with washable interfacing.

Plate 5 shows a summer dress from the district of Kiustendil and a man's ensemble from Ihtiman. Before adaptation, the dress was an example of a two apron style. The bodice is similar to that shown in Figure 1. It is decorated around the neckline to the center front closing with braid, rickrack, lace, and ribbon. The armseyes are also bound with bias. A linen-like rayon material, lined with sateen is suggested for this bodice.

The blouse is made from a modification of a tunic pattern. A stand-up collar is made by attaching a straight



band to the neckline. A tiny ruffle of lace is added to the neck edge and an opening is left at the center front. The sleeves are ornamented with embroidery, braid and rick-rack. They are close fitting to the elbow, from which there is a full ruffle, edged with lace. Muslin would be a good fabric choice.

The skirt is gathered at the waistline. It is given a double skirt effect by underlaying a contrasting color near the hemline as shown. The upper edge is bound with soutache braid. The bottom edge is piped with cording to give it firmness. Material for the skirt may be linen-like rayon or pique. For the apron, select a striped denim or chambray in colors similar to those shown. Attach a straight piece of the fabric to a band and tie at the back.

The male costume is richly ornamented with braids and pipings and is an example of a typical "dark" Bulgarian ensemble. It is suggested that Simplicity pattern 4034 be used for a guide, since it contains a bolero and knee-length trousers. The bolero will be attractive if trimmed in the manner illustrated. This will require some skill and will be difficult for a novice sewer. The bolero and trousers may be made of denim or sailcloth. The weskit may be constructed of chintz and embroidered in wool yarns. A commercial transfer pattern may be utilized if freehand drawing is not possible. Several rows of braid and piping

are applied at the neckline. The weskit may be zipped or buttoned at the underarm.

The blouse is fashioned from a tunic style, with a stand-up collar added and cuffs on the sleeves. Rickrack trims the edge of the collar and cuffs. Linen-like rayon is suitable for the blouse. The trousers have already been mentioned, but note also should be made of the characteristic decoration on them. This may be done with braid and rickrack rather than embroidery. For the cummerbund select a wide band of rayon bengaline and reinforces with washable interfacing. High boots are a characteristic feature of this costume and should be worn instead of shoes.

The costumes on Plate 6 are of a woman from Karlovo and a man from Bela. This is another example of the woman's winter dress. The blouse is a tunic style, and except for including a tight knit sleeve within the loose full one, is no different from that shown in Figure 10. Muslin is suggested for the blouse. White braid with an edge finish may trim the sleeves and neckline. The knitted sleeves may be constructed from cotton jersey, although the costume is equally attractive without them.

The dress may be cut from a jumper pattern including a flare skirt. The neckline is styled in a modified V and bound with two rows of colored braid, as are the armholes. The embroidered medallions at the waistline may be created

from braid also. The bottom of the skirt is bound with bias and more colored braid. A washable interfacing applied at the hemline will improve the flare. A crease-resistant cotton in rich navy blue is a happy choice for this dress. The apron may be made of muslin and trimmed in the same manner as the blouse.

The man's attire exemplifies the Bulgarian love for decoration. This costume is not so readily made as some, but with the help of the Spanish costume Simplicity 4034, a similar garment is possible. The tunic offers no problem. It will look well in linen-like rayon and can be readily decorated with braids, such as shown in Figure 16. The jacket may be constructed from the bolero pattern, but in order to get the fullness at the bottom, the back is narrowed slightly and a gore inserted underneath each arm. This piece is decorated with braid, more is applied to the back section. Rows of braid and bias are applied around the neck, armscyes and down the front. Suitable fabric for both the jacket and trousers is sailcloth.

The trousers are mid-calf length and are full in the seat, but become close-fitting as they reach the bottom. While the boots shown could be made of a thick wool felt and decorated, it is more practical to include them as the lower part of the trouser legs, in contrasting fabric. The decorative effect on the trousers is obtained with

bias and braid applied in the back and around the pockets in the front.

Handwork of the type done on the authentic costumes is given on the following page.

FIGURE 24  
BULGARIAN HANDWORK USED IN COSTUMES





## PLATE 7

WOMAN OF BOHEMIA; AND MAN FROM  
EASTERN SLOVAKIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA



## CHAPTER 5

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the western regions, national costume has almost disappeared from everyday life except in a few villages.

In the central section of Czechoslovakia may be found the richest and most beautiful examples of folk dress.

(39, p.16) Here bright colored skirts, handworked collars and starched puffy sleeves are the usual features of the holiday dress of a countrywoman. (14, p.204) At one time from fifteen to twenty-five petticoats were worn by the women creating an extremely full skirt. (59, p.32)

Today the costumes are still handwoven, although in the more industrialized regions they may be machine-made. Plate 7 shows a young girl from Bohemia and a man from eastern Slovakia. Her costume in the authentic version would be made of linen and wool. For folk dancing, it is recommended that a crisp percale be used for the blouse in order for the very full puffed sleeves to keep their shape. A peasant pattern may be used as a guide for making the blouse, the sleeves of which will need to be exaggerated in size. They are drawn up below the elbow with braid and trimmed on the ruffle with more of the same. A ruffle is also applied around the neckline. The gathered skirt may be made from a striped denim or sailcloth. Three lengths

will suffice. The bottom is trimmed with a row of bias and a cancan petticoat is allowed to show below. A row of eyelet trim as shown in Figure 17 may be applied to the hemline.

The masculine dress includes a decorated leather, fur-lined jacket, linen tunic, and wool trousers. The jacket may be cut from a pajama pattern, without the sleeves, except that the shoulderline is made to extend about two inches beyond normal. It reaches about four inches below the waistline. Trim may consist of several braids applied at the neckline and shoulders. Chamois-colored denim as shown in Figure 20, is a good fabric for the jacket which should be lined with sateen.

The tunic is decorated below the shoulders and at the wrists. It is tied at the waist with a cord. The stand-up collar is trimmed with bias tape. Recommended fabric for the tunic is linen-like rayon. Trousers made from a pajama pattern need to be narrowed toward the bottom, and should be moderately close-fitting. The authentic costume has leggings laced with thongs like those on their espadrille-like foot gear. Black sailcloth or denim may be chosen for the trouser fabric.

## PLATE 8

WOMAN OF NORTH FALSTER, DENMARK





## CHAPTER 6

## DENMARK

Country folk in Denmark ceased wearing costumes almost one hundred years ago except for the fishwives, who may still be seen today, at the market in the center of Copenhagen. Festival costumes now exist only in museum collections. (2, p.3)

In previous times, there existed a rigid dress ritual of which there are still vestiges. These will be given in some detail. While clothing customs differ in each country, these may serve as indications of the relationship of folk dress to the important events in the lives of European peasantry.

The first festivity in Denmark was the childbirth party which took place a few days after the birth. The new mother had to sit up in bed, dressed in her finest clothes, to receive the congratulations of friends and neighbors. At baptism the godmother was the most important person, next to the child. The godmother provided the christening clothes, and if she were quite a favorite it was necessary for her to set in a supply of christening clothes which she used for all her godchildren. Confirmation marked the entry into grown-up society and adult clothes were worn for the first time. Young people received their first pair of

shoes or boots, where they had previously had only wooden shoes. (2, p.5)

The wedding was the greatest feast of all, and was usually celebrated in the spring or fall so as not to interfere with the work in the fields. A big country wedding lasted five or six days. The bride sat in her carriage on the way to church in all her finery for everyone to admire. At the ensuing party she danced the first dances in her bridal dress, but at midnight the bride was danced out of the girls' company into that of the married women. A black cap, the symbol of her dignity as a married woman, was then put on her head, this being referred to as "going under the cap." For each day the wedding festivities lasted, the bride had to wear a different costume.

(2, pp.6-7)

The bridegroom wore the beautifully embroidered shirt which his bride had made for him. He also wore a hat for the first time, this being the married man's symbol of the dignity of that state.

Mourners at funerals wore black or blue. From Medieval times, women wore a black skirt over their heads while in mourning. Throughout the year of mourning the widow had to have someone escort her to church, because she was so closely mantled she could not see. The wedding shirt also served as burial clothes. In some regions the

girls made burial clothes as soon as they were confirmed, in others it became the bride's first duty to make her husband's grave clothes. This melancholy task resulted from the attitude that one must be ready for the unexpected. In some regions young girls were buried in bridal dress. (2, p.7)

In addition to these principal events of life, there were the annual festivals at Christmas and Easter. Finally, there were festivities upon completion of common functions, such as housebuilding, harvesting, preparation of flax and wool. For these occasions, folk dress played a part. With the isolation that accompanied earlier times, these events provided the only relief from the drudgery of peasant life.

In Denmark the married woman's cap was worn on all solemn occasions and it went with its owner to the grave. It was the last part of the folk costume to disappear. It had become a kind of symbol of the peasant class and with its passing went the last visible boundary between the Danish peasant class and other people. (2, p.9)

Skirts of the festival costume were beautifully pleated. The technique of making pleats was known in the time of the Vikings. "The pleats were tacked in place, and on baking day the hot loaves just removed from the ovens were placed on top of the skirts which were thus steamed and pressed at the same time." (2, p.10) The front of

the skirt was made of less expensive material, being hidden under the apron. This was a matter of economy. The apron was an indispensable article of dress and there was much superstition associated with it. It was considered a shield against the evil eye. (2, p.9)

An example of Danish costume is given on Plate 8. It is more conservative in color than most. The skirt and bodice are all in one piece, the opening extending six inches below the waistline at the center front. A bodice style similar to that sketched in Figure 1, attached to a gathered skirt consisting of two lengths of fabric, will make the dress. Suggested material is pinwale corduroy. The neckline, sleeves, and skirt hemline are all trimmed with ribbon of two widths.

Under the bodice a peasant blouse is worn, similar in style to that sketched in Figure 8, with ruffled collar and cuffs. Linen-like rayon will be a happy choice for this item. The gathered apron will be attractive in a striped chambray containing colors which harmonize with the trim on the dress.



## PLATE 9

COSTUME OF MUHU ISLAND, ESTONIA

## PLATE 10

COSTUME OF THE MAINLAND, ESTONIA



## CHAPTER 7

## ESTONIA

This small Baltic country has known only a brief period of autonomy. Despite its troubled history, there are examples of national costumes worn by the peasants. Farming and fishing are their chief occupations and the details of their costumes are symbolic of them. Blue color represents the sea, and yellow the rye plant, which is their staple grain.

Folk costumes are chiefly worn in Estonia for holidays and festival occasions. Although the people do not have the freedom to express their nationality as formerly, they have built up a traditional respect for their folk dress. When wearing their national costumes, they do not drink alcoholic beverages, smoke, or do ballroom dancing. Their conduct while in costume is expressive of their patriotic feeling.

The costume on Plate 9 is that of an unmarried girl from Muhu Island. The little wedge-shaped hat represents a ship. The blue of her rayon satin apron is symbolic of the sea. The blouse is handwoven linen with red cross-stitch decoration on the epaulets and around the front opening. This ornamentation includes the owner's name and birth date worked in as part of the design. The handwoven

skirt has a combination of yellow, green, dark red, white, purple and pink stripes and is gathered at the waistline. A modification of this costume could be very wearable for folk dancing. The blouse may be cut like Figure 8, but with a high collar. The little stand-up collar is made by attaching a straight strip about one inch wide to the neckline. If there is time and inclination to do hand embroidery on the blouse, choose a geometric cross-stitch transfer pattern to ornament the area around the front closing and on the epaulets. The epaulets are merely rectangular, faced pieces, tapered toward the shoulder edge, and stitched into the neckline at the same time the stand-up collar is attached. In lieu of handwork, the use of one or two of the braids shown in Figure 16 or 17 will give the effect of embroidery. Muslin or a linen-like rayon are suitable fabrics for the blouse.

The apron may be a combination of rayon and cotton material, or all of one kind of fabric. An embossed cotton will give a resemblance to that pictured. Rickrack, ribbon and various braids in a pleasing combination of colors may here be a matter of choice. The apron may be gathered on a band of braid. It is suggested that the leather belt be replaced by this braid which seems more in keeping with the textures of the rest of the costume.

The skirt fabric, two lengths of which will suffice,

may be selected from cotton denim or sailcloth. The denim example in Figure 21 has a somewhat handwoven look and would be a good choice. The band at the bottom of the skirt, for which braid again may be used, serves not only a decorative purpose, but gives the hemline firmness as well. The elaborately knitted stockings and handmade shoes are a very attractive part of the authentic costume, but are not necessary for folk dancing purposes.

Another example of an Estonian costume, Plate 10, shows a handwoven striped skirt with bright red and dark blue predominating. The embroidered blouse is a traditional peasant style except for its abbreviated length. The blouse may be made from a pattern of the type shown in Figure 8 with a turn-back collar added. The collar may be cut by using the neckline edge of the pattern as suggested by the sketch in Figure 3. The collar will roll better if the patterns are overlapped at the sleeve edge about one-half inch, and just allowed to meet at the neckline edge. The blouse is so short it stops above the waist and requires a pretty white camisole underneath. This loose blouse may be made of muslin and decorated with rows of blue and red braid of the type shown in Figures 16 and 17. Lace may be applied at the bottom to suggest the crocheted trim illustrated.

The skirt may be made from two lengths of similarly



striped sailcloth, denim, or a wool-like spun rayon. It may be directly applied to a waistband of braid, or the braid may be worn over the top of the skirt as a separate belt. Notice the silver brooch which is worn at the neckline. While seemingly purely decorative, it is quite likely a vestige of the earlier belief in the efficacy of a talisman to keep away dreaded spirits.

## PLATE 11

MAN'S COSTUME FROM SATAKUNTA;  
AND WOMAN'S COSTUME FROM KOKKOLAN, FINLAND



## PLATE 12

COSTUME FROM SAVO, FINLAND

## PLATE 13

COSTUME FROM KIRKKONUMMEN, FINLAND





## CHAPTER 8

## FINLAND

The Finns are vigorously patriotic and have long utilized the medium of folk dress to express their love of country. The old folk costumes, however, had fallen out of general use toward the end of the nineteenth century. Through the encouragement of folklore societies, the making and wearing of modernized national costumes, designed on the basis of the old models, has been revived. (44, p.17)

It was during the period of industrial development that the folk costume fell out of common use. The men's costumes, being somewhat less practical than those of the women, have not been restored to popular use except for folk dancing, especially in the summer. Nowadays young women in rural communities often wear their folk dress on festive occasions, particularly in the summer time.

(44, p.17)

In earlier times it was expected that a young girl make all of her costume from which could then be judged her potential skill in housewifely duties. (32, p.3)

Thus, the costumes of a country are frequently found to be intimately concerned with traditions of social significance. The modern Finnish costumes are exceedingly attractive and can be translated into American fabrics

with a minimum of difficulty. Reds and blues are favorite colors in their costumes. Figure 25 is exemplary of their modern handwoven skirt and bodice fabrics. It illustrates Finnish skill in combining colors.

The man's costume on Plate 11 is adapted from that of the district of Satakunta in Western Finland. The shirt, made of linen in Finland, would be equally satisfactory in cotton broadcloth or poplin. A pattern suggested by the sketch in Figure 10, with gathered sleeves and cuffs may be used. The trousers would be effective in corduroy or denim and may be cut from the Spanish costume pattern Simplicity 4034. A piping at the side as shown will be an interesting detail. The vest may be constructed by using Simplicity pattern 4107, with changes in the neckline and a stand-up collar added. An attractively striped cotton fabric may be used as shown in Figure 18. The vest should be lined with sateen to give the garment more firmness and help prevent wrinkling.

The woman's costume is adapted from the region of Kokkolan. This dress exemplifies the modernization which has taken place in Finnish costumes. Its simplicity makes it easy to construct in American fabrics. A ready-made cotton or rayon scarf may be worn over the shoulders and tucked into the bodice. The blouse may be linen or any cotton of similar weight, for which a simple peasant

style pattern with long sleeves will be suitable. The bodice may be cut like the style suggested in Figure 1, with extensions added in front to create the double-breasted closing. Shiny gold or brass buttons will be a good choice. The bodice should extend below the waist enough to completely cover the blouse, as this not only makes a tidier appearance, but gives a more attractive proportion as well. A wool-like cotton or spun rayon makes a satisfactory bodice, which should be lined with sateen. If desired, a washable interfacing may be used.

The apron is white linen-like rayon or cotton fabric gathered on a band. It may have white embroidery or be left undecorated. The skirt is the basic gathered style, two lengths of fabric being quite enough unless much fullness is desired. A sailcloth with a firm hand such as shown in Figure 19 will make an attractive skirt.

The very wearable costume shown on Plate 12 is that of the region of Savo. The blouse is linen and has been trimmed with fringe and open work done with white thread. The style shown in Figure 8 is suitable for this blouse. The bodice may be constructed from the style shown in Figure 1, cutting off one and one-half inches from each side of the front, and lacing through metal or embroidered eyelets. The bodice extends about three inches below the waistline and is attractively detailed in the back, with

the ends of the sections bound separately and eliptically shaped like the illustration in Figure 1. The skirt is handwoven wool, but a good substitute would be a wool-like cotton stripe, sailcloth or denim in similar color combinations. The colors of this costume are especially handsome combining rich blue with red, yellow, and beige.

The costume on Plate 13 with dark green predominating, is from Kirkkonummen. The bodice is attached to the skirt which is pleated at the waist, and the placket continues down from the bodice opening. The skirt-pocket is removable and ties around the waist on a narrow tape, which should be tucked under the bodice out of sight. The blouse in this costume has a moderately high plain round neckline, and long, rather full, cuffed sleeves. Since descriptions and suggestions for construction are very much like the foregoing, reference may be made to that section.

FIGURE 25

FINNISH HANDWOVEN COSTUME FABRIC





PLATE 14  
FISHERWOMEN'S COSTUME OF BOULOGNE;  
AND  
COSTUME OF THERMAL REGION OF  
VICHY AND BOURBON, FRANCE



PLATE 15  
COUPLE OF BASQUE REGION,  
IN PYRENEES, FRANCE







## PLATE 16

YOUNG GIRLS FROM LOCARANAN,  
BRITTANY, FRANCE

## PLATE 17

COUPLE OF PAU IN PYRENEES, FRANCE



## CHAPTER 9

## FRANCE

Paris has long been acknowledged a leader in setting fashion trends around the world. Yet within its own boundaries, some areas of France have not been noticeably influenced by the fashionable couture of Paris. This is not to be interpreted as signifying that outlying regions of France are not creative. Rather, it means that as long as regions contain small villages, having little contact with metropolitan centers, their interest in contemporary fashion currents remains slight. Their originality is expressed in distinctive costumes requiring great skill in handwork, for which French women are justly renowned. Headdress in particular, has attained literally phenomenal heights in some regions of France.

While folk costumes are still being worn in a few provinces of France, they are more and more becoming dress for special occasions and Sundays. Efforts of traditionalists seek to restore their use. (21, p.3) Oftentimes, the embroidery designs used in their costumes are composed of several border patterns placed next to each other. (40, p.11) This makes it possible to get a similar effect with ready-made American braids which are now plentiful. Plate 16 is an example.

Perhaps one style that the city has adopted from the country is the beret, whose origin seems to be in the Pyrenees, but whose use is not by any means confined to that region. On almost any street in Paris the beret is to be seen with perhaps more frequency than any other style of men's headgear.

The French peasant women like jewelry, and large crosses are favorite ornaments. Some of their costumes depict characteristic features of their locality. The costumes on Plate 14 are examples: oysters are shown on the apron of a fisherwoman of Boulogne, the first fishing port of France. The costume has in addition, a wave-like motif on the scarf, which symbolizes the sea. The dress on the right depicts the thermal springs of the region of Vichy and Bourbon.

These costumes may be adapted for folk dancing very easily. The originals contain far more detail appliqued on the aprons than is here illustrated. Enough of the elements of that decoration were retained, however, to identify their source. The costume on the left consists of a cotton dress in two different colors of blue, a white dickey and cuffs, a cotton shoulder scarf, and white apron with applique. The stiffly starched lace cap is characteristic of French folk headdress.

Chambray, chintz or polished cotton with a

crease-resistant finish will be suitable for this dress. It may be made from a pattern having a close-fitting bodice and a full gathered skirt. The neckline is shaped in a V and a frilly white batiste or lace dickey fills in the area. The same fabric is used for the cuffs on the long sleeves. A triangle of chartreuse linen-like rayon, with a braid stitched around the edges, will make the scarf. Bias tape may be used at the bottom of the hem and a stiffening of washable interfacing will help to make the skirt stand out attractively. The gathered apron, made of white muslin, may have the motif applied with textile paint, embroidery or applique.

The costume on the right may also be made of a crisp-finish cotton. A dress pattern providing for a close-fitting bodice, and a full circular skirt will be satisfactory. If preferred, a four-gore skirt providing less flare may be used. Grey bias may be used to bind the bottom edge.

The neckline is cut rather wide and has a dainty white collar. An eyelet trim, such as shown in Figure 17, would be a handy short-cut for the collar and cuffs. The apron may be made from muslin. The apron bib has shoulder straps which tie at the back waistline, to tie-bands from the sides. The decoration on the apron may be done with textile paint, embroidery or applique.



The couple on Plate 15 are from the Pyrenees Basque region, which lies astride France and Spain. The woman's costume consists of a white long-sleeved cotton blouse, a bright orange-red scarf pinned to the blouse, and a lightweight wool skirt with a wide black band over which is tied a belt hung with bells. Fabric suggested for the blouse is muslin or percale. A plain dress bodice pattern with a high round neck and long sleeves will serve for the blouse. The scarf may be made from a triangle of bright colored cotton, with braid or bias stitched at the edges and in the center as shown.

A sailcloth may be selected for construction of the skirt, which should be moderately full. Three lengths of fabric will be enough, gathered on a black band about four inches wide. This may be the same type of material used in the skirt. The band may be stiffened with interfacing. Acquiring small bells for the belt may be difficult, but copper wire could be formed into a bell shape and several of these looped on to cording covered with black bias. Metal Christmas bells would be good, if obtainable. Another possibility would be to use a band of tassels or cotton pom-poms on the skirt and the waistline to suggest the motion of the bells. A band of black fabric is applied about ten inches from the bottom of the hem.

The man's costume includes the typical Basque beret, a white cotton shirt, a loose wool overblouse and black wool trousers. The shirt may be made of cotton broadcloth from a tunic style, such as shown in Figure 10, with a turn-down collar added. The overblouse fabric may be of denim or sailcloth, and trimmed with a fitted neckband or a bias binding. A suggested pattern source is to utilize a pajama top and modify in the manner suggested by the sketch in Figure 14.

The trousers may also be made of sailcloth or denim. The pattern in Butterick 6550, an Uncle Sam costume, will be helpful. The Basque men wear espadrilles, and since that type of footwear is now available in canvas fabric they would make an appropriate and comfortable completion of the costume.

Young French girls of Locranan, Brittany, on Plate 16, proudly wear their festival dress. Older women wear a costume of similar style, but prefer dark colors in wool, or silk. These costumes differ only in color. They consist of a dress with epaulets, long sleeves, square neckline, wide band over the bodice and a gathered skirt. Over this is worn a white gathered apron. These are unusually simple French costumes.

The dress may be made by utilizing a commercial pattern with plain bodice and gathered skirt. The long

sleeves are left wide at the wrist. The epaulets are an extension of the normal shoulder line of about two inches. These are faced and thus provide a place to attach the sleeves at the normal shoulder line. Suggested fabric for the dresses are wool-like spun rayon, flannelette or cotton broadcloth. The wide band across the bodice may be stiffened with washable interfacing and fastened with hooks and eyes. The sleeves and bottom of the skirt may be decorated with several rows of rickrack and gold or silver braids in the manner shown. Two lengths of fabric will be ample for the skirt. Muslin or percale will be suitable for the apron, which is also trimmed around the bottom and sides with rickrack.

The couple from Pau in the Pyrenees on Plate 17 is wearing festival dress. The woman's costume is a gathered black skirt and white apron, tied with a colored ribbon. The top consists of a white blouse over which a black bodice with an embroidered braid trim is worn, and into which a black silk scarf is tucked. A black cotton, such as broadcloth or Indianhead may be used for the skirt, which is gathered on a waistband. The blouse may be fashioned from fine muslin in the style shown in Figure 9. The bodice can be made from a close-fitting dress pattern similar to the sketch in Figure 11. Suggested fabric is Indianhead or denim lined with muslin. A colorful scarf

in dark tones, long streamers of brocaded red ribbon tied around the waist, plus a white cotton apron, complete the costume.

The man's jacket can be made from a red cotton such as corduroy, or a wool-like spun rayon using a pattern such as Butterick 6550. His vest is white and could be eliminated entirely since the shirt is also white. The style shown in the sketch in Figure 10 is suggested for the shirt. His knee-length trousers may be made of corduroy from Simplicity pattern 4034. At the bottom of the trousers is tied a bright ribbon. The socks are hand-knitted. A sport shop may have knee-length socks, but they might be more interesting if handknitted, of either wool or a blend.

## PLATE 18

COUPLE FROM BAVARIA, GERMANY

## PLATE 19

WOMAN FROM BERCHTESGADEN, GERMANY



73a



PLATE 20  
COUPLE FROM BAD RIFOLDSAU,  
BLACK FOREST, GERMANY



## CHAPTER 10

## GERMANY

In Germany the wearing of folk costume is still quite prevalent in the Black Forest region and in Bavaria. Numerous costumes may be seen in the Alpine villages of Garmisch and Berchtesgaden, particularly on Sundays and festivals. It is possible to purchase German costumes, since they are made in a sort of home industry and sold in specialty shops dealing in handicrafts. Although hand-made, these women's costumes have a minimum of handwork and may range in price from twelve to eighteen dollars for a cotton ensemble. The short leather pants worn by the men are available in men's clothing shops, and cost in the neighborhood of ten dollars, but that varies with the size and style. The men's wool jackets sell for about twenty dollars. From shops dealing in imported folk dance costumes some of these may be obtained.

The German costumes vary roughly with the conformation of the land, with only slight differences between those worn in the several villages of a valley. Pettigrew has written that symbolism, which is a story without words, appears in the use of colors in the Black Forest region south of Stuttgart. (51, p.7) Protestants wear chiefly blues, greens and purples, in contrast to the Catholics'

wealth of reds and yellows. A point of particular interest is the "schappel" or bride's crown, without which no maiden's wedding dress is complete. It has fluttering green and red ribbons and a collection of colorful ornaments piled into a crown shape around the head. The couple shown on Plate 20 on their betrothal day illustrates another folk custom. The girl is wearing her hair long and entwined with ribbon. She will wear it thus only one other time, on her wedding day. After that it will be wound around her head in the manner of the matron.

(51, p.44)

The costumes in Germany are quite similar to some of those of Austria and Switzerland, a not altogether surprising fact due to their proximity. There appears to be a shading off of a style into the adjacent territory at the international boundaries.

The couple shown on Plate 18 were photographed in Bavaria. Her costume consists of a burgundy colored one-piece dress which buttons down the center front and has a gathered waistline. The neckline, which is hidden by a fringed silk flowered scarf, is shaped in a modified sweetheart style similar to that in the succeeding photograph. It has a full gathered cotton apron. A pattern with a plain bodice and gathered skirt will be helpful for constructing the dress for folk dancing. A sailcloth



or embossed cotton such as shown in Figure 19 will be a satisfactory fabric choice. This costume will be more effective if it is given a bouffant look through wearing of a cancan petticoat of the type sketched in Figure 15. Directions for its construction are given in the section on Hungary.

A square of flowered cotton or rayon fabric, fringed at the edges and harmonizing in color with the dress, will complete this ensemble. Rather than allowing the scarf to completely obscure the front, it is suggested that it be knotted and thus allow more of the bodice to show. A row or two of braid on the apron will give the costume added interest.

The man's costume consists of a black wool, long jacket, a high-buttoned vest, knee-length leather trousers, and a shirt. His legs are covered with hand-knitted white hose. The coat is not recommended for folk dancing as it would be rather burdensome. The vest, however, would be very wearable, made from a striped denim having a handwoven look, such as shown in Figure 21. Its construction could be accomplished by the use of Simplicity pattern 4107 with modifications to bring the neckline closer to the neck, and lengthening the waistline about two inches. A row of silver-colored buttons, closely spaced, make an important decoration on the vest.

The knee-length trousers may be cut from the Spanish costume, Simplicity pattern 4034. The front closing is arranged like sailor blues. If hose cannot be handknit, it is suggested that a sporting goods store be investigated as a possible source for that item. The shirt may be constructed of broadcloth in a tunic style, with a turn-back collar. A necktie of colorful braid makes a good fastening.

The costume shown on Plate 19 is a style very typical of Bavarian folk dress. It is made of brocaded rayon taffeta and is consequently a modernized Sunday version. The carved deerhorn rose pendant worn on a velvet ribbon is commonly seen also. A more traditional necklace is a series of silver chains clasped together with a large hand-wrought buckle, high on the neck in choker fashion.

This costume may also be made from a dress pattern with gathered skirt and long puffed sleeves. The neckline is trimmed with the same material used in the apron. This trim is accomplished by using a straight piece of fabric, faced with the material of the dress, and either gathered or pleated in whatever manner seems to give the best results. The Germans baste this trim on, so that it can be removed for easier laundering. Polished cotton, such as

sateen, chintz or chambray would all be apt choices for this ensemble, the apron carrying a color tone harmonizing with that in the dress. While the dress pictured is black, there is a wide range of color possibilities that would still retain the spirit of the original costume, especially reds, blues and greens. The buttons down the front should be metallic and numerous. The size of the apron may be adjusted so that more of the skirt will show. For generous fullness, three lengths of the fabric are suggested for the skirt portion of the dress.

Plate 20 shows a Black Forest couple of the village of Bad Ripoldsau. Her dress consists of a bodice and skirt of wool, a blouse and apron of cotton. His ensemble is similar to that already described above, except that this jacket is not so long and the revers are red, matching the red showing through in his pockets. Because this jacket is more suitable for dancing wear, it is suggested that it be constructed from Butterick pattern 6550 with modifications as suggested by the illustration. See the section above for details of construction for the rest of this costume.

The woman's blouse may be made of muslin or percale in the style shown in Figure 8 with the collar ruffled, and the sleeves elbow length only. The blouse may extend to just below the bustline and be held in place with

elastic in the German manner. The bodice would be attractive made from pinwale corduroy or a substantial weight cotton such as sailcloth, and lined with sateen. The trim is pleated ribbon of matching color, around the neckline and armseyes. The sketch in Figure 1 shows the general type of pattern from which it could be constructed.

The skirt, which in the original model actually comprised an under and over garment, has been modified to a single one. It will look more attractive worn with a ruffled petticoat as shown in Figure 15, which may be multi-striped or white. A white petticoat is recommended, since this may serve for wear with other costumes, and currently fashionable bouffant styles. About three lengths of Indianhead or denim will make a full gathered skirt. The apron may be colored or white as shown, with braids in red, green, and black applied as decoration.

Contemporary German fabrics and trimmings used in folk costumes are given on the following pages.

FIGURE 26  
GERMAN FABRIC USED IN COSTUMES





## FIGURE 27

GERMAN FABRIC USED IN COSTUMES





FIGURE 28  
GERMAN BRAID USED IN COSTUMES





FIGURE 29  
GERMAN BRAIDS USED IN COSTUMES



## PLATE 21

YOUNG GIRL FROM BUJAK, HUNGARY



## CHAPTER 11

## HUNGARY

Folk costume is still worn in Hungary. It is a blend of two components: ancient styles, and imitations of the fashions of the gentry. For example, in the nineteenth century the practice of wearing high boots was taken up by the peasantry, in imitation of the gentry who had originally adopted them from the Turks. Although uncommon in other countries, an apron is sometimes worn by Hungarian men. It is made by the village bride for her groom with infinite care, because it will be carried in procession through the streets to the groom's home, displaying the handwork to passersby. It becomes a measure of her domestic prowess. Dress of the countrywoman, besides revealing her marital status, will tell her religious preference, and her home village. She continues to wear her home costume instead of adopting her husband's if she marries into a strange village. (50, pp.12-18)

Sumptuary laws were passed in the eighteenth century reserving the wearing of ornate garments as a privilege for the upper classes. However, elaborate clothes become general immediately after the abolition of the vassalage of the peasantry. Laws of the clergy also affected dress, as Sunday morning dress for mass was different from that



worn in the afternoon or for great holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. (50, p.19)

In some regions the bride-to-be follows the curious custom of wearing black during her engagement, whereas her wedding gown is extremely colorful. The Hungarian peasant girl takes a trousseau to her new home intended to last a lifetime. She gives evidence of this during the wedding festivities, which last several days, by having a different change of clothes for each day. (50, p.21)

Very full pleated skirts are typical of Hungarian costumes. According to descriptions received from Budapest,<sup>1</sup> pleating of skirts is done in the following manner: the fabric is sprinkled with water, pleated over rolled strips of paper and then dried between loaves of bread just removed from the oven. This seems a resourceful method of obtaining a reasonably permanent pleating without mechanical devices. Underneath are worn six to ten stiffly starched petticoats which make sitting down an impossibility, but create a most picturesque effect. (55, p.43)

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<sup>1</sup> Information received in correspondence from Institute of Cultural Relations, Budapest, March 10, 1954.

Plate 21 shows a young girl in a typical full pleated skirt. Because the petticoat is such an important part of this type of costume, instructions for constructing a practical petticoat, such as sketched in Figure 15, are given here. If it were desired to wear numerous underskirts in the authentic manner, then one could begin with two yards of fabric gathered on a drawstring. The next skirt would have two and one-half yards, the one following, three yards, and so on to the tenth! Each underskirt added would need to be slightly longer to offset the increasing bulk. (23, p.6) This would be authentic, but voluminous and heavy for several hours of dancing. Some folk dancers have found a cancan type petticoat most successful in producing the desired fullness at the hem without creating bulkiness around the hips. This is made by constructing a three-tiered garment. The top tier is almost form-fitting at the waist, and about one and one-half yards at the bottom edge. The second tier is gathered to the first and is about two yards around the bottom edge. These two tiers may each be about eight inches wide. The third tier is made whatever width will give the right skirt length for the dancer. This third tier consists of four ruffles, each one six yards around. Each ruffle is edged with eyelet trim, such as shown in Figure 17. If the lowest ruffle is twelve inches wide,

for example, then the one above it should be a bit wider and the next also, until the top ruffle, so all four ruffles are about the same length when finished.

(23, p.6)

A gored skirt pattern may be used as a guide for the first tier, to eliminate bulk from the waist and hips. The rest of the petticoat consists of straight strips. For the two top tiers, cotton broadcloth is recommended, as it is sturdy enough to support the weight of the ruffles at the bottom. These ruffles are best made from batiste as they place less strain on the top part of the skirt and the wearer as well. Heavy nylon net or taffeta could be used and would have the advantages of requiring neither starching nor ironing, but these are more expensive. The net or taffeta ruffles may be stitched on a half slip of nylon. Some dancers find they are more comfortable in cotton underwear, however. The petticoat described above will do much to make a costume present a more authentic aspect. Ready-made petticoats are available, designed on somewhat the same plan as described above in a wide price range.

To continue the description of the Hungarian folk costume, it is accordion pleated and made of printed and plain cotton. The hem is decorated with several rows of bright colored ribbon. The skirt is worn over eight to ten petticoats. While Hungarians wear skirts that contain

ten or more lengths of fabric it is felt that four lengths of cotton material would be sufficient. The skirt could be dried in a stocking or tied around a broomstick to achieve a pleated effect. The petticoat just described in detail may be worn underneath.

The bodice may be of the same material as the skirt or contrasting color may be used. In this costume, instead of having a separate bodice and blouse as is the case in the original, the two may be combined. A close-fitting dress bodice with long sleeves need merely have a surplice collar attached as shown. The sleeves are trimmed with rickrack at the wrists. The collar may be constructed of a crisp-finish cotton and pleated or ruffled. Artificial flowers and many strands of silver colored beads are worn at the neck. The apron may be tapered toward the waistline and trimmed at the bottom with eyelet, or a width of embroidered flouncing may be used. High boots are a regular feature of this costume and add a picturesque note.

Contemporary fabric used in Hungarian costumes is shown on the following page.

FIGURE 30  
HUNGARIAN FABRIC USED IN COSTUMES





## PLATE 22

FESTIVAL COSTUME OF CORTINA, ITALY



## PLATE 23

COUPLE FROM REGION OF SONDRIO, ITALY





PLATE 24  
WOMAN FROM MOLISE;  
AND CANDLE-BEARER FROM UMBRIA, ITALY



## PLATE 25

FESTIVAL COSTUME OF SARDEGNA, ITALY



## CHAPTER 12

## ITALY

Although Italy has a tradition of folk costumes they are not in evidence to the visitor. In former times every region had its characteristic dress, that in the northern part of the country being darker, and in the southern part gayer and more elaborately decorated.

On Plate 22 a festival costume is worn by a young woman of Cortina in the Italian Alps. It has a dignified elegance attributable to its restrained colors. The shawl and skirt are brocaded silk, the blouse cotton, with red ribbon tied below the elbows. The velvet bodice is the type made from the style sketched in Figure 11.

This costume may be easily adapted for dance wear. A polished cotton damask or embossed fabric such as shown in Figure 19 is suggested for the gathered skirt. A plain polished cotton lined with sateen may be used for the bodice. Percale is a suitable fabric for the blouse, which is styled in the manner sketched in Figure 9. A fabric similar to that in the skirt could be used for the shawl.

Plate 23 illustrates a couple in festival attire from the region of Sondrio. The woman's blouse may be made of linen in a peasant style with long sleeves and high neck. The bodice could be made of Indianhead and



lined with sateen. It is edged with red binding and laced in front with green ribbon. Cotton plaid, worn as a shawl, is tucked into the top of the bodice. The apron may be of linen-like rayon, trimmed with bands of the same ribbon used in the bodice. The gathered skirt is quickly made of two lengths of black wool-like spun rayon or cotton.

The man's costume consists of a cotton shirt, wool jacket and trousers. A sport style pattern is suggested as a guide for constructing the shirt, but the sleeves should be made full and cuffed. Cotton broadcloth is recommended. The colorful jacket may be of red sailcloth trimmed with bias. A pattern guide suggested is the bolero in Simplicity pattern 4034. It will need to be lengthened and adjusted to the proper ease below the waistline. This same pattern includes pieces for knee-length trousers. They may be made from black sailcloth or pinwale corduroy. The sash is easily made from a length of multi-stripped cotton or ribbon. A combination of red and green rickrack may be used for bands at the top of the hose, which ideally are handknit. A sporting goods store may be a source for the hose if they must be purchased.

Plate 24 shows a woman wearing a gala dress from the region of Molise, and a candle bearer of Umbria. The

woman's costume has been greatly simplified from the original. The blouse is of fine muslin, trimmed with a self-ruffle and lace down the front and around the high neckline. A blouse pattern with short puffed sleeves and front closing may be used, however, it will be necessary to attach a long fitted sleeve of red percale to this. A cuff of flowered percale is added to the sleeve as illustrated.

The bodice is a wide band in two colors. To help support it, a ribbon is brought around from the back over the shoulders and tied in front to the bodice slightly forward of the blouse armholes. A combination of red and blue sailcloth may be used, lined with an interfacing to give it body. Tucking may be done to provide a horizontal effect. The bodice may be fastened at the side with hooks and eyes.

The skirt is made with accordion pleating. It would be possible to have a nylon and orlon blend fabric commercially pleated so that laundering could be easily done. A less expensive skirt may be fashioned of black Indianhead and tied when wet around a broomstick; when dry the fabric will have a pleated effect and no ironing is necessary. Black cotton may be selected for the apron. A three-inch border of the same fabric used for the cuffs of the blouse is applied to it. The back of the apron

is like a peplum, but can be cut as a straight piece about ten inches wide. It may be shaped with darts at the waist and attached to the apron on a band which is fastened in front underneath the fold. A sketch is given in Figure 12. A fringe of harmonizing color is stitched to the bottom of the peplum. The unusual headdress would be a doubtful asset in folk dancing, but is included as indicative of the picturesque effect of the total costume.

The man's costume is very simple. In addition to conventional shirt and trousers, a gaily printed neck kerchief and red sash complete his apparel. Muslin for the shirt, and duck for the trousers are suggested. A pajama pattern may be used for constructing these, but adjustments must be made so that they are not too loose. For the kerchief, a square of bright cotton print is practical. A band of red polished cotton with fringed ends may be used for the sash.

The costume on Plate 25 is festival attire from Sardegna. This is a very elaborate costume even in the much simplified adaptation shown. The blouse is richly handworked. A similar effect may be obtained with the use of lace and eyelet trim on a peasant style with long sleeves. It has a center front closing. The bodice is more nearly like a jacket, except that the front does not meet, leaving about six inches of the frilly blouse

exposed. The bodice pattern suggested in Figure 1 may be used as a guide with these modifications: where the front neckline begins to curve make a jog, then bring this line to the waist and below about four inches; extend the back pattern lines the same distance below the waistline; and add long sleeves to the bodice. The extensions below the waist are allowed to spread over the hip fullness as shown. A tie hidden under the apron holds the bodice closed. Chambray or Indianhead, lined with sateen, are suggested fabrics. A binding is added around the neck and the cuffs.

The skirt is a marvel of handwork in the authentic version. By the use of bands of colored fabric, braids, fringe and rickrack, a similar result may be obtained. A four-gore style is suggested for the skirt in order to avoid excess fullness at the waistline. Indianhead or chambray are recommended fabrics. The apron also is highly decorated with braid, rickrack, bands, and embroidery stitches, especially at the edges and corners. Black, crease-resistant cotton, is a good fabric choice. The apron may be tapered slightly toward the waist to give a more slenderizing effect. This headdress also is included merely to suggest the feeling of the complete costume, but not recommended for folk dance wear.

PLATE 26

COSTUME OF BARTA, LATVIA

PLATE 27

COSTUME OF RUCAVA, LATVIA





## CHAPTER 13

## LATVIA

This Baltic country has a proud history of traditional folk costume and there are good examples preserved in their museums. Latvian dress is highly ornamented and displays much fine handwork. Their designs are geometric and on one belt alone can be found almost fifty different motifs. Many of these symbols were intended to protect the wearer from evil spirits. Their colors were obtained from natural plant dyes and are rather subdued as a consequence. Latvian costumes were made at home, starting with the wool from their own sheep and the flax grown in their fields. The women ingeniously succeeded in obtaining most decorative results with a minimum of material.

(15, p.2)

Male apparel was more conservative, consisting of an embroidered linen shirt, a coat and trousers of grey broadcloth. Latvian men discontinued wearing their national costume much earlier than the women. The women's costume was made of plain, striped or plaid wool. In some districts, the women fastened a stout stiff cord to the bottom of the skirt to make it stand out in traditional bell-shaped fashion. Both men and women wore the same type of blouse with high folded collars, and long

sleeves with cuffs; the shoulders, fronts and cuffs being richly embroidered, in white, red, or black cross-stitch. (15, p.2)

Grey broadcloth obtained by mixing white and black wool, plaid fabrics, coronets for unmarried girls and bonnets for married women, are all distinctive characteristics of Latvian folk dress. On Plate 26 is an example of the maiden's elaborate coronet. It is made of cardboard, covered with red wool fabric, and literally encrusted with glass beads, sequins, crystals and braid. The coronet played an important role in the wedding ritual. Following the ceremony, the bridegroom would remove it from the bride's head, present it to her youngest sister, or throw it among the guests to be caught by the maidens. He then placed a richly ornamented wife's bonnet on the bride's head. (15, p.3)

The arrival of the mechanical age and invention of synthetic dyes left the deepest impression on Latvian costume. Although wearing of folk dress has been almost entirely abandoned, women who have costumes inherited from great-grandmothers prize them highly. (15, p.3)

The costume from Rucava shown on Plate 27 is a truly elegant one, combining generous quantities of gold and silver braid, with deep blue fabric and a handsome silver buckle. The blouse, embroidered in red cross-stitch, is

handwoven linen. The bodice and skirt are wool. The buckle at the waistline is primarily decorative. It is derived from the handwrought pin which formerly used to hold a wool shawl over the shoulders of Latvian women, before the wearing of coats came into general acceptance.

The blouse of this costume is similar to many of the peasant styles of other countries, cut like the tunic pattern sketched in Figure 10, with sleeves gathered in at the wrist and allowed to ruffle over the top of the hand. It is decorated with a characteristic Latvian pattern at the shoulders and collar. This may be created of linen-like rayon, or muslin and a cross-stitch type braid applied at the shoulders and collar. The blouse opens at the center front about six inches down.

The bodice may be cut following the general style shown in Figure 1 with alterations. These would be: a reshaping of the front closing to create a V brought together at the waistline; extending the bodice below the waistline about three inches; and creating an inverted pleat at each side seam. The bodice is trimmed with two rows of gold braid on each side of the front, adjacent to one row of silver braid. Red bias binding is used to outline these. Red wool yarn embroidery is applied around the armholes and at the side pleats. A narrow red and white braid is attached at the waistline to serve as a tie.

Since it is unlikely that a silver ornament of the type shown could be obtained except through a custom jeweler, the braid tie alone would secure the bodice closing. Navy pinwale corduroy, or wool-like spun rayon would be good fabric choices for the bodice. It may be lined with sateen.

The skirt is cut from a four-gore pattern suggested by the sketch in Figure 4. It is made of the same fabric as that chosen for the bodice. The skirt length may be adjusted to suit the wearer's taste. It is trimmed at the bottom with one row of silver and two rows of gold braid, spaced about one inch apart. The bottom edge is bound with a band of red fabric, and in this may be encased cording to help stiffen it. If preferred, a three-inch band of washable interfacing may be applied around the bottom to give the hem more body. The amber beads worn with this costume are a product of the Baltic Sea and are a prized possession of their owner. Her headband is a flower-embroidered ribbon, two inches wide and about three yards long.

The costume on Plate 26 from the district of Barta, is an example of the richness which folk dress may attain. The style is well suited to interpretation in American materials. The coronet was referred to above. The blouse is richly worked in black cross-stitch on linen. The rest



of the costume is wool. The bodice is interestingly ornamented with silver braid, and the large silver pin at the waistline is similar to the one previously described. The geometric designs at the lower rim of the skirt are characteristic Latvian motifs. The blouse is constructed in tunic style with a turn-down collar. Muslin is a suitable material. The cross-stitch effect may be obtained with black and white braids and rickrack.

The bodice may be designed from the pattern style suggested in Figure 1. Silver braid, similar to that in Figure 17 may be applied in the fashion shown, in the back as well as the front. Sailcloth or Indianhead with a muslin lining will make a firm bodice. The neck and arm-scyes are bound with black bias tape. The bodice is fastened with hooks and eyes. A narrow braid tie is attached at the waistline. Two tabs extending two inches below the waist, about three inches wide, may be cut in one with the bodice. This extension carried all the way around instead, would help to balance the ornamentation in the upper section.

The skirt is made from a four-gore pattern with a total hemline measure of about three yards. Sailcloth or Indianhead would also be suitable for the skirt. The length could be less than shown, perhaps slightly below midcalf. The ten-inch wide band at the bottom of the

skirt should match the red of the bodice. The design on it may be eliminated. A three-inch wide strip of washable interfacing, attached to the bottom of the hem is recommended to give it an attractive flare.

PLATE 28  
COSTUMES WORN IN  
VOLENDAM, NETHERLANDS

PLATE 29  
COSTUME FROM URK, NETHERLANDS



## CHAPTER 14

## THE NETHERLANDS

It was in this small, but hardy country where the writer saw the greatest number of people wearing folk dress. Two World Wars have had an effect on the disappearance of Dutch costumes, because some of the materials used in making them were no longer obtainable. There is also the tendency for the younger generation in the rural sections to not wish to mark themselves apart from the townspeople, by wearing peasant dress. (28, p.6)

The Dutch have already had the foresight to preserve their folk costumes in their National Folklore Museum, even though they are still being worn in some communities. In earlier days the men's costumes were far more colorful than those now in use. In contrast, the women's costumes, as is the case in other countries, are brightly colored. Wooden shoes are still worn by many. As the influence of town fashions have been felt in the men's costumes, so too, have the women's costumes given way here and there to changes suggestive of city styles. (28, p.7)

Dutch costumes are still worn daily on Marken Island. This is one of the communities in the Netherlands where the little boys wear skirts like those of the



girls until they are five years old. The only distinguishing mark is a slight difference in their cap, not discernible to a stranger. The costumes worn in Volendam are perhaps the ones most familiar to the rest of the world because they have been so often used on travel folders and tulip bulb packages. Strictly speaking, this is not more typical of Dutch folk costume than any other, but is probably seen by more tourists to the Netherlands, because Volendam is a picturesque fishing village located a short distance from Amsterdam. On Sundays villagers hurry to church, wearing their attractive pointed lace bonnets with the sides that sweep up and curl forward as seen on Plate 28. The full gathered black skirt is almost completely covered with a blue and white striped cotton apron. The top is solid black, or blue and black stripe with the neckline cut round or square and outlined with a decorative red braid. A plain square-necked dress top will make a satisfactory pattern. The skirts are worn ankle length, but for dancing a becoming length for the wearer is suggested. This entire costume may be made of chambray or similar cotton material. The man's costume is somber black, relieved only by silver buttons at the throat and waist. The trousers are full length and rather baggy.

The province of Urk, once an island in the Zuider Zee, but now a part of the mainland as a result of the

Dutch reclamation works, is the source of the Sunday costume shown on Plate 29. This ensemble is of black wool, and has a red cotton shirt with a high collar, fastened with two gold buttons, worn underneath the blouse. The trousers are calf-length and only moderately full. A short satin tie is worn at the neck. An adaption of this costume may be created by use of a vest pattern, with sleeves added such as shown in Figure 7. For the trousers, a pajama pattern made wider at the side seams and cut off at midcalf, will be helpful. Suitable fabrics are flannelette, corduroy, or sailcloth. The blouse is double-breasted and has a three-piece back, with fullness added below the waist in the form of two small godets inserted in the seams.

## PLATE 30

COSTUME OF HARDANGER, NORWAY

112a



## PLATE 31

COSTUME FROM TELEMAR, NORWAY





## CHAPTER 15

## NORWAY

Norway is a country in which the wearing of folk dress is presently relegated to rural festivals and weddings. The costume perhaps most frequently seen is shown on Plate 30 from Hardanger on the west coast. The writer visited the Norwegian Folk Museum in Oslo where peasant houses dating back several centuries have been preserved and where hostesses wearing traditional native dress were at hand.

The costume mentioned above is a particularly attractive one, both in its color combinations and its ornamentation. The skirt is black wool, pleated all around and bound near the hemline with three rows of red braid about one inch wide. The white gathered apron on which a traditional Hardanger embroidery has been done, is made of a heavy Hardanger cotton not a common American fabric. A belt of bead work designed in geometric patterns is worn at the waistline over the bodice. The bodice is red wool with a velvet and wool stomacher, also heavily encrusted with beading. The handwoven linen blouse has Hardanger work on the cuffs and stand-up collar. The brooch at the neckline is a typical Norwegian ornament of delicately hung discs of gold and silver. These may

well symbolize the ancient belief of gaining protection by use of shining objects. The red ribbons fall from a small traditional cap which is stiffened with cardboard and also ornamented with braid and beads.

This costume may be easily adapted for folk dancing. The bodice is the only item which will present some problems. It may be carried out using the bodice shape suggested in Figure 1, but altering the neckline to include the point seen above the top of the stomacher. The two front edges may be secured together with hooks and eyes. The stomacher itself should be made of a crisp fabric such as chintz. This will be lined as well as the bodice proper. The same fabric may be selected for the bodice unless a wool-like cotton or spun rayon is preferred. The bodice, neckline and armholes may be trimmed with a brocaded braid such as shown in Figure 17. The stomacher may be decorated with braid and appliqued designs as suggested by the illustration. Some white and colored beading, even if only sparingly applied will make a more effective costume. The stomacher may be permanently attached to the right side of the bodice and secured in place with hooks and eyes on the left.

A peasant style pattern may be used for the blouse, substituting a white braid trim for the Hardanger work. A suitable fabric is linen-like rayon. The same fabric and

trim is suggested for the apron, although the costume is equally attractive without it. For the skirt, use three lengths of black wool-like cotton and trim with three rows of red ribbon or braid. The fullness may be arranged in knife or box pleats at the waist.

The costume pictured on Plate 31 is that of the region of Telemark. This costume is one which the writer saw worn at the Folk Museum already mentioned. This adaptation does not show the wealth of detail in the original. It is made of handwoven wool and linen. The blouse may be fashioned from broadcloth or linen-like rayon fabric. A peasant style pattern, such as shown in Figure 8, will be helpful, with the neckline altered to include a stand-up collar. The opening is held together by a gold brooch, such as described for the previous costume.

The abbreviated jacket is the unusual feature of this ensemble. It stops slightly below the bustline and is very full in cut. The closing at the side may be located with the left lapping over the right, or the more usual right over left may be used. A suggested pattern sketch is shown in Figure 13. Flannelette or other cotton with a nap may be used. The neckline may be trimmed with braid such as shown in Figures 16 and 17. The bottom of the jacket may be bound with contrasting

fabric or a wide yellow grosgrain ribbon may be stitched on. A belt or wide braid may be wrapped around the waist and the ends allowed to hang down. The skirt may be cut from a four-gore pattern as suggested by the sketch in Figure 4. Sturdy fabrics such as sailcloth, denim or Indianhead would be good choices. Bands of fabric three inches wide may be separated with a one-inch width as shown in the illustration. This skirt will be more attractive if it is stiffened with cording stitched into the hem or a band of washable interfacing may be applied to the hem. The apron may be dispensed with although it does suggest a balance for the jacket. It may be constructed of black percale to which may be sewn a U-shaped band of white percale about four inches wide. The white may be outlined with red bias or ribbon. On the white area, fancy braids may be used to give a hand-worked effect. The original costume has a wool embroidered flower design. The apron may be gathered on a braid waistband and tied in front.



PLATE 32

COUPLE FROM KRAKOW, POLAND



## CHAPTER 16

## POLAND

Polish costumes are today worn only in rural areas. Hundreds of variations of several styles have developed throughout the land. The peasants produced their own materials, and owing to conservatism, their folk dress retains many features dating back to remote ages. (61, pp. 3-5) A most notable characteristic of Polish peasant art is their unusual color sense in which they show great daring in their unexpected color combinations. Braid is used extensively in their needlecraft as well as buttons and beads. (41, p.66)

Peasant costumes are no longer in common use in the industrialized regions, so examples are available only in museums or in collections of family heirlooms. (34, p.43) Such an example is given on Plate 32, which shows a fisherman and a woman of Krakow. The feminine costume is made of wool and linen. For dancing such a costume may be fashioned from cotton fabrics. The muslin blouse may be made in a style similar to that shown in Figure 8. The edges of the collar and cuffs may be trimmed with white braid or rickrack. The bodice style is similar to that shown in Figure 1. Indianhead trimmed with bright colored braids and lined with sateen is suggested fabric. The

neckline, armseyes, and peplum may be bound with bias. The gathered skirt may be constructed from two lengths of crease-resistant cotton. Two narrow rows of fabric are applied at the bottom. Her apron, made of muslin, is trimmed with three rows of braid or ribbon near the bottom. It has a scalloped hemline.

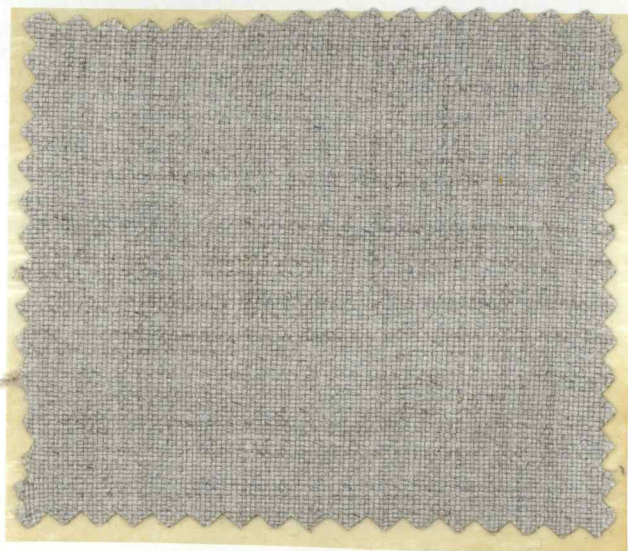
The man's costume consists of an embroidered linen tunic and wool trousers. The tunic may be constructed of linen-like rayon or muslin. A turn-back collar is added to the neckline and cuffs to the sleeves. These, as well as the upper arm, and bottom of the tunic, are ornamented with braids. Braid is used for a waistline tie. His trousers may be made of chamois-colored denim such as shown in Figure 20. A pajama pattern, rather closely fitted, and tapered toward the legs, may be used as a guide.

Examples of handwoven Polish linen and Slavic handwork are shown on the following page.

FIGURE 31  
POLISH HANDWOVEN LINEN AND  
HANDWORK USED IN COSTUMES



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## PLATE 33

COSTUME FROM MINHO, PORTUGAL

## PLATE 34

COSTUME FROM MINHO, PORTUGAL



## CHAPTER 17

## PORTUGAL

This comparatively small country with a long coastline has a history closely related to the sea. Today in the village of Nazare, the traveler can see brightly painted fishing boats of Phoenician design beached on the sands, while fishermen in colorful plaid shirts and trousers repair their nets nearby. A long stocking-like black cap completes their dress.

On the streets of Lisbon, the writer saw Portuguese women domestics carrying their bundles of laundry, fish or vegetables on their heads. Their costume consisted of a head kerchief over which a doughnut-like roll is set to balance their load, and a printed calico dress with an apron of another print or check.

The beautiful festive costume on Plate 33 is from the region of Minho in northern Portugal. The photograph on the right is that of a costume which was worn when a group of Portuguese folk dancers performed at the 1952 Winter Olympic Games in Oslo, Norway. It is a very handsome costume with a lavish quantity of handwork on every item. The skirt, apron, and bodice are handwoven wool. The blouse is linen embroidered in blue and red. It is finished at the neckline and cuffs with bobbin



lace. The red challis kerchief is also a part of the costume.

The blouse may be made from muslin or linen-like rayon. The peasant style illustrated in Figure 9, without the collar and with the opening at the center front, is suggested for the blouse. The decorated effect may be obtained with braid as shown in Figure 16. If handwork is used, a cross-stitch or geometric pattern on the shoulders, cuff and neckline will be effective. The bodice is unusual because it is made of 2 different pieces of fabric, the upper half comes to just below the bustline and the lower half a little short of the waistline. It would look neater to have the bodice reach the top of the skirt so the blouse would not be exposed at the waistline. It would also give a more slenderizing effect. The bodice sketches shown in Figure 11 may be followed by using the bodice in McCalls pattern 792 and revising it. For the top part, choose flannelette. For the lower section, the same type of fabric or pinwale corduroy will be satisfactory. Between the joining of the two fabrics, insert a piping or a braid such as illustrated in Figure 16. The edges of the neckline and armholes may be bound with tape or other trimming. To obtain the effect of the hand embroidery on the bodice, stitch bias tape on a pattern drawn on the cloth with pencil, suggesting the hand detail



shown. Another method of obtaining a similar effect would be to applique a printed design on the bodice. Still another possibility would be to stencil a design on the fabric with textile paints. The most attractive results would be obtained with embroidery in wool or silk yarns.

The apron may be adapted by using a flowered cotton print with reds and pinks predominating. It may be gathered on a waistband and bound around the edges with braid. The skirt, adjusted to a becoming length for the wearer, is also constructed from two different colors. The fabrics selected for the bodice may be repeated in the skirt. The fuller the skirt the more effective it will be in dancing. Three lengths of fabric are suggested for the red section but they may be tapered toward the waistline to reduce the bulk over the hips, and gathered on a narrow waistband. The black band at the bottom may be about fifteen inches wide. It is decorated near the top with a flower design in white yarn. Bands of braid such as illustrated in Figure 16 may be substituted here. The top edge of the fabric is merely pinked and stitched on top of the red. The elaborate skirt pocket may be eliminated since there is sufficient ornamentation without it.

The second costume from Minho Province is similar in construction and detail to the foregoing. The skirt,

however, is sufficiently different to merit special mention. Like the one just described, it is also handwoven. This skirt may be adapted in a striped sailcloth or denim and the band at the bottom made of about fifteen inches of solid color of the same fabric. The design detail may be applied in any of the ways enumerated above. When wearing this costume, the Portuguese women sometimes like a kerchief over their shoulders as well, as is suggested by the illustration. Filigree jewelry earrings and other ornaments are appropriate with this costume. An imported costume of this type costs in the vicinity of seventy dollars.

PLATE 35  
COUPLE FROM REGION OF  
DELSBO, SWEDEN



PLATE 36  
MAN'S COSTUME FROM LANNA;  
AND WOMAN'S COSTUME OF  
FRYKSANDE, SWEDEN





## PLATE 37

COSTUME FROM BOHUSLAN, SWEDEN

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PLATE 38

COSTUME FROM SORUNDA, SWEDEN

PLATE 39

COSTUME FROM DALARNA, SWEDEN





## CHAPTER 18

## SWEDEN

Perhaps the most prosperous of the European countries, Sweden presented to the writer the closest resemblance, in general outward appearance, to our own country. The modernism of her buildings may account for this. Nevertheless, despite the modern look in architecture, art, and household furnishings, there is currently a revival of interest in traditional folk handicrafts. Weaving is taught the young girls in school. Making a folk costume from handwoven materials is presently a popular summer school project encouraged by the Swedish government. While folk dress has not been worn daily in Sweden for many years, in the rural areas and small fishing villages, folk costumes are donned for holidays, weddings, or festivals.

Nylen emphasizes that each costume is not necessarily just a local product. Each item of the Swedish costume has its individuality and history, some from the remote past, but most costumes are a combination of elements taken from different epochs dating from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century. Features from all of these periods may be found in a single costume and it is this odd mixture which makes peasant dress what it

is. (48, p.11)

In the picture-stones of the seventh and eighth centuries, on Norwegian tapestries of the Viking period, and on the Bayeux tapestry, some items of Swedish dress can be recognized. In northern Sweden, the use of knitted stockings is still not accepted, even today. The use of knitted stockings did not appear in the fashionable world until the sixteenth century and it was centuries later before they became popular among the peasantry. The people of northern Sweden still bind their feet with cloth or hay, because they consider that superior to stockings in giving warmth and protection. The local dress of each village has been carefully perpetuated as the elders insisted that the young keep to the costume of their forefathers. (40, p.90)

Swedish everyday garments were largely influenced by eighteenth and nineteenth century fashions, but their festival dress carried Medieval and seventeenth century traditions. (48, p.15) In Stockholm, the Nordiska Museet is the repository for the folk costumes from which the designs on Plates 35 and 36 are adapted.

The dress of an unmarried woman of the parish of Delsbo, has a black skirt handwoven of linen and wool. It is pleated or gathered on a waistband of braid. When making this costume for folk dancing, in order to offer a

contrast to the perky bodice which juts out beyond the waistline, it is suggested that the skirt be constructed from a four-gore pattern, such as shown in Figure 4. This will give a good circle at the bottom while providing a close fit over the hips. The fullness at the hemline may be adjusted to a pleasing quantity for the individual wearer. A good fabric choice is a crisp black cotton. The bottom of the skirt may be faced with a washable interfacing material. A colorful red braid such as illustrated in Figure 16 makes an unusual waistband. A band of red fabric or ribbon may be stitched to the hem.

For the blouse, a helpful pattern is the long-sleeved peasant style with gathers at the neckline, similar to Figure 9, but with long sleeves. Linen, cotton broadcloth, or poplin would be suitable for the blouse.

The bodice, made from a pattern similar to that illustrated in Figure 1, is fastened in front, edge to edge with hooks and eyes. It would be practical to make this of striped chambray, lined with sateen, although denim, Indianhead or sailcloth would keep their shape without wrinkling more readily.

The young man's costume from the same region has chamois breeches. These may be adapted in a pinwale corduroy of similar color. Simplicity pattern 4034 is a man's Spanish costume and contains a knee-length trouser

pattern which may be modified slightly to obtain the yoke effect in the front. His shirt of white linen, broadcloth or similar fabric may be cut from a plain pattern with these changes: make cuffs about one and a half inches wide; and make a stand-up collar by adding a straight piece at the neckline as shown in Figure 10. Swedish men's shirts are always embroidered. It is the custom for the young girls to begin early to make the shirts for their future husbands, with their mothers instructing in this work. A shirt may become very elaborate, being the result of many years of labor. (40, p.91)

A strip of brightly colored ribbon or fabric makes a good tie at the neckline. The knee bands on the trousers were originally leather on cloth. Suggested substitutes would be a narrow braid applied to the trousers or a ribbon about one inch wide, the same as the necktie. A sporting goods store may carry some knee-length stockings, otherwise, nimble fingers will have to fly to knit the hose.

Plate 36 shows a masculine costume after the type from the parish of Lanna. The jacket and trousers are a wool fabric called "frieze cloth" by the Swedish. One of the new cotton fabrics giving the appearance of wool would be an excellent choice for this outfit since it could be easily washed. Brown corduroy will make a good

collar trim. A helpful pattern for constructing this costume is Butterick 6550. It is an Uncle Sam costume with a coat pattern that may be used with the following changes: cut pattern off just below the waistline; narrow the lapels; and add two rows of brass buttons. This jacket is worn unbuttoned so the white shirt is well displayed. A sport shirt pattern may be used to make it of broadcloth or linen-like rayon. The shirt collar has short points and may have a colorful braid or ribbon tied around it similar to that shown in Figure 16.

Construction of the woman's costume taken from Fryksande parish is one for which McCalls pattern 792 would be helpful. It contains a semicircular skirt pattern which may be made up in rich brown cotton chambray. It also contains blouse and bodice patterns which need only minor changes. The blouse neckline should be cut higher than that of the pattern. The bodice has a side closing which may be achieved by relocating the front opening as illustrated in Figure 5. The apron is quickly made by gathering striped chambray or percale on a long tie band of braid.

The costume shown on Plate 37 is that of Bohuslan on the west coast of Sweden. It was made by the wearer from fabric of her own weaving while participating, during the summer, in a school program stressing handicrafts



mentioned earlier. The costume may be modified for folk dancing by selecting a dark blue, wool-like cotton, for the skirt and either gathering or pleating it to the waistband. The red bodice, which indicates the wearer is unmarried, is made with a center front closing under a somewhat triangular overlay hiding the lacing as shown in Figure 6. It is stitched on the right side and attached with hook and eyes to the left. Flannelette is a possible material for the bodice. The blouse of muslin may be cut from a long-sleeved peasant pattern with a high neckline. A pleated band which is shaped to fit the neckline forms a collar as shown in Figure 8. This is decorated with embroidery stitches in white thread. The apron is made of white cotton or linen.

Another costume brought from Sweden and handwoven by the wearer is that from the parish of Sorunda near Stockholm, shown in Plate 38. The blouse is white cotton, the skirt and bodice wool, the apron cotton. On Sunday a silk apron and hat are worn with this costume. A pattern similar to that described for the Bohuslan costume will be helpful for making the muslin blouse. The bodice may be constructed from an attractively striped chambray or denim. It will be greatly improved by the addition of a lining as that will help keep its shape. Usually European bodices are lined with muslin or sateen. A wool-like

cotton is suggested for the skirt, which may be arranged in unpressed pleats or gathers on a waistband. Two lengths of fabric are sufficient for this skirt.

The very colorful costume of the province of Dalarna is one bought last year in Sweden. It is all handwoven wool except for the blouse, which is cotton. A common practice with Scandinavian costumes is to join the bodice and skirt as was done with this example. Although an exceedingly attractive folk dress, it would be too warm for an evening of energetic dancing. An adaptation of this costume in cotton or blends of the new fibers would be most practical. A simple bodice pattern, such as illustrated in Figure 1, is joined to the skirt which may have gathers or unpressed pleats, if a narrow silhouette is preferred. The bodice is laced with ribbon passed through metal loops. The separate skirt-pocket is an interesting detail of decorative handwork, but might be made from a similarly printed fabric, lined and then bound with red bias tape. The apron, which is an important part of this costume, may be constructed of red and green broadcloth and gathered on a band of braid such as illustrated in Figure 16. A gaily printed challis neck scarf is worn with this costume.

PLATE 40  
COSTUMES FROM REGION  
OF BERNE, SWITZERLAND



## CHAPTER 19

## SWITZERLAND

This beautifully scenic country has its share of traditional folk costumes, although their use is now confined principally to Sundays and holidays. Each valley, town or region has its characteristic dress, examples of which may be seen in Folk Museums at Lucerne and Zurich.

At the beginning of the summer the herdsmen of the Appenzell district proudly wear their colorful folk costume, yodelling as they lead their cattle up the high mountain paths to summer pasture. (60, p.12) Their attire consists of a traditional short red jacket, white linen shirt, yellow knee-length trousers and white hand-knit stockings. The men also follow the quaint custom of wearing a tiny gold spoon dangling from one ear as a symbol of their occupation, cheesemaking. The herdsmen used to wear their trousers so low on their hips that a kerchief was tied around the hips to hold the shirt in. Today the kerchief is merely worn for decorative purposes since their trousers now reach the normal waistline. (60, p.14)

Centuries ago sumptuary laws were passed by the Swiss government, which required that dark costumes without jewelry be worn to church, and for mourning. Since



church services were attended frequently, and mourning had to be worn not only for immediate family members but relatives far removed, the opportunity for development of folk costume was held in abeyance. It was only after the relaxation of these laws that the peasants could apply decoration to their dress. It is from about the seventeenth century that Swiss folk dress as it is known today, began to evolve. (40, p.54)

The folk headdress for women is quite varied in size and shape. Perhaps the best known is the type shown on Plate 40 from the district of Berne. It is a black velvet bonnet to which is attached a halo of horsehair lacework and wire. This costume may be readily adapted for folk dancing, in a variety of interpretations of the same basic style. The ensemble consists of a wool skirt, velvet bodice, cotton blouse and silk apron. The bodice is made the center of interest, laced down the front over handsome silver fasteners. The blouse may be fashioned from a full-sleeved peasant style, such as sketched in Figure 9. Percale or fine broadcloth are suggested materials.

The bodice is basically a wide fitted band reaching about the middle of the bustline. The little collar worn over the blouse, is tied with ribbon from each corner to the top of the bodice. A sketch for making the collar from a blouse pattern is given in Figure 3. The

bodice laces over a stomacher which extends below the waist in a rounded point. The stomacher may be attached to one side of the bodice so it will remain in place more securely. Silver colored buttons are suggested as a method of ornamenting the front. Pinwale corduroy or flannelette are suggested fabrics for the bodice; sateen may be used for lining.

For the gathered skirt two lengths of wool-like spun rayon are suitable. The apron may be a plain striped chambray, gathered on a long colorful brocaded ribbon, tied at the side front. It is suggested that the apron be short enough to allow some of the skirt to show below.

Examples of contemporary Swiss costume fabrics are given on the following page. They are for everyday rather than festival dress.

## FIGURE 32

SWISS FABRICS USED IN COSTUMES

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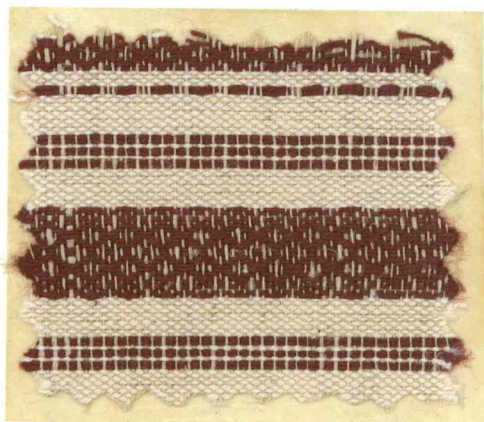


PLATE 41  
FESTIVAL COSTUME FROM REGION OF  
ZAGREB, YUGOSLAVIA





## CHAPTER 20

## YUGOSLAVIA

The country of Yugoslavia, which means land of the south Slavs, is rich in its variety of peasant costumes. The country people wear their colorful folk dress for festive occasions, folk dancing, and to market; especially in the small villages. Their native dress is brightly colored and shows painstaking skill in handwork. The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb has an excellent collection of national costumes. State ensembles of folk dancers are maintained in Yugoslavia as a means of preserving their folklore. (35, p.11)

The costume shown on Plate 41 is indicative of the great extravagance of handwork that is concentrated on one garment. On a background of cream-colored linen, a bodice made with extremely full sleeves is embroidered in wool yarns and trimmed with lace at the cuffs. The skirt, similarly ornamented, is actually in two parts: the front is generously gathered on a band to the side seams, like an apron. Under this is worn a garment, the front of which is a straight piece of muslin; but the back is very regularly pleated and decorated in the same manner as the front apron. This pleating is very likely accomplished in the manner described for Hungarian skirts.

Around the waist, a cummerbund of bright red sateen, and on the head, a wreath of artificial flowers complete this costume.

In adapting this costume for folk dancing, the simplest method of obtaining the effect of handwork is to select a printed cotton of similar design and color. This may then be appliqued on a crisp cotton or rayon in two bands as illustrated. The top band is about twelve inches wide and the lower one perhaps eight inches. These could be reversed in placement with an improvement in area relationships. The narrow printed band is brought up to the waistline at the sides as can be seen in the photograph. A two-inch width of lace may be added to the bottom of both the front apron and back of the skirt. This costume seems to lend itself to a generous skirt length. The blouse may be made from a peasant style, or McCalls pattern 689, which is a choir surplice, may be utilized. The sleeves may be appliqued with the same fabric chosen for the skirt decoration. The cummerbund is quickly fashioned from a length of red sateen, although a wide grosgrain ribbon is equally satisfactory.

## CHAPTER 21

## SUMMARY

The widespread popularity of folk dancing in the United States at the present time suggests the need for appropriate costuming for that wholesome recreation. The premise of this work has been that authentic European folk dress offers a fertile source of design inspiration for this purpose. Folk costumes are an outgrowth of many of the geographic, social and cultural aspects of the country people, and are thereby fraught with tradition. Skill in handwork, the need for economy, the love of color and its unrestrained use, together with superstitions and fragmentary influences of fashionable town dress have all left their mark on peasant dress. Oftentimes their headgear was most elaborate. Those included in this thesis are not described for construction because of their difficulty. They were retained merely to show the complete costume.

At one time national dress was not looked upon by Europeans with quite the same pride that it is today. This is in part the result of its being given importance by traditionalists and nationalists. European folk dress is being worn less and less as the country people accept the influence of urban life and relinquish their



traditions. In each country where folk dancing is popular, the national costume is likely to continue to be worn for that purpose, however.

In the United States the interest in folk dancing appears to be increasing continually, creating a demand for suitable dress. Perhaps the European folk costume need not be relegated entirely to the folklore museum, but may continue to exist in American adaptations of the sort suggested in this thesis. Such costumes are not only colorfully characteristic, but also attractive, comfortable, comparatively easy to construct, modest in cost, and should require minimum care.

The scope of this work leaves much of the area of European folk costume untapped. A study of the costume of one country alone could yield much design inspiration. Investigation of the folk dress of the European countries not included in this work, would uncover many more costumes adaptable for American folk dancers.

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