
TRADITIONAL FOLK WOMEN’S CLOTHING OF WESTERN VOLYN

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to do the research on the complexes of women’s clothing in Western Volyn at the end of the 19th and the mid-20th centuries, to characterize the fabric, types of cut and decoration, and to determine their local features. The Methodology of the Research. In the research there have been used a number of general scientific and special methods: a typological analysis, comparative and historical, statistical, structural and functional methods, field studies, as well as a direct observation method. The scientific novelty consists in the fact that for the first time in the article there have been collected and systematized the materials from archival, published, expeditionary and museum sources regarding the traditional clothing of Western Volyn of the end of the 19th – mid-20th centuries; its local features have been determined; new terminology has been introduced into scientific circulation; the geographical boundaries of certain phenomena distribution have been specified. The Conclusion. The folk clothing of Western Volyn, despite transformation and modification that took place at the end of the 19th century – at the beginning 20th century, retained its special flavour. One of the defining features of the clothes in the region under analysis is the colour of embroidery, namely black. The tradition of black-embroidered shirts covers Sokal, Ivanychi, Volodymyr-Volynsky and Horokhiv districts of Volyn region, as well as a significant part of Hrubieszów
Povit of Lublin Voivodeship of the Republic of Poland, which indicates the inexpediency of using the names “Sokalski” and “Nadbuzhanski”. One more local feature is long folding collars on women's shirts. As for women's waist clothing, the most characteristic were skirts sewn from a striped cloth in narrow blue-white longitudinal and transverse stripes, under a local name – “valyvka”. In Western Volyn waistbands were in the form of striped narrow edges. In the first half of the 20th century, among women's chest clothing, in addition to “corsets”, “staniki” and “shnurovysyi” (laces), “kamizelky” (vests) were spread. Among women's outerwear, it is worth noting samples that arose under the influence of an urban fashion – “svyaky”, “kosachky”, “sachky”, “pizhakы”.

Key words: Western Volyn, traditional clothing, body clothing, waist clothing, chest clothing.

The Problem Statement. Modern researchers of folk clothing of the Ukrainians divide the ethnographic region of Volyn into three large parts: Western, Central and Eastern (Chaikovska, 2012, p. 94). Western Volyn covers the south-western part of Volyn Region, the northern part of L'viv Region, as well as Bilgorajski and Tomaszów Povits of Lublin Voivodeship of the Republic of Poland.

At the beginning of the 21st century the study of folk clothing of local areas and even individual settlements is particularly relevant, which is due to the need to study regional aspects of the Ukrainian history and ethnology (Mytrofanenko, & Domaransky, 2023, p. 263). The research focuses on the traditional clothing of the Ukrainians in Western Volyn. This aspect of an everyday life was the research focus of scholars of different periods, therefore, in the context of the study, the researches from the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century have been taken into consideration.

The research has been done on the basis of archival, published, expeditionary and museum sources. The analysis of the issues related to the study of the folk clothing of the Ukrainians in Western Volyn at the end of the 19th – mid-20th centuries is based on the materials of field research collected in the territory of modern Volyn and L'viv regions during the period of
2010 – 2023. In the process of the research, exhibits from museum and private collections, archival materials, printed sources, and Internet resources were used.

The samples of clothing from the museum collections of Volyn Regional Museum of Local History, National Centre of Folk Culture “Museum of Ivan Honchar”, Novovolynsk Historical Museum and Sokal Historical and Local History Museum also served as a source base.

The Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. A special role in the study of the national clothing of the Ukrainians belongs to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, founded in 1845, whose members were many outstanding Ukrainian scholars. P. Chubinskiy was a member of this society, a well-known Ukrainian ethnographer, who, as a result of his own field research, published seven volumes of the “Works of Ethnographic and Statistical Expedition to the Western Russian Region by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society”, which contains a description of the folk clothing of various regions, in particular the inhabitants of Volyn (Chubinskiy, 1872; Chubinskiy, 1877).

In the context of this research, the articles on the folk clothing of Volyn inhabitants, published in “Ethnographic Collection of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society”, “Volyn Provincial Gazettes”, “Chernihiv Provincial Gazettes”, the magazines “Zhyvaya Starina” and “Proceedings of the Society of Researchers of Volyn” are of a considerable interest.


A significant contribution to the study of folk clothes of the Ukrainians was made by Khv. Vovk, an anthropologist, ethnographer and archaeologist. In the works “The Ukrainian People in their Past and Present” (Volkov, 1916, Vol. 2, pp. 543–595) and “Studies in Ukrainian Ethnography and Anthropology” (Vovk, 1995, p. 170) a valuable description of the national costume of the Ukrainians of various ethnographic regions of Ukraine, which is typical of researchers of the 19th century, is presented, a thorough analysis of clothing elements is carried out on the basis of comparisons, common and distinctive features of the clothing of the Ukrainian population of various regions, including Volyn, are traced.

Brief information about folk clothing in Volyn is found in the works of H. Stelmakh, T. Kosmina, K. Mateiko, T. Nikolayeva, etc.

The works by H. Stelmashchuk “Ancient Clothing in Volyn” (Stelmashchuk, 2006) and V. Malanchuk “Some Features of Peasant Clothing, Embroidery and Artistic Weaving in Sokal Region” are also of a special interest in the research context (Malanchuk, 1964, p. 5).

Information about the Volynn clothes is found in the eighteen-volume album of photo materials “Ukraine and the Ukrainians” (Ukraina y Ukraintsi, 2006) from the stock collection of the National Centre of Folk Culture “Ivan Honchar Museum”, compiled by I. Honchar.

In the thorough work by L. Ponomar “Folk Clothing of Right Bank Polissia of the mid-19th – mid-20th Centuries. Historical and Ethnographic Atlas. Dictionary” (Ponomar, 2015) and the research of A. Dmytrenko “Collection of Clothes from Kovel Region in Volyn Museum of Local Lore” (Dmytrenko, 2013), “Artistic Solution of Volyn Women’s Shirts (from the Funds of Volyn Museum of Local History)” (Dmytrenko & Andrusyk, 2015), “Attributive Signs of Women’s Shirts of Volyn and Western Polissia in the Works of Researchers of Traditional Clothing” (Dmytrenko, 2017) there is information about the clothing of the population of Western Polissia bordering on Western Volyn. This makes it possible to follow the parallels in the use of folk clothing in the neighbouring territories.

The purpose of the article is to do the research on the complexes of women’s and men’s clothing of Western Volyn at the end of the 19th – mid-20th centuries, to characterize the fabric, types of cut and decoration, to determine their specific local features.

The Results of the Research. In the second half of the 19th century residents of Western Volyn used local raw materials to create clothes and shoes mostly: flax, hemp, wool, straw, and animal skin. Most often, these were linen cloth and woolen cloth, woven by Volyn women.

At the end of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century in the manufacture of clothes, factory-made fabrics began to be used more actively, in particular cotton and linen factory fabrics of various types, coloured and ornamented cotton, satin, manufactured cloth, velvet, etc. Woolen, silk and satin ribbons, coloured cords, hand-made and factory-made lace, white and coloured cotton threads, braid, glass and pewter buttons, metal cufflinks with coloured glass inserts were used to decorate the elements of the outfit. At the time, the influence of urban clothing on the peasant outfit becomes noticeable.

At the end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century the complex ensemble of women’s traditional outfit of Western Volyn included: body wear, chest outfit, outerwear, waistbands, hats, shoes and jewelry.

Body Clothes

In Western Volyn women’s shirts were sewn from home-spun linen or factory-made cotton or linen fabric. For festive shirts, bleached cloth of the best quality was used, for everyday ones, accordingly, of the worst quality. The shirt was sewn from two cloths – front and back, because the width of a local cloth was sufficient to avoid using the third cloth, which was a common phenomenon in the neighbouring Polissia, where narrower cloths were used. The length of the shirts was shortened and reached the middle of the thigh and was never visible from under the loincloth. This feature is observed in neighbouring Opillia and Western Polissia. Despite this length, there were both separate shirts and shirts with a sewn-on lower part – “pidtochka”, for the sewing of which less bleached and coarser cloth was used.

At the end of the 19th century in Western Volyn, women’s shirts with a gusset cut were used, where the gusset (a shoulder gusset) was sewn to the cloth. The sleeve was sewn from one cloth and ended with a cuff or frills. A must-have constructive detail of the shirt was a square insert, which was sewn between the sleeve and the waist and made it possible to move hands more freely. Quite often, a square insert was cut from the same cloth as a sleeve.

Embroidered shirts which date back to the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century are mostly decorated with factory cotton threads – the techniques “cross”, “shtapivka” and “lichylna hlad”. The colour of the embroidery of these shirts was mostly black, which makes it possible to distinguish the outerwear of Western Volyn from among the others. In recent decades, such shirts have received the name “sokalsky” in the society, which is not correct, because it limits the territory of use of these shirts only to the administrative
boundaries of Sokal district of Lviv region, and in fact, the geographic limits of the spread of this phenomenon include, in addition to Sokalsky, also Ivanychivsky, Volodymyr-Volynsky and Horokhivsky districts of Volyn Region, as well as a significant part of Hrubieszów Povit of Lublin Voivodeship of the Republic of Poland, where from time immemorial and before the events of the “Vistula Operation” of 1947, Volyn Ukrainians lived compactly. It is also inappropriate to use the term “Nadbuzhanski shirts”, because the tradition of black-embroidered shirts covers only a part of the Zakhidny Buh river basin.

At the beginning of the 19th century, and especially in the 20s and 30s of the 20th century red and yellow colours are added to the basic black colour of the embroidery, and from about the 30s and up to the mid-20th century embroidery becomes polychrome. During the mentioned above period, peasants increasingly began to use factory-made cotton and linen fabrics instead of home-spun linen.

The inset, sleeve, cuffs or ribbing, occasionally the armpit incision, as well as the collar were decorated with embroidery. On the shirts of the 19th century sometimes there are geometric ornaments, but at that time the dominant one was a floral “brocade” embroidery, which spread from the mid-19th century.

The principles of arrangement of ornaments remained traditional until the period between the two World Wars – a stripe was embroidered on the collar, under the collar, on the sleeve – an embroidered vase-tree or a scattering of flowers in a checkerboard pattern, sometimes there is embroidery on the wrist above the cuffs or ripples. Sometimes you can see three embroidered horizontal stripes of geometric or floral ornament on the cuff and sleeve.

Based on the analysed samples of women’s clothing from Western Volyn, it can be concluded that the axillary incision was mostly in the middle, occasionally it was shifted to the left. There are often shirts with a stylized placket formed from the linen to the right of the armpit cut. Such a conventional ribbon can be unembroidered or embroidered with a floral or geometric ornament, has slotted loops and is fastened with metal, horn-shaped or glass buttons of various colours.

The most common collars on women’s shirts of the region were long turn-down collars, the length of which could reach about 20 cm (Appendix 1, 2). They are characteristic only of Volyn shirts and are not characteristic of any other ethnographic region of Ukraine. Such collars gave the shirt a special expressiveness and recognition from among the embroidered shirts of Ukraine. Along the perimeter, they were embroidered with floral, geometric, and sometimes calligraphic ornaments. They often sewed two rows of “shtapivka”, sometimes there was made a small needle lace. Mandarin collars were occasionally used, and in the 20s and 30s – without a collar and there was a small lining.

The cuffs on women’s shirts were quite wide, up to 10 cm wide. As on the collars and cuffs, “shtapivka” was made along the perimeter, and the base of the cuff had a geometric or floral ornament. The edges could have braided needle lace. The ruffled end of the sleeve could be adjusted using the “prutyk” technique and decorated with a narrow strip of ornament.

**Waist Clothing**

In the second half of the 19th century in Western Volyn, sewn forms of women’s clothing continued to be used. These were skirts sewn from several sheets of home-spun fabrics. In various sources, there are the following names for these skirts: dymka, chystoch, litnyk, apron, vartukh with a bolf, kolman, randak, spudnytsia, etc. The raw materials for them were flax and wool, respectively, there were linen, woolen and semi-woolen fabrics, where the basis was linen threads, and the weft was woolen. Dyes of a natural origin were used for
dyeing threads, which were completely replaced by aniline counterparts at the beginning of the 20th century.

The most characteristic were skirts sewn from a striped linen in narrow blue and white longitudinal and transverse bands. Sometimes such a skirt was decorated with red woven stripes in a lower part of a skirt. In the villages of Sosnya, Ivanychi and Bubniv, Volodymyr-Volynsky districts, we managed to find such a model of the end of the 19th – the beginning 20th century and fix a local name – “valyvka” (Appendix 3). The length of “valyvka” is 105 cm, at the waist it is pleated, except for the front part, which contains a cut and there was necessarily a home-made zapaska (an apron with a star-shaped trim).

At the end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century factory-made fabrics were used actively. Therefore, waistband clothes made of home-made fabrics fell out of use gradually, and skirts made of calico, satin, a thin woolen factory fabric, etc., took their place. In terms of a cut, these waistband clothes resembled samples of homespun fabrics: densely pleated at the waist, with a slit and no pleats in the front, but the difference was in length – they were much shorter than their predecessors. Quite often, such skirts were decorated with an appliqué in the form of several horizontal coloured ribbons, occasionally wealthier peasant women used pozument. Mandatory for such skirts was an apron made of factory fabric, decorated with embroidery or an appliqué.

Zapasky (aprons with a star-shaped trim).

An indispensable element of women’s complex outfit of Western Volyn was an additional waistband clothing – zapaska – a rectangular single-clothing, sewn from a woven piece of home-made fabric, the basis of which was linen threads, and the weft was finely spun woolen threads (Appendix 4).

In the upper part of zapaska there were several folds and a sewn narrow linen band, to which there were attached, in turn, linen laces or narrow woolen strips, with the help of which zapaska was fixed on top of the main waistband clothing. There was a simple seam in the lower part.

Zapaska had narrow multi-coloured (black, red, yellow, green, blue, white, orange, etc.) stripes alternating with each other across. There were wider main colour stripes in the lower part.

Aprons

At the beginning of the 20th century a home-made zapaska became a thing of the past, and was replaced by aprons sewn from factory cotton and linen fabric. They were sewn from one rectangular cloth, pleated in waistband, and at the bottom they were decorated with a lace of home or factory production, sometimes peasants made tassels from the threads of the cloth base (Appendix 5). Embroidered aprons were spread on both sides of the Western Buh River and had a number of common features.

In some places, the ancient name “zapaska” was preserved to denote an apron made of factory fabric. Such aprons were mostly embroidered in the “cross” technique and occasionally “plain” in cotton, sometimes silk threads. Plant ornaments were dominant, sometimes in combination with geometric ones.

Kraiky

In Western Volyn, as well as in other neighbouring parts of the region, waistbands were in the form of striped narrow edges, made on a loom in the technique of a simple linen weaving (Appendix 6). Sometimes there were samples made in an “overflow” technique. Such edges were multi-coloured, but the main colour was red, complemented by splashes of black, yellow, green, blue, white, orange, etc. The edges ended with twisted tassels formed from the warp threads.
**Chest clothing**

Sleeveless chest clothing is of a rather late origin and arose under the influence of pan-European urban fashion. It was worn directly over the shirt and complemented the silhouette of the Volyn folk clothing of the period under analysis.

Sleeveless chest clothing were represented by vests and corsets of several types: “horset”, “stanik”, “shnyrovytsia” (Chaikovska, 2012, p. 74). The front pleats were fastened with buttons and slotted loops or hooks. The back was mostly solid and widened with wedges. Some of them have the so-called “tongues” – round flaps that were sewn along the waist.

The analysed samples indicate that the majority of sleeveless chest clothings were sewn by a sewing machine. Mostly factory-made cotton and semi-wool fabrics were used: velvet, satin, chintz, etc. The most common were black, blue, green, burgundy, etc. colours. Sleeveless shirts had a lining, which was cut mainly from home-spun linen. They were decorated with an appliqué made of velvet, pозумент or factory braid.

In the first half of the 20th century there appeared slightly different “камизельки” (vests) (Appendix 7). They were somewhat longer when compared to the samples of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century. The main fabric was mainly velvet, although there are samples made of factory woolen and cotton fabric. The lining was a home-spun linen cloth. The main difference of such vests was not only in the length, but also in the way of decoration – a widespread embroidery with beads and threads using a “plain” embroidery technique. In some villages, especially in the vicinity of a modern town of Novovolynsk, such vests were used until the middle of the 20th century and were used during the wedding ceremony.

**Footwear**

At the end of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century, in the territory of Western Volyn, during the warm season people walked barefoot. On cooler days and bad weather three types of shoes were used: woven from tree bark, wrinkled from animal skin, and sewn.

The most archaic footwear of the region are postols woven from tree bark, which were mostly found in the north of the territory under analysis, on the border with Polissia, where woven postols were the most common among other regions of Ukraine. The legs were wrapped with cloths – pieces of home-spun or woolen fabric, depending on the air temperature, they were fixed with the help of drags – linen laces.

Leather soles are a type of tight shoes made of thick, but soft cow or pig rawhide, which were sewn from one piece of leather, blunt or pointed, depending on the place and nature of tightening or stitching of individual parts of the sole (Nikolaeva, 1987, p. 74). We learn about postols made from animal skins from archaeological excavations, in particular from the battlefield near Berestechko during the national liberation war of the Ukrainian people led by B. Khmelnitskyi. However, field research and museum samples do not give us an idea of wrinkled leather shoes of the period of the second half of the 19th – the first half of the 20th century. Longer, sometimes up to the mid-20th century, this type of footwear was found in Podilia, which is close to Volyn.

Sewn footwear includes boots and shoes made by local craftsmen. Heeled boots with long freebies stilettos in different colours were especially popular.

In the 1920s and 1930s, when the region was part of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, factory-produced shoes of the European type became widespread.

**Hairstyles and hats**

In warm season, girls went with their heads uncovered, braiding one or two braids, in cool season they wore a kerchief. In Volyn, as well as in other regions of Ukraine, married women always covered their heads.
At the end of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century, in Volyn, various types of women’s headdresses were common – cap-like chiptsi, towel-like namitky made of different types of cloth, woven kerchiefs.

It was possible to record and study only a few of the main women’s headdresses outfits in the areas under research. These are kerchiefs made of home-spun linen (the village of Lytovezh, Ivanychi district) and manufacturing production. The absence of cap-like and towel-like headdresses in museum collections indicates that they fell out of use at the end of the 19th century.

A home-made kerchief was of a rectangular shape, was woven from home-spun linen threads, and along the perimeter was ornamented with tassels made of red factory cotton threads.

Kerchiefs of manufacturing production were different in size and colour pattern. Manufactured kerchiefs with embossed ornament were used.

**Jewelry**

In Western Volyn the most common necklace was a coral necklace of various shapes and sizes. The poorer population used the so-called “stone” (smalt) necklace of different colours, different shades of red mostly (Vrochynska, 2008, p. 39). A necklace made of multi-coloured blown and cast glass was also popular.

Residents of Western Volyn also used a variety of jewelry. These are mostly silver, and occasionally gold, earrings, crosses, various rings.

**Outerwear**

Outerwear of the Ukrainians was of two types: autumn-spring and winter. A special group includes raincoat clothing, which was worn on top of the first two types in bad weather conditions (Nikolaeva, 1987, p. 54).

Animal skins, home-spun cloth and linen were used for sewing outerwear. The cloth was usually the natural colour of sheep’s wool: brown, white, gray and black (Mateiko, 1977, p. 97). The same can be observed in the previous eras (Shkolna, Timoshenko, 2023, p. 21).

At the beginning of the 20th century the most common examples of autumn-spring clothing were svyty, semrags, syvaky and kosachky in Western Volyn.

The traditional svyta was made of brown home-spun cloth. It had a straight back and widened downwards with side wedges that folded into folds along the waist line. The sleeves were straight, the collar mostly had the appearance of a stand, sometimes it was sewn with a fold-down collar.

Semrags were similar to suits, which were also sewn from home-spun cloth, usually brown in colour. They were straight-backed and flared downward with wedges, but had no pleats. Semrags were decorated with velvet appliqué and ribbons on hems and sleeves.

At the beginning of the 20th century in the territories of Sokal District of Lviv Region, Ivanychi District of Volyn Region, as well as Hrubieszów Povit of Lublin Voivodeship of Poland, syvaky were widespread. This is a female outerwear of a late origin, which arose under the influence of urban fashion. They were much shorter, if compared with suits and semrags, a jacket design, but were sewn from a homespun cloth of a gray colour, from which they got their name (the villages of Lytovezh, Zabolotski, Zastavne of Ivanychi district). They were decorated with an appliqué in the form of velvet stripes on hems, bottom, sleeves.

A rather interesting sample of short women’s outerwear made of home-spun cloth were “kosachky”, which were worn in the suburbs of Volodymyr. They were mostly sewn from brown cloth, decorated with factory cloth, braids, pozuments, curls of various colors. One example of such a kosachka was found in the village of Bubniv, Volodymyr-Volynsky district (Appendix 8).
The main form of winter outerwear of the Ukrainians in Volyn, as well as in other regions of Ukraine, and among neighbouring peoples, was a coat kozhukh (Mateiko, 1977, p. 114). In the territory under analysis, there were long, straight-backed white coats kozhukhy that were wider downwards with the help of side wedges with a large folding collar or a low stand-up collar. They were replaced by shortened coats kozhukhy of a dark ochre colour, an active use of which is the period of the 20s and 30s of the 20th century. Kozhukhy coats were decorated with an appliqué with stripes, ribbons, curves on hems, around wrists and pockets, sometimes they were embroidered with woolen or cotton threads with the seam “goat”, “cross”, etc.

In Western Volyn, and especially in the Galician part, the so-called poltnianka was worn. According to the method of cutting, they had several forms – straight-backed, single-sided; flared single- and double-sided; with a cut-off back and thick gatherings (Chaikovska, 2012, p. 73). They were decorated with an appliqué, using a blue cloth and cords of blue, red, yellow colours, etc.

In the middle of the 20th century old models of outerwear went into the past, they were replaced by “sachky”, “jackets” of dark colours, which appeared under the influence of an urban fashion.

The Conclusion. Folk clothing of Western Volyn, despite transformation and modification that took place at the end of the 19th century – at the beginning 20th century, kept its special colour owing, above all, to a black colour in embroidery of women’s shirts. Although a large assortment of cotton threads for embroidery of various colours appears during the period under analysis, shirts, despite a polychrome embroidery that replaced a monochrome one, did not lose their face and a clear narrow local specificity, on the contrary, they were enriched with new techniques and ornaments, which makes it possible to distinguish them from other examples of body clothing of a large ethnographic and historical region – Volyn.

Acknowledgement. We express sincere gratitude to all members of the editorial board for consultations provided during the preparation of the article for publishing.

Funding. The authors did not receive any financial support for the research, authorship and / or publication of this article.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Sokalski, B. (1899). Powiat Sokalski pod wzgledem geograficznym, historycznym i ekonomicznym [Sokal County in terms of Geography, History and Economy]. Lwów. [in Polish]


Illustrations

Appendix 1. Women’s embroidered shirt. Sokal District, Lviv Region. The beginning of the 20th century

Appendix 2. Women’s embroidered shirt. Lytovezh village, Ivanychiv District, Volyn Region. The end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century
Appendix 3. Home-made skirt «valyvka». The village of Bubniv, Volodymyr-Volynsky District, Volyn Region. The end of the 19th century

Appendix 4. Homemade zapaska. The village of Sosnyna, Ivanychiv District, Volyn Region. The beginning of the Start 20th century

Appendix 5. Embroidered zapaska. Lytovezh village, Ivanychiv District, Volyn Region in 1920 – the 30s
Appendix 6. Kraika. The village of Stara Lishnia, Ivanychiv District, Volyn Region. The end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century

Appendix 7. Sleeveless women’s “kamizelka” (vest). Lytovezh village, Ivanychiv District, Volyn Region in 1920 – the 30s

Appendix 8. Women’s outerwear “kosachok”. The village of Bubniv, Volodymyr-Volynsky District, Volyn Region. The end of the 19th century