

# Folk Dress



117. Woman's and man's festive costume. NORW. Setesdal. 19th century. Wool, linen, silk. Adult size. Norsk Folkemuseum.

All evolving from the long pants or skirt and long shirt of Medieval times, distinct styles of dress developed in different areas after the Renaissance. The two parts, however, remained fundamental with the changes being largely in additions over them and shifts in their length and the location of the waistline. The woman's costume of Setesdal had essentially this form by the mid 18th century and the man's by the mid 19th. Geometric embroidery helps retain a Medieval and Renaissance character.



118. Married woman's festive costume.  
Norw. Hallingdal. 19th century. Wool,  
linen. Model: H. Ca. 63" Adult size.  
Norsk Folkemuseum.

The high waist of Setesdal, pre-Empire  
in origin, is also found in the female  
costume of Hallingdal but with a longer  
skirt. The addition of a floral print apron  
and of floral embroidery on the bodice  
and elsewhere are reflections of the  
Baroque. The headdress gives matronly  
grandeur to the figure.







119. Married woman's festive costume. NORW. IN AM. Hardanger. Early 20th century. Wool, cotton, linen. Adult size. Vesterheim, Luther College Collection (204)

Having acquired essentially this form in the 17th century, the Hardanger female costume in the late 19th century gained status as the national costume of Norway (Fig. 26). The heraldic clarity of its black, white, and red (accented by green trim) and its geometric embroidery made it well suited for this.





120.

120. Free interpretation of bridal costume from Hardanger. NORW.-AM. Mrs. Ole J. Myrlic, Hills, MN. Ca. 1910. Wool, linen, cotton, metallic lace, glass. Adult size. Vesterheim, gift of *Hardangerlaget* through Bruce Hitman (86.131.1.1-10).

This nostalgic American simulation of the maker's wedding attire in Norway served from 1912 to 1986 as a symbol of origin for immigrants from Hardanger. It was worn in actual or mock weddings at the annual meetings of their society (*bygdslag*) (Fig. 32). It also represents the migration of what might be called a cult of the bride in late 19th century Norway.



121.

121. Dress with Hardanger embroidery. NORW.-AM. Grace Rikansrud, Decorah, IA. Signed and dated 1979. Cotton, cotton blend. Size 12. Grace Nelson Rikansrud.

Without pretense of being a traditional costume, this Norwegian-American dress based on it and incorporating traditional embroidery still serves as a symbol of origin. Comparable examples go back to the turn of the century.