

Cover Page



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Chapter Three-Hide Clothing to Dance Shirts

In this chapter I will start off examining hide clothing. I will mainly be looking at breastband designs and also attempt to identify the tunic's regional origin. Once I have discussed the tunics from various regions I briefly write about the changing style of the tunics and breastbands as contact with the white people became more common. I will then look at various other upper body garments, such as later style hide jackets and dance shirts. This chapter does not give an exhaustive list but a general overview. There may be unique personal and regional examples of hide clothing and dance shirts that do not 'fit' into my descriptions. This is because of styles being copied or exchanged through the trading activities as well as styles moving into new areas because of people marrying with a person of that new region.

I will be focusing on the style of the breastband as a form of regional identification. The book *Fascinating Challenges* by Judy Thompson, Judy Hall and Leslie Tepper, in collaboration with Dorothy K. Burnham is an excellent reference to the different cut styles between the Tanaina (Dena'ina) and Gwich'in clothing. Judy Thompson's research on the two cut styles has allowed her to identify with certainty if the tunic is Dena'ina or Gwich'in. I examine the differences of the details of the tunic with a focus on the breastband patterns from various groups of people. By noting the similarities of tunics from one group of people I reveal the differences with other groups of people. I will start with the Dena'ina and Gwich'in because of the more certain provenance. Later I look at the southern Yukon tunics. I thus add the "Southern Yukon" tunic style.

Tunic breastbands

I have found that in all the collections I have examined the tunics are one of the most collected and representational artifacts of our culture. In fact, the tunic breastbands give us a large inventory of decorative arts. Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* reports that there are over 150 examples of tunic and moccasin-trousers in museums collections in North America and Europe. These tunics were collected from the western Northwest Territories, northern British Columbia and Yukon, interior and the southeastern coastal areas of Alaska. In some cases the tunics and moccasin-trousers were collected second hand from a middle man. For instance, southern Yukon tunics were traded to the coastal Tlingits, then on to white traders and explorers. As far as I know there is not a single southern Yukon tunic that was collected in the southern Yukon! In other areas the tunics were collected directly from the regional group of people. For example, the Russian America Company collected regional tunics during the course of their trade operations starting in the late 1700s until Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867. And the Hudson Bay Company collected many tunics directly over the course of their trading operations in the Northwest Territories, northern Yukon and interior Alaska.

The Tlingits had a very established trade system with the people of the south-central Yukon. The items traded from the Yukon to the Tlingits were such things as copper, hides, bone tools, ritual items, dolls and hide clothing. There are many old drawings of coastal Tlingits wearing what is obviously interior made clothing. This is what Annie Ned says about the past when the coastal Tlingits wanted interior clothing:

"Yukon people are hunting, and they've got nice skin clothes--Oh, gee, porcupine quills, moose skins, moccasins! Everything nice.

Coast Indians saw those clothes and they wanted them! That's the way they found out about these Yukon people. Right then, they found where we hunted. Coast Indians

traded those knives, axes, and they got *nothing*, those Tlingit people, just cloth clothes, groundhog clothes. Nothing! Goat and ground-hog, that's all." (Cruikshank 1990: 280)

Since the Interior clothing was superior to the coastal made clothing it was in demand by the coastal Tlingits and was a big part of early trade up till the time that furs came in demand. The demand for furs started when the white traders had established contact and developed trade relations with the Tlingits. The trade for hide clothing did carry on for a while and hide tunics were traded on from the Tlingits to white people. Those traded tunics that were originally from the southern Yukon made their way into museum collections. Because they were traded via the middleman Tlingit traders, these articles of clothing often were identified as either Tlingit or interior and given no indication as to more precise interior location. An example of the lack of identification can be seen on a didactic panel in front of a set of Athapaskan clothing at the Anchorage Museum in figure # 59:

This set of heavily bead-decorated clothing was probably made in Alaska or northwestern Canada, although it is difficult to discern stylistically which group made it. (99.077.001ae, Anchorage Museum)



Figure # 59. 99.077.001ae, Anchorage Museum

The original hide tunics and dresses followed mostly the same pattern, that is, the man's garment was a pull-over and came to a point at the bottom front and back and a woman's garment was generally straight at the bottom, except in the western part of Alaska where the women sometimes wore dresses with the pointed front and back. The men's tunics had a decorated breastband across the chest while this was less the case for women's dress. In the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, in the artifact notes for a man's moose hide tunic that is listed as interior Alaska, the purpose of the tunic design is described as follows:

Pointed shirt is long to protect legs, going through the bush, provides protection, sitting down, gives protection from wind to vital areas of the body, lets water drip down the center, not down the legs; decoration adds weight to keep shirt down in wind. (George Lewis, Sitka IV.X.1 a,b. SJM).

See figure # 60 below for the set of clothing on display at the Sheldon Jackson Museum. Note what I wrote about the geometric zigzag pattern in the breastband in Chapter Two-Geometric & Decorative Arts shown in figure # 23 on page 57.



Figure # 60. Men's Athapaskan hide clothing. IV.X.1 a,b. SJM.

While all men's tunics had the same outward pattern, the breastband designs were all different. People tended to make the breastbands in a local style and thus the breastband patterns can help to identify the region where the tunic was made. When examining the tunic and breastband I try to answer questions like: How wide is the breastband? How complex and colourful are the patterns within the breastband? How are the fringes dealt with? What type of pattern goes from the collar area to the breastband? I also look at the sleeve cuffs. Are they decorated? How about the painted lines of the tunic and is there any fur showing? Are there additional parts added such as breastbands and fringes on the back? By looking at these areas of the tunic I am sometimes able to identify general regional styles. In some areas a regional style is easier to detect, such as for the Dena'ina (also known as the Tanaina), while in other areas there seems to be a blending of styles between regions. Once you take into

account intermarriage between groups and even just a mixing of ideas, the regional styles can become even more blurred. The Gwich'in breastbands tend to have common traits within their region and there also seems to be a general southern Yukon and northern British Columbia breastband style. This is a vast subject that would require more research and is beyond the focus of this book, but I will give comparisons of different breastband styles from the three main regions as well as from some of the neighbouring areas. Please note that, like all other art forms from the Athapaskan regions, there are always exceptions and variations. While the Tanaina are quite a distance from the Yukon region their breastbands and clothing patterns are a good place to start when discussing the differences between regions. This is because their clothing has a distinct appearance and generally the same style of breastband designs

Tanaina breastband designs

See figure # 61 for four examples of Dena'ina breastband designs. The provenance for collecting artifacts of the Dena'ina is generally good. Many of the tunics were collected by the Russian American Company during their trading operations in Alaska.





C



D

Figure # 61. Four Dena'ina tunics. A) Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin IV 9386. B) National Museum of Finland VK 175. C) National Museum of Finland VK 168. D) Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin IV 9086.

The breastband patterns above use muted earth colours in a narrow band. The patterns are a series of repeating motifs of geometric designs often spaced by lighter coloured gaps. There is a sepia type colour with brown patterns over a lighter tan colour and this breastband is mounted on a very lightly smoked hide and thus showing a light cream, off- white colour. The patterns themselves are very geometric in nature using small blocks or lines of colour. Some of the blocks of colour are made up of a series of smaller patterns themselves. Many of the tunics collected from this area appear to be slightly longer in design than tunics farther to the east and south. While only one tunic (A) is showing a breastband that goes straight across the chest and not a shallow “V” type pattern, there are many examples of other Dena'ina tunics with the breastband in similar configuration. Tunic A is a woman's garment and was originally collected by the Russian American Company. It has fringes that were cut out of a strip of hide in quite wide sections. Note that the other tunic fringes are narrower and are decorated with either silverberry seeds or with wrapped porcupine quills. It is not uncommon for the Dena'ina to use the wide undecorated fringes on the woman's garments and I have not seen examples of this in other groups. Nor have I seen the wide fringes on Dena'ina men's

tunics. All the Dena'ina women's garments I examined have straight bottoms while all the men's tunics have pointed front and backs. You will also see fur collar on the garments in examples A & B. Tunic B was donated to the National Museum of Finland in 1846 and was originally collected by the Russian American Company. In example C is a series of painted lines, which occurs on occasion. It seems that the Dena'ina preferred to leave that area above the breastband clear of decoration. While Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* states that from the 1880s Dena'ina started using beads in their breastbands, the only example I have seen of the Dena'ina using beads on their hide clothing is from the Alaskan State Museum in Juneau. In the interior of the Yukon, First Nations people were using beads on their clothing as early as the 1840s without any direct contact with white people. With the Dena'ina already having almost a century of direct contact with white traders and only starting to use beads in the 1880s, there must have been a reluctance to switch from porcupine embroidery to beading.

Gwich'in breastband designs

In contrast to the Dena'ina designs are the Gwich'in. The three breastband patterns in figure # 62 A, B & C all have broader breastbands and are filled with very colourful geometric patterns. The breastbands also do not always go straight across the chest but, as in A and B, have two 'peaks' of the breastband at both sides of the chest, creating a bit of a wave effect. The patterns themselves do not always have the set spaces between geometric patterns but have a continuous geometric pattern such as in figure # 62 A & B. Figure # 62C's pattern incorporates the white colour areas as part of the whole pattern and these lighter coloured areas are not gaps between the geometric patterns as in the Dena'ina examples. It does appear that the breastband pattern in figure # 63 does use the lighter areas as a space between the geometric patterns. There are three embroidered strips traveling down from an embroidered area at the collar front.

Tunic # 62A is from the Canadian Museum of Civilization and has on the label "H.B.Co." "Loucheaux". As mentioned earlier, the early name to identify the Gwich'in was Loucheaux. Kutchin is also an earlier term for the Gwich'in people. Tunic # 62B is from the Royal Ontario Museum and was collected by Frank Wilson who was the factor of Fort Vermillion which is in northern Alberta, quite south of Gwich'in territory. The tunic was likely traded south as the style appears to be very much Gwich'in to me. Tunic # 62C is from the National Museum of Nature History at the Smithsonian in Washington DC. It is identified as Kutchin and was collected on the Yukon River. It was part of the Bernard Ross collection. Compared to the other two tunics, Tunic C has a slightly thinner breastband with a less noticeable 'wave'. But when I compare Tunic C in # 62 to other tunics that have been identified as Loucheux from other collections that originated from the Hudson Bay Company, such as the man's summer outfit in figure # 63, they look alike.

The outfit in figure # 63 is in the Royal Scottish Museum and was collected by Bernard Ross from Fort Simpson. Fort Simpson is not in Kutchin territory but is in the Athapaskan group Slavey's territory. Fort Simpson was a Hudson Bay trading post built in 1822 and is on the banks of the Mackenzie River, the main trading route connecting the north to the southern major Hudson Bay Company's trading forts such as Fort Resolution and Fort Chipewyan. Because Fort Simpson was on the major trading route in northern Canada and Bernard Ross was a major collector in the 1860s the tunic could have easily been obtained by Ross in Fort Simpson or elsewhere. The other point that makes me think that this is indeed a Gwich'in garment is that from what I have seen from early Slavey clothing, the pattern is different. It appears that the Slavey tunics generally have straight and not pointed bottoms. Having said that, I must point out that there are very few examples of very early Slavey

clothing to compare with Gwich'in clothing. Other than the breastband pattern details the two tunics # 62C and # 63 are essentially the same and because of this, I am satisfied that Tunic # 62C is correctly identified as Kutchin.



A



B



C



D

Figure # 62. Four Gwich'in/Kutchin tunics. A) CMC VI-I-73a, B) ROM 2000.80.1.1, C) NMNH 2030, D) PRM 1884.88.8.



Figure # 63. Gwich'in summer outfit. RSM A.564

The provenance for Gwich'in tunics is generally good as they were collected by people involved in some manner with the Hudson Bay Company during their trading operations in northern Canada and into the interior of Alaska. Yet some tunics are mistakenly identified as Kutchin because they have the same outline. This tunic pattern is common from Northern British Columbia up into the interior of Alaska and across to the north western part of the Northwest Territories. Identifying a tunic solely based on its outline could lead to errors. See figure # 62D for an example of a tunic that is identified as Kutchin based on the style. This tunic, which I discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, was donated to the Pitt River Museum in Oxford in 1884 and the location or date of collection is unknown. While it does have a wave-like pattern in the breastband, it is not colorful like the Gwich'in and there are not the three strips traveling down from an embroidered area in front of the collar. There are three red painted stripes which is a characteristic of other Athapaskan tunics but not Gwich'in. Because of these differences the tunic looks more like the southern Yukon style rather than northern Yukon.

Next I will show Gwich'in breastbands that have incorporated trade items, mainly beads and/or dentalia shells. The dentalia shells originate in the Haida territory of the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia and illustrate how far the trade networks stretched. The dentalia shells made their way inland from the Tlingits to interior Athapaskans and on to the Gwich'in. The beads first arrived in the Gwich'in territory with the Hudson Bay Company but some Russian trade beads may have worked their way up from the Tlingits in the earlier part of the 19th century, before the Hudson Bay Company established itself in the area in the mid-19th century. Robert Campbell mentioned that there were already beads in Northern Tutchone territory when he first established Fort Selkirk at the fork of the Pelly and Yukon River in 1848. An early description of Southern Yukon First Nations clothing is found in *Prelude to Bonanza*, in the Pelly and Yukon River areas between 1848 and 1853 as described by Robert Campbell, when he moved into the area and operated Fort Selkirk:

Two of their leading Chiefs, father & son, named Thlin-ikik-Thling and Hanan were tall, stalwart, good looking men, clad from head to foot in dressed deer skins, ornamented with beads & porcupine quills of all colours. (Wright 1976: 40)

And again Campbell describes the clothing down the Yukon River somewhere between the Pelly, Stewart and White Rivers:

Their dress which when new is pretty & picturesque, is made of the skin of the moose or the reindeer, principally the latter. The skirt or coat is finished in a point, both before & behind, & reaches down to the knees, being frequently ornamented with coloured beads, porcupine quills, or long hair. The coat has a hole large enough to admit the head, but does not open in front, & is provided with a hood which can be used when wanted, as a headdress. The trowsers [*sic*] or leg covering, & shoes are made of the same material, & trimmed the same way. The winter costume is the same, except that the skin is dressed with the hair left on, & the garment made with hair inside for warmth. Their socks in winter consist of grass & hair, over which is drawn the shoe. Their tents of course are made of leather. These Indians are very fond of ornaments of any kind; such as ear-rings, & also decorate their dress freely with ermine or squirrel skins or tails, duck wings, long hair, &c. They also often daub their faces with red earth or ochre &c... (Wright 1976: 67)

As we can read from these descriptions, trade beads have already made their way into the Northern Tutchone territory before Campbell showed up in the region. It seems to be the only trade item that was in common use at that time. See figure # 64 A-D for the Gwich'in tunics with dentalia shells and beads incorporated into the designs.



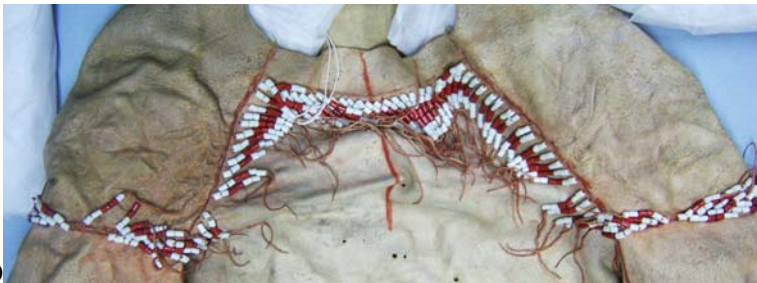
A



B



C



D

Figure # 64. Four Gwich'in tunics with trade beads incorporated into the breastband designs. A) NMNH 881 B) NMNH 4971 C) NMNH 884 D) NMNH 1855.

The first two above are men's tunics and the two bottom garments are women's dresses. The most obvious difference between a man's tunic and a woman's dress, as I mentioned before, is that a man's tunic has a pointed front and back while the woman's dress is generally cut level at the bottom. The second difference is that most of the time the woman's dress breastband area is not decorated nearly as much as a man's tunic. In the Dawson City (Han) area, when people asked why men's clothing was fancier than women's clothing, they replied that it was that way with birds. The male bird is generally more decorated than the female bird. This is even apparent in the grouse dance performed in the southern Yukon. It is the man who dances like grouse, using grouse tail feather dance fans to try and attract the women. See figure # 65 for full length view of a man's tunic and woman's dress.

The four Gwich'in breastbands in figure # 64 are good examples of the transition from porcupine embroidery to using beads. In figure A the breastband is mostly dentalia shells and the pattern is connected with blue trade beads. The fringes are also highlighted

with beads. While the pattern is much simpler than the earlier porcupine embroidery it is still quite attractive with the generous use of dentalia shells, which also shows the wealth of the owner. Notice that the beads are used in the geometric patterns, not the later floral designs. The breastband is wide and the collar area is well defined with beads and dentalia shells. In tunic B there is more use of beads and the breastband is wider than A. It is also very attractive. Both these tunics as well as the two dresses are in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian collection in Washington, DC. When we look at the woman's dresses we can see right away that the breastband work is simpler and goes across the arm, up the side of the shoulder to the collar and across. The breastband does not travel across the chest. In C the dress has a narrow breastband that has a series of beaded fringes coming out of the bottom of the breastband. Dress D is the same but without the breastband, having only beaded fringes.



Figure # 65. Two Gwich'in garments. A) Left; Man's tunic, NMNH 881 B) Right; Woman's dress, NMNH 884.

In figure # 65 you can see how the bottom of the garment is handled: the male tunic pointed and the female dress straight across. There are some cases where a garment is identified as a woman's dress but is pointed in the front and back. I have not been able to verify that these are in fact male tunics that have been misidentified, so for now I accept them as woman's dresses with a pointed front and back. The other identifiers are the painted lines and fringes at the bottom of the two garments. In both the dresses (# 64C&D) is a double painted line across the bottom. This does not occur in all dresses but appears to be common on those dresses that use an additional hide at the bottom to increase the length of the dress. This may be due to the use of smaller caribou hides. The seam line is then painted in red ochre. The Dena'ina use one piece of hide for the length and I have not seen these lines on their dresses. The line coming down the center is common in both male and female garments. Both the garments have decorated cuffs.

Han & Northern Tutchone

Just to the south of the Gwich'in are the Han people and the Northern Tutchone. Clothing of the Han and possibly the northern most people of the Northern Tutchone is very close in appearance to the Gwich'in. See figure # 78 on page 108 of Han dresses for an example of closeness in styles when compared to the Gwich'in dress in figure # 65B. Below in figure # 66 is three examples of Han or possibly Northern Tutchone breastband designs.

All three are in the National Museum of National History Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Item 66A is listed as Han and item 66B was collected in the Peel River. This river falls within both the Gwich'in and Northern Tutchone traditional Territory. Since item 66B does not have either beaded or porcupine embroidery going from the breastband to the collar, as in all the Gwich'in tunics, and since the use of painting lines from the breastband to the collar was more popular in the south-central Yukon, I put forward that this tunic may be of Northern Tutchone manufacture. Item 66C was collected at Fort Reliance, Yukon and is well within Han territory. This is a child's garment and has the hood attached. In the adult garment's case, the hood was almost always separate. Maybe for a child's garment the hood was attached for ease of use by the child and to prevent loss of the hood. All three of the breastband designs are mostly beaded and in the case of item 66A also decorated with dentalia shells. All three look very similar to the Gwich'in breastband designs that used beads. I am suspecting that when the beads and dentalia shells were used for the breastbands they limited the amount of geometric designs that were earlier created with porcupine quills. Being neighbors and the overlapping of traditional territories may have a lot to do with the similarities of breastband design, especially after the introduction of beads.



A



B



C
Figure # 66, Han & possible Northern Tutchone breastband designs; A) Han tunic 1857-0 NMNH. B) Tunic from Peel River 1856-1 NMNH. C) Han child's clothing from Fort Reliance, Yukon 49150 NMNH.

Southern Yukon Style

The people to the south of the Northern Tutchone are the Southern Tutchone, and south of them the Tagish, Inland Tlingit and Tahltan peoples. Because the styles of this area seem to be different from other regions I will deal with the southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia as one area, which I will call the Southern Yukon Style. This is regardless of the fact that within this area there are different ways to deal with the breastband designs. Every article and related information of southern Yukon hide clothing in collections I have examined and read was collected from the Tlingits along the Alaska coast. They had obtained the clothing from the interior peoples through trade and were prized by the Tlingits. Most information on these tunics states that they were collected in Sitka and do not identify in which area they were originally made. Other tunics were collected from Klukwan in Chilkat Tlingit territory and these tunics most certainly were obtained from either the Southern or Northern Tutchone based on the trade routes the Chilkat Tlingits used. The tunics below have enough evidence to suggest to me that they originate from the Southern Style region. One of the interesting things about some of the breastband designs from this region is the use of a "V", which is at times a deep pointed style breastband design. The other point is that for some tunics they used larger blocks of coloured areas in the breastband patterns. There also seems to be red ochre painted on the chest areas. The added red ochre is not painted in any design or pattern. Was it originally painted over the whole chest area but has worn off over time to leave only sections with paint? See figure # 67 for three examples of tunics from the Tutchone part of the region.



A



B



C

Figure # 67, Southern Style breastband designs; A) Southern Style tunic. 79349 Field Museum. B) Southern Style tunic 1168 Burke Museum. C) Southern Style tunic 2430 Burke Museum.

Note that the breastband pattern designs shown above tend to use bigger shapes and bolder motifs than the Tanaina or Gwich'in and more colourful than the Tanaina. Tunic 67A is from the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and was collected in 1902 by George Emmons. This tunic's breastband is pointed at the center of the chest and has

the Greek style key or meander pattern making up the colourful beaded design. This meander pattern seems to be unique to the southern style's area. The museum data card for this tunic states:

“Collected by Emmons in 1902 from a Tlingit chief in Sitka, Alaska. The chief had acquired them in 1900 from Tlingit at the head of the Lynn Canal, who in turn had received them in trade from an interior Athapaskan group (VanStone 1982: 51)” from Pride of the Indian Wardrobe by Judy Thompson.

The head of the Lynn Canal suggests that this garment was collected from the Chilkat Tlingits who in turn traded with the Southern and Northern Tutchone. Here is what Emmons wrote concerning the Coastal Tlingit use of the hide clothing with the breastband designs:

The tanned skin dress was ornamented with fringe strips and bands painted red. Beadwork was not employed on the dress, and porcupine quill work was only on clothing procured in trade from the interior tribes. (Emmons, 239)

The next tunic, # 67B, was also collected by Emmons in 1909 from Klukwan, a Chilkat Tlingit village. It is listed as originating from the Yukon Basin suggesting the Northern and Southern Tutchone traditional territory. It has a slight point at the chest and is a simple checkered pattern of orange dyed quills. This basic pattern appears on other items from the southern Yukon such as bone gopher skinning knives and bone arm bands. The next tunic (# 67C) was also collected by Emmons in 1909 from the Chilkat Tlingits and is listed as coming from the Yukon River valley. Again, this would make it either Southern or Northern Tutchone.

In the next two examples are garments that may come from the Inland Tlingit people. When the Tlingit moved inland for trade reasons they had to adopt the Athapaskan lifestyle and had to deal with the harsh environment in order to survive. This included adopting the clothing styles of the interior people. Figure # 68 has two rather different style garments. Item 68A is a fairly typical garment from the Southern Style region and has a unique geometric breastband pattern and item 68B has a deep “V” in the breastband. This is not uncommon for the Southern Style region. Item 68A has a unique repeating ‘dumbbell’ geometric design in the breastband that is typical in using bigger bolder patterns in the breastband. The breastband pattern is made of repeating dumbbells and has a square motif, third from center space in the breastband, providing a break between the repeating dumbbells. I find that the space size for the dumbbells and the dividing of the dumbbells themselves remind me of what is known as the ‘Divine Proportion’. According to Priya Hemenwat’s *The Secret Code*, on page 25, this size of rectangle shape is most pleasing. The approximate ratio of 1.618 is known as the ‘golden ratio’ or the ‘Divine Proportion’ and is often found in nature. With a greater examination of breastband and other geometric designs we may find many examples of the ‘Divine Proportion’. This would not have been planned on purpose but was created for its pleasing feeling. Silverberry seeds are used in the fringes as well as porcupine quill wrapping. Beads are used in the collar area and on the strips leading down to the breastband. Red ochre paint was used on the seams.



A



B

Figure # 68, Southern Style breastband designs; A) Southern Style tunic. 5085 Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna. B) Southern Style dress VI-J-82, CMC.

The second garment is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization and is identified as a woman's dress but has the pointed bottom front and back edges. I have also seen photographs of this breastband pattern on many other tunics and dance shirts that were worn by men. This pattern is also often used on coastal Tlingit dance shirts adding weight to the idea that this is a common coastal and Inland Tlingit pattern. Because the dress has a pointed front and back I wonder if this is indeed a women's dress. Note the photograph in figure # 142 on page 164 of a man wearing a tunic with the same breastband pattern. This dress was collected by H.H. Cheney and was received at the CMC in December of 1931. When and where this dress was made, and by whom, is not listed. The CMC has listed this dress as probably Inland Tlingit. The catalogue card states:

“Inland Tlingit” attribution based on comparison with documented specimens from Teslin Lake which have very similar “stylized leaf” motif as found on the cuffs of this specimen.

See figure # 69 for the detail of cuff's bead designs. This bead style does look Inland Tlingit so I agree with this attribution. The breastband is of a meander design that is sometimes used in the Southern Style area and goes along with the trend of using big bold patterns. The breastband is beaded and the fringes appear to be wrapped in porcupine quills.



Figure # 69. Detail of cuff design, Southern Style dress VI-J-82, CMC.

There is a similar looking garment very close to the tunic in # 68B and is listed as a Northern Athapaskan shirt. It is in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. The museum purchased this dress in 1965. See figure # 70. Note that the design and the pointed breastband are almost identical to the above dress, but for some differences. The breastband has quill work instead of beads. In fact there are no beads used in this garment at all. There is a collar added to the head hole and there are fringes coming out of the front and back of the pointed bottom. Furthermore, the sleeve cuffs are lined with fur which is normally a Dena'ina trait. What I found amazing is the incredible amount of work required to create this quill work breastband. The geometric pattern in this dress is very close to the Inland Tlingit dress above in figure # 68B. The breastband design is the same on both garments and would indicate that the dress in figure # 70 is also from the Southern Style region. The breastband designs are elaborate and remind me of the geometric designs on the spruce root baskets from Teslin. Emmons documented Athapaskan origins to Tlingit basket motifs which originated with Athapaskan quill work designs.



Figure # 70, Northern Athapaskan southern style garment. AC 1, #92210, Glenbow Museum.

Adjacent to the Inland Tlingit territory are the Tahltan people. They were displaced from the southern Yukon about 200 years ago by the Inland Tlingit for trade reasons. There was a lot of fighting between the two groups as well as trade and intermarriage. This may have resulted in the similar appearances of the following two breastband designs with the Inland Tlingit breastband design in # 68B. The garment in # 71A was collected on the Stikine River which would place it in Tahltan as well as Tlingit territory. The upper Stikine River is Tahltan while the lower Stikine River is Tlingit. It is in the Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen in Berlin, Germany and is listed as Tlingit. The museum has many obviously Athapaskan garments listed as Tlingit. I think this error can be attributed to the original collectors directly assigning the artifacts as Tlingit origin. This is a case where the museum identifications need to be corrected.

The breastband pattern on this garment is a series of repeating chevrons. While not as colourful as other Southern Style tunics the bold geometric chevrons do fit in the Southern Style area. The fringes are wrapped in porcupine quills as well as beads. There are beads along the collar that lead down to the breastband. Garment 71B is in the Glenbow Museum and is listed as Tahltan. It was purchased in 1966 by the museum. This garment appears to lack the colour and bolder breastband design that the other garments from the Southern Style area have. The breastband design is simpler than both the Tanaina and the Gwich'in but I think fits more in the Southern Style. There is porcupine embroidery in the breastband along with silverberries on the fringes. There appears to be a series of red beads that go along the collar and down to the breastband. Based on the overall style and that it was collected on the Stikine River leads me to think this tunic is Tahltan in origin and traded to the Tlingits down the Stikine River. It was then later traded by the Tlingits to white traders who listed the garment as Tlingit.

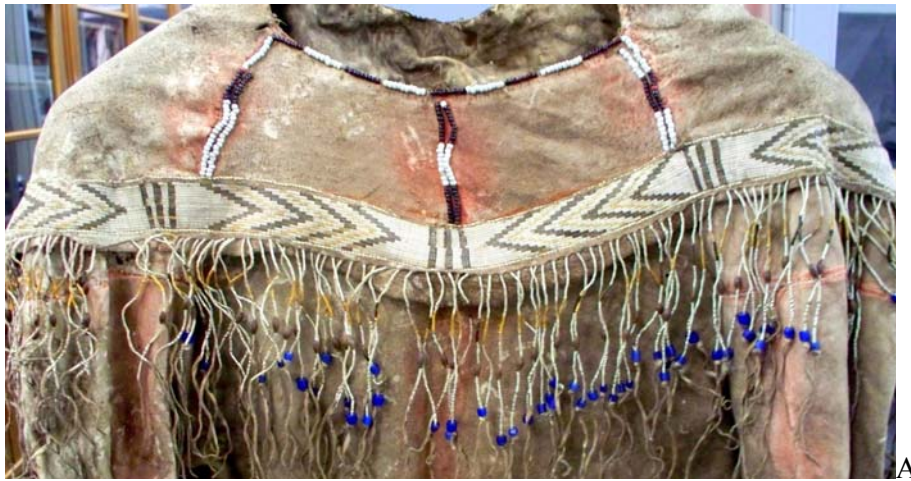




Figure # 71, Southern Yukon Style garments. A) Tunic from Stikine River. IV A 527, Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. B) Tahltan tunic AC 16a #75989, Glenbow Museum.

The Stikine River tunic has something different on the back. While very often the backs are bare or have the breastband continuing all the way around the tunic, the Stikine River has two rows of fringes. See figure # 72 for a back view of the tunic.



Figure # 72. Back Tunic from Stikine River IV A 527 Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

While not so common, these multi fringe or decorated bands were sometimes added to tunics and dance aprons. In the next section I will present a couple of other examples of garments that have extra fringes and breastbands.

Fancy tunics

I have on occasion come across tunics that had additional breastbands or decorated bands attached to them. These range in number from two to six bands. I have not seen anything written about the reasons for having additional bands. I have decided to call these Fancy Tunics, since I am guessing that these additional breastbands were intended to make them fancier, possibly for potlatches and other ceremonies. In addition to the tunics I have seen hide dance aprons designed the same way. The hide dance aprons had a number of bands on them and I suspect that these were used only during potlatches and celebrations. This would strengthen the idea of additional bands being added for ceremonial purposes. In the National Museum of Finland there is a Dena'ina dress that has two breastbands across the front. See figure # 73.



Figure # 73. Dena'ina woman's dress with two breastbands. VK 174, NMF.

In addition to the dress above there is an almost identical dress in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. The difference is that it appears that the extra band is placed on the back of the dress. I base this on the shape of the collar opening: one side of the dress the opening of the collar is lower and this side has one band as seen in the right photograph below in figure # 74. The collar on the other side of the dress is higher and has two bands as seen in the left photograph below. I am assuming that the lower collar is also the front of the dress. On the side with two bands, the bottom band is wider than the top band and note that the collar is round with fur trimming while the collar on the Helsinki dress above is square without fur trimming.



Figure # 74. Dena'ina woman's dress with two breastbands. IV A9386. Ethnologisches Museum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

The museum notes indicate that this dress arrived in the Ethnologisches Museum via Russia.

The next step in adding breastbands is in the British Museum collection in London. The tunic has six embroidered bands across the front.



Figure # 75. Yukon made fancy tunic. AM1982.28.21, BM.

The museum notes for the tunic above state that it was purchased in 1982 from the Warwickshire Museum and that it was originally collected from the Yukon. It does not state where in the Yukon. Judy Thompson in *Fascinating Challenges* suggests that it may have been collected during Capt. Vancouver's Pacific voyage in 1794. This tunic is dark smoked, so this would seem to indicate the garment is not Dena'ina since I have not come across any darkly smoked Dena'ina garments. In fact the Dena'ina clothing are all almost white in colour. The geometric patterns on the six bands are too muted to be Gwich'in. While some of the colours are commonly used by the Dena'ina some of the breastband patterns do not look like Dena'ina designs. The top band uses a series of blocked geometric shapes that are white and olive colour. The next three bands have a series of repeating step-pyramids in white, olive and the occasional sepia colour. The fifth band has a checked pattern all across the band in black, white and sepia. The final band has a series of diagonal step patterns in white, sepia and brown. The olive colour is unusual. The cut appears to be in the Gwich'in style. It is my estimation that this fancy tunic was made somewhere between the Gwich'in and Dena'ina areas. It may be a Han, Tanana or Ahtena fancy tunic and may have been traded through a Tlingit middle-man to end up in the hands of the original collector.

There is another fancy tunic in the Peter the Great Museum and it was collected by the Russians. The breastbands appear to be of southern Yukon style. The use of multi-embroidered bands also extended to dance aprons. I came across a number of dance aprons but failed to take photographs of them all. Below in figure # 76 is a photograph I took of one on display at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka. Unfortunately the photo is of poor quality.



Figure # 76. Athapaskan made Fancy dance apron. IV.X.12, SJM.

The museum notes for this dance apron state that it was manufactured by Athapaskans and obtained and owned by the Chilkat Tlingits of Klukwan, Alaska. This would make this dance apron either Southern or Northern Tutchone in manufacture.

The last Athapaskan tunics/dresses in use

Next two photographs are of what may be one of the last tunics or dresses used, even if the tunic was only worn for special occasions. These are the only photographs I have ever seen of the men's pointed tunic and the Han women's hide dresses. The first photograph in figure # 77 was taken in the Tanana River area and the second photograph in figure # 78 was taken in Dawson City. By the 1880s nobody was using these tunics anymore and yet the photograph in figure # 77 was taken between 1896 and 1939 while the photograph in figure # 78 was taken after the city of Dawson City was built in 1897! The caption for figure # 77 states: Photograph of Chief Alexander at Tolovana in "old time costume." The Tanana River is in the background.



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Figure # 77. Tanana Chief Alexander wearing pointed tunic. UAF-1985-72-91

The tunic appears to be darkly smoked. Perhaps there is a connection with the darkly smoked fancy tunic in figure # 75 on page 105. The breastband pattern is a simple dark and light repeating motif done with dentalia shells. There are no beaded, embroidered or painted lines going from the breastband to the collar. He is wearing a sash as a belt. There are also dentalia shells lining the sleeve cuffs. He is wearing a dentalia shell necklace and with all this display of dentalia shells he is showing us that he is a man of wealth and status!

The image of the hide dresses worn by the Han women in figure # 78 is from a postcard from my collection. The postcard caption states: "Indian Women, returning from Trapping.-Dawson, Y.T." and on the back is written: "Pub. By Cribbs Drug Store". Cribbs Drug Store was in operation in Dawson City from 1897 until 1920. Since hide clothing fell into disuse shortly after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 I would think that this photograph was taken closer to 1897.



Figure # 78. Postcard of Han Women returning to Dawson City sometime between 1897 and 1920. UvK Collection.

The women are wearing typical hide dresses that look very much like the Gwich'in hide dress in figure # 65B on page 94. In examining the details I can see the dresses in the postcard are slightly different from the dress in figure # 65B. The dress on the woman on the right in the postcard has what appears to be a dark band around the bottom. It appears to be part of the dress. The patterns at the bottom of both dresses are very close to the pattern in figure # 65B. While these dresses look like the Gwich'in dresses, I believe these to be Han dresses, as they were very similar in appearance. I base my belief on the fact that the caption states these women are returning from trapping which would imply that they are Han women returning home to the Dawson City area. Note the mitts and the string that is attached to them. The string goes around the neck. Also note the snowshoes behind the women which are typical Yukon style snowshoes.

Gopher coats & rabbit skin clothing

Since I am examining upper body wear I will be adding two other styles of coats that are often overlooked. They are the gopher skin coats and rabbit clothing. In Chapter Eight- Art of the Potlatch & Death I will be discussing gopher skin robes further. The robes were at one time quite common and since gopher skins were used to make robes it only makes sense that they would also have been used for other clothing. In figure # 79 is an example of a gopher skin jacket. It is in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. The museum purchased the coat in 1938 and it is listed as coming from the Yukon and from the Nahane Tribe. Based on the area where the Yukon Nahane lived according to the older Yukon tribe maps, this would most likely make the coat a Kaska garment. The gopher skins are sewn together in the same manner as the robes but shaped into a coat.



Figure # 79. Probably Kaska made gopher skin coat. 198044.000, NMAI.

These gopher skin coats were made throughout the region. Later in figure # 406 on page 377 I will refer to another gopher skin coat but that one was made in Klukwan, Alaska where there are no gophers!

The next article of clothing is rabbit skin made clothing. In the Yukon there are no rabbits but hares, yet these are universally called rabbits. In *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* it states:

Rabbit Skins were peeled off the bodies in long strips, washed and woven loosely into light, warm blankets and parkas. The weaving was done without a loom and was loose enough to provide air space next to the body just like modern new undergarments for cold weather wear. (McClellan 1987: 130)

And in McClellan's *My Old People Say*:

Robes and parkeys of netted rabbit skin were widely used in aboriginal times because they were light, warm, and easily made. Rabbit skins were also popular for wrapping babies in and making hats. Many people still prefer foot duffles of rabbit skin in their winter moccasins. (McClellan 2001: 157)

In this next image you can see by the texture that the garment was woven. The undated but quite old postcard below was produced between 1920 and 1955 by the Missionnaires Oblats de Marie-Immaculée (OMI) of the Catholic Church in Paris in order to show off the members of their 'flock' to their supporters in France.



Figure # 80. Post card of Young Indian girl in full rabbit skin clothing. OMI.

The caption reads: Missions D'Extreme-Nord Canadien. Series VII-Petite fille habillée en "peau de lièvre". This translates to: Little girl dressed in a "hare skin". While the postcard does not give an exact location, the rabbit clothing was common to Athapaskans in many areas of the north and this image is representational of what the clothing looked like when worn. These garments were still worn into the early twentieth century. There are a couple of complete sets of almost identical children's Gwich'in rabbit skin clothing in the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian (cat. Number 071053.00, 071504.000). Those sets were collected in the Peel and Porcupine Rivers areas in 1917 by Donald Cadzow.

Rabbit skins fell into disuse shortly after World War Two. Below in figure # 81 is one of the last images of a used rabbit skin coat I have come across from the Yukon. The photograph is of Florence Orr (nee Kushniruk) and was taken in the late 1940s during the Winter Carnival in Whitehorse. Florence is about four years old when the photograph was taken so this would place the time about 1947 or 1948. Florence is also my 1st cousin once removed. There was little information about the rabbit skin coat but it seems to have a dark trim. This may be the fur of the rabbit in the summer when it is darker or it may be another animal. It does not appear like the coat was woven but that the skins were sewn together. The texture looks quite different from the above image of rabbit skin clothing in figure # 80. The sides of Florence's mukluks are rabbit trimmed. The beadwork applied to the front of the mukluks is the simplified flowers that became common after the completion of the Alaska Highway in 1942.



Figure # 81. Florence Orr wearing a rabbit skin coat late 1940s in Whitehorse's Winter Carnival. Photograph Courtesy of Florence Orr.

Changing styles

From the 1880s onwards and throughout the Yukon, First Nations people had begun to wear more western style trade clothing. This was before any real influx of white people. As I quoted earlier on page 3 of this thesis: 'Dr. George Wilson, a member of the 1883 Lt. Schwatka expedition into the Yukon, stated that well within Han territory, whitemans clothing was "universally worn."' (Duncan 1989: 133)

After the introduction of trade clothing, hide clothing was still made, but no longer in the original style. The makers of hide clothing were influenced by trade clothing that was making its way into the territory. This western clothing style was adopted quickly. The pointed bottoms as well as the breastbands disappeared. Beads became the medium of decoration. While there were still hide pullover jackets, more jackets now had the fronts opened and were closed with buttons or tie-strings. Fringes were sometimes used and beads were most often placed on cloth and then added to the jacket at the shoulders, the bib, or both. In *Northern Athapaskan Art* Kate Duncan describes the hide jackets that have beaded bibs and shoulder epaulets as "English" style hunting jackets. They were first seen at Fort Yukon by W.H. Dall in 1867 indicating that these were the first major style change from the pull-over tunics. It would appear that the hide tunics continued to be made for only another 20 years. Another hide shirt was made sometime after the introduction of the English hunting jackets. It was beaded without the beaded shoulder epaulets and bib. Duncan identifies them as dance shirts. If the garment is open in the front, she calls them jackets. If the garment is a pull-over and has a longer body, she identifies these as tunics.

Pull-over jackets and shirts

See figure # 82 for two examples of the pull-over style jacket with various decorative styles.



A



B

Figure # 82, Pull-over jackets. A) Top; Hide English style hunting jacket from "Upper Yukon" 129350 NMNH B) Bottom; Tagish Hide Jacket VI-P-19 CMC.

While I totally agree with the first jacket (#82A) being the English style hunting jacket, I am reluctant to call the next one a dance shirt. # 82B is a hide jacket from the Tagish people and was collected by Frederick Lambert between 1910 and 1930. Some of the noticeable differences to the hunting jacket are the downturned collar, a different style neck opening, and chest pockets. As well, there are decorated cuffs and a set of fringes that come out at the sides of the jacket and along the bottom of the sleeves. I am more inclined to think of this as a fancy jacket to be worn on special occasions and not exclusively intended as a hunting or dancing shirt.

In the southern Yukon there are many examples of these pull-over style jackets. The following are three photographs of Chief Jim Boss wearing shirts, both square bottom and pointed bottom edges. Chief Jim Boss was the chief of the Lake Lebarge Southern Tutchone people just to the north of Whitehorse. Marge Jackson stated that Sophie Miller's mother made this shirt. See figure # 83 and # 84. In the left Figure # 84 Chief Boss is wearing a hide

shirt with fringes coming off the apron and the bottom of the sleeves. There is an embroidered design on the apron that is a mix of geometric zigzag and scroll or floral designs. The sleeves have a military style officer's cuff design. While there are differences in details, overall this shirt is close in pattern to the Tagish made shirt in figure # 82B. This is an E.J. Hamacher photograph who was a portrait photographer in Whitehorse in the early 20th century. The photograph is not dated. Chief Jim Boss was born sometime in 1871 or 1872 and took over as chief from his father Chief Mundessa around the time of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. His mother was from the Carcross area and she may have been Skookum Jim's sister. This would make Jim Boss Tagish. On Mundessa's grave stone is a painted bird, presumably a Crow, see figure # 401 on page 371. If Mundessa was from the Crow clan, his son Jim Boss would be a member of the Wolf clan.



Figure # 83, Chief Jim Boss. E.J. Hamacher fonds, 2002/118 #697, YA.

In the left photograph in figure # 84 we can see Chief Boss is older and appears to be wearing the same hide shirt as in the earlier photograph. He has a bag around his neck which looks like a knife sheath and wears what appears to be a captain's hat that has been modified. The hat has the commonly applied diamond and triangle designs going around it which are essentially crossing zigzag patterns. The design, a geometric zigzag pattern, also appears on other First Nations clothing and hats. Here the shirt has been modified with a fringed overlay sewn on the front of the shirt. This gives the appearance of a pointed front bottom edge. This pointed yoke and the pull-over style is reminiscent of earlier Athapaskan tunics with the pointed front and backs along the bottom edges. Chief Boss is also holding what appears to be a pair of beaded gantlets and is wearing a pair of tall undecorated hide boots.



Figure # 84 Jim Boss; Left. 91.303, MacBride Museum photograph. Right: Rolf Hougen Photograph.

In Figure # 84 on the right we see a still older Chief Boss wearing an elaborately ornamented jacket. It is embroidered in the front and decorated with a combination of fringes and feathers attached to the shirt. The shirt also has the pointed bottom edge. The hat Chief Boss is wearing appears to be the same in both photographs but in the right photograph feathers have been added around the top. Chief Boss is also wearing a pair of tall decorated hide boots. The caption for this photograph states: “Chief Jim Boss of Lebarge-Crow Tribe-Full War Dress-He died in 1950”. The ‘Full War Dress’ of the caption seems romanticized. The photograph is giving the impression that the Crow tribe were made up of war-like people, which is not correct. Another point is that the caption states that Chief Jim Boss is from the Crow Tribe. This is an example of describing the Southern Tutchone and Tagish people as the Crow Tribe. Since Jim Boss’s father was Southern Tutchone and Crow Clan, Jim Boss would have been Wolf Clan of the Tagish people because of his mother.

The next hide shirt in figure # 85 has squared bottom edges and is made in the pull-over style. It is of Patsy Henderson in an early postcard. There were a number of postcards produced of Patsy Henderson because he was present at the discovery of the Klondike gold on August 17th, 1896. Later in life he would tell the tales of the discovery and perform for tourists in the village of Carcross. In the postcard Henderson is holding two coastal style rattles and has some sort of necklace around his neck. An interesting point is that he is wearing a bishop-style hat. As stated before, the hats were highly individual and there were many different designs. This appears to be one of those unique designs, but one wonders, could it be an actual bishop’s hat!



Figure # 85. Postcard of Patsy Henderson, undated. UvK Collection.

In an earlier shown photograph in figure # 28 on page 62 is Patsy Henderson performing in Carcross in front of the Caribou Hotel. He is wearing the same patterned but different beaded hide shirt shown here in figure # 85. In figure # 28 the fringes along the bottom are longer and there are fringes across the chest. There also appears to be more beadwork on the shirt. In the photographs I have seen of Patsy Henderson he is often wearing this type of hide pull-over shirt with a collar and fringes along the bottom. Henderson performed for tourists in Carcross and was therefore one of the most photographed Yukon First Nations people. There have been many postcards of Henderson in different types of dress.

A last pull-over type jacket I will show is of Leo Taku Jack in figure # 86. Jack is an Inland Tlingit from Atlin. In the undated photograph he is wearing a simple pull-over hide shirt that has fringes along the shoulders and along the bottom. The shirt appears to be un-beaded. He is wearing a type of headband and is playing the drum. As you can see in this and the previous photographs the pull-over shirt or jacket was popular, at least in the southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia.



Figure # 86, Leo Taku Jack. Undated Photograph. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

Chief's coats & jackets

The next jackets I will examine are those with the front open and buttons or hide string ties to close the fronts. In the Dawson City Museum, on display, is one of Han Chief Isaac's coats. The display information notes that this style coat was based on the "Chief's Coat" that the Hudson Bay post at Fort Yukon used to give out. They were based on a military style coat with an open front and special decorations. There was little detail on this coat. In # 87 is a photograph of a "Chief's Coat" on display in the Dawson City Museum. One of the common traits of these coats is the presence of a decoration going down the front of the garments. Often the decoration is in the form of floral bead designs. Often, added attention is given to the cuffs. In Chief Isaac's coat below you will note the two lines of bead work going down the front of the coat. The beading style is what I identify as the upper Yukon River Style. In Chapter Four-Beaded & Floral Designs I will explain the various beading styles. The cuffs are also beaded.



Figure # 87. Chief Isaac's Coat. DCM.

The next photograph in figure # 88 is of Chief Isaac wearing another “Chief’s Coat”. It was taken between 1920 and 1932 and is part of the Charlie Isaac Collection at the Dawson City Museum.



Figure # 88 Chief Isaac's coat. 984.70.1 DCM & HS.

Chief Isaac's jacket has fur trim around the base and pockets. He is also carrying two bags and the straps are clearly visible. You can make out the tie straps used to close the jacket's front. There are also two beaded bands running down the front of this coat. The cuffs have an added fur trim. The front pocket covers are beaded with what appears to be a large flower. Additionally there are fringes at the epaulette and shoulder areas. Chief Isaac is wearing beaded leg bands. Because Yukon First Nations people are highly adaptive we can appreciate the bowler hat which rounds off the overall appearance.

In the following photograph, figure # 89, is a picture from the Albert Drea fonds from Yukon Archives. It is a picture of an Inland Tlingit Yukon First Nations man that I understand to be named Jim Fox. He is wearing a hide jacket that is open at the front. The cut is basically the same design as Chief Isaac's coat in figure # 87 with the two bands of beaded floral designs running down the front. This indicates that this style of jacket was common for at least the Han in the central Yukon through to the Inland Tlingit in the southern Yukon and northern British Columbia. The cuffs are beaded as well as the flaps for the pockets and collar. There are no epaulettes but there are fringes where the sleeve is joined to the body of the coat. Note the unique hat he is wearing with the feather plume at the front, which very well may be a duster. I discuss the use of feather dusters in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. I cannot make out what type of leg bands, if they are indeed leg bands that Jim Fox is wearing.



Figure # 89. Albert Drean fonds, 89/5, YA.

The next hide jacket was collected from Fort Selkirk, thus Northern Tutchone, is made of moose skin and cross fox fur trimming. It is in the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Collection in Washington, DC. This photograph illustrates the tie strings quite well. The jacket has fringes along the shoulder and under the sleeve. The fur lines the cuffs and an upturned collar. There is a series of embroidered designs along the front. Embroidery was less common than beads to decorate the garment. See figure # 90.



Figure # 90. Northern Tutchone moose hide jacket. 379786 NMNH.

The final jacket I will discuss is one of the items that Johnny Joe donated to the MacBride Museum and is shown in figure # 91. Johnny Joe was a Southern Tutchone man. This jacket has elaborate bead designs that consist of floral work and what seems to depict animals or other beings. The Elders I showed the image on the pocket to felt that it was an early flower design. Johnny Joe's grandmother, who was from Hutchi, made many of the items that Johnny Joe donated.



Figure # 91, Johnny Joe's coat. 1977.46.1, MacBride Museum.

Note the zigzag or “S” style stem work coming down the length of the front panel. The overall floral design is also in the upper Yukon River style. There are a number of split coloured leaf motifs throughout the beadwork and there are no negative spaces left in the centers of these leaf motifs. The leaf designs are common for the Tagish and Southern Tutchone. This jacket employs a single beaded band running down the front of it and has button holes to close the coat. Most of the other coats use ties for this. The cuffs, bottom hem and whole upper body of the coat have floral bead designs on a red cloth.

Button coats

Another less common shirt style I will call the button coat. This button coat is decorated the same way as a button blanket with buttons lining the edges of the coat. See figure # 89 for a photograph of Chief Isaac wearing this style of coat. This photograph was taken in 1931 at Minto Park in Dawson City. Chief Isaac's coat appears to be made in the same pattern as the coat he is wearing in figure # 88. This coat has the standard button blanket style trim along the outside edge instead of a floral decorated trim which can be seen in figure # 88. It has the buttons sewn along the trim's edge. It is sewn the same way as along the edge of a button blanket, although this jacket's edges are trimmed with fur and not fabric.

Chief Isaac is also carrying a bag with the beaded strap over his shoulder and is holding a doll and a walking stick. The doll is not a child's plaything, but, as many other dolls, an article of importance. Dolls will be examined closer in Chapter Six-Art of Rituals & Shamans. And once again Chief Isaac has adopted a non-traditional style of headdress, a top hat which adds to his overall Han appearance.



Figure # 92, Chief Isaac wearing a button-shirt. 984.32.1.16, DCM&HS.

I have seen other examples of similar button coats. Another photograph is in the *Handbook of North American Indians* on page 535 of Volume 6. The photograph shows Nabesna John, an Upper Tanana man, wearing the same style shirt as Chief Isaac. John's shirt has two rows of buttons sewn in by the fur trim, while Chief Isaac's only has one row. It also appears that John's shirt has a fur collar while Isaac's does not. Chief Isaac had friends and relatives in the Upper Tanana area. In fact, in response to the prohibition by the Canadian Government on Potlatches, Chief Isaac took songs, dances, drums and a ganhook to the Upper Tanana people for safe keeping. In 1912 he took these cultural treasures to Lake Mansfield and in 1917 he took other objects to Tetlin. Both were on the United States side of the border and safe from Canadian authorities.

Where Chief Isaac was removing culturally important items from Canada to protect them from the Canadian authorities, in Mayo Northern Tutchone special constable Alfred Hunter was wearing the same style button shirt. As a Royal Canadian Mounted Police special constable Hunter was not issued a uniform and therefore wore his own fancy jacket to show his position. See figure # 93 of special constable Alfred Hunter and his wife in Mayo, sometime in the 1920s or 1930s. Hunter's jacket is more like the Tanana version than Chief Isaac's jacket, in that it has a double row of buttons and a fur collar.



Figure # 93, Special Constable Alfred Hunter wearing a button-shirt in Mayo in the 1920s or 30s. 6859 YA.

Dance shirts

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, as traded cloth was beginning to replace hide clothing, cloth dance shirts became popular to wear during potlatches and ceremonies. In *My Old People Say*, McClellan says:

Many Yukon “dance shirts” resemble the well-known style from the coast tribes. They probably represent a cross between the old interior skin shirt and imported western-style garments, including a dash of military. Indeed, the coastal Tlingit often describe their own dance shirts as “gunana” (foreign), in this case referring to their inland neighbors of the Yukon and British Columbia. They are rather long, tailored affairs, usually of red or black and often beaded bib-like yokes. (McClellan 2001: 322)

This seems to indicate that at the very least the dance shirts were influenced by the early interior made hide tunics, to be adopted on the coast. Thus the status of the earlier valued hide clothing was carried on with the dance shirts. There are two distinguished dance shirt styles, the Athapaskan dance shirts with mostly floral designs and the coastal and Inland Tlingit dance shirts that often had clans or other images on them. The Tahltans also added clan images to their dance shirts. The Tlingit also made dance shirts with floral designs but it seemed that other than the Tahltans, Athapaskans did not put clan or other images on their dance shirts. McClellan states:

Although the designs on dance shirts from the interior are preponderantly stylized plant forms, some Tagish and Inland Tlingit shirts and blankets are decorated with sib animal crests. (McClellan 2001: 322)

It also seemed that the Inland Tlingit and Tagish used the dance shirts more than the Tutchone:

Among the more interior Tutchone, elaborate necklaces and bandoleers of dentalia necklaces with fine skin clothing were more frequent than the beaded or button-decorated dance shirts favoured by the southern tribes, but the face painting and ornaments were probably much the same, and dancing was, if anything, even more spirited than in the Tlingit-dominated bands. (McClellan 2001: 323)

An example of a possibly interior made dance shirt can be seen in the photograph in figure # 94. Johnny Fraser, centered, is wearing a floral patterned dance shirt. Elders I spoke to stated that Johnny Fraser had received the dance shirt and the frontlet from the Chilkat Tlingits from Klukwan. Someone from Klukwan had died and that person's items were given to Fraser. Nobody seems to know who made the dance shirt. It may even have been made in the interior and later returned there through Johnny Fraser. Fraser was the chief of the Champagne people and had strong ties with Klukwan. The Elders also said that later all of Johnny Fraser's First Nations items were sold to tourists. Later in this section I will discuss more about this dance shirt. This photograph was taken in the late 1940s, most likely during the Winter Carnival. It is an interesting photograph as it shows a whole cross section of Southern Tutchone ceremonial clothing from that time-period. Johnny Fraser is wearing a hat with the common crisscross design. The hat has feather plumes coming out of the top. His footwear incorporates a zigzag design. On the right side of the photo a lady is wearing a gopher skin robe. The woman beside her is also wearing some sort of skin garment and a pair of fancy mukluks. The two men on the left are wearing a hide pull-over coat and a floral beaded dance shirt. The dance shirt has a series of zigzag patterns going around the bottom of the shirt as well as a double row of the pattern going around the cuffs.



Figure # 94, Johnny Fraser and dance group, possible at the Winter Carnival, circa 1940s. 04.30, R. Hougan photograph.

Another well known dance shirt is the one that belonged to Johnny Joe. In figure # 95 we can see Johnny Joe wearing his dance shirt and a fancy hat at the MacBride Museum in the 1960s. This is the time he donated the dance shirt to the MacBride Museum. In figure # 96 you can see the details of Johnnie Joe's dance tunic at the MacBride Museum. The design looks exactly like Johnny Fraser's dance shirt, but there are a couple of differences which I will explain after the illustrations.



Figure # 95, Johnny Joe with dance shirt. 92.96, MacBride Museum Photograph.



Figure # 96, detail of Johnny Joe's dance shirt, front bib & bottom of shirt. MacBride Museum.

In Johnny Joe's dance shirt there is trimming with small fringes extending from the middle of the bib area to just under the arms. Also, in the detail photographs we can see some fringes coming out of the back of the arm. There is no set of fringes coming out of the bib area, nor any other fringes in Johnny Fraser's shirt. Other than these noted items the dance shirts are identical, especially the details of the bead work. This creates the problem of Johnny Fraser's dance shirt originating in Klukwan while Johnny Joe's dance shirt originated from the Southern Tutchone settlement of Hutchi. Dinah Jim, Johnny Joe's granddaughter, stated that Johnny Joe's aunt was the maker of his dance shirt. At the time of our

conversation Dinah Jim did not remember her name. Johnny Joe and his family were originally from Hutchi, his dad being Chief Joe and mother Ts'ahl ma, both of Hutchi.

Based on the identical beadwork I conclude that Johnny Fraser's dance shirt was originally made in the Yukon by the same person, who is the aunt of Johnny Joe. Did she have a pattern she copied for the second dance shirt or did she make the two at the same time? There is also the possibility that the fringes were added later and that Fraser and Joe were wearing the same dance shirt. Garments were often modified after they were considered finished.

The following dance shirt in the photograph in figure # 97 was taken in 1948 and is an Inland Tlingit dance shirt. It is worn by Edgar Sydney who was born in Juneau, Alaska but moved and lived in Teslin. It is unknown where this dance shirt was made but I am suspecting in Teslin. It follows the standard design, bib in front, epaulettes on the shoulders and cuffs, all with floral beaded designs. Note the zigzag pattern around the bottom of the dance shirt which is done a bit like the dance shirt shown in figure # 94 on page 123. The dance shirt is on the man second from the left.

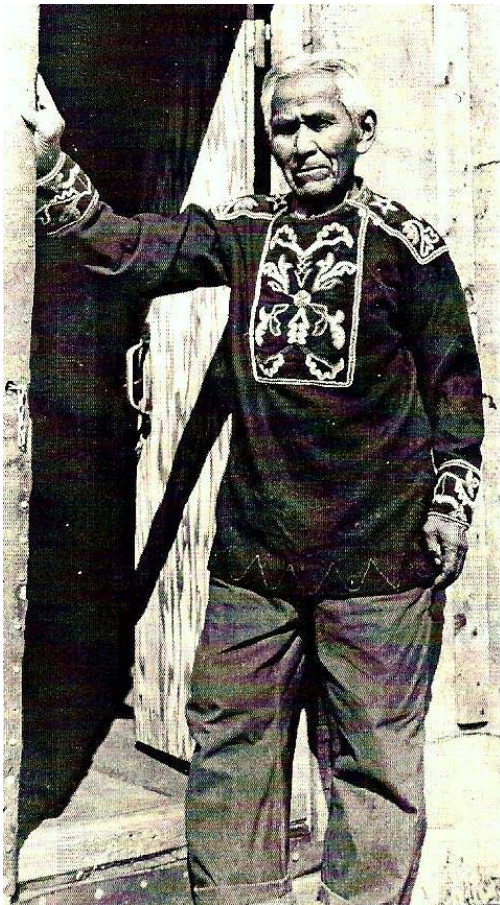


Figure # 97. Edgar Sydney wearing dance shirt in Teslin, 1948. D. Leechman photo. J2310 CMC.

In the following photograph in figure # 98, we can see a group of people waiting for the arrival of Queen Elizabeth in Carcross in July 1959. The man on the left is wearing a dance shirt with a different bead style design than the previous two. He is also wearing a military style medal on his dance shirt. The next two ladies are wearing the Tagish/Inland Tlingit style garments with the woman on the left wearing a dance shirt with the beaver crest and the woman beside her is wearing a dress with whale and/or fish designs on it. The second

lady is Mrs. Patsy Henderson, also known as Mrs. Edith Henderson. She is standing beside her husband, Mr. Patsy Henderson. The dance dress that Mrs. Patsy Henderson is wearing is almost the same as in an earlier photograph of the couple in *Their Own Yukon* on page 21. I suspect she made both dance dresses. Mrs. Edith Henderson is originally from Hutchi, making her a Southern Tutchone woman. Patsy Henderson is wearing his famous hide ceremonial clothing. To the right of Patsy Henderson is May Hume.



Figure # 98, First Nations people waiting to meet Queen Elisabeth II in 1959. 92.63, MacBride Museum.

This is a good transition to examine dance shirts that have images on them. This next photograph in figure # 99 is of a scene taken in Atlin, British Columbia during the 1918 potlatch. There are a number of dance shirt styles shown. The man on the right is holding two Crow drums and has a fairly fancy crow on his dance shirt. I am assuming this bird is Crow as this is a Crow/Frog clan hosted potlatch. The next man is wearing a simple hide pull-over shirt with some beadwork on the bib. The standing man in the middle is wearing a hide style pull-over fancy shirt with a lot of beaded designs on the chest. Although the photograph is not very clear, it appears like the man to the left of him is wearing an older style fancy hide tunic. Note the “V” breastbands across the front. The man on the far left wears a killer whale dance shirt. See figure # 100 for a coloured photograph of this particular dance shirt. He is holding a Crow and double fish drum. And in front of them all is a man wearing a Chilkat robe.



Figure # 99. Five Inland Tlingit dance shirts & Chilkat robe, Atlin, 1918. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.



Figure # 100 Inland Tlingit Killer Whale dance shirt, Atlin, Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

The killer whale dance shirt noted in figure # 99 is shown above in figure # 100. There are three killer whale images on it, a large one across the top and two joined at the tail. As the man is wearing a dance shirt and holding a drum that both show twin killer whales joined at the tails, I would guess he painted the drum and the dance shirt was made for him. There may be a special story from the coast about twin whales joined at the tail but if so I am not aware of it. The beaded designs on the shoulders and at the cuffs are slightly different than

the normal Inland Tlingit beadwork. They employ only one colour, white, and the design is basically a large outlined geometric shape. They look more like Tahltan than Tlingit beading. There is also the zigzag pattern added around the bottom of the dance shirt. The use of only black, white and red gives this dance shirt a bold appearance.

The next photograph in figure # 101 is also from Atlin and shows two dance shirts. The man on the left, possibly Lee T. Jack, is wearing either a lighter coloured cloth or hide made dance shirt. I have seen early made dance shirts that were lighter in colour such as shirts made with yellow fabric. From the appearance of the texture I think it is a fabric dance shirt. The shirt is very nicely beaded with a style that does not seem like the typical Inland Tlingit style. It may be that the dance shirt originated elsewhere. I am basing this on the bead style either from the Tagish or Tahltan people. In the center of the photograph a man, possibly Mr. S. Jack, is wearing a Frog clan dance shirt and holding the unique style Atlin dance stick or ganhook. These dance sticks are different from the Athapaskan as well as the Coastal Tlingit dance poles. I will be showing more of these Atlin style ganhooks in Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death. Mr. Jack is also wearing a dance feather wane stuck in his headband. The rest of the women are all wearing either button or other blankets for the potlatch. The woman on the right is holding a feather dance wane, most likely a duster.



Figure # 101. Atlin potlatch scene, P-2667. Courtesy of Atlin Historical Society.

A final set of dance shirts is in figure # 102. These are two quite different dance shirts and were photographed by Catherine McClellan in 1950. They show the front and back of a beaded dance shirt with Crow in the front and a second lighter coloured dance shirt that has a drawing in the front and back. For my analysis of the two images see figure # 182 on page 197 in Chapter Five-Figurative Art.



Figure # 102. Inland Tlingit dance shirts. C. McClellan photographs. Top J765, bottom J766. CMC

As we have looked at the various dance shirts you will note that no two are alike with the possible exception of Johnny Fraser's and Johnny Joe's dance shirts. If these are two different dance shirts then I assume they were made by the same person. Also here individuality is reflected in the wide range of dance shirt styles and designs.

Closing comments

I have shown a wide range of upper body garments that have its origins starting with the Geometric Period and continue into the Beaded Period. I have not looked at lower body garments. The porcupine embroidery in the hide leggings generally copies the breastband work patterns in the tunics, providing they were made at the same time. Once beads were used for floral & figurative designs lower body garments were no longer made. As you progress through this thesis you will be seeing more upper body garments, for example in Chapter Five-Figurative Art and Chapter Eight-Art of the Potlatch & Death.