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Résumé de l'article

Un des grands spécialistes des arts traditionnels au Canada, Michael Bird considère ici l'importance des arts décoratifs en milieu Doukhobor au Canada. Il commente les diverses techniques employées et les mérites relatifs de cette production artistique.

Doukhobor Folk and Decorative Arts

MICHAEL BIRD

Few Western countries are blessed with so rich a mixture of cultural traditions as Canada, and probably still fewer are distinguished by the continuation to such late date of ethnically unique folk and decorative art traditions. It is interesting to observe that nearly all of the national folk art traditions illustrated in H.J. Hansen's monumental *European Folk Art*¹ can be found in one form or another somewhere in Canada. From the earliest votive art of New France to the domestic art forms of the Scandinavians, Germans, Ukrainians, and others who settled in western Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, not to mention the wealth of indigenous art produced by Canada's diverse native peoples, there is a striking panorama of ethnically or religiously infused artistic expression.

The present article focuses upon the decorative arts of a single group in Canada, the Doukhobors, who left their Russian homeland in the late 1890s to settle in areas of present-day Saskatchewan and (later) British Columbia. A comprehensive study would undoubtedly take into account a broad cross-section of artifacts including textiles (early photographs of Doukhobors in Russia sometimes show individuals holding locally-made Caucasian rugs), carving, gravemarkers, and other decorated articles. In the present study, primary emphasis is given to furniture and architecture, with attention being directed to characteristics of construction, design, and decorative motifs.

“Spirit Wrestlers”: The Doukhobors in History

The emergence of the religious group eventually to be known as Doukhobors has no precise historical beginning point. The name itself, like the titles “Christian” or “Lutheran” or “Calvinist”, was given by an unsympathetic outsider in a spirit of derision. Coined by Archbishop Amvrosii Serebrennikov in 1785, the name “Doukhobor” means literally “spirit

¹H.J. Hansen, *European Folk Art*. New York: McGraw-Hill Cook Company, 1968.

wrestlers,” implying that this sect was fighting *against* the Holy Spirit.² First appearing as a localized religious movement among peasants in the early 1700s in the Ukrainian province of Kharkov, the group emphasized simplicity of religious life, an immanentist understanding of God, and a manner of living grounded in brotherly love, communal work, collective ownership, and pacifist principles. Its eschewal of priesthood, sacraments, and icons brought the Doukhobor group into conflict with the Russian Orthodox Church, as its refusal to take public oaths or participate in military service drew opposition from the central government.

The first persecution visited upon the Doukhobors occurred in the form of investigations and mass trials, resulting in their dispersion to peripheral regions of the Russian Empire in the 1790s. The comparatively benevolent policy of Tsar Alexander I (ruled 1801-1825) resulted in the transplanting of the Doukhobors to a place of asylum along the Molochna River, known in English as the Milky Waters. In this fertile area near the Black Sea the Doukhobors were neighbours of Mennonites who had migrated there previously from the Vistula Delta of Prussia (now Poland). Subsequent vacillation of government policy (the harsh treatment by Nicholas I during the period 1825-1855 and the more liberal disposition of Alexander II between 1855-1881, followed by the return to bitter persecutions under Alexander III in the 1880s and 1890s) meant frequent alternation between periods of prosperity or crisis. Possibly the golden age of Doukhobor culture in Russia occurred during the 1860s and 1870s. In this period the strong spiritual leadership of the group's only female leader, Lukeria Kalmakova, contributed to unsurpassed growth and stability. Among her many achievements, not the least significant was her decision in 1882 to take under tutelage the young man Peter V. Verigen (1859-1924), who was later to become an outstanding spiritual leader among the Doukhobors of western Canada.

The most severe treatment of Doukhobors in Russia took place in the 1880s and 1890s, at which point imprisonment and exile became normative. It was due to efforts outside Russia at publicizing their sufferings that pressure was eventually brought to bear upon government authorities to permit emigration. The Society of Friends in England as well as supporters in the United States and Canada engaged in efforts to bring Doukhobors out of Russia to a temporary haven in Cyprus, then an English colony. Among the most ardent sympathisers was Leo Tolstoy, who personally contributed the proceeds of his novel *Resurrection* to the migration fund.³

²George Woodcock, *The Doukhobors of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977, p. 19. Doukhobors accommodated themselves to this name by the argument that, in fact, they wrestled by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and not with carnal weapons. Cf. Joseph Elkinton, *The Doukhobors*. Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, Publishers, 1903, p. 4.

By late 1898 arrangements had been made by Quakers and Tolstoyans in England for coordinated migration to Canada. On January 23, 1899, the first shipload of Doukhobors arrived at the Port of Halifax. Some 7,500 immigrants reached Canadian soil in this mass exodus, settling on newly opened lands near Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Their principal settlements include two in the Yorkton-Canora-Pelly area and another near Blaine Lake. Following disagreements with the Canadian government over oaths and compulsory individual land registration, which many Doukhobors considered a contravention of the principle of collective ownership, settlers were evicted from their lands in 1907. Some members compromised or capitulated to government claims, while others migrated westward to the Kootenay and Boundary regions of British Columbia, establishing the fourth geographical area of Doukhobor settlement.

Within the larger group are three smaller divisions, including the Orthodox group, the Independents, and the Sons of Freedom, reflecting a diversity of emphases ranging from a conservative-collective viewpoint, to a modern culturally-adaptive outlook, to a zealous radicalism. Lavish media coverage of this last sub-group has impeded a more profound public understanding of the Doukhobors as a religious group borne within the context of Christian chiliasm (realizing the Kingdom of God within human history) and mysticism (encountering a deeper realm of meaning behind the normal world of superficial experience).

Doukhobor Decorative Arts

Focusing principally upon architecture and furniture, it is possible to see that the Doukhobors maintained extraordinarily conservative tastes, which, along with their Russian language, dress, food, and certain customs served to preserve a cultural distinctiveness in the new Canadian homeland, setting them apart from the many other ethnic or religious groups who settled around them on all sides. In recent years, this distinctiveness has been blurred by gradual assimilation into the surrounding culture, and, indeed, their decorative artforms brought along from their Russian background were probably already reflective of mixed cultural influences.⁴ Even so, artifacts found in Doukhobor settlements of Saskat-

³Koozma J. Tarasoff, *A Pictorial History of the Doukhobors*. Saskatoon: The Western Producer, 1969, p. 54.

⁴Given many years of dispersion, re-constitution, and exile again, it is doubtful that one can speak meaningfully of a cohesive Doukhobor decorative arts tradition. An indication of cross-cultural influences is to be found in the statement by George Woodcock, "They were also fortunate in having as neighbours the Mennonites. . . . Not only did they learn new farming methods from the Mennonites; they also borrowed the design of their wooden houses and, in the case of the men at least, even their form of dress (*The Doukhobors*, p. 41).

chewan and British Columbia are frequently among the most dramatically articulated examples of Canadian ethnic folk art, and are more often than not similar to one another in details of workmanship or design. This distinctiveness is particularly true with respect to their tables and selected categories of accessory furnishings.

In the category of architecture, it is a sad reality that of the hundreds of buildings erected at the beginning of the century, only a handful remain intact today. Rural architecture in Saskatchewan has not suffered at the hands of urban sprawl in the way that this phenomenon has gone unchecked in Ontario or Quebec. Rather, the villain in the West is the corporate approach to farming, by which smaller farms are merged into one vast enterprise, with existing buildings allowed to deteriorate or deliberately destroyed to minimize tax liabilities. In British Columbia, the dissolution of the communistic structure by mid-twentieth century meant the gradual abandonment of community houses and shared functional buildings. Scattered throughout the valleys of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers and their tributaries are to be seen the weathered remnants of that province's most distinctive imported ethnic architecture (apart, perhaps, from the Chinatown sections of Vancouver and Victoria). One bright spot in this otherwise sad picture is the reconstruction in the late 1960s of a village museum at Castlegar by the Kootenay Doukhobor Historical Society.

Early Doukhobor villages in Canada were patterned after prototypes in the Milky Waters and Caucasian Uplands areas of southern Russia. These villages reputedly featured from twelve to twenty one-storey dwellings arranged in regular lines on each side of a broad street.⁵ Villages in the North and South Colonies in the Yorkton-Pelly region of Saskatchewan often had one or two community barns, while in the Blaine Lake area there were a number of house-barns, reflecting the stronger individualism of Kars Doukhobors in that region.⁶ Early structures were usually of log construction, with mud plaster on inside and outside. Most were finished with a steeply pitched sod or straw roof with wide overhang at ends as well as sides. The long walls were in many cases comprised of several sections of shorter lengths of log, braced at each end by vertical posts. Decorative details on these primitive structures were modest, but included in some instances upper lintels with carved embellishments such as sunburst motifs (Fig. 9).

Other structures of importance included public meeting houses and prayer-homes. Serving as focal points for community gatherings, spirit-

⁵Tarasoff, p. 75.

⁶*Ibid.*

ual meetings, and other functions, such public buildings were often of more stable frame or even brick construction, using materials made at community brick factories. An excellent example of early Doukhobor architecture is a brick prayer home, albeit in deteriorating state, situated on a ridge south of Kamsack, Saskatchewan, close to the Manitoba border (Fig. 2). A similar building, originally located at Gromovie village, west of Benito, Manitoba, has been moved in recent years, to the ground of the Doukhobor Museum at Verigen, where it is being restored. Both are constructed of distinctive indented bricks which were probably made ca. 1905 in Verigen or Yorkton. Like several of the individual residences, these prayer homes are distinguished by steeply pitched roofs, giving way to a more gradual slope which leads to porches running the full length of either side. The entire roof and attic area extends beyond the lower floor at each end. The overhanging and section is partially enclosed, a feature found in numerous Doukhobor buildings in the Yorkton-Kamsack-Pelly area, and repeated somewhat later in buildings constructed after 1912 in the Castlegar and Grand Forks regions of British Columbia.

Another architectural form, of somewhat later date, is essentially a modification of the square house typical of the Canadian prairie, given considerable enhancement by porches on all sides. Several villages had such square two-storey community homes situated at the end of the central street. Possibly the finest example is the frame community home in Verigen, constructed by local workers in 1918. Completely surrounded by a two-storey verandah, its outstanding decorative feature is the pierced ornamental metalwork between vertical supports, creating forty arcades of strong aesthetic interest (Fig. 3). A likely prototype for this superb fancy work is the house built ca. 1800 for Lukeria Kalmakova in Transcaucasia, Russia.⁷ The elaborate geometric designs and floral motifs may derive from traditional Doukhobor arts learned in Russia, and are closely related to decorative elements found in textiles and furniture made in Canada. Lesser examples of such decorative tinwork are found in the verandahs and gable-ends of other houses in Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Related in design to the floral motifs in Doukhobor architectural metalwork are designs in bricks made at the community factory at Grand Forks, British Columbia (Fig. 6). Similar to the indented bricks made in Saskatchewan, the Grand Forks examples feature the additional embellishment of a lily motif in high relief on one side of the brick.

Doukhobor furniture, in its distinctive design, color, construction, and

⁷This beautiful *dvoretz* (courtyard or palace) is illustrated in Tarasoff, pp. 42 and 188.

decorative treatment, presents a visual manifestation of one of Canada's latest and most singular ethnic forms of folk art expression. The exuberance of contours of Doukhobor furnishings is at least as pronounced as those of Ontario Polish furniture, while additional features of carved and painted surface decoration place the former in a category by themselves.

Dominant among Doukhobor furniture forms are tables, cupboards, storage chests and boxes, beds, chairs, and benches (the latter resembling types found in railway waiting rooms. Smaller accessories include picture frames, wall shelves, and coat-racks, many of which have been given dramatic ornamental embellishment.

A brief comment needs to be made with respect to the distinctiveness of Doukhobor furniture from Saskatchewan, relative to that of the Doukhobors' immediate neighbors. Arriving in Canada somewhat later than Russian Mennonites and at about the same time as Ukrainians, their furniture is in many respects similar to that of these groups, particularly in the retention of the arabesque contours of the late east-European baroque style. Generally, however, the Doukhobor furniture is given to greater complexity of surface decoration than are Ukrainian examples. Additionally, the former is marked by greater sophistication of construction technique (mouldings, hidden dovetails, and other refinements) than the latter.

There is ample evidence that numerous trained craftsmen were among the waves of immigrants coming to Canada in 1899. A significant number of furniture examples are of sufficiently refined design and construction to set them apart from 'home-made' furnishings. In this first category are pieces which are unmistakably the work of highly skilled village craftsmen, that is, amateur pieces usually assembled in a crude manner, frequently butted together, and secured only by nails at critical points. The more 'professional' examples feature such comparative subtleties of construction as mortise-and-tenon joinery, mitered corners, complex turnings, dovetailed splines, and similar refinements.

The categories of Doukhobor furniture are highly varied. Dominant forms include cupboards, buffets, chests of drawers, tables, beds, chairs, and boxes. The forms of many pieces are striking in their boldness of contour. Tables, in particular, reflect the late perpetuation of the baroque curvilinear form which characterized much of east-European furniture-making as practised by immigrant craftsmen in Canada. Canadian Doukhobor furniture presents a fascinating blend of stylistic influences, including at times such unexpected variations as Jacobean-style turnings on legs and posts or vaguely Chippendale refinements such as applied frames enclosing doors and drawers. The dominant feature of these pieces is the elegant curved line, derived variously from natural or mathematical forms.

In surveying extant examples of traditional furniture made during the approximate period of 1900-1930 (representing the first two generations of Doukhobor craftsmen in Canada), a cluster of design features can be found. With respect to decorative embellishments, certain motifs occur with significant regularity: the shell or fan, rosettes, leaves, tendrils, and other floral designs, the compass-star, hearts, the lily or tulip, and a closely-related characteristic three-lobed motif. Additional flourishes are sometimes based on animal forms, including birds, lions, and horses. Finally, there is to be found, on occasion, a more random array of embellishments, including painted circles, lunettes, sun or ring-of-fire motifs, and even random daubs of colour.

The techniques of furniture surface decoration fall essentially into three categories: carving, inlay, and painting. A fourth decorative technique pertains to the form of the furniture itself, that of lathe-turning, used on tables, beds, and legs of cupboards or chests of drawers.

Of all ethnic furniture in western Canada, it is perhaps in the Doukhobor cabinet-making tradition that carving attains its highest level of evolution. Carved ornamentation takes two forms: relief-carving and fretwork. In the former case, the decoration appears literally at the surface, while in the latter instance the design is cut *through* stiles, backboards, skirts, and headboards.

Relief-carved decoration is encountered most frequently in the surface treatment of relatively small articles such as wall shelves and coat racks, as illustrated in Figures 17 and 18, or on picture frames, such as that in Figure 15. It is also a means of artistically enhancing utilitarian items such as the clothes mangle in Figure 12. Such relief carving is less common on larger pieces of furniture, but occurs occasionally on chairs and on the skirts of tables (Figures 11 and 23).

Even more prevalent than relief carving as a means of decorative enhancement is another technique, that of fretwork carving. It is almost as if in the fretwork embellishment of furniture Doukhobor craftsmen were consciously creating an internal corollary to the pierced tinwork on the gables and verandahs of their community homes and other buildings.

Although a considerable variety of articles are subject to fretwork treatment (notably the cupboard, sconce, and bed in Figures 20, 27, and 24), the principal furnishings to be so decorated is the table. Of all categories of Doukhobor furniture revealing a distinctiveness of design and workmanship, it is the table that is most singularly striking.⁸

⁸For a cross-section of these unique ethnic furniture forms, see Michael Rowan, "Doukhobor Tables," *The Upper Canadian*, May/June, 1982, p. 47.

To appreciate the complexity of Doukhobor design principles, one might examine thoughtfully the intricate fretwork of the skirts of varied tables from Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The most characteristic use of fretwork is in the symmetrical composition of floral motifs. Often, a central floral design (or a simple three-lobed motif) is flanked by identical cutout patterns. In most examples, these cutout elements appear as either single or paired lily motifs (Cf. Figure 23). The lily, or tulip, has strong traditional associations with the folk arts of central and eastern Europe, notably in Swiss, German, and Slavic cultures. It is also, of course, a part of Turkish culture, immediately adjacent to the Russian homelands of the ancestors of Canada's Doukhobor pioneers.

Of particular noteworthiness is the subtle understanding these craftsmen possess with respect to internal and external form. By compounding baroque contour with floral interior, they have imaginatively integrated abstract form with concrete motif. Creativity and control merge in bringing together the indeterminate and determinate, the universal and explicit. Without the fretwork decoration, the tables would amount to little more than modest variants of a baroque *retardataire* phenomenon; without the contour, these pieces would be arbitrary decorative forms. It is in the intermingling of outer form and interior detail that these tables must be seen as truly outstanding expressions of folk art furniture.

Much rarer in the inventory of Doukhobor decorative techniques is the practice of inlay, using contrasting woods to achieve artistic effect. Two striking examples, both from Saskatchewan, include a picture frame with inlaid date and tulips (Figure 13) and a table with inlaid central lily motif (Figure 23). In both cases, the inlaid woods are set apart from the background by means of coloured stains.

The third method of surface embellishment utilized by Doukhobor furniture makers is that of painted decoration. The body of pieces characterized by folk art ornamentation contrasts markedly with the majority of single-colour furniture examples (typically brown or red). In general, the painted motifs are closely related to those otherwise created by means of relief- or fretwork carving. They include both natural and geometric forms. Among striking instances are those pieces with floral motifs, such as the corner cupboard, buffet, cradle, shelf, and coat-rack (Figures 21, 22, 17, and 18). The painted double lily motifs on the corner cupboard and low buffet bear strong stylistic resemblance to the carved work on the table in Figure 23. Painted geometric elements on the buffet in the form of compass-stars parallel incised decoration on the bed in Figure 25.

Taken together, these diverse architectural and furniture forms present vivid evidence of a bold decorative tradition. This remarkable manifestation offers the student of material culture an insight into both the

competence of craftsmen and tastes of a strongly ethnocentric culture. Within an established tradition of design, composition, colour, and construction method these builders, cabinetmakers, tinsmiths, painters, and related craftsmen produced a considerable diversity within unity.

Some thirty years ago, Alfred Shulman, psychiatrist and member of a specially constituted research committee, expressed his assessment of "the Doukhobor arts, which show a decided lack of truly imaginative activity."⁹ A similar view was given by Harry B. Hawthorn in his observation that, "there is little inventiveness in women's needlework, nor is it very apparent in the crafts of the younger men's cabinetmaking, the older men's carving."¹⁰ Against these claims it needs to be argued that inventiveness is frequently to be discerned no less in subtle variations upon traditional themes than in grandiose innovations based upon wholesale rejections of past convention. Certainly this is the rule rather than the exception in any consideration of the 'art' in folk art. Working within a powerful sense of traditional design, itself learned within a culture transplanted intact from Russia to North America, these craftsmen have produced a striking body of artifacts that are among the most culturally unique of Canadian ethnic decorative arts. A culture, which in its Asian background drew from disparate sources, appears subsequent to its establishment in Canada to have achieved an impressive degree of cohesiveness with respect to styles and motifs in its folk art expression.

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Résumé

Un des grands spécialistes des arts traditionnels au Canada, Michael Bird considère ici l'importance des arts décoratifs en milieu Doukhobor au Canada. Il commente les diverses techniques employées et les mérites relatifs de cette production artistique.

⁹In Harry B. Hawthorn, ed. *The Doukhobors of British Columbia*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia and J.M. Dent and Sons, 1955, p. 135.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 13.

1.



2.



1. Doukhobor Village: early 1900s

This picture of an unidentified Doukhobor village on the Canadian prairie shows the typical arrangement of thatched-roof houses on either side of a wide centre street. The prayer home with its higher, extended roof, is visible as the sixth building from the right side.

2. Prayer Home, Saskatchewan: early 1900s

Much deteriorated, this abandoned prayer-home on a ridge just south of Kamsack is a striking illustration of the transfer of an architectural style used earlier in south Russia to the newly-opened reserves of western Canada.

3.



4.



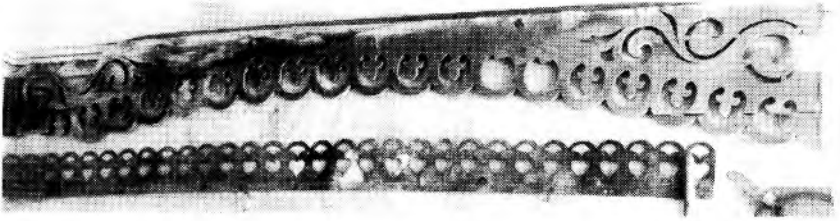
3. Community Home, Verigen, Saskatchewan: 1917-18

This two-storey place of meeting is one of the most impressive statements of Doukhobor architecture in Canada. Its metalwork verandah enclosing both lower and upper levels is strongly reminiscent of earlier structures in Russia.

4. Decorative Detail, Community Home, Verigen, Saskatchewan, 1917-18

The finely-detailed pierced tinwork of this structure was designed and executed by John Mahonin. The floral motifs are closely related to those found also on furniture and accessories in Doukhobor households in both Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

5.



6.



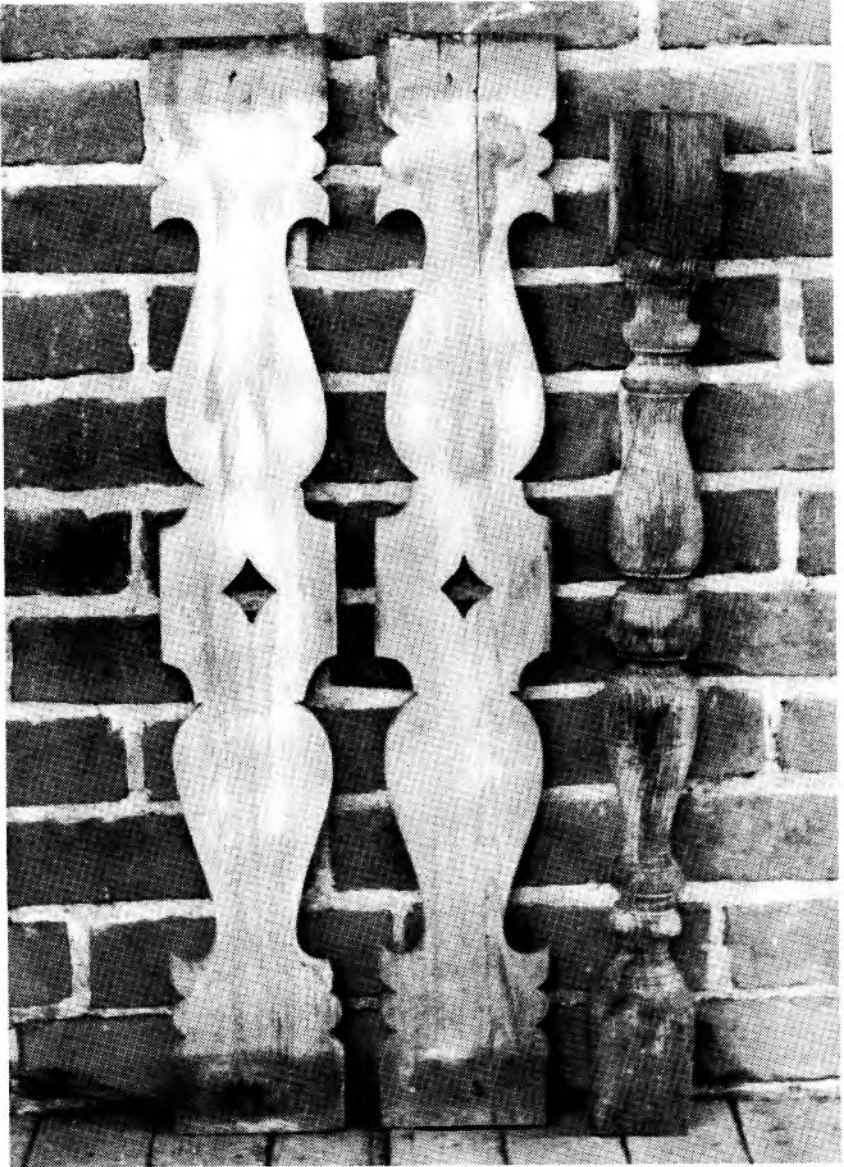
5. Verandah Fretwork: early 20th century

From the Grand Forks area of British Columbia, these wooden fretwork boards were originally decorative elements of a verandah. Decorative bargeboard work has generally been considered to have attained its highest level of evolution in northern Europe and Russia. Doukhobor craftsmen excelled in this art in both metal and wood, and Canadian examples bear strong resemblance to those produced previously in Russia.

6. Brick: early 20th century

Doukhobor brickworks in both Saskatchewan and British Columbia provided construction materials for houses and community buildings in the regions. This example from Grand Forks is of interest with its lily motifs and related floral configurations pressed in low relief.

7.



7. Verandah Railing Elements: early 20th century

These porch splats and posts are indicative of the refinements found on the exterior of Doukhobor houses in western Canada. The shaping of the ends of the splats are, in effect, stylized floral designs, and the overall shaping of these pieces suggests parallels to that of the wall sconce in Figure 27.

8.



8. Poplar-Pole House, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

Among few surviving examples, this log house near Blaine Lake is a remnant of what was originally a Doukhobor village in the area. Finished inside and out with mud plaster, it has cooking and heating fireplace typical of Doukhobor houses of the region. In the right foreground stands the cupboard illustrated in Figure 10.



9. Window with Decorative Detail, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

A window frame in a deserted village between Blaine Lake and Petroka Ferry is given decorative interest with carved sunbursts on its lintel.

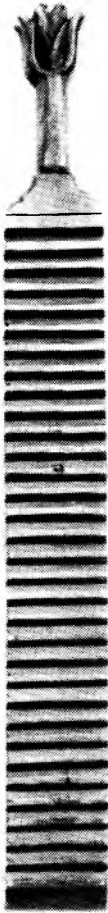
10. Cupboard, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

The predilection for floral embellishment in Doukhobor decorative arts is given vivid expression on this primitive cupboard, removed from the poplar-pole house in Figure 8. The pattern of undulating vines and flowers is painted in bright orange against a dark green background. Atop the front of the cupboard is a primitively-carved crest with paired lions-heads.

11. Chair, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

Apart from numerous Victorian details, this hardwood chair reflects many of the basic conventions of the Doukhobor vocabulary, including carved sunbursts, rosettes, three-petalled lilies or tulips, and symmetrical arrangements of elements.

12.



13.



14.



12. Mangle, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

A common household utensil in Doukhobor communities was the mangle, a tool used for ironing. This example, with its carved tulip motif, shows how a utilitarian object can be made into an aesthetic work of considerable interest.

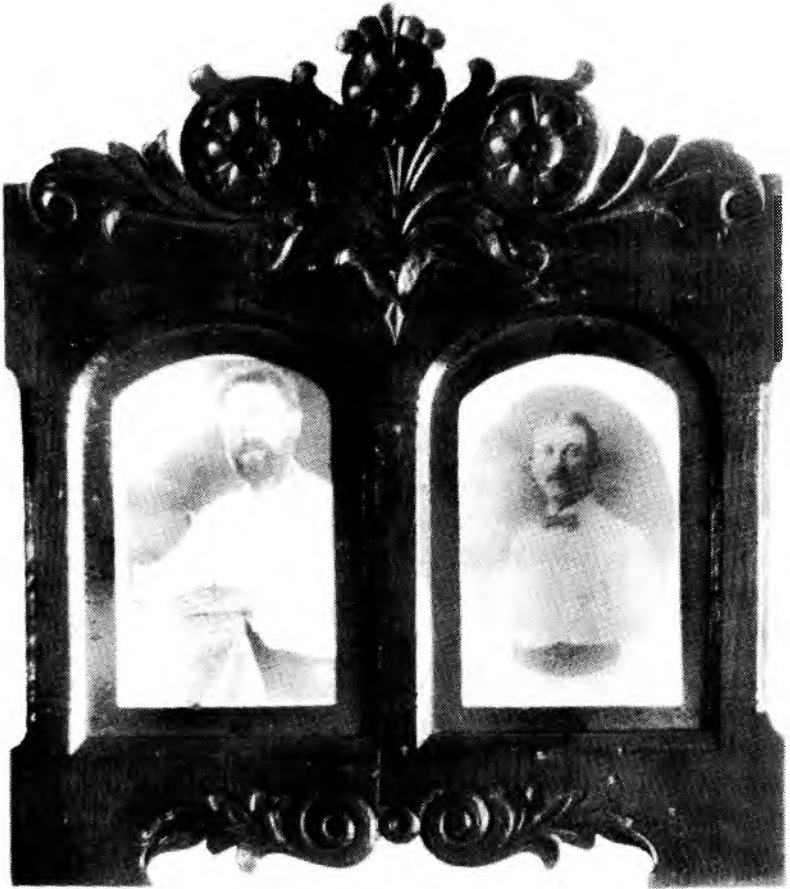
13. Frame, Saskatchewan: dated 1906

Among decorative techniques utilized by Doukhobor craftsmen, inlay was comparatively rare. Here it is employed in the form of date and tulips, stained red to produce contrast with the background wood of the frame.

14. Frame, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

This frame is stylistically related to furniture and decorative metalwork in its symmetrical arrangement of carved details. The man in the photograph is Peter V. Verigen (1859-1924), gifted spiritual leader among Doukhobors of western Canada.

15.



15. Frame, British Columbia: early 20th century

The low-relief carving on this picture frame is unusually elaborate. The rigid symmetry of the floral design is reminiscent of traditional folk art decoration of central and eastern Europe and of the Pennsylvania Germans in North America. The photograph at left is of the Doukhobor poet I.F. Sysoev.

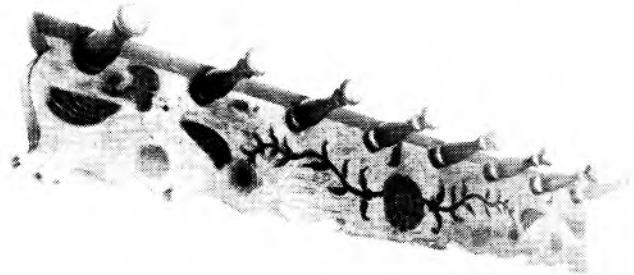
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18.



16. Wall Shelf, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

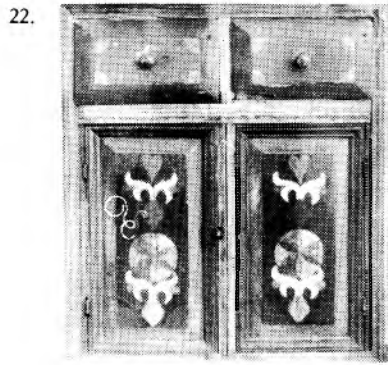
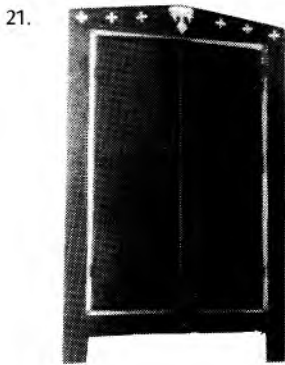
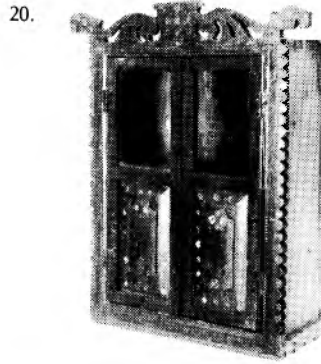
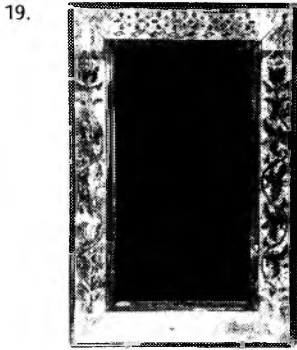
From Verigen, this small shelf is elaborately decorated by means of symmetrically-arranged carved details and three-lobed floral elements.

17. Wall Shelf, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

The carved elements on this shelf reveal striking similarity to details on other Doukhobor furnishings, including the picture frame in Figure 15, the table in Figure 23, and the coat-rack in Figure 18. As in the preceding example, added decorative interest is achieved by a two-layered backboard in which the silhouette of one stands out in relief against the other.

18. Coat-rack, Saskatchewan: dated 1905

One of the earliest of dated Canadian Doukhobor artifacts is this profusely-decorated coat-rack from Verigen. Beneath a row of eight robustly-turned pegs is a floral design, radiating outwards from a central carved and painted daisy or sunflower. The backboard is carved in the format of symmetrically-arranged curves and lobes, and the surface is boldly painted in dark red, ivory, and green colours.



19. Hanging Cupboard, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

Weaving vines, tulips, lilies, and repeating geometric patterns are gouge-carved into the facade of this small open cupboard from eastern Saskatchewan. Courtesy National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

20. Hanging Cupboard with Doors, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

Found near Canora, this Doukhobor hanging cupboard features pierced-work similar to that on tables and metalwork. Additional flourishes include carved horses-heads at each end of its pediment, and bold colour scheme of green, black, yellow, and ivory abstract spots of colour against a background of dark red.

21. Hanging Corner Cupboard, British Columbia: early 20th century

Like many Doukhobor cupboards, this simple piece is given a degree of artistic refinement by its moulded stiles. Its principal decorative interest lies in the painted motifs on its pediment, including quatrefoils surrounding a central design of outwardly-facing lilies.

22. Buffet or Low Cupboard, British Columbia: early 20th century

One of the most vibrantly decorated pieces of Doukhobor case furniture is this low cupboard or buffet from the Castlegar area. Painted in five colours (red, dark red, white, yellow, and blue-green), it features geometric compass-stars, hearts, and paired lilies facing outward. Courtesy Kootenay Doukhobor Museum, Castlegar, British Columbia.

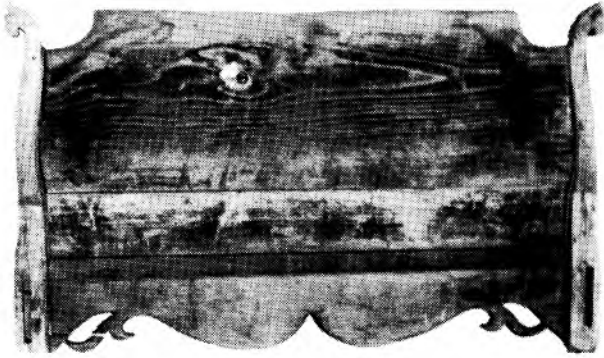
23.



23. Table, Saskatchewan, early 20th century

Several tables of related design from Doukhobor settlements are distinguished by pierced-work designs and dramatically-turned legs. This superb example features three-lobed lily motifs carved from the apron, as well as carved in relief on the drawer fronts. Green and dark red stain set off floral designs against the medium red colour of the table itself. An unusual feature is a removable cabinet designed to rest on the box stretcher.

24.



25.



26.



24. Bed, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

While the scrolled element of this bed suggests American Empire design influences, the fretwork motifs are squarely within the Doukhobor decorative tradition, as seen also on tables, cupboards, and architectural detail.

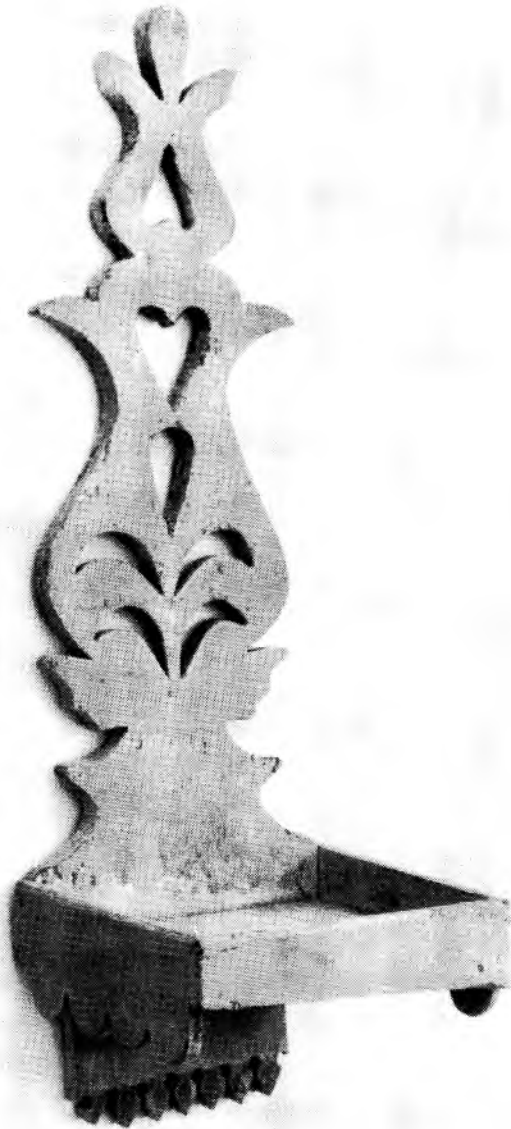
25. Bed, British Columbia: early 20th century

Reputedly used by Peter V. Verigen, the headboard of this bed is shaped in the late simplified baroque style characteristic of much furniture made by Russian or east-European craftsmen in Canada. Incised onto its surface are two shell-patterns flanking a central six-point compass star.

26. Hanging Cradle, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

In many an early photograph is to be seen an infant's cradle, suspended from a central point by straps leading down to its four corners. This example is embellished with painted vases and floral designs. Courtesy National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

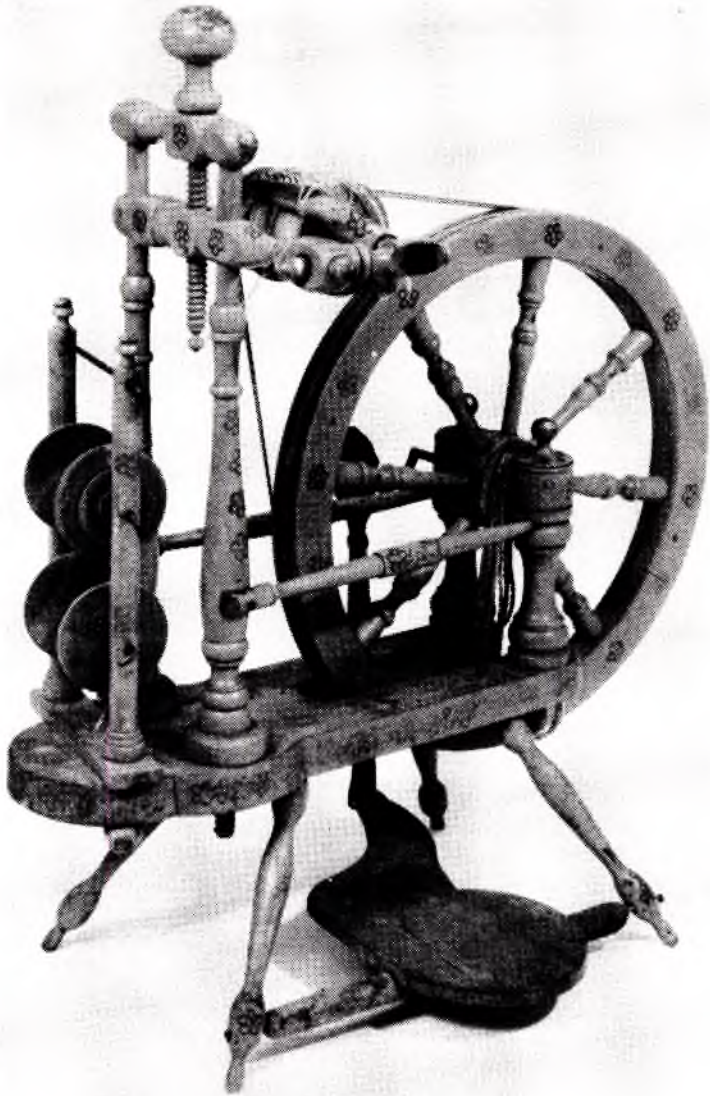
27.



27. Wall Sconce, Saskatchewan: early 20th century

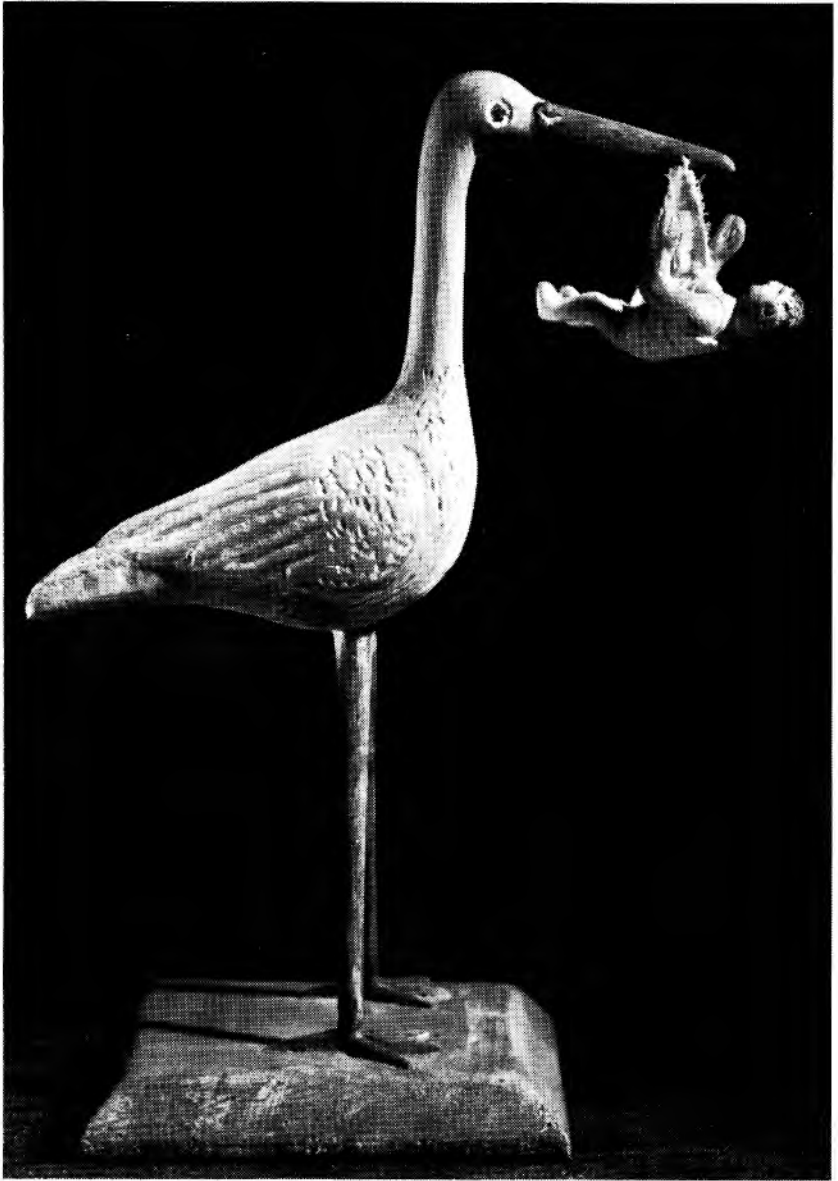
Smaller accessories are frequently the most highly-decorated of Doukhobor furnishings. This wooden sconce, painted blue, is fashioned generally in the classical shape of an urn. Its floral top, fretwork hearts, and other flourishes are stylistically similar to design elements seen on other pieces, notably the verandah elements in Figure 6 and the fretwork on the cupboard and bed in Figures 20 and 24 respectively.

28.



28. Spinning Wheel, Saskatchewan: dated 1934

Typical in form of spinning wheels used in Doukhobor communities of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, this piece is somewhat unusual in the extent of its decorative treatment with painted flowers in red against blue-green background. It is also signed and dated, "Made by Mr. Kuzma A. Katasonow 1934 Verigen, Sask." Courtesy National Museum of Man, Ottawa.



The Stork

Painted wood and cloth. Billie Andrews, Bradford, Ontario. ca. 1950.
27 x 12.5 x 11.5 cm. National Museum of Man. Photo: Harry Foster,
National Museum of Canada.