

1800 - 1819

CLOTHING TRENDS

1800 - 1819 MAJOR FEATURES IN CLOTHING.

The first two decades of the 1900s bore the fashion terms “Empire” or “Regency.” The differences in those two decades are subtle, but in general, women wore waistlines high under the bustline both front and back, leading down to straight-falling skirts. After 1815, the waistline lowered a bit, skirts began to flare at the bottom and skirt hems were decorated. Necklines might be low and revealing for formal wear in the higher classes, or covered with shawls, collars and longer sleeves for middle and lower-class women, and in cold weather.

Fashionable Men padded their shoulders at a slope from shoulder up to their high collars, and favored small waistlines, even to the wearing of male corsets or “braces.” They wore tight knee-breeches and stockings for dress, or snug, ankle-length trousers (possibly knit) with shoes for daytime and informal occasions. Slippers were worn for dancing, and boots were for outdoors – riding or hunting.

Farmers and laboring men wore what they had for the last century-- smocks of strong fabric with ornate “smocked” gathering beside the front plackets and at the wrists cuffs. Such smocks were worn every day over other clothing in cold weather or over no other clothing in hot weather. So sturdy were they (usually spun and woven at home from raw wool or linen), they might be passed down to the next generation.

NOTE- Images have been cropped to best show the clothing, rather than the overall portrait, photo, or illustration.

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1800 – 1819 - MEN, WORKING-CLASS CLOTHING.

(Working smocks were worn from 1700 through 1900)

American Smock with less smocking than European styles, and no additional embroidery. 1700 – 1900 on.

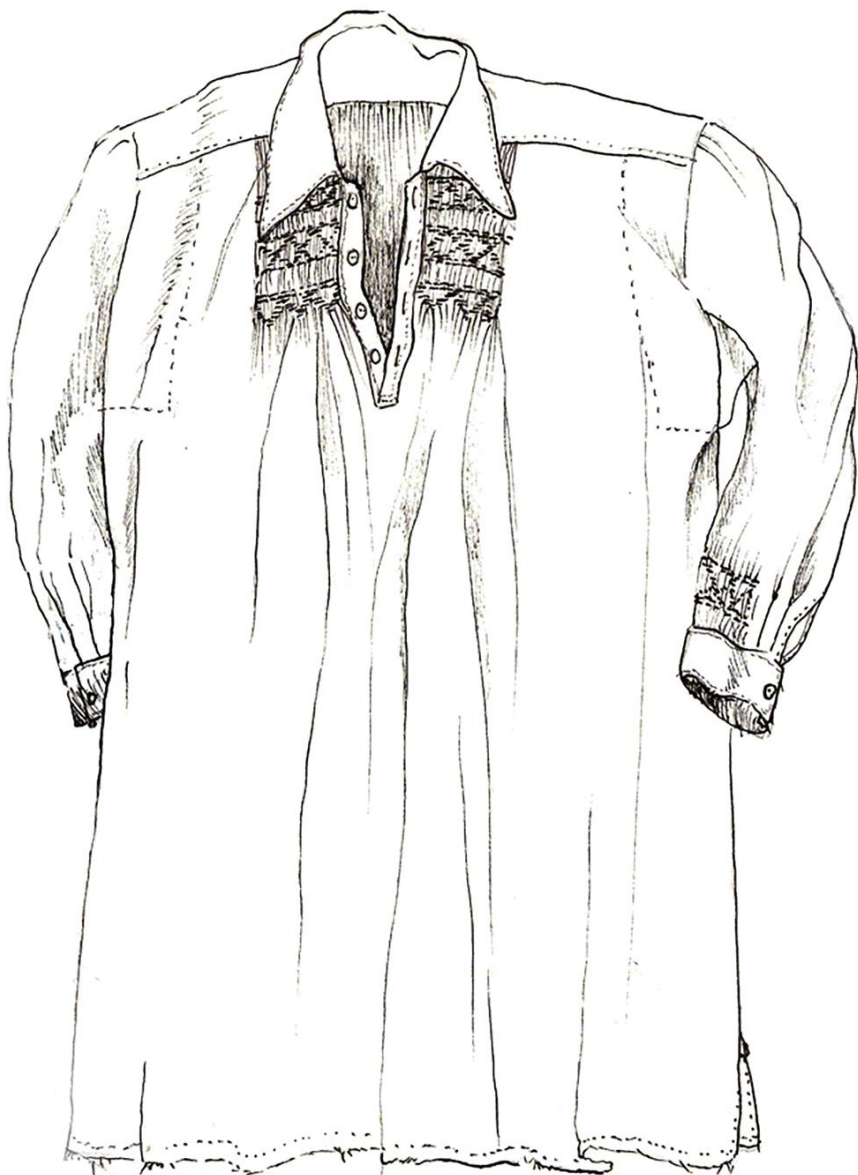
DESCRIPTION: Smocks were the most common working man's clothing of the 1700s & 1800s in both the old world and the new. This is a linen smock from America with smocking in front and a placket of four buttons. There is a little smocking at the collar line in center back. (It is not a "round smock," which would have a placket on the back side as well, to allow wearing it reversed.)

On the shoulders are double layers of linen that cover all raw edges, and are called the "straps," for reinforcing the smock. Sometimes, a strongly made smock could be used for future generations. Nothing went to waste or was thrown away if there was still some use in it.

American smock fronts have varied smocking designs, with only two inches of smocking on the cuff-lines of the sleeves. Note that the smocking does not go all the way around the cuffs, but is centered, and is there simply for beauty's sake. Other pleats in the sleeve fabric attach to the side of the cuff opening.

Under the rectangular arm sections are the usual seven-inch squares sewn into the sleeves and body as folded, triangular gussets. On the shoulders, the long "straps," and the facings inside the smock, cover the raw seams of sleeve insertions and are pressed inward toward the neckline. This

completely covers the raw edges of the sleeves and straps. (continued ▼)



(continued from above ▲)

All raw edges of the fabric are turned under with small, hand whip-stitching that is hardly seen on the outside of the smock, This adds strength to the garment. Such construction will survive generations of work and washing.

At the bottom of the side seam (French-seamed) is a tiny gusset at the top of the side slit to prevent side-seam tearing. There is plenty of room within this smock for a farmer to comfortably lift hay, drive a team, etc.

The smock could be any neutral color of linen or dyed to a dark navy blue or brown for little boys' smocks. In New England, Nova Scotia or Canada smocks could even be wool, subtly striped, and much longer. Wool would protect men better than linen from cold, rain, snow, and dirt.

SOURCE: Drawn by Carma from a smock made by a Nauvoo missionary's wife using Carma's measurements and sewing tutelage. Free use.

SMOCK PATTERN IN APPENDIX. (Many pattern companies have a ready-made smock pattern listed under Historic Costumes.)

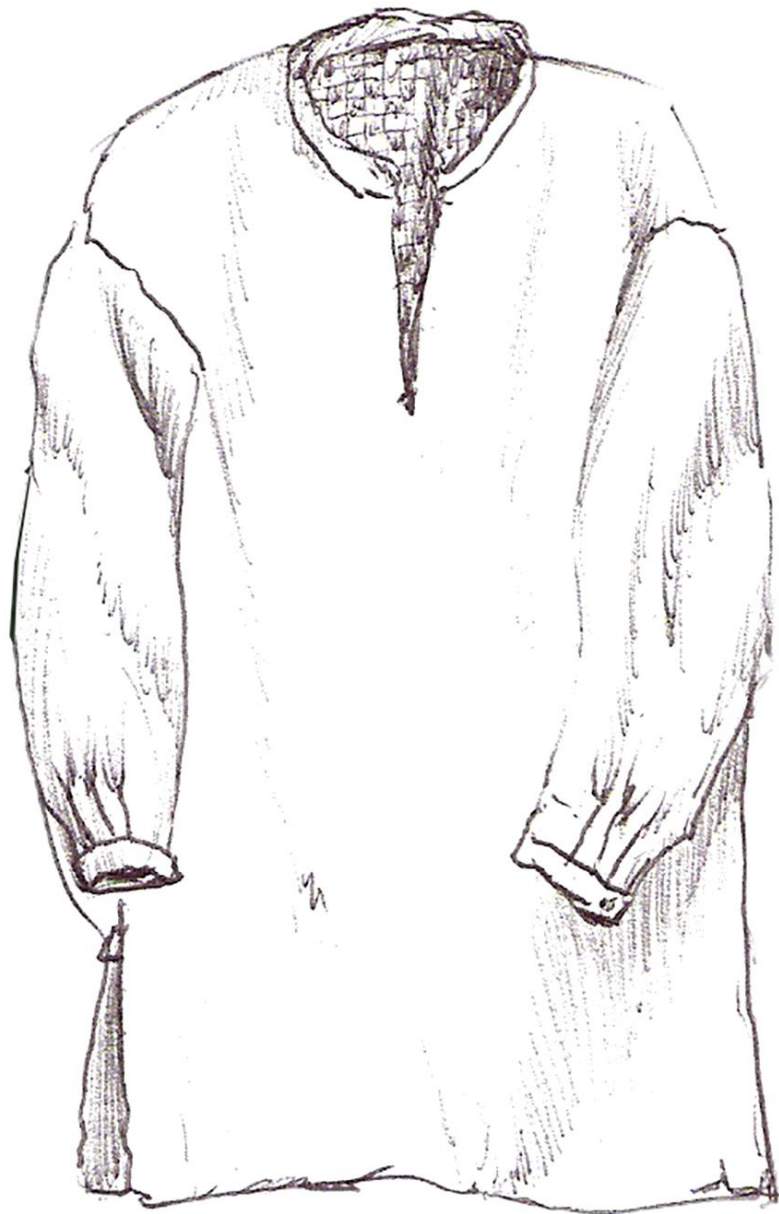


Farmer wears a work smock and trousers. 1800 – 1900 on.

DESCRIPTION: Of the large Germanic Whitmer family in Fayette, New York, David Whitmer had a strong mind and body. Here he wears the usual American linen smock to cover his clothing while working. If the day were hot, a farmer might wear nothing on his torso except his tough linen smock. He also wears a broad-brimmed, low crowned hat and heavy leather work shoes.

David's family hosted Joseph Smith, Jr. for one month while the Prophet used this safe place to get away from life-threatening mobs while translating the *Book of Mormon* from ancient gold plates into English.

SOURCE: This ink drawing, a portrait by Robert Barrett, is displayed in the Grandin Print Shop, Palmyra, New York. The clothing was carefully coached by Carma for the artist.
Photo by Carma; free use



A very simple man's woolen work smock is fully lined. 1700s to 1870s

DESCRIPTION: This drab-colored woolen smock has no fancy stitching on it, but is a straight, hanging tunic with broad shoulders. It is fully lined with yellow and brown plaid fabric for warmth. Its sleeves have small sleeve pleats at the *narrow*, sewn-on cuffs. A simple 1 inch binding at the neck is of the same tunic fabric. This over-smock was used as an additional two layers of fabric that could be conveniently pulled on over the head for cold farm work.

SOURCE: Drawn by Carma when this American smock was a recent acquisition at Old Sturbridge Historic Village in Sturbridge, New York. Free use.



Smock from Old Sturbridge Village collection, 1830s to 40s, but typical of 1700-1900.

DESCRIPTION: This man's calf-length smock had been repaired, as we can see a carefully reinforced seam just left of bottom center. A tear had taken place from the front hem and upward about 15 inches. Perhaps that split in the fabric was there when the smock was *first made*, many years before, and had been sewn up to prevent fraying. Then the fabric could still be used as good linen to create a long-sleeved smock for a man.

This design has only a square of smocking stitches in top front, no wider than the flat collar spreads. All stitching and openings are identical on front and back, making it a reversible "Round Smock."

The sleeves have the expected section of smocking near the narrow cuffs, but not all the way around the cuffs. It had lasted a long time by being used on both, reversible sides for many years, or more than one generation. The owner donated it to the historic village. It is definitely a New England type of smock and is badly tacked up for this display. The shoulder width would have dropped a little off the farmer's shoulders when worn.

SOURCE: Old Sturbridge Village, a wonderful national park in Massachusetts showing historical Americana. From a booklet



A blue and white striped smock over regular clothes, 1830s to 40s.

DESCRIPTION: A woolen smock with a squarish neckline binding added protection and warmth when worn over everything a man normally had on, even his coat, shirt, and tie. He could then go about his business in town or around his lands in very cold weather in Britain, Canada, or Northern U.S. and still keep his underneath clothing clean.

SOURCE: Booklet from Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Mass.



American sailor holding a sextant

This hard-working sailor is not military, but one of the thousands of sailors who manned trading ships from port to port and country to country.

His blouse has full front and back torso, and very full sleeves under a wide collar. His hat is flat with a long ribbon around the crown that falls to his shoulders. He also has a scarf tied under his collar.

The trousers are the renowned, sailor bell-bottoms. If a sailor fell into the sea, he could lift a wet bell-bottom above the waves, trap air in the voluminous leg, and hold it tight at the bottom to provide a float. Wet fabric would hold the air in for a quite a while as he waited for help.

Chances are good that many sailors on older ships wore not uniform sailor garb, but whatever they had in shirts or trousers. It probably depended on the strictness of the owner, and who was paying for his clothing.