

**OPANAK / OPANCI** are distinguished by the construction of leather, lack of laces, durable, and various ending on toes. In Serbia, the design of the horn-like ending on toes indicates the region of origin. They are considered a national symbol of Serbia, and the traditional peasant footwear for people in the Balkan region. Opanak as a form of footwear exists since antiquity and has not changed much. Until 50 years ago, they were usually worn in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. Nowadays, they are only used in folk costume, for folkloric dance ensembles, festivals, feast days or other cultural events.

#### REGIONAL TYPES

**Šopske** (Shopi opanci)

**Valjevske** (Valjevo)

**Moravske** (Morava)

**Kilaši** (Kilo ones)

**Crvenjaši** (Red ones)

**Užičke** (Užice)

**Noske** (Snouts)

**Kukičari** (Hooked ones)

**Šabačke** (Šabac)

**Kolubarske** (Kolubara)

**Mrki** (Brown ones)



Serbian Heritage Museum wishes to express gratitude to the Serbian community and Serbian Community Centre for their generous and loyal support through all these 25 years. We hope you will enjoy the exhibit and return to see us often.

We also wish to thank our volunteers, contributors and Museum Board who have assisted us with their skills and expertise in organising this exhibit. We have many important and interesting projects prepared for the future, so please contact us if you wish to know more or are able to help.

**Museum hours:** Monday to Friday 10:00 am — 6:00 pm

Saturday & Sunday 6:00 pm—9:00 pm



## SERBIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

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## HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

In 1975, the idea of a Serbian Museum was initiated. The Serbian Heritage Women's Society undertook the first collection of artifacts and archival materials from the Serbian community. In 1976, they displayed at the Hiram Walker Historical Museum, now Windsor's Community Museum, for four months. The exhibit generated much interest among the general public and Serbian community. A permanent museum then became the new goal for the Serbian Heritage Women's Society.

They accomplished this goal in 1987. The support came from the Government of Ontario through a grant for the first necessary display equipment. Serbian businessmen and generous individuals donated office furniture and other useful items.

## IMMIGRATING AND COLLECTING

The first large group of Serbian people came to Windsor between 1923 and 1929. They settled in Ford City which at that time was a separate municipality located east of the town of Walkerville. Windsor Serbs came from the several different regions of the former Yugoslavia: Serbia, Vojvodina, Lika, Kordun, Banija, Montenegro, Bosnia, Kosovo, Dalmatia, Herzegovina and Macedonia. As they were arriving in many waves of immigration, Serbs brought with them family heirlooms, traditional costumes, books, hats, musical instruments, sacral artifacts. Anything that reminded them of their home country. Through generations these artifacts accumulated through generous donations, bequests, purchases into a good size of a collection which we have highlighted here.



### TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

Serbian costume is known for the variety of textures and decorative elements distinguishing the regional origin, social class, gender and age of the people wearing it. Traditional Serbian female dress consists of *opanci*, embroidered woolen socks that reached to the knees - *nazuvice*. Skirts were very varied, of pleated or gathered and embroidered linen, with *tkanice* serving as a belt.

In medieval times, rulers, the nobility and senior churchmen brought many of their fabrics from Dubrovnik. The most common fabric for ordinary Serbs was *sclavina* or *schlavina*,

a coarse wool fabric. Linen was also made within Serbia, while silk was grown at the Dečani Monastery as well as near Prizren. Few secular garments have survived from the medieval period.

Many designs of clothes of the Serbs were developed from antiquity and embroidery patterns were laden with symbolism and shared with other Slavic peoples (i.e. Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Russians). These symbols were mostly representational of Great Mother Syra Zemlya to invoke the protection of fertility of soil and family, blessing of the marriage, and granting



good health of all who have worn them as amulets or incorporated them into clothing.

Roman, Byzantine, and later Turkish rule over Serbian lands brought their own secular and sacral influences over the textile manufacture and choice of decorative elements in the folk costume. Under the influence of the mentioned factors certain common wearing elements within the wider cultural and geographic zones were created, such as Central-Balkan, Pannonian, Dinaric and Adriatic zones with their own particularities. Here we exhibit few examples of women dress from Eastern Slavonia, Eastern Serbia, and Hercegovina.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

**TAMBURICA (tambouritza)** – Another string instrument popular amongst Serbs, though this one serves to accompany lyrical songs and to inspire jovial dancing. It is believed that it came to Serbs from Turkey in the 14<sup>th</sup> C by way of the Muslim population in Macedonia and Bosnia. By the 18<sup>th</sup> C migrations, tambouritza was brought to Slavonia and Vojvodina where it took root very quickly. It lost its oriental roundness and became more alike to the guitar. However the melody and tonality of the songs it accompanied amongst Serbs and Croats alike could be considered as the indigenous to the regions of its new home. This instrument has been and still is a very popular tool for causing merriment at any social gathering.



### GAJDE

Bagpipes are a class of musical instrument, aerophones, using enclosed reeds fed from a constant reservoir of air in the form of a bag. Though the Scottish Great Highland Bagpipe and Irish uilleann pipes have the greatest international visibility, bagpipes have been played for centuries throughout large parts of Europe, the Caucasus, around the Persian Gulf and in Northern Africa. Southeastern Europe still keeps *gajde* alive, though its traditional popularity and importance have been unfairly neglected by the modern times. Erške *gajde*, three tonal bagpipes, are the oldest Serbian bagpipe

**GUSLE** - The Serbian *gusle* (*pluralia tantum*) has one or two strings and is usually made of maple wood. A *guslar* is an individual capable of reproducing and composing poems about heroes and historical events to the accompaniment of this instrument, usually in the decasyllable meter. He is the one usually creating the instrument from one piece of wood, maple or walnut. There are records of an instrument named *gusle* being played at the court of the 13th-century Serbian King Stefan Nemanjić, Polish poets of the 17th century mentioned the Serbian *gusle* in their works. The *gusle* has played a significant role in the history of Serbian epic poetry because of its association with the centuries old patriotic oral legacy. Most of the epics are about the era of the Ottoman occupation and the struggle for the liberation from it. With the efforts of ethnographer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, many of these epics have been collected and published in the 19th century. *Gusle* are most respected and beloved instrument amongst Serbs to this day.