

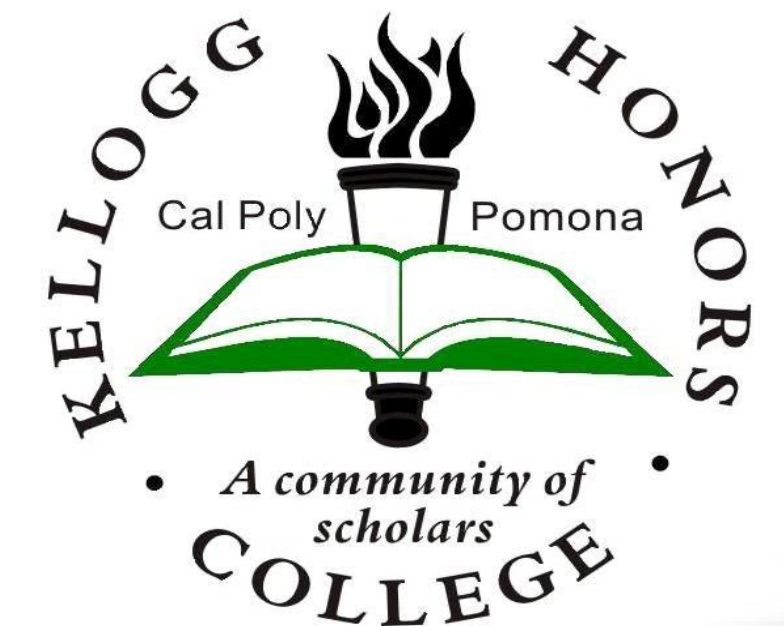
Pryguny Sostri (Jumper Sisters): Molokan Women in America, 1904-2004



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Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project



"Russian Youth Sitting on U.S. Flag"

From 1904-1912, Molokan families left their homes in the Transcaucasian & Transcasian regions of Russia, migrating to the United States in search of religious asylum. Also known as Spiritual Christian Jumpers, the religious sect desired to preserve their ethno-religious beliefs & customs by teaching their children about their heritage. However, similar to many other immigrant groups in the early 1900s, Molokans faced the assimilation pressures. Dressed in a traditional 'Russian shirt' & sitting atop an American flag, the youth symbolizes the complexities associated with living between two cultures, & the balance required to navigate ethnic & popular cultures.

(Photograph from Shubin Family Collection.)

"Portrait of Two Molokan Women"

Taken in Los Angeles in the early 1900s, at North Spring Street Studio, the portrait depicts two women. The women—wearing headscarves (*kasinki*), long-sleeved blouses, and long skirts in sturdy fabrics—showcase the sensible ethnic outfits worn by many early Molokan women in America. Later, thinner & synthetic fabrics became popular, in order to account for the Southern California climate, as well as evolving aesthetic appeal.

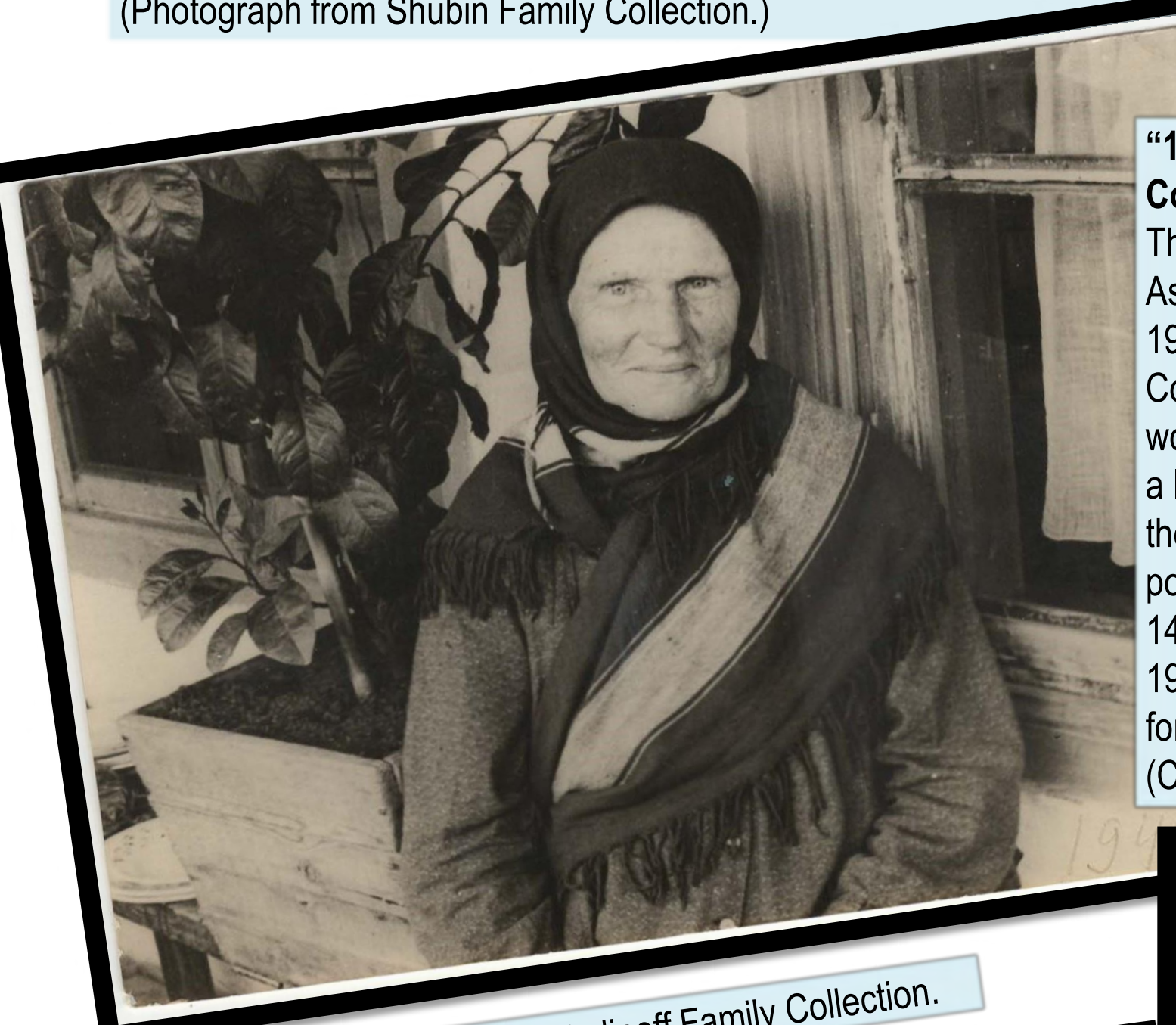
(Photograph from Shubin Family Collection.)



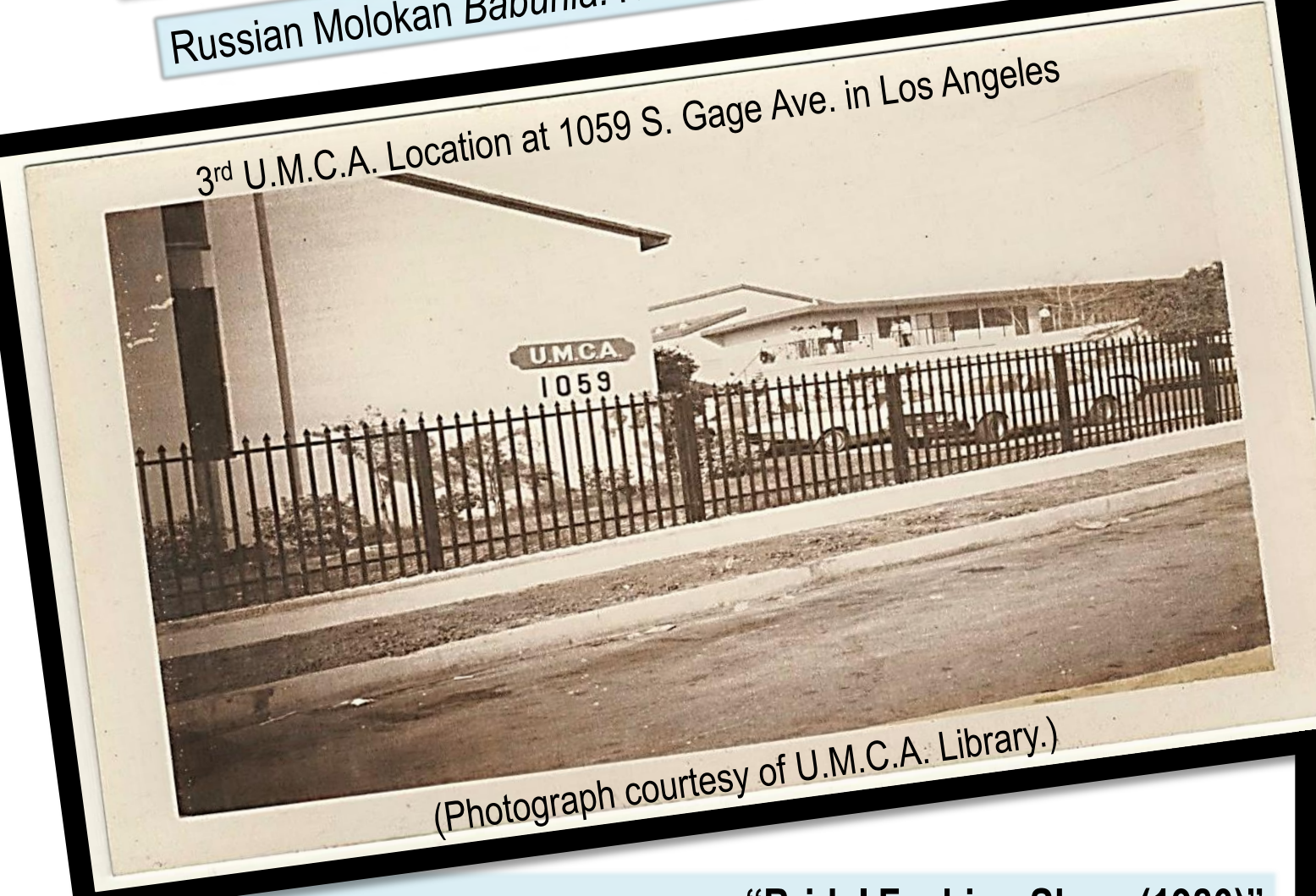
"1942 U.M.C.A.'s Ladies Auxiliary Committee"

The United Molokan Christian Association (U.M.C.A.) was founded in 1926. In 1933-1934 the Ladies Auxiliary Committee was established. The women of the Ladies Committee played a large role in connecting the youth with their ethno-cultural roots. Here, they pose in front of the U.M.C.A. building at 145 S. Utah Street (Los Angeles) in 1942, wearing outfits resembling their foremothers' dress.

(Courtesy of the U.M.C.A.)



Russian Molokan Babunia. Kudinoff Family Collection.



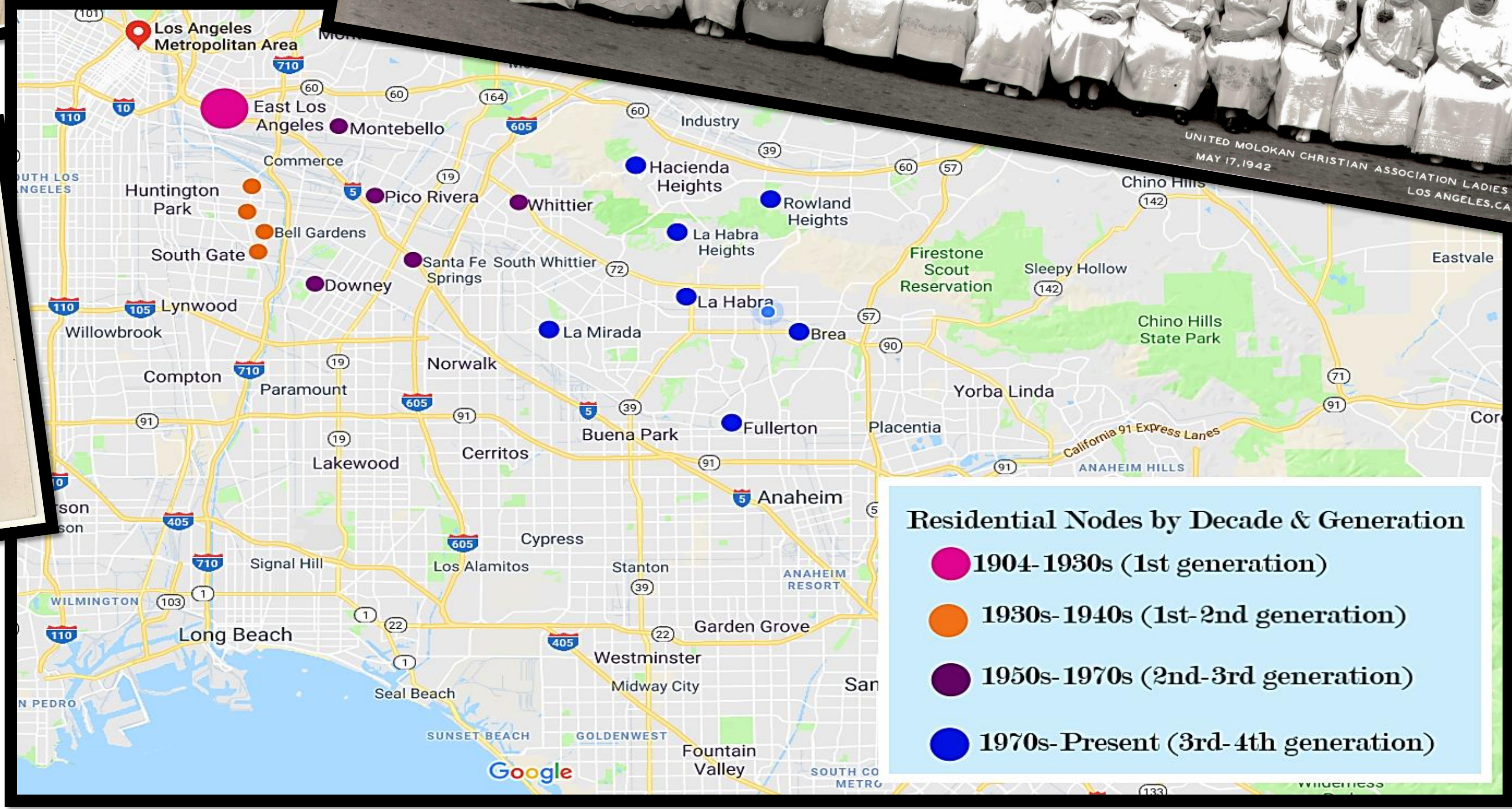
3rd U.M.C.A. Location at 1059 S. Gage Ave. in Los Angeles

(Photograph courtesy of U.M.C.A. Library.)

"Bridal Fashion Show (1980)"

These brides, modeling their wedding dresses at a community Fashion Show in the 1980s, portray the continuation of the Molokan's ethnic dress. The brides, retaining the main conventions of ethnic dress, also incorporate elements of American fashion into their gowns. Thus, this photograph conveys the community practice of adapting ethnic practices to a modern world, in order to ensure the survival of their culture.

(Photograph courtesy of U.M.C.A.)



Above: "Residential Nodes by Decade & Generation"

The map, depicting the Los Angeles metropolitan area, indicates where large numbers of the Molokan community settled throughout the twentieth & twenty-first century. In the early 1900s, Molokans settled in Boyle Heights Flats. As their financial assets grew, they moved to the cities of Maywood, Bell, & Cudahy in the 1930s-1940s. Taking part in the American trend of post-WWII suburbanization, Molokan families began to live in Montebello, Whittier, & Downey. By the 1970s, community members continued to move eastwards, to Hacienda Heights, La Habra, Brea, & the surrounding areas. Similar to other immigrant groups, Molokans moved out of densely populated urban epicenters, as each new generation possessed an increasing ability to move to the suburbs. However, unlike some immigrant communities, the Molokans have retained a strong sense of their ethno-cultural identity. Therefore, Molokan women, by actively preserving and transmitting culture via foodways, dress, & participation in community institutions, have played a large role in perpetuating their ethnic roots.

Bottom: "Molokan Baby Shower (Zubok)"

In this photograph, Molokan foodways & modern American practices fuse together. The new mother & her friends gather around the *samovar*, while celebrating the young girl with an American party. By the 1940s, Molokan women & girls had learned how to adapt their ethnic culture to an American lifestyle.

(Photograph from the 1942 Molokan Review.)



Celebration of Fashion

We invite all: Creative Katyas,
Designing Duniyas,
Talented Tanyas,
Modelling Manyas,
and Admiring Annas

To join us on the evening of Friday, March 23 for the annual Fashion Show at the U.M.C.A.

Look for future details and entry forms in next month's Molokan Newsletter

THE MOLOKAN The Molokan, February 1990

STARTING NOW

VOLLYBALL 1st Thurs in Jan

vollyball for Girls in 6th grade and up every Thursday Night 7-8:30 pm

Women began to organize & coach sports scrimmages, in order to promote social interaction between Molokan community members of all ages. Therefore, as the community moved out of East Los Angeles, into the suburbs, the U.M.C.A. & events like Thursday Night Volleyball provided an opportunity for the community to unite & reconnect.

Foodways, Post WWII:

During the 1960s, the U.M.C.A. Ladies Committee decided to commission a series of ethnic cookbooks. They formed a delegation to collect recipes of community favorites, write, edit, & print the cookbooks. Including the names of women who donated recipes, as well as ethno-religious information concerning traditional foodways, the *Russian Molokan Favorites* (1960s) & *Treasured Molokan Favorites* (1994) epitomizes the agency of women, in regards to cultural preservation; the women ensured the survival of traditional foodways by printing them for use by future generations.

"Ladies Baking Piroshkee (1988)"

Ladies, gathering at the U.M.C.A., join together to make vast amounts of *piroshkee*, or 'hand-pies.' They continue to make the same foods as their grandmothers before them.

(Photograph courtesy of U.M.C.A. Library.)



"U.M.C.A. Ladies Auxiliary (Early 2000s)"

The women of the Ladies Auxiliary Committee demonstrate that the conventions of Molokan-style dress still thrive in the modern era. While the methods of construction & choice of fabric materials & style have evolved, the practice of wearing ethnic dress to social & religious community events has persisted. The photograph also conveys the strong sense of unity shared between Molokan women. Even while living in a suburban landscape, facing pressures of outside obligations, the Ladies Auxiliary Committee still remain active in caring & providing for their fellow community members. Through their agency in organizing, implementing, & educating others about ethno-cultural community events, these women demonstrate that they are the key to the survival of Molokan culture in the twenty-first century.

(Photograph courtesy of the U.M.C.A.)

