



NATIVE AMERICAN WEDDING MOCCASINS

Much like European women, Native American women wear special bridal clothes when they marry. A Native American woman's bridal ensemble generally includes a special dress and special moccasins. Women who lived among the nomadic Plains tribes wore light-colored moccasins and knee-high leggings. Pueblo, Navajo and Hopi women wore light-colored one-piece moccasins that came to just below the knee.

While all Pueblo and Plains peoples had different traditions and practices, the following description of the Hopi tradition fits generally with those of the Pueblo peoples of the Rio Grande Valley:

THE HOPI TRADITION

A Hopi young man would propose to a maiden by preparing a bundle of fine clothing and white buckskin moccasins. He would leave the bundle at her doorstep and, if she accepted it, she accepted him as her future husband.

While not all Pueblo men prepared clothing as a proposal, many of the Pueblos required that men prepare a meal, gather special objects (corn, mano and metate), or dance with a maiden on a special occasion as a proposal. If the young woman accepted the gesture, then the marriage plans and ceremonies could continue.

In many of the Pueblos, the tradition was for young women entering marriage to receive two sets of wedding clothes, one for the wedding and the other for her funeral. The idea behind this practice was that both events marked a significant time in which she would be beginning a completely new life.