



Up until the time of the Enlightenment, almost all romantic love was more a part of folklore than fact. It may have played a part in society, but not in the everyday realization of the rights of the individual.

Out of this struggle to recognize the individual came an awareness of the integrity of the human spirit. This new conscience recognized the female as equal in the social sphere and entitled to reciprocal rights in the marriage relationship.

As one scans the most recent issue of any bridal magazine on the stands it represents fragments and fractions of the past from which we have emerged. I have no desire to cast it aside -- only to recognize the caveman in us all.

WEDDING - from the word wed, meaning the purchase price paid in horses, cattle or other property to the bride's father in order to seal the transaction.

WEDDING INVITATIONS - calling your immediate family and society together much like the tribe -- to witness the event.

WEDDING GOWN, RECEPTION, - all paid for according to custom by the bride's father as part of the exchange sealing her "purchase."

WEDDING DATE - June is such a favorite month due to good weather -- the ancients did not allow marriage in most other months, as June was the fertile month of the plantings. Some other ancients reserved all weddings until harvest in the fall.

MAID OF HONOR AND BRIDES-

MAIDS - At one time these maids represented all the other virgins available for matrimony at that time -- also they were the somewhat ineffective protectors of the maid's virtue at times of capture.

BEST MAN - The groom's aids in carrying out bridal capture.

BRIDAL VEIL - A tangible symbol that the bride is a pure and honorable maid, kept from any undesirable outside contact prior to marriage.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS - The blossom of an everblooming tree -- symbolizing fertility.

WEDDING RING - A symbol of continuity from earliest times, it seems always to have been translated as a

sign of fidelity.

WEDDING CAKE - A part of the customs of many peoples the cake has been translated as the sign of prosperity and survival and crumbs of the nuptial cake were believed to be good fortune -- hence the single maids who take a small piece of the wedding cake home to sleep on and wish for their own wedding day.

RICE - The wedded pair often scattered bits of the lucky cake amongst the guests and from that arose the custom of showering the couple with rice.

TROUSSEAU, HOPE CHEST etc. - In an age where putting each other through school and the working wife is the norm, the idea that a bride had to come equipped with most of the linens and household necessities as well as a generous wardrobe before a lad would even be so foolish as to consider marrying her seems very distant -- (but not to the folks who make today's hope chests).

HONEYMOON - In northern European countries, a mead drink made from honey was to be drunk for a month by the newly wed couple, (according to tradition, Attila the Hun drank so much at his wedding feast that he died from over indulgence). Also during times of bride capture or elopement, the couple was forced to hide out until parental wrath cooled, constituting the traditional honeymoon flight.

For the most part, the dramatizing of the change from one stage in our lives to another is a practice that all through time man has sought to perform in an outward and formalized manner.

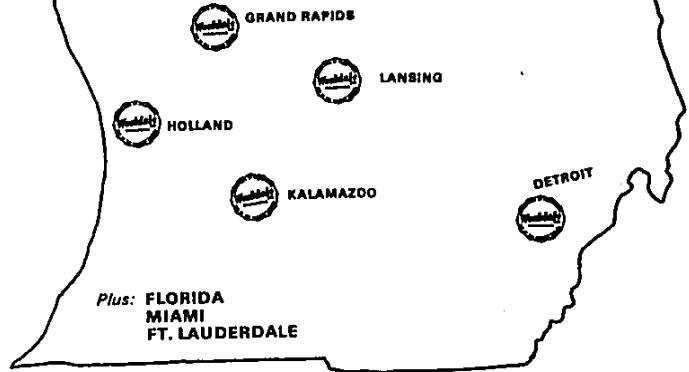
Through it all inevitably expressing his condition in life. It all seems bizarre when plucked from its proper setting and so too will our dress-up ritual, in due time, when the whole range of human endeavor has shifted to a new and hopefully better emphasis.

So just as the cave girl made herself accessible for capture, so we too will wed ourselves in the best way we can in hopes that our life will lead our heirs of this earth to even better understandings of themselves.



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