

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

INDIAN COSTUMES

IN THE

UNITED STATES



By
CLARK WISSLER

GUIDE LEAFLET SERIES

No. 63

AMERICAN MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY



After Maximilian

Fig. 1. A Mandan Chief.

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A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THE COLLECTIONS
IN THE MUSEUM

By CLARK WISSLER

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INDIA & COSTUME IN THE
UNITED STATES

BY
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INTRODUCTION

To get at a true understanding of native Indian costume one must look at the whole of the New World. To us, clothing means textiles, woven stuffs, but such materials were used in pre-Columbian days nowhere outside of the highlands of Mexico and South America, except in what is now New Mexico and Arizona, the area of true cloth.

Yet, there was one peculiarity to clothing made of these prehistoric textiles; the cloth was not cut and sewed by a tailor, but the garment was woven in about the shape in which it was to be worn. Naturally, this reduced all styles to straight lines and right angles. So we can say that all the textile costumes of the aborigines were non-tailored.

In other parts of the Americas the materials were chiefly the skins of animals. However, the users of skins fall into two classes, those who are tailors and those who are not. The Eskimo are true tailors, since skins are cut according to patterns and skilfully fitted to the body, so that in every respect their work compares favorably with that of our own tailors. The Canadian Indians, also, living next to the Eskimo, show almost equal skill, but as we move south through the forests of Canada, we note less and less skill in the tailor's art and in northern United States it vanishes, or becomes excessively crude. No Indian in what is now the United States made a sleeved garment like a coat, except a few of those along the Canadian border. Nor did such a thing as a skin coat appear in all of South America.

The picture we get, then, is that of a central group wearing cloth costumes, surrounded by a naked people who bundled themselves in skins when necessary, while in the extreme north were tribes who knew how to make well fitting coats and trousers of skins. So we see that if we wish to study the original costumes of Indians in the United States, we will, in the main, have to deal with a people who for the most part went naked and protected themselves from the cold by wrapping up in skin robes. "Naked savages," the colonists called them, and with much truth.

Now, while we have defined the basic character of Indian costume, we must prepare ourselves for a variety of styles, even tribal differences. As to what these differences were in prehistoric America cannot be completely stated. To say just what individualities in style prevailed in Manhattan Island, for example, when Hudson arrived here, is next to the impossible, but since, as we have seen, the more basic elements in a style tend to spread over a great stretch of country, we can be confident

that the general plan of costume say, for New York and New England, can be determined from the writings of explorers, supplemented by later studies among the Indians themselves. Yet, we must be continually on our guard, for the white traders sought to introduce their wares from the first and the missionaries set their faces resolutely against the exposure of any part of the body. And the Indian was always keen for a new style. Yet the effort in this brief study will be to state the styles prevailing when the first explorers arrived.

COSTUME MATERIALS

Little in the way of weaving was to be found in the aboriginal United States, except among the Pueblo dwellers of the Southwest, who raised some cotton. Yet, there is reason to believe that some cloth was made in the lands skirting the Gulf of Mexico, but these are the exceptions, skins of deer and other animals serving as the basic materials. All early writers are loud in their praise of the beautiful soft-tanned deerskins prepared by the Indians, a very fine costume material, indeed.

One of the most important aspects of costume is color, and, it is not strange that though skins were used throughout the area under consideration, these were made white, yellow, etc., as desired. In the account of De Soto's expedition, we read:—

The skins are well dressed—the color being given to them that is wished—and in such perfection that when of vermilion they look like very fine red broadcloth; and when black—the sort in use for shoes—they are of the purest. The same hues are given to blankets.¹

If we add feathers and soft barks of trees and grasses, the list of costume materials will be complete.

THE FORESTS AND THE PLAINS

Since most readers are familiar with the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains, we will give our chief attention to their costumes. This part of the United States presents two rather different environments, the plains and the forests, each of which has influenced dress and ornamentation. Nevertheless, the costume of these two areas is similar when compared with the remaining more specialized regions, as the Southwest, California, and Alaska. Perhaps one should say they are similar because made of skins, for all the Indians of the Plains and Forests were hunters, some exclusively so, and others, though varyingly engaged in agriculture, still chiefly dependent on the chase. Two halls in the Museum house the exhibits for the Indians of our eastern forests and of the western plains. Costumes are shown there, but none of these were made before 1492 and few, if any, more than a hundred years ago. Yet, many of them are prehistoric in style, or show no European influence.

¹*Narrative of the Career of Hernando de Soto* (Translated by Buckingham Smith, New York, 1866), 53.

HEADGEAR

One naturally thinks of an Indian as decked with feathers, and this was varyingly true of all tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, though most accentuated in the Plains. Yet nowhere was feather headgear the regular costume, but rather was it worn as regalia or insignia. Both sexes were innocent of hats or caps. It is a little surprising not to find these objects, for nothing seems more necessary to us in winter than a hat or a cap, yet it is not until we reach the Canadian border that such things come to notice. There in Colonial times we find a kind of cap, which the French called a "capot," but just what form this took in prehistoric times we do not know. So, in the Plains and Woodlands of the United States, the only protection to the head was that afforded by the robe which could be pulled up over the head, if desired.



Fig. 2. Seminole Hair Dress. The sides of the head are cropped close, leaving a ridge of hair on top and a similar border to the face. After Macauley.

Now that heads were bare, we may expect some developments in hair dress and ornaments. The women rarely cut the hair, except in mourning; but we find a widespread tendency among the men to shave, or crop close, the hair from the sides of the head, leaving a ridge or roach in the middle, like a cockscomb. Judging from the earliest accounts such a tonsure prevailed among all tribes between Lake Champlain and Georgia and westward far out into the Plains. No doubt there were varieties in this style, but that surviving among the Seminole to recent times is the same as that in the drawings of John White, 1584.

One item should be noted, however, that the Indians about New York and in New England made an artificial roach of deer hair. Gookin says, "deer shuts made in the fashion of a cock's comb dyed red and crossing their heads like a half moon."¹ (See illustrations.)

Headdresses of this character are still worn in a dance popular among the Plains Indians (see exhibits in Plains Hall). It is reasonable to suppose that originally a roach of natural hair was worn and that from this developed the idea of the artificial roach.

Again in the north the hair was gathered into a knot at the back of the head. In the south, on the other hand, the knot was drawn

¹Willoughby, C. C., "Dress and Ornaments of the New England Indians" (*American Anthropologist*, N. S. vol. 7, pp. 499-508, 1905), 505.

up on top of the head. In the Upper Mississippi Valley and around the Great Lakes the men wore the hair long and braided.

As we have stated, the women throughout wore the hair long and hanging down or braided. In early times, in the north as well as the



Fig. 3. Fox and Sauk Indians about 1840, with Hair shaved except for a Stubby Roach to which is attached an Artificial Roach of Deer Hair. After Maximilian.

south, the front hair was sometimes cut off like "bangs." Some of the young men of the Upper Missouri practised a form of this in Catlin's time.

Headbands and Feathers. If the reader will consult the successive cases in the Woodland Hall, it will appear that a black headband set with a row of feathers is the rule. Now it so happens that one of the early writers states that many wore such bands of skins dyed black.

Perhaps then what we see in museum collections is merely a change from skin to cloth, adding ornaments of trade beads.

A very curious diadem or band, about four inches broad, and ingeniously wrought or woven, and curiously decorated with stones, beads, wampum, porcupine quills, etc., encircles their temples; the front peak of it being embellished with a high waving plume, of crane or heron feathers.¹



Fig. 4. A Mohawk Indian showing Hair Dress and Toga-like Garment. Colonial Period. Jeffreys Collection.

The unusual turban-like cap (modern), still worn by the Seminole, reminds one of Old World styles, from which source it may have been derived.

Feather Hats. During the period 1800-1900 the feather hats of the Siouan tribes and their neighbors have been the most conspicuous. We do not know that they were so large and handsome before 1800, probably they were much smaller then. Anyway, it is certain that the coming of the horse stimulated their elaboration.

¹Bartram, William, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws* (London, 1792), 499-500.

The feather headgear of the Forest Indians was different; it had no tail, but did circle the head. Both eagle and turkey feathers were used. They stood erect, rather than drooping backward as in the Plains.

In the south the hair was more frequently gathered on top of the head in a knot and from the old drawings it seems that a kind of band, or chaplet, was worn, into which feathers were stuck. This is no doubt the original form of the feather hat.



Fig. 5. King Philip. A portrait of the time from which it appears that this famous chief wore a shirt of European style and presumably of cloth. Otherwise, the costume follows aboriginal lines. After Thomas, *Elementary History of the United States*.

Ornaments. Tying things to the hair was universal, but aside from feathers, individuality prevailed to such an extent that it is well nigh impossible to treat the subject here. Skins of birds, claws of animals, shells, etc., were used according to the taste or superstition of the wearer.



a



b

Fig. 6. a, A Mexican Indian wearing a Cape and Skirt of Turkey Feathers. The headdress is probably Spanish in origin, but the feather garments are similar to those of Indians in Eastern United States; b, A Delaware Indian of the Colonial Period wearing Aboriginal Headdress. From old prints, Jeffreys Collection.

Boring the ears seems to have been universal and especially in the south the lobe was greatly distended for the insertion of large disks and ornaments. Speaking of the Southern Indians, Jones states:—

Not only were the ears slit for the reception of inflated bladders, eagles' claws, feathers and various ornamental pendants, but in some instances the nipples and under lips were bored so that canes and other matters for personal adornment might be introduced and worn. The nose was perforated to admit of the suspension of ornaments from the cartilaginous wall which separates the nostrils. It would appear

that lip-stones (called by the Spanish *bezote* and by the Mexicans *teutell*) were worn, at least to a limited extent.¹

The bladders mentioned are shown in De Bry's plates.

In New England the ears were pierced, but not so distended, the ornaments being smaller, and the same can be said for the tribes westward into the Plains. The nose was rarely pierced, nor is their evidence



Fig. 7. Headdress of Drooping Feathers. A Museum specimen collected from the Sioux Indians in 1838.

for the labret, these being characteristic of the south. Nevertheless, in the extreme western limit of the Plains are the Nez Percé Indians, who did perforate the nose as did some of their neighbors.

Beads were chiefly of shell, pearl, and occasionally of copper. Apparently all such ornaments were rare and costly and so limited to the favored few, but the coming of the trader with new tools, etc., quickly cheapened beads and made them universal. Speaking of wampum

¹Jones, C. C., *Antiquities of the Southern Indians* (New York, 1873), 88.

Bradford wrote in 1627 that its use was limited to "ye sachems and some spetiall persons that use a little of it for ornament," but a little later it became plentiful and cheap.

The use of face paint was universal, but tattooing seems to have been most intense in the south, as some old sketches show the chiefs tattooed from head to foot like Polynesians. Some of the chiefs in New



Fig. 8. The First Sketch Shows the Winter Garment for Southern Indians, merely a Rectangular Robe of Dressed Skin hanging over the Left Shoulder. The Second, the Ceremonial Dress of the Same Region, a Small Apron Before and Behind. John White, 1585.

England were also so adorned and so were they in parts of the Plains. But the elaborate tattooing disappeared quickly with the adoption of Colonial costumes. Even in aboriginal times tattooing seems to have declined as one moved northward, for, where the body was well covered part of the year, tattooing would serve no good purpose. A moderate amount of face tattooing was well nigh universal.

UNDER GARMENTS

The breechcloth was universal for men, and for the most part, women also. A Dutch writer in 1671 says: "The men wear between the legs a lap of duffels cloth, or leather, half an ell broad and nine quarters long; so that a square piece hangs over the buttocks and in front of

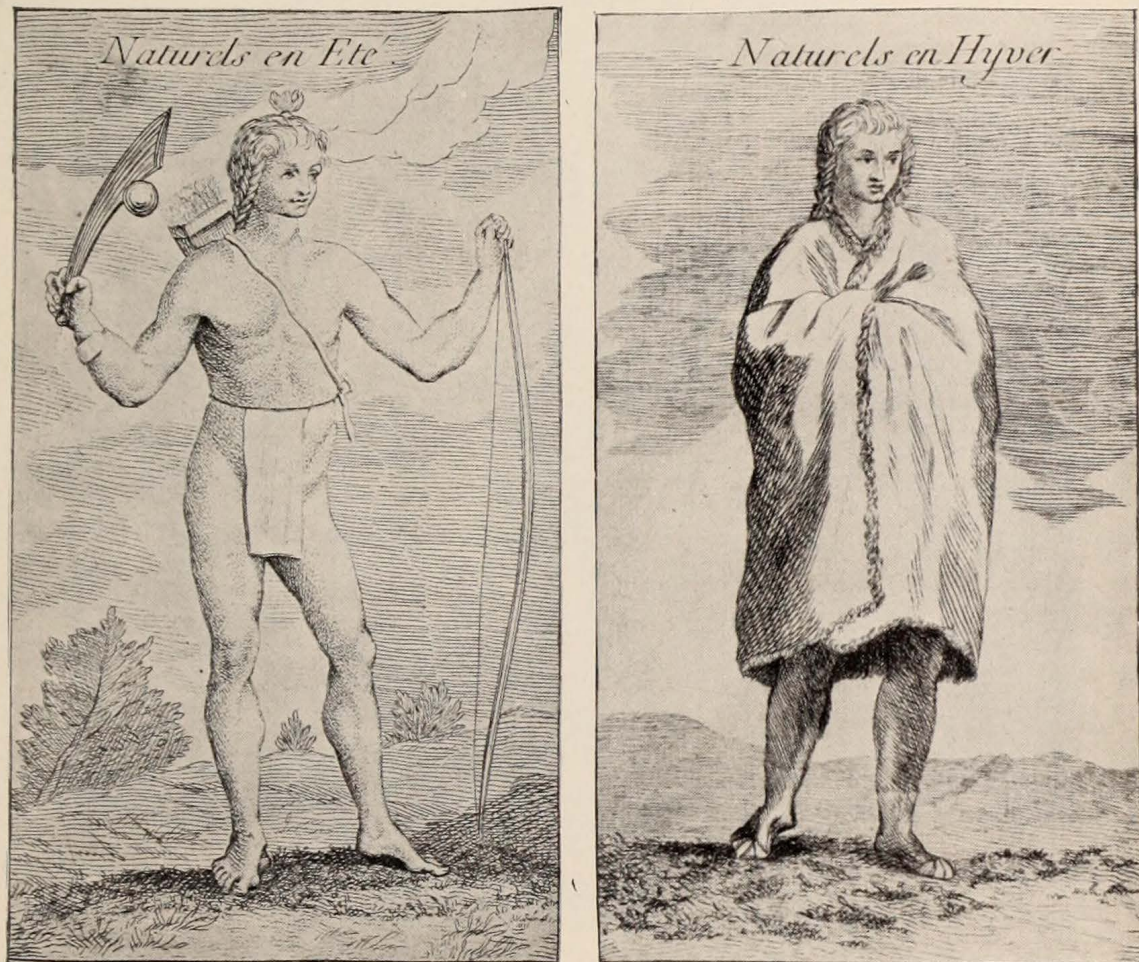


Fig. 9. An Old Print contrasting the Summer and Winter Costumes in Louisiana. After Du Pratz.

the belly." With few exceptions this will hold for all tribes in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains.

According to White's sketches both women and men in Virginia wore a kind of apron before and one behind, but one cannot make out whether these are the ends of the breechcloth, or an additional garment.

Skirts. The women in New England usually appeared in Colonial times with a short skirt formed by wrapping a skin around the waist. This rarely came below the knee. Such seems to have been the original form of the Algonkian, or Eastern, slit skirt, which appears in Colonial times in cloth. (See exhibits.) Such a skirt is merely a rectangular piece brought around the waist, and its use seems to have extended out



Fig. 10. Costumes of Southern Indians from Drawings by John White, 1585.

across the Mississippi and down into the South. Yet along the Gulf some weaving was practised, for we are told that the aprons or skirts were sometimes of native woven stuffs.

UPPER GARMENTS

In the house and in mild weather, the Indians wore nothing above the waist line,—men and women the same. As stated before, no good evidence exists that a coat or jacket with sleeves was used below the Canadian border.

In New England and the Central States jackets and shirts appear early in Colonial times, but the styles indicate European origins. It may be, however, that a kind of sleeveless poncho was worn, as reported by Parker.¹ The accounts of the Dutch indicate that originally sleeved garments were unknown.



Fig. 11. Female Costumes in Southern United States. The garment is shown as a rectangular piece of dressed skin. After Du Pratz.

Robes. Instead of jackets, shirts, and coats, both men and women wore, when needed, a robe.

Mantles or robes were made of the skins of the moose, deer, bear, beaver, otter, raccoon, fox, and squirrel, and were worn by both sexes. Beautiful cloaks were manufactured of the iridescent feathers of the wild turkey, 'woven with twine of their own

¹Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, vol. 17, part 2, 80.

making,' so that nothing could be seen but feathers. These cloaks were usually the work of the old men, but sometimes were made by the women for their children.

When in the vicinity of Wellsfleet harbor, Massachusetts, Champlain saw robes woven of 'grass and hemp scarcely covering the body and coming down only to the



Fig. 12. Woman and Girl of the Plains. The woman is muffled in a painted robe of buffalo skin. The girl's dress is a replica of the prevailing style for women in 1840. After Maximilian.

thighs.' These were probably identical with the silkgrass mantles of the southern Algonquians illustrated by John White in 1585.

A single skin of the moose, deer, or bear served for a man's robe. Moose skins were commonly dressed without the hair and were made 'wondrous white.'¹ . . .

¹Willoughby, *ibid.*, 502-503.

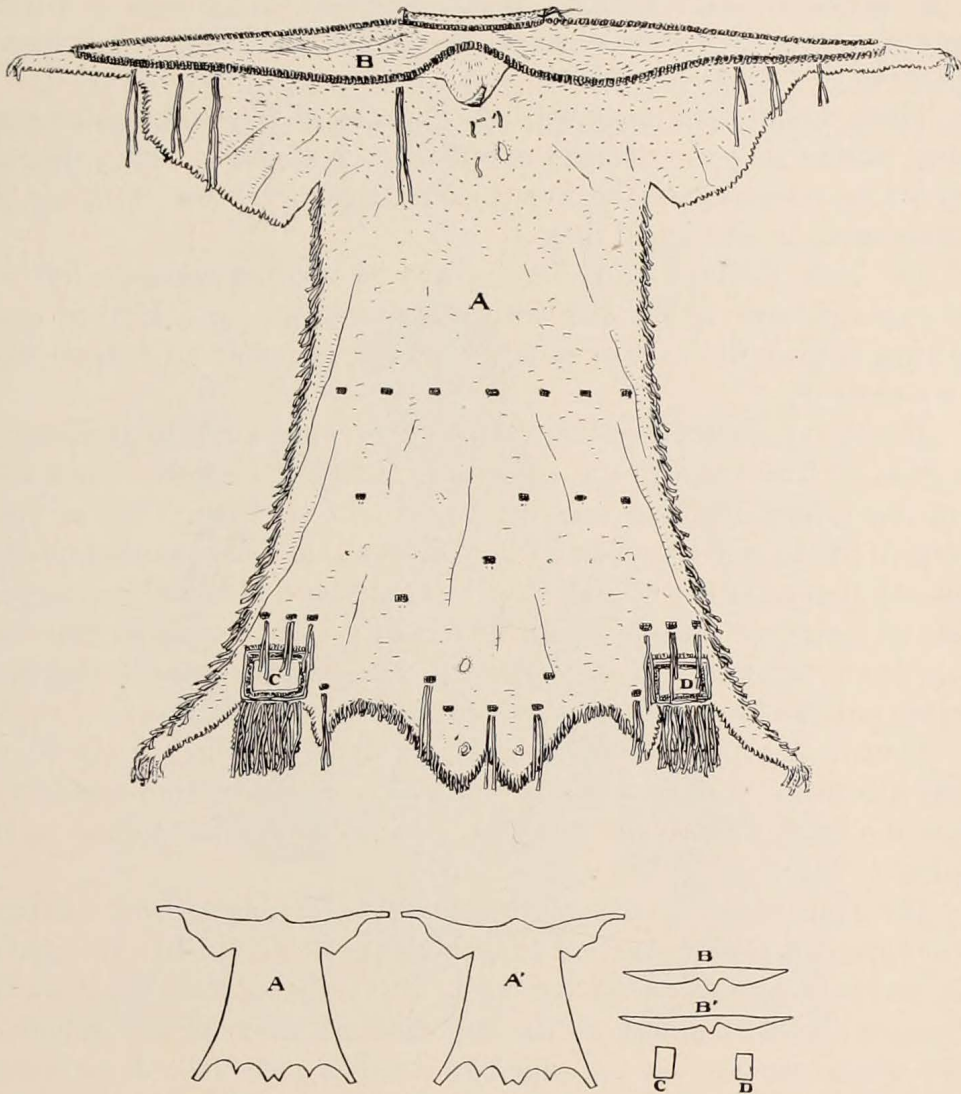


Fig. 13. A Woman's Dress, Crow. An entire elkskin is taken for each side. A cape-like yoke is formed of two pieces as above, and sewed in place. It is interesting to note that the form of dress follows the natural contours of the skin.

Deer-skin mantles were dressed with or without the hair, and a perfect tail greatly enhanced their value. In winter the hair was worn innermost. Those especially prepared for summer wear were dressed usually without the hair. These garments were fastened at the shoulders with leather. They were thrown over one or both shoulders and brought usually under one arm. When traveling they were also secured at the waist with a belt.¹

¹Willoughby, *ibid.*, 504.

A long robe fastened at the right shoulder by a knot, at the waist by a girdle, served the men and women for an upper ornament, and by night for a bed cover. Both go, for the most part, bare headed.¹

These descriptions agree with the sketches of White and other early artists, and as we go westward the buffalo robe appears. Thus the robe is about as universal as the breechcloth; together, these comprise the fundamentals in aboriginal dress.

The New England and Virginia way of wearing the robe left one arm exposed, over which was worn a sleeve of fur, or a kind of muff. This was held to the robe or neck by a cord, probably a northern idea, as we shall see.

Mantles of Turkey Feathers. One of the most striking garments of the Atlantic Coast was a cape, or mantle, of turkey feathers. Such were worn from New England southwestward to California. Not a single specimen has been preserved and they seem to have disappeared quickly upon the coming of the whites. Yet we hear that a net was "woven with twine of their own making" and the feathers fitted to this so that they hung down naturally. Such garments seem to have been common in Mexico and we are able to reproduce an old drawing here.

Shirts. A type of woman's costume, best observed in the Plains is like a poncho, or shirt, a one piece garment reaching from shoulder to below the knee. There are, however, two rather distinct forms: *a*, the Plains; *b*, the Cree-Ojibway type.

The Plains type is without true sleeves. Taking a Crow specimen as the type (Fig. 13) we see that three pieces of skin are used: an inserted yoke and two large pieces for the skirt. The sides are sewed up from the bottom of the skirt almost to the cape-like extension at the shoulders. There are no sleeves, but the cape-like shoulder piece falls down loosely over the arms. The side seams and the bottom and all outer edges are fringed. The garment has neither front nor back, both sides being the same.

The technical concept is a garment made from two whole skins, in this case, elkskins. A dress is formed by placing two whole skins face to face, the tail ends at the top, the head at the bottom. The neck is fitted and the yoke formed by the insertion of a transverse piece of skin. Very little trimming is needed to shape the sides of the skirt.

The distribution of this pattern concept so far as we were able to determine by the study of specimens is: Apache, Arapaho, Assiniboin,

¹Skinner, Alanson, *The Indians of Greater New York* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1915), 22, quoted from O'Callaghan, *Documentary History of New York*.

Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Dakota, Gros Ventre, Hidatsa, Kiowa, Nez Percé, Northern Shoshoni, Plains-Cree, Sarsi, Ute, Yakima.

In the Cree-Ojibway type the shoulder cape is missing, thus leaving a skirt, supported over the shoulders by straps, or the edges of the skin tied together.



Fig. 14. Sketch of an Ojibway Girl of about 1850. The style of dress intended to be portrayed, is a simple sleeveless garment supported by straps over the shoulders. The separate cape-like sleeves are also shown. After Schoolcraft.

The coat, or body covering, falls down to the middle of the leg, and is fastened over the shoulders with cords, a flap or cape turning down about eight inches, both before and behind, and agreeably ornamented with quill-work and fringe; the bottom is also fringed, and fancifully painted as high as the knee. As it is very loose, it is enclosed round the waist with a stiff belt, decorated with tassels, and fastened behind. The arms are covered to the wrist, with detached sleeves, which are sewed as far as the bend of the arm; from thence they are drawn up to the neck, and the corners of them fall down behind, as low as the waist.¹

¹Mackenzie, Alexander, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the years 1789 and 1793, etc.* (London, 1801), XCIV.

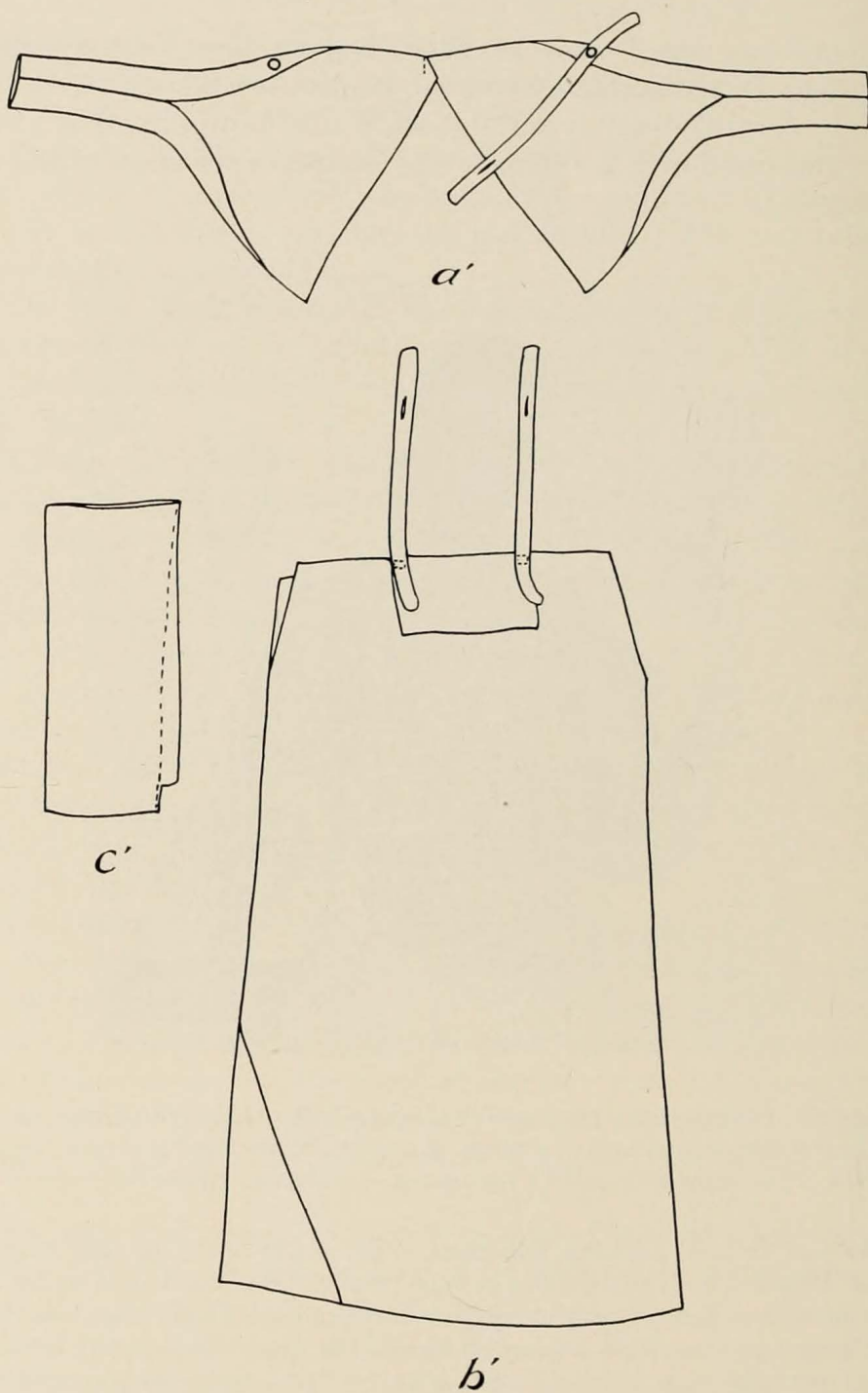


Fig. 15. Pattern of a Deerskin Dress from the Saulteaux Indians, similiar to the One shown in the Sketch of an Ojibway Girl.

These sleeves held by a cord remind one of the men's sleeve in the east, to which they certainly have some relation.

On dress occasions the distinguished men of the Plains wore shirts, also made of deerskins (Fig. 16). In this case, however, the forequarters of the skin are cut off and sewed to the sides forming an open sleeve as

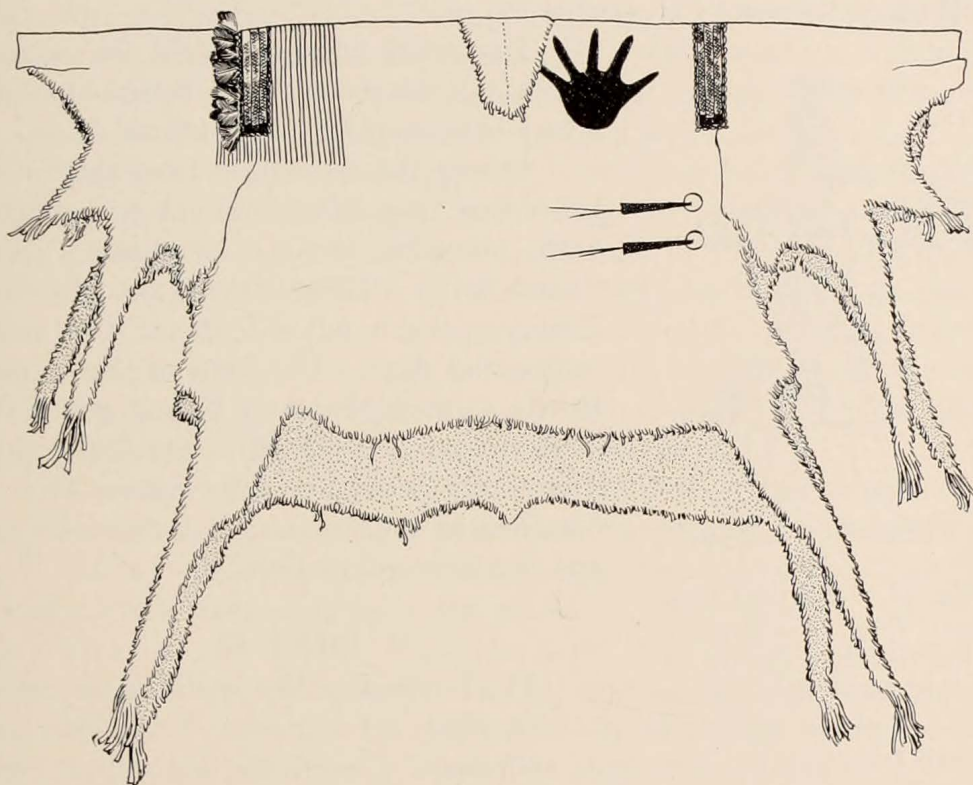


Fig. 16. A Man's Shirt of the Poncho Type. This specimen is made of two deerskins. There are bands of quillwork over each shoulder, fringed on one side with crow feathers. On the opposite side of the fold is a transverse band of quillwork. See Bulletin of this Museum, vol. 18, fig. 95. The tail tuft is discernible on the lower edge and the dewclaws are still attached to the leg projections. Collected in 1838.

for women. More modern specimens have the lower part of the sleeve closed. All the Plains tribes used this shirt, as well as the Apache and Taos on the south and the Ojibway on the northeast. They vary somewhat in decoration as may be seen in the exhibits.

We repeat that these shirts were only worn on special occasions and by a few men; otherwise, except in the northeastern Plains, no upper garments were worn.

WALLETS

In addition to the belt for holding the breechcloth, a girdle was often used to hold the robe. To this were attached useful objects, but special mention should be made of pouches.

The men wore at the girdle a pouch of dressed skin containing fire-making implements. A pipe and tobacco were also carried in the pouch, which was sometimes suspended from the neck.¹



Fig. 17. A British Footguard, 1745. A comparison of the bandolier on this figure with those in the Indian collections is suggested. Sketch from Grant's "British Battles".

The pouch offered a field for decoration and among the Plains Indians became a very important feature of formal dress.

Among the collections from the Forest tribes one may note large showy pockets with shoulder bands, sometimes called "bandoliers." These are assumed to be of European origin, but still appear very early in Colonial days. The form of this pocket closely parallels that used by soldiers of the period (Fig. 17) as seen in the illustration. These very decorative articles must then be regarded as innovations in Indian costume and not mere adaptations.

FOOTGEAR

The footgear of the Indian is far better known than other parts of his costume. A moccasin was worn throughout the forests and the plains; but along the Pacific Coast, from Alaska to Mexico, the people went barefoot most of the time. In the desert lands of the Southwest and in Mexico sandals were worn. Our present concern then is with the moccasin. The earliest pictures of Indians from Virginia to the south show everybody barefoot, but we are told that moccasins were often worn. On the other hand, from Virginia northward moccasins were the rule.

Leggings were used by both sexes, especially in the north, but for a true boot one must go to the Eskimo. In New England and apparently in all the upper Mississippi region, the men wore a long legging reaching far up on the thigh and held by a string to the belt, supporting the breechcloth.

¹Willoughby, *ibid.*, 505.

In addition to the breech-clout it was customary for the men, and sometimes for the boys, to wear close-fitting leggings of tanned deer skin. These were worn for warmth in cold weather, on dress occasions, and by hunters as a protection from brush and briars. Their lower ends were fastened within the moccasins and their upper extremities were secured by straps to the girdle, which was sometimes ornamented with pendants or 'set with forms of birds or beasts.' The leggings were ornamented with designs in yellow, blue, and red. The women also sometimes wore leggings.¹

This description, culled from old writers, is repeated by the Dutch observers and if one views the collections in the Museum it will be seen to hold for all tribes east of the Rockies. The leggings for women rarely come above the knee and were held up by a string garter.

Moccasins. The local types of moccasins have been carefully studied by Mason and Hatt.² In the main the moccasins of the forest had a soft sole, like a stocking; while those of the plains had a stiff sole like a slipper. The body of the former was made of a single piece of skin with the folds and seams on top of the foot and what varieties are found are produced by change in the flap and seams. So, in the main, the form shown in the figure (5) will serve for all the tribes east of the Mississippi. The flaps can be worn down or up.

The moccasin was also subjected to decoration and as such is one of the most conspicuous parts of an Indian's costume. The design usually follows the seams, covers the tongue insert, and the flaps. Seldom are the other surfaces of the moccasin ornamented.³

Turning now to the Plains we meet with a soled moccasin, in reality a shoe, but with no heel. The patterns for this type resemble those for shoes and need not be explained. In decoration there are some differences, for now there is a sole line at the side of the foot. This is often ornamented. Yet, in the main, the styles of moccasin designs found in collections from the Plains, are similar to those from the forests; hence, we infer that the Plains type is the more recent.

On the other hand, the practice of beading or quilling the entire surface of the moccasin is peculiar to the Plains, and is also recent.

In both the forests and the plains, there is little distinction in pattern between the moccasins of women and men.

¹Willoughby, *ibid.*, 502.

²Mason, O. T., "Primitive Travel and Transportation" (*Report, United States National Museum for 1894*, Washington, 1896); Hatt, Gudmund, "Moccasins and their Relation to Arctic Footwear" (*Memoirs, American Anthropological Association*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1916).

³Wissler, Clark, "Structural Basis to the Decoration of Costumes among the Plains Indians" (*Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 17, part 3, 1916).

EARLY ACCOUNTS

A fair idea of Virginia costume is given by John Smith, as follows:—

For their apparell they are sometimes covered with the skinnes of wilde beasts which in Winter are dressed with the hayre, but in Summer without. The better sort vse large mantels of Deare skins, not much differing in fashion from the Irish mantels. Some imbroidered with white beads, some with Copper, other painted after their manner. But the common sort haue scarce to cover their nakednesse but with grasse, the leaues of trees or such like. We haue seene some vse mantels made of Turkey feathers, so prettily wrought and woven with threads, that nothing could be discerned but the feathers. That was exceeding warme and very handsome. But the women are alwayes covered about their middles with a skin, and very shamefast to be seene bare. They adorne themselues most with copper beads and paintings. Their women, some haue their legs, hands, breasts and face cunningly imbroidered with divers workes as beasts, serpents, artificially wrought into their flesh with blacke spots. In each eare commonly they haue 3 great holes, whereat they hang chaines, bracelets, or copper. Some of their men weare in those holes a small greene and yellow coloured snake, neare halfe a yard in length, which, crawling and lapping her selfe about his necke, oftentimes familiarly would kisse his lips. Others weare a dead Rat tyed by the taile. Some on their heads weare the wing of a bird or some large feather with a Rattell. Those Rattels are somewhat like the chape of a Rapier, but lesse, which they take from the taile of a snake. Many haue the whole skinne of a Hawke or some strange foule, stuffed with the wings abroad. Others a broad peece of Copper, and some the hand of their enemy dried. Their heads and shoulders are painted red with the roote *Pocone* brayed to powder, mixed with oyle, this they hold in sommer to preserue them from the heate, and in winter from the cold. Many other formes of paintings they vse, but he is the most gallant that is the most monstrous to behold.¹

Speaking of the moccasins of the Southern Indians, Jones states:—

The shoes of the men and women were fashioned after the same pattern, and were seldom worn except upon a journey. They were made of deer-skin, the sole and upper leather being of the same piece, and sewed together on the upper part of the foot. The moccasin was cut about three inches longer than the foot, and folded over the toes. The quarters were about nine inches high, and fastened round the leg like a buskin.²

Of the women's costume of the Indians living in the vicinity of New York, O'Callaghan in his *Documentary History of New York*, writes:—

The women ornament themselves more than the men. And although the winters are very severe, they go naked until their thirteenth year; the lower parts of the girls' bodies only are covered. All wear around the waist a girdle made of a fin of a whale or of seawant (wampum). . . The women wear a petticoat midway down the leg, very richly ornamented with seawant. . . They also wrap the naked body in a deer skin, the tips of which swing with points . . . The women bind their hair in a plait, over which they draw a square cap, thickly interwoven with seawant.³

¹Quoted in Jones, *ibid.*, 76-77.

²Jones, *ibid.*, 79.

³Quoted by Skinner, Alanson, *The Indians of Greater New York* (1915), 22.

CALIFORNIA

The standard clothing of California, irrespective of cultural provinces, was a short skirt or petticoat for women, and either nothing at all for men or a skin folded about the hips. The breechclout is frequently mentioned, but does not seem to have been aboriginal. Sense of modesty among men was slightly developed. In many parts all men went wholly naked except when the weather enforced protection, and among all groups old men appear to have gone bare of clothing without feeling of impropriety. The women's skirt was everywhere in two pieces. A rather narrow apron was worn in front. A larger back piece extended around at least to the hips and frequently reached to meet the front apron. Its variable materials were of two kinds: buckskin and plant fibers. Local supply was the chief factor in determining choice. If the garment was of skin, its lower half was slit into fringes. This allowed much greater freedom of movement, but the decorative effect was also felt and used. Of vegetable fibers the most frequently used was the inner bark of trees shredded and gathered on a cord. Grass, tule, ordinary cordage, and wrapped thongs are also reported.

As protection against rain and wind, both sexes donned a skin blanket. This was either thrown over the shoulders like a cape, or wrapped around the body, or passed over one arm and under the other and tied or secured in front. Sea otter furs made the most prized cloak of this type where they could be obtained. Land otter, wild cat, deer, and almost every other kind of fur was not disdained. The woven blanket of strips of rabbit fur or bird skin sometimes rendered service in this connection, although also an article of bedding.¹

Moccasins "were not worn about the village or on ordinary excursions." Yet they were made and of the general forest type. In Southern California, however, sandals were used.

The typical California moccasin, which prevailed over central and northwestern California, was an unsoled, single-piece, soft shoe, with one seam up the front and another up the heel . . . The front seam is puckered, but sometimes with neat effect. The heel seam is sometimes made by a thong drawn through. . . Separate soles of rawhide are sometimes added, but old specimens are usually without, and the idea does not seem to be native. The moccasin comes rather higher than that of the Plains tribes, and appears not to have been worn with its ankle portion turned down. Journeys, war, wood gathering are the occasions mentioned for the donning of moccasins; as well as cold weather, when they were sometimes lined with grass. They were not worn about the village or on ordinary excursions. . . .

The skin legging is rarer than the moccasin. It was made for special use, such as travel through the snow.²

Two somewhat unique features are a netted cap for men and basket caps for women. The latter occurs in northern California extending upward to Washington; the former is found chiefly where the basket cap is wanting.

¹Kroeber, A. L., "Elements of Culture in Native California" (*University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 13, no. 8, 1922), 260-261.

²Kroeber, A. L., "Handbook of the Indians of California" (*Bulletin 78, Bureau of American Ethnology*, Washington, 1925), 805, 807.

WASHINGTON AND OREGON

With respect to the tribes in the valley of the Columbia River, near the coast, it is stated:—

The clothing used by the natives of this area was relatively simple. The men either wore nothing at all or merely a robe or blanket thrown over the back and fastened across the chest with a string. The women wore a sort of petticoat made of twisted strings of cedar-bark or grass, occasionally of wool, fastened to a cord or band around the waist and falling to the knees. In addition to this they usually wore a robe, smaller than that worn by the men, over the back. Among the Yakonan a similar fringed garment was worn around the shoulders. A hat, usually woven of cedar-bark and grass, was frequently worn, especially in wet weather, when it was also customary to throw a mat over the shoulders for further protection.

The hats of the Chinook and neighboring tribes . . . were closely woven of cedar-bark and grass with some fine cedar-root, so as to be water-tight, and were of a conical shape, surmounted by a pointed knob some two to four inches in diameter. They were ornamented with interwoven designs representing whaling scenes, animals such as dogs and deer, or purely geometrical designs. . . .

The robes and blankets used in this area were usually made of the skins of various animals, or woven (twined) from the wool of the mountain goat. While these were more common northward, woolen robes were also made on the Columbia. . . .

Tattooing occurs to but a slight extent among these tribes, and is usually limited to a few lines or dots on the arms or legs, apparently according to individual fancy. It is more prevalent among the women than the men. The face is rarely, if ever, marked.

Ornaments were commonly worn by both sexes, but especially by the women. Nose and ear ornaments, necklaces, etc., were worn, though it is doubtful if nose ornaments were used by the tribes of Puget sound. Most of these were made of shells, dentalia being the most valued. These form, in fact, one of their most valued possessions, and also serve as a circulating medium.¹

Usually all these Indians were barefoot.

In the interior, among such tribes as the Yakima, Nez Percé, etc., we find the above type of costume fading out into that of the Plains. Further, since the boundary between the United States and Canada is an arbitrary line, we need not be surprised to find that both the coast and interior types extend into British territory. The Indians of Alaska have a variant of the coast type (see exhibits in the Museum).

¹Lewis, Albert Buell, "Tribes of the Columbia Valley and the Coast of Washington and Oregon" (*Memoirs, American Anthropological Association*, vol. 1, part 2, 1906), 165, 166, 168.

THE SOUTHWEST

The California type of costume, or want of costume, spreads into Arizona and the Plains type crowds in from the west, as among the Apache; but the Pueblos stand out as rather distinct. This is chiefly due to the presence of woven materials, but when they do resort to skins they tend toward Plains types, except that their moccasins are more like



Fig. 18. Girls from Sia Pueblo in New Mexico. After Mrs. Stevenson.

boots. The women in many villages wear a boot whose top is wrapped around the leg to the knee. Sandals were, however, the usual footgear.

The older woman's costume seems to have been without sleeves, but fastened over the right shoulder, leaving the left free. A sash was used instead of a belt. A rectangular robe might be thrown over the shoulders. No hats were used.

The fabrics were woven of cotton and later of wool. Yet, in aboriginal days, robes were sometimes woven of strips of rabbitskin and also the turkey feather mantles used in southern and eastern United States were common.

The men usually cut their hair (bobbed) and wore a band around the head. It is not clear as to the existence of a poncho, or shirt, that seemingly came in with the Spaniards; the essential costume was a short kilt and a mantle or a skin robe.

Quoting from the earliest Spanish accounts, we read:—

Cibola is seven villages. The largest is called Macaque. The houses are ordinarily three or four stories high, but in Macaque there are houses with four and seven stories. These people are very intelligent. They cover their privy parts and all the immodest parts with cloths made like a sort of table napkin, with fringed edges and a tassel at each corner, which they tie over the hips. They wear long robes of feathers and of the skins of hares, and cotton blankets. The women wear blankets, which they tie or knot over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm out. These serve to cover the body. They wear a neat well-shaped outer garment of skin. They gather their hair over the two ears, making a frame which looks like an old-fashioned head-dress.¹

In their houses they keep some hairy animals, like the large Spanish hounds, which they shear, and they make long colored wigs from the hair, like this one which I send to Your Lordship, which they wear, and they also put this same stuff in the cloth which they make. The men are of small stature; the women are light colored and of good appearance, and they wear shirts or chemises which reach down to their feet. They wear their hair on each side done up in a sort of twist, which leaves the ears outside, in which they hang many turquoises, as well as on their necks and on the wrists of their arms. The clothing of the men is a cloak, and over this the skin of a cow, like the one which Cabeza de Vaca and Dorantes brought, which Your Lordship saw; they wear caps [probably headbands] on their heads; in summer they wear shoes made of painted or colored skin, and high buskins in winter.²

Some of these people wear cloaks of cotton and of the maguey (or Mexican aloe) and of tanned deer skin, and they wear shoes made of these skins, reaching up to the knees. They also make cloaks of the skins of hares and rabbits, with which they cover themselves. The women wear cloaks of the maguey, reaching down to the feet, with girdles; they wear their hair gathered about the ears like little wheels.³

¹Winship, George Parker, "The Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542" (*Fourteenth Annual Report part 1, Bureau of American Ethnology*, Washington, 1896), from *Translation of the Narrative of Castañeda*, 517.

²Winship, *ibid.*, from *Translation of the letter from Mendoza to the King*, April 17, 1540, 549.

³Winship, *ibid.*, from the *Relación Postrera de Sivola*, 569.

THE USE OF CLOTH

As stated elsewhere, among the first articles to be offered the Indians, were cloth, shoes, boots, etc. At first, the tendency was to cut the cloth to the patterns for the old skin garments, as a study of the collections will make clear; but eventually the coats, shirts, etc., of the whites introduced new styles. Very early, indeed, the Iroquois took to cotton shirts and coats of buckskin, with brass buttons. The women were a little more conservative, but quickly adopted the waist with sleeves.



Fig. 19.—Winnebago Indians. These costumes contain both native materials and trade cloth; in pattern they are hybrids.

In the Ojibway collection are to be found cloth dresses without sleeves, made after the pattern of Fig. 15. The Iroquois and other eastern women wore a skirt formed by wrapping a rectangular piece of cloth around the body, examples of which are on view. Even in the Plains, cloth dresses are to be found.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The ideal procedure in the study of costume is to examine the collection in a well stocked museum, but even then it will be necessary to take the literature into account. Thus, if one wishes to know the dress of a given tribe, say the Seminole, he should turn to that title in the *Handbook of American Indians*,¹ where he will find titles of the most important publications. Then, if the dress of a known historical period is desired, that can also be determined. Finally, if the notes thus secured are taken as the basis for a study of museum collections, one will have exhausted all the available sources.

Among general works, the following will be found useful:—

- BRY, THEODORO DE. Brevis narratio eorum quæ in Florida Americæ Provincia Gallis acciderunt, secunda in illam navigatione du ce Renato de Laudoniere classis Praefecto anno M. D. LXIII, quæ est secvnda pars Americæ. Francoforti ad Mœnvm, 1591.
- CATLIN, GEORGE. Illustrations of the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians. 2 vols. New York and London, 1848.
- CHAMPLAIN, SAMUEL DE. Voyages; ou Journals es decouvertes de la Nouvelle France. Tomes I-II. Paris, 1830.
- HARIOT, THOMAS. A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia of the Commodities and of the Nature and Manners of the Naturall Inhabitants. Folis Frankoforti ad Mœnum, 1590.
- JEFFREYS, T. Collection of the Dresses of the Different Nations (etc.), the complete American Indian portion, being plates 121 to 240. London, 1757-72.
- LAFITAU, J. F. Mœurs des Sauvages Americains, comparees aux Mœurs des Premiers Temps. Tomes I-II. Paris, 1724.
- MAXIMILIAN, PRINCE OF WIED. Travels in the Interior of North America. Translated from the German by H. Evans Lloyd. London, 1843.
- McKENNEY, THOMAS L. AND HALL, JAMES. History of the Indian Tribes of North America, with biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs. Embellished with One Hundred and Twenty Portraits from the Indian Gallery in the Department of War at Washington. Philadelphia, 1837-44.
- SCHOOLCRAFT, HENRY R. Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Collected and Prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Vols. 1-6. Philadelphia, 1851-1857.

¹Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology.



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