

Modern Brides Remember Traditions

By ANNETTE BUCHANAN
 As the modern bride plans her wedding, she takes into account many old customs. The historical origins of these traditions are both unusual and interesting. Selecting a ring is one of the first steps for an engaged couple. A diamond is the most common betrothal gem and has been accepted as such since the 15th century. The word "diamond" is from the Greek "adamas" which means unconquerable. The Egyptians were the first to actually use a ring in the wedding ceremony. This was preceded by an ancient Jewish ceremony in which a symbolic ring,

too large to be worn on the finger, was given to the bride. The circular shape of the ring is said to be a carry-over from fetters and bracelets worn by slave women in primitive times. The theme of submission is also carried out by wearing the ring on the left hand, the traditional symbol of subjection. This custom had been followed by English speaking peoples since the 16th century. An ancient belief decrees that a "vein of love" runs directly from the fourth finger to the heart. Hence the wedding ring is worn on that finger, closest to the hand, with the engagement

ring on the outside. In the Protestant service, the ring ceremony symbolizes the perfect circle of married life. Catholics consider the ring a very ancient pre-Christian symbol of faithfulness which has been adopted by the church. In the quaint days of yore, cavemen gave their brides a smash with a mammoth club, and carted them off to a cave. Strong-armed buddies of the groom kept the girl's family at bay while all this was going on—thus the custom of "Best Man" at a wedding was hatched. The French of the Middle Ages had a custom almost as boisterous

—it was considered good luck to get the bride's garter, and after a wedding ceremony there was a scuffle for it. This got a bit brutal, and eventually the elegant old custom degenerated into vying for the bridal bouquet. Many other wedding customs date back hundreds of years, and come from all over the world. Centuries ago, it was believed that a blood vein ran through the middle finger of the left hand straight to the heart. For some reason, it was decided that this would be a good place to put a wedding ring. The custom of wearing the ring

on the left hand reportedly stems from the theory that the left hand is symbolic of subjection, while the right hand indicates authority. The veil worn by brides at weddings is an offshoot of the veil worn by women in the Middle East. Here too, the idea of "submission" governs the custom.

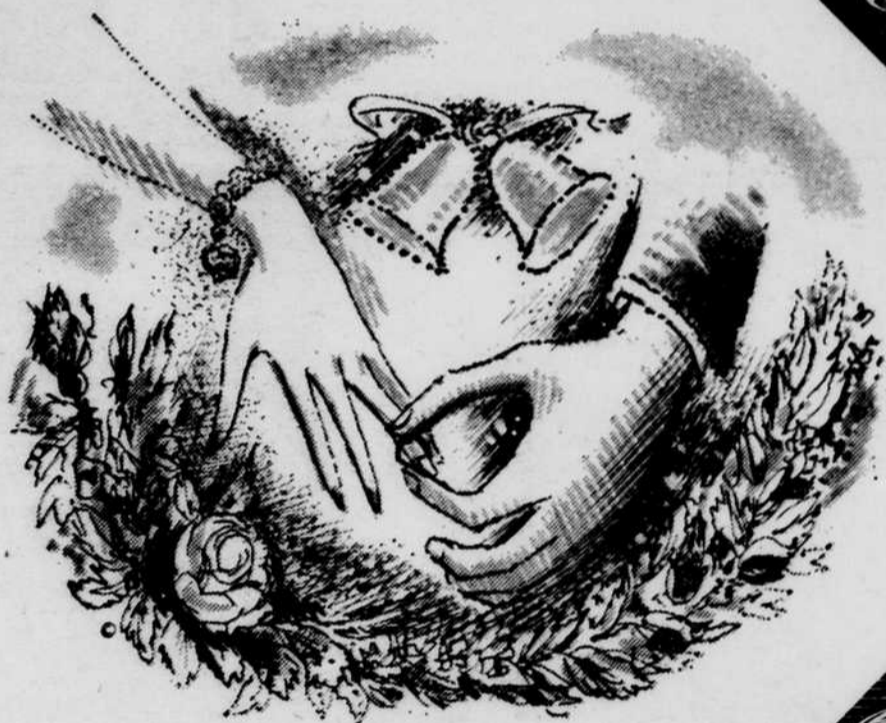
Military Wedding

The military wedding follows the regular marriage ceremony with the groom in dress uniform. The best man may or may not be a serviceman. The dress for the civilian best man and father-of-the-bride is formal.

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