

## Elegant Funerals



### funerals

Funerals during the 17th century had flare! Here are a few things which have been forgotten. People wore a plain funeral ring as well as a pair of white funeral gloves.

Such items were mentioned in last wills and testaments and passed down to relatives. The time of mourning was one year, which all family members observed except the widow who might prefer black until she remarried. The remarriage was certain, however. In the colonies, there was a need for women to replace those who died in child birth and of fevers.

Also, there were often small children who needed raising, and, believe it or not, it was not unusual for her to "select" the next spouse. This explains the

frequency of marriages to sisters and cousins of the same families. If a woman lost her husband, she had several suitors at her door the next day to compete against one another. After all, the estate left by her deceased husband consisted of the plantation and other resources valuable to the community.

All of the work and expense going into the homeplace was not to be lost! The early settlement of the wilderness country of the colonies was a brave decision. Not only was their disease, but unfriendly natives went out the white European settlements with hatchets.

In 1622, for example, in Virginia, Chief Powhatan set out to slaughter every white man. It was a great tragedy which called for widowers to return to old neighborhoods in England to find new wives.

This was a solemnly respected occasion during which all of the neighbors generally attended. Sometimes, the old wills contain interesting bequests regarding the funeral.