Womanless Weddings [1]

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Cast from "The Womanless Wedding," ca. 1890 Trinity College drama group. Image courtesy of Duke University Archives. [2]
by Lisa Brantley Kobrin, 2006

Womanless weddings [3], often staged by men's civic and fraternal groups, were popular entertainment in North Carolina and other southern states prior to the advent of television. They consisted of a mock wedding in which males dressed the roles of the entire wedding party, including the bride, mother of the bride, bridesmaids, and flower girl. These events were often fund-raisers, since many in the community were more than willing to pay admission to see their male neighbors in ridiculous female attire. Some organizations continue to stage womanless wedding fund-raisers.

"Tom Thumb" weddings, a "cousin" of womanless weddings, were also popular in the early primary grades of the state's public schools. These were usually yearly events in which the youngest students played the bride and groom and their classmates the wedding guests-many of them dressed as nursery rhyme characters.

Image Credit:

Cast from "The Womanless Wedding," ca. 1890 Trinity College drama group. Image courtesy of Duke University Archives. Available from https://www.flickr.com/photos/dukeyearlook/3176880865/ [2] (accessed June 12, 2012).

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