

LOOK AGAIN



Stretch to Fit

UNFINISHED MOCCASINS? MUSEUMS IN BERN, Edinburgh, and Ottawa hold a number of moccasins with unclosed heels, and the pair shown here were given to the ROM by Dr. J. H. Garnier, an eminent 19th-century naturalist. He collected them from the Blackfoot, but stylistic considerations show that they were made by the Dene around 1885. Garnier noted that they were made to “stretch to fit.” This quotation is somewhat ambiguous. Garnier may have simply been making the general statement that by their supple nature the moccasins

would stretch to fit. On the other hand, he may have meant that the heels were purposely left unclosed so as to fit a variety of foot sizes.

If the latter were true it seems plausible that such “unfinished” moccasins were made for trade as they would have shipped more easily in their flattened state. In earlier days, open-heeled moccasins would have been serviceable to unmounted plains warriors who commonly tucked several pairs of moccasins under their belts before taking the war path to distant lands. ❖

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