

The Plains Native Americans have been using dolls for over 1,000 years when the Northeastern tribes started to harvest corn. There were two different kinds of dolls that were commonly used by the Crow; cornhusk, and Kachina (Katsina) dolls. While the Kachina dolls were used more to represent gods and deceased tribal members, corn dolls were both playthings and sacred items.

Cornhusk dolls were often given accessories such as bows, arrows, and canoe paddles if they were boys, or if they were girls they might have been given small tools, medicine bags, and cradle boards. Most of the dolls were shaped in a basic stick figure with clothes made of hide and beads. It wasn't uncommon for children to donate pieces of their own hair for their dolls. One of the most interesting things about the dolls is that none of them have faces.

The materials for making a cornhusk dolls are simple, all that is needed is a pair of scissors, some corn husks, water, and yarn. Start with putting the husks in water for 10 minutes to soften them up. Always using an even number lay out 4 or 6 husks in to a stack. Using thin twine, tie the husks together at about 1 inch from the top (2.5cm). The husks will then need to be separated into equal portions (2 and 2, or 3 and 3), and fold the halves down, covering the twine. With thin twin tie the husks about 1 inch down creating the head. Using a single husk roll it up and tie at the end to make arms. Position the arms below the knot at the neck, between equal portions of husks. Under the arms tie the husks together to get the waist, for a female doll trim the husks to an even length. For a male doll, separate the legs into equal portions. Tie at the knees and ankles. Trim the husks evenly. To make hair, glue some yarn or raffia to the heads. Clothes can be fashioned from pieces of felt by cutting rectangles and snipping slits or X's in the center and sliding it over the doll's head, then securing it with a strip of felt or yarn.