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Native American women's cultural diversity before and after the arrival of the White Man: A comparison between the Eastern Woodlands (North America) and European cultures

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Abstract

By analyzing the profound consequences of cultural exchanges between Native Americans and European settlers in North America's Eastern Woodlands region, this study focuses on the formation of Native American women's identities, roles, and communities. The research examines the quick changes that occurred both before and after the arrival of European settlers in the late 15th century, as well as the intricate interweaving of Native American civilizations. By comparing the traditional roles, responsibilities, and social structures of Native American women with those of European women, this study sheds light on the complex interactions that arise from cultural variety.

Before European settlers came, Native American women had significant roles in the Eastern Woodlands region's cultures. They administered clan and kinship structures, participated in agricultural production, and played important roles in spiritual and medicinal rituals. Their civilization was characterized by matrilineal descent systems, in which kinship and inheritance were traced through the female line. When European settlers arrived and confronted Native American traditions with new technology, religious teachings, and social structures, these established customs were upended.

In order to adapt to the shifting environment, Native American women used a variety of strategies to engage in trade, diplomacy, and cross-cultural interactions. It examines the perseverance of Native American women in overcoming challenges such as being forced off their land, epidemics, and missionary endeavors while negotiating the complexities of European colonialism. Their experiences are contrasted with those of European women, who brought with them their own distinctive social mores, beliefs, and practices to the New World. In navigating a rapidly changing cultural milieu, it emphasizes the Native American women's steadfast tenacity. It also examines how cultural traditions were blended, how indigenous knowledge was preserved, and how Native American women created new identities throughout the post-contact era. This study uses the Eastern Woodlands as a microcosm of the larger Native American experience to better comprehend the cultural diversity, adaptation, and persistence of indigenous women before and after the arrival of European settlers.

Keywords: Native American women, Cultural diversity, Eastern Woodlands, European settlers, Pre-contact era, post-contact era, Indigenous cultures, Matrilineal societies, Gender roles, Traditional roles, European colonialism, Intercultural relationships, Adaptation and resilience, Hybridization of cultures, Indigenous knowledge, Identity formation, Native American history, Gender dynamics, social structures, Cultural encounters

Introduction

Before and after the arrival of European settlers, Native American women's cultures were very different, and a complex web of elements, such as their political settings, social positions, cultural traditions, and tribal allegiances, affected their lives. Consider some of the following crucial issues: Native American women originated from a range of cultures with various languages and customs before Europe was settled. There were more than 500 distinct Native American tribes in North America, each with its own social systems, linguistic communities, and cultural traditions. Women's responsibilities and status varied among tribes. While women had substantial leadership roles and had a lot of autonomy in decision-making in some tribes, they were more obedient to men in other tribes.

American Indians are a very diverse group with notably distinctive customs, in contrast to common misunderstandings and arguments. Does this idea stand up when we really examine

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in depth the lives of Native American Women? In which Indian tribes were women treated differently? Did they have more privileges in European culture than women? Women played important roles as mothers, healers, chefs, and artists in many tribal groups ^[1]. They also performed important spiritual duties as bridges between the physical and spiritual realms. Women's interactions with men usually involved an equal distribution of power and responsibilities. In some tribes, women were in charge of resource access and had a say in important decisions, whereas men had more influence in other communities.

Following the Settlement of Europe

Because to the arrival of the Europeans, Native American cultures suffered enormous change, including modifications to their political, economic, and social structures. The lives of Native American women were significantly affected by these modifications. Patriarchal systems and practices were commonly applied to Native American cultures throughout European colonialism, which had a detrimental effect on women's status and roles in many tribes. The gender norms and roles that those European invaders imposed on Native American women were frequently in opposition with their customs and caused cultural discord. Native American women experienced violence, exploitation, and forced assimilation as a result of European colonialism, uprooting their communities and endangering their traditional ways of life.

Native American women's cultures varied greatly before and after European settlers arrived, which emphasizes the complexity of Native American history and the importance of considering the diversity of Native American women's experiences throughout space and time. This essay also emphasizes the importance of addressing the effects of colonization and the struggle of Native American people to reclaim their cultural heritage and sovereignty.

At the time of the first contact with Europeans, there were at least three hundred different cultures and two hundred different languages spoken there. Along with hereditary chiefdoms, these cultures included matrilineages, theocracies, and democracies. The population lived in major urban centers, rural communities, or modest nomadic hunting bands. Sweeping the subject so widely would fail to acknowledge the Native Americans' unique contributions to the Americas both before and after European settlement, as well as their diverse cultural heritages. Despite the compelling arguments, women's lives are not directly discussed in the debates ^[2]. Women have made important contributions to daily tribal activities, tribal governance, and the observance of the tribe's sacred rituals in a number of tribes. For some Indian tribes, whose views on women's responsibilities had remained unchanged for centuries, opinions of women along with many other deeply held beliefs did not begin to change until European settlers came. The current research will contrast the social obligations, cultural obligations, property ownership, and political engagement of women in some Native American tribes with

Western European communities. It's major goal is to demonstrate how Western culture has failed to acknowledge the numerous and distinctive contributions made by Native American women and the effects of those encounters on them. This paper's initial section will give a brief history of how women have been seen in Western society. The roles that women play in American Indian culture will be discussed in more detail in the second portion of this essay. Thirdly, it will address how Native American women's rights and responsibilities within their tribal societies have been impacted by European law, culture, and customs during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a particular emphasis on the Eastern Woodland cultures of North America (Mohegans, Cherokee, Iroquois, Creeks Siouan and Ojibwas,). The way that these Native Americans were treated and interacted with by Europeans also differed greatly. This essay demonstrates that, despite the devaluation of "women's labor" by Europeans during the initial contact, Native men and also the tribe cherished and honored the regular contributions Native women made to the tribe's riches. By drawing comparisons between the status of women in original European societies and the Eastern Woodlands, the relationship between women's status in their society and the physical environment, religious culture, and social hierarchy, as well as the variations in these factors' combinations, will be investigated. This study will examine historical texts that discuss the status of Indian women before European contact in order to understand tribal variety and, for the most part, fair structural parallels. We will look at Indian women's traditional and nontraditional positions while considering the spiritual foundation of their authority ^[3].

An overview of the perceptions of Women in Western culture throughout history

Women's lives revolved around domestic chores, childrearing and childbirth, tight family relationships, and other supposedly "feminine" tasks. Whether unmarried or married, women who worked outside the home frequently discovered that their employment options were constrained owing to their gender ^[4]. During the period between 1500 and 1800, such was the social perception of women in the West. The roles for women were established by the Victorian idea that a woman was restricted in her capacity to live in a man's world and that she was expected to focus primarily on her domestic tasks. Through times of success and failure, the traditional view of women in the Western world has changed over time. Here's another succinct synopsis:

Ancient Greece and Rome

Because females were viewed as inferior to men in Ancient Greece and Rome, women's rights and prospects were typically restricted. Women were expected to put their attention toward taking care of the home and to defer to their husbands and dads.

¹ In this essay, all mentions to "European culture," "Western society," "Western culture," "Western civilization," etc. pertain to countries like Britain.

² Kuhlmann, Annette. "American Indian Women of the plains and Northern Woodlands." *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 16, no. 1 (1992): pp1.

³ LaFromboise, Teresa D., Anneliese M. Heyle, and Emily J. Ozer. "Changing and diverse roles of women in American Indian cultures." *Sex roles* 22 (1990): 455-476.

⁴ Riley, Glenda. *The female frontier: A comparative view of women on the prairie and the plains*. University Press of Kansas, 1988.

Middle Ages

During this period, women's roles were mostly shaped by their relationships with men. Women were expected to bow to their husbands and fathers and were not allowed to own property or participate in public life.

Renaissance

Although there was a shift toward more positive portrayals of women in art and literature, women's place in society remained largely constant during the Renaissance.

Enlightenment

During this time, a significant movement for women's rights and equality was born. Women's rights remained restricted, and development was slow ^[5].

In England during the early modern era, religion had a significant impact on the lives of women. In their religious convictions, women found a sense of spiritual fulfillment and a reason for living. Contemporaries frequently noted that female spirituality was more intense and unique from masculine religiosity. Women's spirituality is impacted by the restrictions that are imposed on them as a result of gender stereotypes and presumptions. Women's religious experiences were different from men's. Despite attending the same worship sessions as men and hearing the same theological messages, they experienced gender symbols in religion in different ways ^[6].

The roles that American Indian women perform in society

Theda Perdue makes the argument in her excellent book, *Cherokee Women*, that since gender was a major structuring force of society, women and men frequently encountered and dealt with these issues in radically different ways. She argues as well that historians must look beyond the usual declension model in order to fully understand this complex historical era ^[7]. Males typically played more conspicuous, public roles because they were in charge of social contacts with outsiders, battle, and hunting. Conversely, women oversaw the society's internal affairs. They were typically in charge of the family's upbringing, agricultural food production, and possession of home items.

Women had considerable political, social, and economic power since they were so important to societal prosperity. In many North American cultures, women frequently passed along clan membership and other belongings. For instance, all Five (later Six) Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy practiced matrilineal ancestry. The matriarchs of each clan appointed males as their chiefs and ousted any chiefs they did not approve of. The vital roles that women filled in society and politics also had an impact on their domination. Native American creation myths usually depicted women as the ones who give birth to humans or other creatures, or as the ones who create the earth by constructing it with their own bodies.

Some academics contend that after the interaction, women's

authority steadily declined as a result of cultural integration. When it came to commercial negotiations, Euro-American men insisted on dealing with Indian men, and clergy urged the Indians to accept patriarchal Christian gender roles such as making men farmers and women housekeepers. Many indigenous women still held positions of authority in ancient society, according to several academics, including anthropologist Joy Bilharz from SUNY Fredonia and historian Theda Perdue from the University of North Carolina ^[8]. Many communities kept valuing matrilineal inheritance of clan identity long after first contact, and women kept using their maternal authority to influence political decisions both within and outside of their own countries ^[9].

Women of Iroquois

The Iroquois currently are made up of the Mohawk, Seneca, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Tuscarora tribes. Two more tribes that are referred to as Iroquois tribes are the Huron and the Cherokee. The reason for this is that they are distant cousins of the Iroquois Confederacy tribes and speak languages that are close to one another ^[10]. It appears that matrilineal dwelling arrangements and matrilineal descent were aspects of Iroquoian social structure. The identification of social categories for individuals in ethnohistoric literature indicates that more research on the structural aspects of gender-divided lifestyle from the standpoint of social organization is necessary.

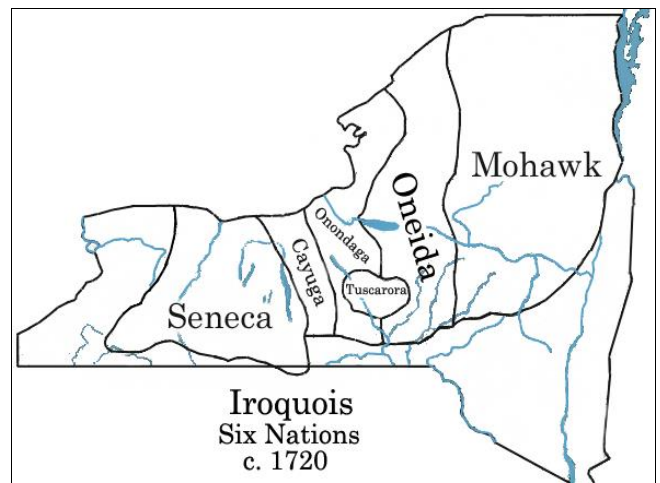


Fig 1: Shows the Iroquois six nations c. 1720

⁸ Laurence Marc Hauptman was written by Joy A. Bilharz, an associate professor of anthropology at the State University of New York College at Fredonia. The Seneca Nation of Indians since World War II is described in "In the Shadow of Kinzua."

⁹ Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*. Lincoln, Neb: 1998.

¹⁰ The Northeastern Woodland is separated into three primary zones, and the six distinct tribes are scattered across. The Great Lakes-Riverine, Saint Lawrence Lowlands, and Coastal zones are the names given to these three main regions. The Atlantic Seaboard of the United States, south of North Carolina, and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada are included in the coastal region. The Saint Lawrence Lowlands comprise the Susquehanna Valley, southern Ontario, upstate New York, and the area surrounding the Saint Lawrence River. The remaining interior regions in the northeast, where speakers of the Central Algonquian and Siouan languages are found, are the Great River valley zones.

⁵ Hufton, Olwen. *The prospect before her: A history of women in Western Europe, 1500-1800*. Vintage, 2011.

⁶ Crawford, Patricia. *Women and religion in England: 1500-1720*. Routledge, 2014.

⁷ Perdue, Theda. *Cherokee women: Gender and culture change, 1700-1835*. U of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Both men and women in the Iroquois tribe had certain roles to play. While the males were in charge of trade, fighting, and hunting, the women were in charge of farming, property, and the family. Only men and women were permitted to cast ballots to choose the Iroquois Confederacy's delegates to the Great Council. Family hunting or fishing sub-areas may correspond to gender-specific occupational categories. Camps are one example. According to anthropological accounts, men collect fish and maintain nets and equipment while women take care of the camp and process the fish. These tasks are performed by people using specialized tools. It appears that task division and related technologies will make them simpler to conduct archaeologically ^[11].

Settlement patterns and gender roles appear to vary seasonally. Families occasionally leave their homes in the middle of winter to go hunting in the wilderness. A hunting camp atmosphere maintains gendered labor and unequal resource utilization- men and women "work together." Men hunt for wildlife, but women create and care for the camp site. The division of labor by sex search generated 52 pages of data from various authors and sources. According to Morgan (1901:251. 320), women are reported to cultivate plant foods and gather wild fruits ^[12]. Women weave, create several types of basketry, manufacture rope, and work with beads also demonstrating how men and women work together on numerous ceremonies (Morgan 1901:17). He also argues that the fur trade increased the responsibility of women in general because men were focusing on hunting and trapping to get pelts. Noon (19 4 9:35) talks about women and young girls running family hunting camps and controlling agricultural output ^[13].

Siouan Women

With a few minor languages spoken in the east, the Siouan ^[14] The Siouan women were highly regarded and had a big impact on their society. Instead of meeting in the tribal councils, they exercised their power within the family and among their kin ^[15] Sioux women were responsible for overseeing food preparation and collection, as well as the care and education of children. They fulfilled the criteria of their social organization for their duties as spouses and

mothers, and they were happy and content doing so ^[16]. They played a significant role in decision-making within their communities and were frequently consulted by tribe leaders when significant choices needed to be made ^[17]. Sneve also discusses the impact colonization had on Lakota women's life. She makes the point that the forced removal of the Sioux from their ancestral lands disrupted traditional gender roles since men were frequently forced to seek wage labor and women were required to take on more responsibilities to sustain their families. She also makes the point that Sioux women's sense of cultural identity and self-worth were significantly impacted by colonial policies like forced assimilation and boarding schools.

Mohegans

Women continued to hold strong leadership roles and social sway in Northeastern Woodlands society. Depending on their distinct groupings and historical periods, Mohegan women may have had different specific roles to fulfill. Women played a significant role in the matrilineal clan structure that controlled social, political, and economic life. Clan moms, who were frequently older women, held great influence within the clan and were in charge of electing leaders, maintaining social order, and resolving disputes. In these societies, women were actively involved in subsistence tasks including farming, fishing, and harvesting wild herbs. They also had significant economic roles in their communities. They routinely traded goods with different societies and were able to negotiate and make trade judgments. They often had significant roles as healers, herbalists, and spiritual leaders in the spiritual and religious life. They were typically in charge of maintaining harmony and balance between humans and the environment since they were regarded to have a close connection to nature ^[18].

Ojibwas

Women have traditionally had a lot of control and decision-making authority in Ojibwe groups ^[19]. Clan moms were important female positions who were in charge of selecting leaders and maintaining social order. For Ojibwe women, fishing, hunting, and gathering wild rice and other plants were essential subsistence activities. In several disciplines, women were highly informed and skillful, and they regularly transmitted their knowledge to younger generations. In Ojibwe spiritual and religious life, women also had important responsibilities to perform. They were frequently healers and had vast knowledge of medical plants and procedures ^[20].

¹¹ Perrelli, Douglas Jeff. 2001. "Gender Roles and Seasonal Site use in Western New York c. A. D. 1500: Iroquoian Domestic and Ceremonial Production at the Piestak and Spaulding Lake Sites." Order No. 3010859, State University of New York at Buffalo. <http://ezproxy.lib.apsu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/gender-roles-seasonal-site-use-western-new-york-c/docview/252253984/se-2>.

¹² Morgan, Lewis Henry. "League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois, a new edition, with additional matter, edited and annotated by Herbert M." Lloyd. New York: Dodd, Mead (1901).

¹³ Noon, John A. "Law and government of the Grand River Iroquois." (1949).

¹⁴ The Siouan Indians are all the North American Indian tribes that speak languages that share linguistic ancestry with the federation of tribes that went by the names Dakota, Nakota, or Lakota, depending on the tribe's dialect.

¹⁵ Eastman, Jane M. "Life courses and gender among late prehistoric Siouan communities." *Archaeological Studies of Gender in the Southeastern United States* (2001): 57-76.

¹⁶ Taylor, Cora Alice. "The Social and Religious Status of Siouan Women Studied in the Light of the History and Environment of the Siouan Indians." PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1906.

¹⁷ Birchfield, D. L. Sioux. Gareth Stevens Publishing LLLP, 2002.

¹⁸ Klein, Laura F., and Lillian A. Ackerman, eds. *Women and power in native North America*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.

¹⁹ Ojibwe is also known as the Chippewa or Anishinaabe people.

²⁰ Klein, Laura F., and Lillian A. Ackerman, eds. *Women and power in native North America*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.



Fig 2: Shows the land of Ojibwe people major Ojibwe community neighboring people present-day boundaries

Women performed significant roles in ceremonies and rituals and had a significant impact on preserving the spiritual and cultural traditions of their communities. However, the arrival of European colonization significantly changed the roles and status of Ojibwe women. The establishment of European patriarchal systems of authority resulted in the marginalization and denial of power for women in Ojibwe communities. Women's participation in government and decision-making decreased as a result of the increasing violence and oppression of European conquerors. Despite these challenges, Ojibwe women have persisted in taking a stand against oppression and establishing their authority and leadership both inside and outside of their communities. Ojibwe women are involved in a range of social and political causes today, including campaigning, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

Cherokee

Cherokee women's gender roles and behaviors, according to Therda Perdue, were intricate and varied, and they were closely tied to their social and economic status within the Cherokee culture. Cherokee women had a significant impact on governance, agriculture, and the production of material goods before they interacted with Europeans. Women's roles and responsibilities, however, became more marginalized and disregarded as Europeans arrived and Cherokee society changed as a result. The way Cherokee women reacted to these adjustments and how they managed to maintain their agency and power in spite of the restrictions placed on them is highlighted by Perdue.

She cites the Cherokee women as being particularly important in trade and diplomatic connections with European settlers as well as in the formation of alliances and treaties with other Indigenous peoples ^[21]. Perdue's work generally emphasizes how important it is to understand the range and complexity of Native American women's experiences and duties, especially in light of colonialism and cultural change. She argues that a nuanced and culturally aware approach is necessary to fully comprehend the contributions and agency of Native American women

²¹ Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*. Lincoln, Neb: 1998.

throughout history.

Creeks

As adults, men and women typically led separate lives in historical Creek societies in Alabama and Georgia (Braund 1993:14; see Sullivan, same volume). Women contributed to their cultures as matrilineal clan and house chiefs. The gardens and fields from which they gathered food, including maize, beans, and squash, as well as wild berries, grasses, nuts, birds, and game, were also maintained by them. They might have made baskets out of the materials as well ^[22].

English women

In the early 1500s, English women played a range of roles in society depending on their social status, amount of education, and familial background. Here are several examples: Royalty and However, some wealthy women attended convents or hired private tutors to complete their education. Education was seen as a way to raise social prestige.

Marriage and Families

Getting married was a major thing for women in the 1500s. The majority of women were expected to marry, have children, and take care of the home. Arranged marriages were typical for women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, but women from wealthy households typically got to choose their husbands. Religion: There was a Protestant Reformation in the 1500s, and many women were involved in these reform movements. Some others, like Anne Askew ^[23], were even executed because of their opinions. It was common for women from lower socioeconomic classes to work in crafts or handicrafts like weaving or needlepoint. They also cooked for their families at home and took care of the children.

English women faced significant challenges in the early modern period (1500–1800) simply because of their gender. Hufton made the following key discoveries: Patriarchy and Gender Roles: English society, which had a strong patriarchal framework, was dominated by men. Women were expected to be obedient to men, whether they were their fathers, spouses, or other male relatives. They were also expected to perform the traditional roles of wives, mothers, and housewives.

Family and Marriage: For many English women, getting married was their first priority, and their families frequently orchestrated the union. After getting married, women were expected to be faithful and have kids. Hufton asserted that many women were dependent on their spouses and had little control over their lives. Work and Labor: English women from all socioeconomic groups worked and labored, whether it was at home, on the farm, or in a variety of crafts and trades. But because of workplace discrimination on the basis of gender, women frequently received lower pay for doing the same job as men ^[24]. In essence, Hufton's

²² Eastman, Jane M. "Life courses and gender among late prehistoric Siouan communities." *Archaeological Studies of Gender in the Southeastern United States* (2001): 57-76.

²³ During the time of King Henry VIII of England in the 1500s, the English author, poet, and Anabaptist speaker Anne Askew who also went by the name Anne Kyme - was persecuted as a heretic.

²⁴ Hufton, Olwen. *The prospect before her: A history of women in Western Europe, 1500-1800*.

highlights the limitations placed on English women during the early modern era by patriarchal structures and gender norms. Many women were subject to cultural expectations and limitations because of their gender, while some were able to live independently and with agency.

English women in rural New England in the late 1700s encountered many challenges but also had opportunities to be independent and make a difference in their communities. Laurel Thatcher's "A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard" Ulrich's research, which is based on midwife Martha Ballard's diaries, gives light on the lives of women at this time. A few important considerations are as follows:

Work and Labor: Women in rural New England were heavily involved in work and labor, both at home and at work. For instance, Ballard served as a midwife and helped her husband on the farm. Women were expected to contribute to the financial stability of their families, and many of them were skilled in certain trades like spinning or weaving. Community and connections were frequently at the center of women's lives throughout this time. Through the development of social and financial support networks, women assisted one another during childbirth, illness, and death. The importance of Ballard's ties to her family and community is clear from reading her diary ^[25].

Gender Roles and the Patriarchy: Although women in rural New England had some possibilities for freedom and agency, they were nevertheless constrained by patriarchal systems and gender stereotypes. Women were supposed to defer to their husbands and fathers and had minimal legal rights. Women like Ballard, however, were able to exert some control and power in their communities as a result of their work as midwives.

Tribal diversity and fair structural similarities

Native American tribes are not homogeneous and exhibit a considerable level of diversity, as seen by the fact that over 500 separate tribes are recognized in the United States alone. The rich history and diverse cultures of the British, like those of the Americans, have influenced British culture. Native American tribes and the British have certain structural similarities while also having some structural differences. One factor that links them together is the value of relationships to the community and families. Tribes in both Britain and Native America place a great value on kinship relationships and family ties and frequently base their decisions on the needs and objectives of the larger group. Before the interaction between Native American tribes and British invaders, both Native American and British women had distinctive cultures and social structures. There were, nevertheless, some structural similarities between the two groups.

Native American tribes are very diverse, as was already said, with over 500 of them being officially recognized in the United States alone. Each tribe had its own unique traditions, languages, and religious convictions. Women played important responsibilities in Native American tribes with matrilineal systems, in which inheritance and ancestry were traced through the mother's line. As a result of the

different groups and peoples that have inhabited the nation over the course of thousands of years, British society has a lengthy and diverse past. There were several roles for women in British society, depending on their position and social standing. Women in lower socioeconomic categories typically had to work to support their families, but those from wealthier houses frequently had greater educational opportunities and were expected to marry and govern their households. One structural similarity between Native American women and British women is the roles that Native American women play in the family and community. Both British and Native American women were responsible for raising their families and children. Native American women were frequently in charge of tasks like gathering food and supplies for clothes, whereas British women handled running the home and making sure their families were fed and cared for.

Another structural commonality was the value associated with marriage and families. Both Native American tribes and British society regularly used marriage as a way to create bonds between families or tribes since it was seen as an important occasion. Women had to marry and have children in order to perpetuate traditions and the family line. It's important to keep in mind that there were significant differences between the two groups as well. Native American tribes that allowed women to hold positions of leadership and make important decisions typically offered them more autonomy and freedom. British women, on the other hand, frequently felt bound by social norms and had limited opportunities for education and career advancement. Although there were some structural similarities between Native American and British women prior to the contact, their cultures and socioeconomic structures were significantly different. It's important to respect and recognize the unique histories and traditions of each group.

Impact of the encounter

The impact of colonialism on Iroquois women's lives was significant and intricate. The northeastern region of what is now the United States and Canada was originally home to six powerful indigenous alliances: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. Iroquois women played important roles in their communities and were essential to the management and decision-making of the Confederacy. But when European invaders arrived, Iroquois women's lives suffered a tremendous upheaval. Through colonization, new forms of violence emerged, including the spread of diseases, the eviction of people from their homes, and armed conflict. Many Iroquois women were kidnapped or sold into slavery, and they frequently suffered torture and exploitation. One of colonization's most terrible impacts on Iroquois women was the loss of their traditional roles and positions of authority within their societies. The patriarchal gender roles that European colonist brought with them clashed with the matrilineal traditions of the Iroquois Confederacy. Women's roles as clan mothers and decision-makers were progressively disregarded as men's influence in politics and the economy rose. European missionaries also had a profound impact on the lives of Iroquois women. They imposed Christian values and gender norms on native societies by promoting male-headed households and nuclear families. The traditional communal living arrangements of the Iroquois people, which were based on extended families and matrilineal clans, were significantly impacted by this.

Vintage, 2011.

²⁵ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, ed. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard*. (New York: Vintage, 1991).

This was especially true in the fields of politics and administration, where European notions of male leadership and power opposed Iroquois traditions of matrilineal decision-making. Deloria discusses the effects of colonization on Indigenous women's lives, highlighting how women were disproportionately harmed by the violent removal of Native American populations from their ancestral lands. He argues that colonial practices undercut the traditional responsibilities of women as stewards of the land and providers for their families by frequently dividing families and forcing them to rely on government supplies rather than traditional sources of subsistence ^[26].

Because of this, women's perspectives and viewpoints are usually disregarded during important decision-making processes, which lowers the value of the contributions they provide to their communities. On the other hand, colonialism also caused European women to lose their sense of agency and autonomy. Many of the colonizers' female immigrants were forced to assume new responsibilities, such as home chores and childcare, that were more limited than those they were accustomed to in Europe. This was especially true for single women, who usually had limited opportunities for social and economic mobility. The exploitation and enslavement of Indian women was also facilitated by White women. For instance, European women commonly served as missionaries and teachers, pushing Christian ideals and gender roles that strengthened patriarchal power structures and weakened Indigenous practices. Additionally, they participated in the slave trade, when both European and native traders would capture and sell Native American women and children as slaves. Overall, the lives of Iroquois women were significantly and differently impacted by colonialism. It reduced the opportunities and agency of European women who participated in colonization while also causing Indigenous women to lose their autonomy and authority. By examining these effects from a number of perspectives, including those of Indigenous women and European women, researchers like Mithlo provide a more complex and nuanced understanding of the effects of colonialism on women's lives and experiences.

Despite these challenges, Iroquois women continued in fighting back against colonization and contributing significantly to their cultures. By using their networks and allies to defend their traditions, they opposed the patriarchal structures that Europeans imposed. Some Iroquois women even took on active roles in resistance movements, such as the Haudenosaunee women who organized a boycott of English goods in the middle of the 18th century. Iroquois women experienced a strong and extensive impact from colonialism. Even though European colonization brought new forms of cruelty and oppression to indigenous people, Iroquois women continued to play important roles in their societies and combat colonialism in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, their communities were left with a lasting impact when they lost their traditional positions of leadership and influence.

This book's main theme is the impact of colonization on Creek women's life. As European immigrants started to

invade Creek women's ancestral lands, more barriers and restrictions were placed on their ability to carry out their traditional roles and activities. Women found themselves excluded from decision-making and vulnerable to new types of violence and abuse as a result of the collision between Creek customs and European concepts of gender roles and patriarchy. Despite these obstacles, Creek women persisted in making a significant contribution to their civilizations and changing their surroundings. They used their social networks and allies to fight colonial efforts and maintain their cultural heritage. Their communities adopted new roles and occupations, such as working as interpreters or dealers, as a result of their adaptation to shifting economic and social conditions. Sifters highlights the noteworthy accomplishments and fortitude of Creek women in the face of colonization and general cultural change. It offers crucial insight into the lives and experiences of Native American women and challenges colonialist preconceptions of gender and power in indigenous cultures ^[27].

The Mohegan people and many other Indigenous cultures were profoundly impacted by the experience. These impacts had a considerable impact on the obligations and standing of Mohegan women in their communities. One of the colonization's most profound effects on Mohegan women was the formation of patriarchal institutions of power and governance. Prior to colonialism, many Native American tribes in North America were organized around matrilineal clan structures, where women held significant power and decision-making capacity. But because of European colonialism, patriarchal authority structures were introduced into Mohegan tribes, which resulted to the marginalization and disempowerment of women. The Mohegans' pre-colonization subsistence farming, hunting, and fishing economic patterns were also upended by colonization.

Due to the arrival of European trade and the imposition of capitalism, traditional Okinawan economic practices were devalued, particularly due to the substantial roles that women played in trading and subsistence activities. Additionally, colonization brought forth a number of social and cultural changes that significantly impacted the lives of Mohegan women. Native Mohegan spiritual rituals and beliefs were frequently weakened by the imposition of European missionaries' own religious practices and ideologies on indigenous nations. Furthermore, the imposition of European social ideas and standards frequently resulted in the erasure of Indigenous customs and traditions, particularly the roles and status of Mohegan women in their communities.

Ultimately, colonialism brought with it a variety of violent and oppressive behaviors, such as land theft, forced eviction, and cultural annihilation. Like other Indigenous women, the Mohegan women suffered from high rates of assault and abuse at the hands of European colonizers, which further weakened their status and authority in their communities. In the end, colonization had a huge impact on Mohegan women's lives, which resulted in their social marginalization and disempowerment. Despite these challenges, Mohegan women have continued in opposing and recovering power, fighting for their rights, and establishing their leadership both inside and outside of their communities.

²⁶ Deloria Jr, Vine. "Custer died for your sins." *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*. Edited by Antonius CGM Robben and Jeffrey A. Sluka. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell (2012): 199-206.

²⁷ Perdue, Theda, ed. *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

One of the most significant changes brought about through interaction was the introduction of European gender roles and expectations. Cherokee women were actively involved in politics, the economics, and other social matters before European contact. Additionally, they had a great deal of power and authority throughout their society. Women's economic and political influence, however, started to erode when Western ideas about gender roles and the division of work came to infiltrate Cherokee society. Another consequence of contact was the spread of European diseases, which devastated Cherokee settlements ^[28].

Cherokee women's lives and their ability to maintain their traditional way of life were significantly impacted by the loss of so many lives. In providing care for the sick, women were essential. The opening of the American frontier and the eviction of the Cherokee from their ancestral lands caused considerable suffering among Cherokee women as well. Many women were forced to leave their homes and communities in order to uphold their conventional roles and lifestyles. In spite of these challenges, Perdue emphasizes the adaptability and resilience of Cherokee women. While continuing to play important roles in their families and communities, some women were able to preserve elements of their traditional culture and traditions.

Violence and Trauma was another direct impact: because of their interactions with European cultures, many Indian women suffered from violence and trauma. This was a direct effect of the encounter on Native women as a whole. Europeans often exploited them sexually, raping them and using other means. In addition, the introduction of European diseases killed a number of individuals, mostly women and children, which was harmful to Native tribes. Calloway highlights the profound impact that European colonization had on Native American women. He emphasized that many Native women were forced to adapt and alter their roles and beliefs as a result of the disruption of traditional Native American economic, political, and social structures brought about by European colonization. Violence and trauma were two additional effects of the encounter on Native women as a whole. Many Indian women suffered from violence and trauma as a result of their interactions with European civilizations. They were regularly used as sexual objects by Europeans for rape and other crimes. In addition to harming Native tribes, the introduction of European diseases resulted in the demise of a number of people, mostly women and children. The huge impact that European colonization had on Native American women is highlighted by Calloway. He emphasized how many Native women had to adjust and modify their duties and beliefs as a result of the disruption that European colonialism brought about in the old Native American economic, political, and social institutions.

Conclusively, Women continued to play important roles as healers, artisans, and carers even when men gained more political power. Native American women faced significant difficulties and changes in their way of life as a result of the arrival of European civilizations. The patriarchal society that emerged as a result of European colonialism viewed women as male property and undervalued their contributions. Additionally, Native American women endured acts of violence, slavery, and cultural assimilation. Despite these challenges, Native American women in the

Eastern Woodlands persisted in defending their unique cultural heritage and resisting attempts by Europeans to integrate them. They discovered ways to adapt to their environment by fusing elements of European trade into their traditional crafts or by accepting new religious traditions while maintaining their old ones.

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