

The iroquois

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Kinship is the cornerstone for how people within a society relate to others and race lineages. Many societies trace their lineage through the father, which is called patrilineal, or through the mother which is called matrilineal. The Iroquois nation traced their kinship through the matrilineal decent lines. Kinship directly relates to how family groups think, act and live along side each other. The culture of the Iroquois can also be compared to how many American families relate to one another as well. Iroquois Lineage The Iroquois nation traced their lineage through the female sex; this is called the matrilineal line.

Women of the Iroquois nation were the sole producers of food and all land was handed down to children from the female line. When a man and woman of the Iroquois nation would marry they would have to do so in an exogamous way, meaning they must and always marry outside of their lineage. The Iroquois were not to marry anyone with the same clan name thus they marry in exogamous way. “ The Iroquois kinship system recognizes two groupings: (1) parents and siblings who are tool closely related and (2) potential spouses and in-laws. (Nowak, B. & Laird, P. 2010 chapter 4. 5 Marriage) This is the same in modern day America American Lineage

In the American culture lineages are traced through the patrilineal lines of the family. When a man and woman in today's American culture decide to marry they will choose a partner who is outside of their family. Today it is outlawed and even forbidden to marry those who are closely related. If a person were to marry someone who is closely related to him or her this would be called incest. This type of union is frowned upon and even forbidden by laws. When comparing the Iroquois nation to the American

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culture it can be seen that the kinship and marriage rules are the same in both cultures.

Marriage is often times seen in the American culture of a man and women leaving their parents and beginning a new life together on their own however, this is not so in the Iroquois nation. Iroquois living style The Iroquois nation married outside their family or clan (exogamous marriage) like we do in the American culture however, once married Iroquois couples would live with the bride's parents this is called matrilocality.. " ' The Iroquois matrilineages, for example, provided women with the rights to fields and tools.

In addition, Iroquois lived in longhouses, which were long structures in which nuclear families inhabited compartments within the structure. (Nowak, B. & Laird, P. 2010 chapter 4. 5 Decent Groups) Within these longhouses there would be many families, the majority of which were adults. Since the land rights would pass through the woman's family the women of the Iroquois nation would have the most influence within the community. If women did not want their warriors to go and fight another tribe or clan they could withhold food from the warriors so they would not leave.

This gave women freedom within their community and some control over political aspects of the Iroquois nation. The same can be said for women in the American culture. American living style The American living style can in part be compared with the living style of the Iroquois with the exception of where the married couple lives. Often times the married couple will move away from family to live on their own, whether it be in another town or state.

Others will live within the same town as their family. Sometimes a couple will not make enough money to live on their own and could live with his or her parents or with another relative.

Also politically speaking with in the American culture women have had to fight for their rights and freedoms. These freedoms did not come easy for women in the American culture. Women fought for equal rights, the same rights afforded to American men. Since these women fought so hard for equal rights for women there have been additional rights that have been afforded along the way. Often times there are couples that get married but have chosen not to stay with one another because of a difference in opinion, this is called divorce. Iroquois and divorce

Often time's couples marry only to find out that they have a difference of opinion or one spouse has caused serious marital strain on the other. Since the Iroquois couples lived matrilineally, this makes it easier for the woman to dissolve the marriage, keep her children and continue to live at home with her family. " If a woman no longer desired to be married to her husband, all she had to do was pack up her husband's belongings and leave them on the steps of the longhouse.

When he came home, the husband would find them, realize his wife had terminated the marriage, and return to his home village and his own patrilineage. (Nowak, B. & Laird, P. 2010 chapter 4. 5 Divorce) In the American culture it is more difficult to obtain a divorce. Americans and divorce Americans divorce for the same reasons the Iroquois divorced for however, in the American culture it is harder to divorce. Many times couples

divorce because of infidelity of one or both of the spouses, or from irreconcilable differences. In order to obtain a divorce in America many states require the couple to attend counseling to see if they can fix their marriage.

Sometimes this is successful and the couple will stay together and often times it is not possible for the couple to stay together so they will then obtain a divorce through the judicial system. Within a common law marriage where a couple has never been married but they have lived together for a specific period of time they can follow the same divorce style as the Iroquois.

American culture and the culture of the Iroquois nation is comparable in many ways positive and negative. Cultures Collide Many times cultures learn and adapt social patterns from one another.

As one can see above American and Iroquois culture are almost the same but there are minor differences. The Iroquois did not marry within their own family and must marry exogamous just like American couples. . Also the Iroquois live in one home with the wife's family and Americans usually live in a variety of locations with family or alone. Within the Iroquois nation it was easier for a couple to divorce than it is for an American couple. The traits that both cultures exhibit impact how we as a culture live, act and think. These similarities and differences are what make each culture interesting to study and compare.