

Although between the huron women and native

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Although Native Americans are characterized as both civilized and uncivilized in module one readings, their lifestyles and culture are observed to be civilized more often than not. The separate and distinct duties of men and women (Sigard, 1632) reveal a society that has defined roles and expectations based on gender. There are customs related to courtship (LeClercq, 1691) that are similar to European cultures. Marriage was a recognized union amongst Native Americans, although not necessarily viewed as a serious, lifelong commitment like the Europeans (Heckewelder, 1819). Related to gender roles in Native American culture, Sigard writes of the Huron people that "Just as the men have their special occupation and understand wherein a man's duty consists, so also the women and girls keep their place and perform quietly their little tasks and functions of service".

He also observed that "They usually do more work than the men, although they are not forced or compelled to do so" (1632). Gender roles in European society were also well defined in this era. Women handled household chores and cared for the children while men hunted to provide for their families, fought in wars, and had more rights and freedom than women.

It is difficult to determine if Native American men had more rights than women, although it appears from the documents that they did have more free time. A noticeable difference between the Huron women and Native Americans in colonial Pennsylvania, however, was documented by Heckewelder when he stated that women were to "...cut and fetch the fire wood, till the ground, sow and reap the grain, and pound the corn in mortars for their pottage..." (1819). These tasks are more physically demanding than those normally performed by Huron women.

This observation demonstrates that there were differing expectations in various Native American cultures, which is also similar to Europeans. Expectations of men and women varied based on their location, position in society and accepted cultural traditions. Native American courtship and marriage processes also shared similarities with those of Europeans. In the Micmac society, a young man had to obtain approval from the father of the girl he wished to marry. If the father consented, the boy would talk to the girl he was interested in to see if she felt the same, and if so, would present her with a gift (Le Clercq, 1691). This is a familiar process in many European societies wherein a young man would seek approval from a girl's father prior to proposing marriage, or in some instances, prior to serious courtship. The Micmac people had a long courtship period, during which time the young man would live for a year with his future father-in-law "...whom, according to the laws of the country, he is to serve, and to whom he is to give all the furs which he secures in hunting..." (Le Clercq, 1691). The process described here seems to be more complex and with higher expectations than those of European courtships.

Interestingly, marriage in Native American culture was not always considered a lifelong commitment. Women seemed to have equal authority to dissolve a relationship if they were unhappy or found the partnership disagreeable. Heckewelder wrote that "...it is understood on both sides that the parties are not to live together any longer than they shall be pleased with each other. The husband may put away his wife whenever he pleases, and the woman may in like manner abandon her husband" (1819). In this sense, Native American women had more rights in a marriage than European

women, who would find it almost impossible to divorce and still be considered an upstanding and accepted member of the community. Native Americans were just as civilized as the Europeans that migrated to America, and may have even been more civilized in some of their cultural practices.

They had clear expectations of the men and women in their societies, and rules and expectations related to courtship and marriage. Native American women held more power than European women when it came to ending an unhappy marriage, having the ability to make that decision themselves and take action to dissolve the union. Men have similar roles in both cultures as being the hunters and warriors. To be civilized means "having an advanced or humane culture, society, etc." (Dictionary.com) and both Native Americans and Europeans met this definition in many similar ways.