

# Native and european women in the early colonial era

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Native and European Women in the Early Colonial Era Affiliation Native and European Women in the Early Colonial Era Women have been the pillars of the community for a long period although their roles vary depending on the era, geography, and race. European women during the early colonial era occupy a specific place in their communities and performed traditional roles such as preparing and serving food, raising and educating children, weaving, and clothing. In colonial America and Europe, women were viewed as the weaker gender both morally and mentally.

The Native women who including American women, Africans, and Indians performed all the manual labour as directed by the European standards, doing all the chores around the house and tilling the land (Rountree, 1990). Women worked in groups especially in the farms, farms tending to the crops such as corn. Group work seemed to make work lighter for the women and many groups came from extended families. Women work was appreciated greatly as they did most of the household chores and mad sure that the family as well fed. Men were not offering much assistance and leisured around hunting animals, fishing, and building homes

Women used to tend farmlands although it was a hard task during the pre-colonial times especially farming tobacco. Some of the families with enough resources could hire slaves to help in the farms. The slave women performed most of the household chores and in the farms. Women in England had a lot of authority over their women and at some time there were laws by the law-makers defined the roles for women. They came up with two distinct roles of women, the good wife free and white performed domestic chores around the house (Ulrich, 1991). The other one was the agricultural laborer mostly the

blacks and slaves. White women later acquired a clear place to inherit land and another policy allowed widows and daughters to occupy the land. The native women most of them slaves serving as cooks, hairdressers, housekeepers, washerwomen, and tailors. The slaves worked in the farms as labourers and never got time for themselves. These women were to serve their masters and carry out all the housework without pay.

Men were more than women, which created some imbalance; women became more valuable and appreciated in marriage. Women got more rights such as the right to keep any property that she brought in marriage as asserted by Ulrich (1991). A woman was supposed to be a loving wife, a mother, and a true housekeeper. Later women started owning lands and venturing in other areas such as businesses, managers of inns, and taverns. Men appreciated their women and allowed their daughters to inherit their property and manage it. Other women such as widows, single women, and divorced women owned property and managed businesses a role that was initially for men. Women could receive headrights grants of land from the government and became self-sufficient earning respect from men. The government also provided midwives to assist women in giving births and reduce deaths during childbirth in addition to courts that prosecuted men who abused their wives..

The value of women increased later in Europe as they participate in the roles initially reserved for men. Roles such as management of businesses, owning land, and inheriting property were reserved for men in the early colonial times. The past work, which women did, led to the formation of policies by the government to allow women participate in the community affairs.

## References

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