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THE FIRST AMERICAN WOMEN

The first American women were Native American women. The religious, economic, and political roles that they played within their own societies prior to the arrival of Europeans suggest that Europeans and Native Americans held dramatically different ideas about what women and men should be and should do. The difficulty that Europeans had in understanding the alternative gender realities to which they were exposed tells us how strong is the impulse to view established gender definitions in one's own culture as natural rather than socially constructed.

Note the importance Evans attaches to Native American women's religious functions. How did the sexual division of labor within Native American tribes she describes affect women's economic importance in a subsistence economy? To what extent did the Iroquois provide the authors of American constitutions with a democratic model?

According to the Iroquois, the creation of the earth began when a woman came from heaven and fluttered above the sea, unable to find a resting place for her feet. The fish and animals of the sea, having compassion on her, debated in council about which of them should help her. The tortoise offered his back, which became the land, and the woman made her home there. A spirit noticed her loneliness and with her begot three children to provide her company. The quarrels of her two sons can still be heard in the thunder. But her daughter became the mother of the great nations of the Iroquois.¹

Women appear frequently at the cosmic center of native American myths and legends, tales that are undoubtedly very ancient. The history of women on the North American continent began 20,000 years ago with the migration of people from the Asian continent across the land bridge that now is the Bering Strait. These early ancestors of contemporary native Americans gradually created a great diversity of cultures as they adapted to varied environmental circumstances and conditions over time. The archaeological record indicates that 2,000 years ago some North American cultures lived nomadically, hunting and gathering plants and animals. Others settled in villages and subsisted on domesticated plants as well as wild resources. Still others built complex, hierarchically organized societies centered in relatively large cities or towns. In these latter

groups, archaeological remains reveal widespread trade relations and religious systems uniting people over vast areas of the continent. When the first Europeans reached North America in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were some 2,000 native American languages in use, a cultural diversity that made Europe look homogeneous.²

GATHERERS AND NURTURERS, TRADERS AND SHAMANS

Among the peoples of North America whose tribes lived in the woods, along the rivers, and on the edges of the plains, women were essential to group survival. In a subsistence economy, daily life revolved around finding food for the next meal or, at the most, the next season. Women's work as gatherers and processors of food and as nurturers of small children was not only visible to the whole community, but it also shaped ritual life and processes of community decision making.

Women's activities were sharply divided from those of men in most Indian societies. Women gathered seeds, roots, fruits, and other wild plants. And in horticultural groups they cultivated crops such as corn, beans, and squash. Women were also typically responsible for cooking, preserving foods, and making household utensils and furnishings. In addition, they built and maintained dwellings, such as earth or bark lodges and tepees, and associated

household facilities like storage pits, benches, mats, wooden racks, and scaffold. In groups that moved on a seasonal basis, women were often responsible for transporting all household goods from one location to the next.

Male activities in many groups centered on hunting and warfare. After the hunts, Indian women played an important role in processing the hides of deer or buffalo into clothing, blankets, floor coverings, tepees, or trade goods; preserving the meat; and manufacturing a variety of bone implements from the remains of the animals.

Indian societies differed in their definitions of which tasks were appropriate for women or men and in their degree of flexibility or rigidity. In some groups people would be ridiculed and shamed for engaging in tasks inappropriate for their gender, while other groups were more tolerant. Sometimes men and women performed separate, but complementary tasks. Among the Iroquois, for example, men cleared the fields so women could plant them. In other cases men and women performed the same tasks but the work was still segregated on the basis of sex. For example, many Plains Indian tribes divided the task of tanning hides according to the animal, some being assigned exclusively to women, others, to men.

These differences shaped the relationships among women and between women and men. Societies with a clear sexual division of labor and cooperative modes of production, for example, encouraged gender solidarity. The Pawnee, a Plains society, lived in lodges large enough for several families, or about fifty people. Women shared cooking responsibilities among themselves, alternating between those on the north and those on the south sides of the lodge. Among the Hidatsa, another Plains group, female labor was organized by the household of female kin while male activities, ranging from individual vision quests to sporadic hunting parties, were organized by age and by village. Groups of female kin built and maintained their homes, gathered seeds and

edible plants, raised crops, and processed the meat and skins of animals killed by the men.³

In Iroquois society, where men were frequently away for prolonged periods of time, women farmed in a highly organized way. A white woman adopted in 1758 by the Seneca (one of the six tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy) described their work:

In the summer season, we planted, tended, and harvested our corn, and generally had all of our children with us; but had no master to oversee or drive us, so that we could work as leisurely as we pleased... We pursued our farming business according to the general custom of Indian women, which is as follows: in order to expedite their business, and at the same time enjoy each other's company, they all work together in one field, or at whatever job they may have on hand. In the spring, they choose an old active squaw to be their driver and overseer, when at labor, for the ensuing year. She accepts the honor, and they consider themselves bound to obey her.

When the time for planting arrives, and the soil is prepared, the squaws are assembled in the morning, and conducted into a field where each plants one row. They then go into the next field and plant once across, and so on till they have gone through the tribe.⁴

As they gathered, cultivated, and produced food, tools, and housing, some women also actively participated in trade. Algonkian women on the Atlantic coast traded with whites from the earliest days. In 1609 John Juet, Henry Hudson's first mate, recorded an incident in New York Harbor: "There came eight and twentie Canoes full of men, women and children to betray us: but we saw their intent, and suffered none of them to come aboard us.... They brought with them Oysters and Beanes, whereof we bought some."⁵ In later years many observers noted both transactions with women and the high proportion of trade goods that were particularly interesting to women. Far to the northwest, on the Alaskan coast, the Tlingit built their economy on fishing for plentiful salmon and on trading with neighboring groups. Tlingit women not only dried and processed the salmon but they were also entrusted with managing and dispensing the

family wealth. White traders were continually struck by the skill and sophistication of these women, who frequently stepped in to cancel unwise deals made by their husbands. These shrewd dealings paid off in that society where status could be gained by impressive displays of gift-giving.⁶

Religious myths and rituals offered women additional sources of power and status in their villages and tribes as they reflected in a symbolic realm the relations between people and nature.⁷ In most North American Indian creation myths, females played critical roles as mediators between supernatural powers and earth. Many horticultural societies ritually celebrated the seasonal powers of Earth Mother—whose body produced the sacred foods of corn, beans, and squash. Groups primarily oriented to hunting more frequently conceptualized sacred powers as male, but in some cases the Keeper of the Game appeared as a woman. She observed humans' failures to address proper ritual prayers to the spirits of the animals and to treat the animal world on which they depended with proper respect; she could also inflict punishments of disease and famine.

American Indians perceived their world as sacred and alive. Power and mystery infused all living things, inspiring awe and fear. Women, like men, sought spiritual understanding and power by engaging in individual quests for visions. Quests involved a period of seclusion, fasting, and performance of prescribed rituals. Women's quests drew on the fasting and seclusion accompanying menstruation.

In most societies menstruating women were believed to be dangerously powerful, capable of harming crops or hunts and draining the spiritual powers of men. To avoid such harm they withdrew to menstrual huts outside the villages. Did women interpret this experience in terms of pollution and taboo, seeing it as a banishment, as many observers assumed? More likely they welcomed the occasional respite from daily responsibilities as an opportunity for meditation, spiritual growth, and the company of other women. The power that visions

conferred allowed some women to serve as herbalists, midwives, medicine women, and shamans.

Marriage practices in some societies granted women considerable control in choosing their partners. In others, marriages were arranged by elders (often women) as a means of building economic alliances through kinship. Divorce, on the other hand, was common and easy to accomplish. A woman could simply leave her husband or, if the house was hers, she could order him out on grounds of sterility, adultery, laziness, cruelty, or bad temper. Women's autonomy often had a further sexual dimension: Although the male-dominated groups prized female chastity, most Indian groups encouraged sexual expressiveness and did not enforce strict monogamy. Female power in marital and sexual relations could also be shaped by the proximity of a woman to her own kin.

Women's political power was rooted in kinship relations and economics. The scale of clan and village life meant that people knew one another primarily through kinship designators (daughter, husband, mother's brother, grandmother), and in many cases the most important level of sociopolitical organization was the local kin group. It seems likely that female power was most salient at the level of the village group, where it would shape many facets of daily life. In many tribes, however, there were some (often transitory or temporary) public forums, such as a council of elders, where decisions could be made for the community as a whole. Women held proportionately few of these public roles, but a recent reevaluation of ethnographic evidence shows that despite most scholars' belief that women had no significant political roles, there were numerous female chiefs, shamans, and traders.⁸

Iroquois women represented the apex of female political power. The land was theirs; the women worked it cooperatively and controlled the distribution of all food whether originally procured by women or by men. This gave them essential control over the economic organization of their tribe; they could withhold

food at any point—in the household, the council of elders, war parties, or religious celebrations.⁹ The Iroquois institutionalized female power in the rights of matrons, or older women, to nominate council elders and to depose chiefs. As one missionary wrote: "They did not hesitate, when the occasion required, to 'knock off the horns' as it was technically called, from the head of a chief and send him back to the ranks of the warriors. The original nomination of the chiefs also always rested with them."¹⁰ When the council met, the matrons would lobby with the elders to make their views known. Though women did not sit in formal or public positions of power, as heads of households they were empowered as a *group*. This, in turn, reflected their considerable autonomy within their households.¹¹

GENDER AND CHANGE: THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN CONTACT

When Europeans began to invade the Americas in the 1500s, the most devastating assault on Indian life initially came from the unseen bacteria and viruses Europeans brought with them. Within a century raging epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria, influenza, measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, tuberculosis, smallpox, scarlet fever, strep, and yellow fever reduced the population of Mexico to only 5 to 10 percent of its former level of 25 million. The population of the northern areas which later became the United States suffered similar fates.¹²

As cultural, economic, and military contacts grew, the differences between women and men in each group began to change. In some cases women appropriated new sources of wealth and power; in others they lost both skills and autonomy. These various changes were shaped by the sexual division of labor in indigenous cultures, the demographic composition of European colonizers, and the nature of the economic relations between Indians and Europeans.

For example, when the Aztec empire fell before the superior military technology of the Spanish,

women were booty in the military victory. The demographic facts of a dense Indian population and Spanish conquerors who were almost exclusively male shaped a continuing sexual interaction between Spanish men and Indian women. Seeking stability, the Spanish soon began to encourage marriages with Christianized Indian women. These Indian mothers of the *mestizo* (mixed-bloods) were historically stigmatized both by a racial caste system and by association with illegitimacy. Nevertheless, they fashioned for their children a new culture blending Christianity and the Spanish language with cultural concepts and practices from their Indian heritage. Contemporary Mexican culture is the result of their creative survival.¹³

On the Atlantic coast of North America, by contrast, English colonizers emigrated in family groups, and sexual liaisons with Indians were rare. Algonkian Indian women quickly seized the opportunity to trade for European goods such as metal kettles, tools, and needles and put them to use in their daily work. Although quick to appropriate European technology, they and their people actively resisted European domination. They fought back militarily, politically, and culturally. One key form of resistance was the Indian insistence on continuing women's prominent roles in politics, religious ritual, and trade despite the inability of Englishmen to recognize or deal with them.¹⁴

The impact of Europeans was more indirect for inland Indians. The European market for furs represented an opportunity for tribes eager to procure European trade goods. In all likelihood the men's increased emphasis on hunting and warfare sharpened the separation of men's and women's lives. The Iroquois, for example, quickly became dependent on trade goods and lost traditional crafts such as making pottery, stone axes, knives, and arrowheads. Yet by the 1640s they had depleted the beaver supply and had to compete with neighboring tribes for hunting grounds. One result of their longer and longer hunting expeditions was that the village

itself became a female space. As hunters, traders, and fighters, men had to travel most of the year while women stayed at home, maintaining villages and corn-fields generation after generation.¹⁵ One consequence, then, of the fur trade in the first two centuries after contact was increased power for Iroquois women as they controlled local resources and local affairs.

Lacking a similar strong base in highly productive local agriculture, however, women in other tribes did not gain the power and influence that Iroquois women did. Among the Montagnais-Naskapi in the upper St. Lawrence valley, the fur trade gradually shifted the economic balance toward dependence on income provided by the men's trap lines or wages.¹⁶ In some tribes, polygamy increased when a single hunter could provide more carcasses than a single woman could process.¹⁷

One group of Indian women—those who married fur traders—created an altogether new cultural and economic pattern. European fur traders, principally the French and later the English and Dutch, were almost exclusively male. As they traveled thousands of miles inland, traders depended on the Indians for their immediate survival and for long-term trade relations; thus, they began to marry Indian women. Indeed, Indian women provided the knowledge, skills, and labor that made it possible for many traders to survive in an unfamiliar environment. On the basis of such relationships, over the course of two centuries a fur trade society emerged, bound together by economics, kinship, rituals, and religion.¹⁸

Essentially traders adopted an indigenous way of life. Indian women prepared hides, made clothing and moccasins; manufactured snowshoes; prepared and preserved foods such as pemmican—a buffalo meat and fat mixture that could be carried on long trips; caught and dried fish; and gathered local fruits and vegetables such as wild rice, maple sugar, and berries. Stories abound of trading posts saved from starvation by the fishing or gathering or snaring skills of Indian women.

Indian women's ability to dress furs, build canoes, and travel in the wilderness rendered them invaluable to traders. A Chipewyan guide argued that the Hudson's Bay Company's failed expeditions were caused by a lack of women:

in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labour? Women ... also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm at night; and, in fact, there is no such thing as travelling any considerable distance, or for any length of time, in this country, without their assistance.¹⁹

Indian women were active participants in the trade itself: They served as interpreters on whose linguistic and diplomatic abilities much depended. They trapped small animals and sold their pelts, as did many of their sisters who remained in traditional Indian society.

There is considerable evidence that some marriages between Indian women and fur traders resulted in long-lasting and apparently caring alliances. William McNeil, ship captain: for the Hudson's Bay Company, mourned the loss of his Haida wife in childbirth: "The deceased has been a good and faithful partner for me for twenty years and we had twelve children together ... [she] was a most kind mother to her children, and no Woman could have done her duty better, although an Indian."²⁰

Despite their importance, many Indian women involved in the fur trade were exploited. As guides or as wives, they lived in a social and economic structure organized around the needs of male European traders.²¹ When they decided to return to Europe, traders were notorious for abandoning wives of many years, sometimes simply passing them on to their successors. Such practices contributed to the increased reluctance of Indian women to have any relations with white men. According to observers in the early nineteenth century, the fertility of traders' wives, who commonly had eight to twelve children, was sharply higher than that of traditional Indian women, who bore only four children on average. Traders did not observe traditional practices that restricted

fertility, such as lengthy hunting expeditions and ritually prescribed abstinence. And unlike their traditional sisters who had virtual control over their offspring, traders' wives experienced the assertion of patriarchal authority most painfully when their children—especially their sons—were sent away to receive a "civilized education."²²

The daughters of such marriages eventually replaced Indian women as the wives of traders. Their mothers' training in language and domestic skills and their ongoing relations with Indian kin fitted them to continue the role of "women-in-between" and their marriages settled into more permanent, lifelong patterns. At the same time, these mixed-blood, or metis, daughters lacked many of the sources of power and autonomy of their Indian mothers. They were less likely to choose their marriage partners and they married at a much younger age. Also, they did not have strong kinship networks to which to escape if their marriages proved unhappy or abusive. The absorption of European norms meant a far more polarized notion of men's public and women's private spheres along with the explicit subordination of women in both. The ultimate burden for the Indian wives of European traders came with the arrival of increased numbers of white women to the wilderness in the nineteenth century. Indian and mixed-blood wives experienced a growing racial prejudice that was not abated by even the highest degree of acculturation.²³

The fur trade collapsed in the middle of the nineteenth century, as did the society that had grown up around it. Sizable towns in the Great Lakes region were populated by metis people who spoke a common language used in trade, shared the Catholic religion, and grounded their lives in the economics of the fur trade. The disappearance of the fur trade and the emergence of reservation policies in the United States forcing persons of Indian descent to register as Indians defined out of existence a people whose unique culture was built on the lives and activities of Indian "women-in-between."

By contrast, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a very different set of circumstances strengthened the influence of women in some tribes on the Great Plains while marginalizing their power in others. These changes were less a product of trading relationships than of new technologies and economic possibilities inadvertently introduced by Europeans. Navaho women, for example, owned and managed livestock, enabling them to develop broad social and economic powers and a position of high prestige based on their economic independence. Sheep and goats, originally introduced by Spanish explorers, rapidly became the principal livestock, greatly expanding women's resources.²⁴

Farther north, the introduction of horses; in the early 1700s transformed the technology of hunting and, therefore, the Indians' way of life on the Plains.²⁵ Nomadic tribes previously had traveled slowly, depending principally on women's gathering for subsistence and engaging in highly organized collective hunts that often failed. Early in the eighteenth century, however, Plains tribes gained access to horses descended from those brought by early Spanish explorers. Horses enabled bands of hunters to range over a far wider territory and transformed buffalo hunting. An individual hunter could ride into a herd, choose as prey the largest rather than the weakest animals, and shoot his arrows at point-blank range. The consequence for the material life of Plains people was sudden, unprecedented wealth: more meat protein than they could consume, with plentiful hides for tepees, clothing, and finally, for trade.

More individualized hunting styles placed a premium on skill and prowess while encouraging the accumulation of wealth. The fact that a single hunter could easily supply several women with hides to dress and meat to cure encouraged polygamy. And the chronic shortage of horses led to institutionalized raiding and continuous intertribal warfare. The lifestyle that emerged under such circumstances has become in some respects the center

of American mythology about the Indian. Mythical images of warlike braves galloping across the Plains in full headdress or engaging in rituals like the famed sundance leave little place for Indian women except as passive squaws waiting in the background.

The myths themselves reflect the heightened emphasis on male domination and concurrent loss of female power that accompanied the social and economic revolution brought by the use of horses. Certainly men's and women's life experiences diverged substantially. Frequently women traveled with hunting parties, charged with the care of tepees, children, food preparation, and clothing manufacture, as well as the processing of the huge carcasses. Though the women continued to do the bulk of the work, the romance and daring of war and hunting dominated the ritual life of the group. Male bonding grew with such ritual occasions and the development of military societies.²⁶

By the nineteenth century the Lakota culture had incorporated an emphasis on sexual differences into all aspects of daily life. Cultural symbols sharply emphasized the distinction between aggressive maleness and passive femaleness. The sexual division of labor defined these differences concretely.²⁷ Extreme distinctions in demeanor, personality, and even language flowed from this rigid division. Men went on vision quests, directed religious rituals, and served as shamans and medicine men. Though women were economically dependent, their work remained essential to group survival, and their importance found ritual expression in female societies and in some women's individual visions that gave them access to sacred powers. The most important female society was made up of quill and beadwork specialists devoted to the mythic Double Woman Dreamer. The Lakota believed that dreams of the Double Woman caused women to behave in aggressive masculine ways: "They possessed the power to cast spells on men and seduce them. They were said to be very promiscuous, to live alone, and on occasion to perform the Double Woman Dreamer

ceremony publically."²⁸

The Double Woman Dreamer enabled the Lakota and other Plains Indians to incorporate specific social roles for women whose behavior violated feminine norms. Another was the widespread role of a "warrior woman" or "manly hearted woman" who acted as a man in both hunting and warfare. The manly hearted woman is a parallel role to the male "berdache," a man who could assume the dress and roles of a woman and was presumed to have special powers. Thus, although women lost both economic and cultural power as Plains tribes began using horses to hunt, to some degree women and men could move outside the boundaries of strictly defined feminine and masculine roles.

This fluidity allowed a few women quite literally to live the lives of men. In some societies manly hearted women were noticed very young and raised with extreme favoritism and license. In others the shift in gender roles received validation at a later age through dreams or visions. A trader on the Upper Missouri River told the story of one such woman, a member of the Gros Ventres captured at the age of 12.

Already exhibiting manly interests, her adopted father encouraged these inclinations and trained her in a wide variety of male occupational skills. Although she dressed as a woman throughout her life, she pursued the role of a male in her adult years. She was a proficient hunter and chased big game on horseback and on foot. She was a skilled warrior, leading many successful war parties. In time, she sat on the council and ranked as the third leading warrior in a band of 160 lodges. After achieving success in manly pursuits, she took four wives whose hide-processing work brought considerable wealth to her lodge.²⁹

WHAT THE EUROPEANS THOUGHT THEY SAW

At the time of the American Revolution, the existence of Indian societies, and in particular the highly democratic Iroquois Confederacy, provided for white Americans a living proof of

the possibility of self-rule. Their virtues furnished a useful contrast to the corruption and tyranny against which Americans saw themselves struggling. For example, Thomas Jefferson wrote that the Europeans "have divided their nations into two classes, wolves and sheep." But for the Indians, "controls are in their manners and their moral sense of right and wrong." As a result, Indians "enjoy ... an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments."³⁰

What the founding fathers did not explore, however, was that the Iroquois model included considerably more political and economic power for women than any Europeans considered possible. Many white observers overlooked the cultural complexity of Indian societies and the great range of women's economic, social, and religious roles. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century both male and female writers persisted in describing Indian women—if they described them at all—as slaves, degraded and abused. A sixteenth-century Jesuit outlined the many tasks of Montagnais-Naskapi women, contrasted them with the observation that "the men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and waging of war," and concluded that "their wives are regarded and treated as slaves."³¹ An English fur trader, exploring the Canadian forests in the 1690s, described the status of Cree women: "Now as for a woman they do not so much mind her for they reckon she is like a Slead dog or Bitch when she is living & when she dies they think she departs to Eternity but a man they think departs to another world & lives again."³²

Similarly, Europeans failed to comprehend women's political power. Early contacts with the coastal Algonkians, for example, produced elaborate descriptions of villages, tribes, and occasional confederacies headed by "chiefs" or "kings." Because Europeans looked for social organizations similar to the cities and states they knew, they could not imagine that the most significant political and economic unit of these people was the matrilineal-matrilocal clan

in which women had considerable power and autonomy.³³

What these observers saw was a division of labor in which women performed many tasks that European culture assigned to men. They were especially outraged to see women chopping wood, building houses, carrying heavy loads, and engaging in agriculture—jobs that in their view constituted the very definition of manly work. Missionaries, for example, persistently defined their goal as civilizing the Indians, by which they meant not only urging them to accept Christian doctrine and sacraments but also to adopt a way of life based on female domesticity and male-dominated, settled agriculture. Not surprisingly, their ideas met sharp resistance.

Iroquois women by the late eighteenth century, for example, were eager to obtain information about the agricultural practices of Quaker missionaries, but they wanted to use it themselves. When Quakers insisted on teaching men, the women ridiculed them as transvestites. "If a Man took hold of a Hoe to use it the Women would get down his gun by way of derision & would laugh & say such a warrior is a timid woman."³⁴

In the long run, the Iroquois example held deep implications not only for self-rule but also for an inclusive democracy that sanctioned female participation. The latter, however, was something that revolutionary founding fathers could not fathom. Their definitions of "public" and "private," "masculine" and "feminine" did not allow them to see the more fluid, democratic, and simply different realities of Indian life. Yet over the course of American history, an understanding of public, political life built on an inclusive definition of citizenship proved to be a powerful idea, one capable of subverting even the ancient hierarchies of gender.

NOTES

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3. Janet D. Spector, "Male/Female Task Differentiation among the Hidatsa: Toward the Development of an Archeological Approach to the Study of Gender," in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, ed. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, ; 1983), pp. 77-99.

4. James Seaver, *Life of Mary Jemison: Deh-he-wamis* (1880), pp. 69-71, quoted in Judith Brown, "Economic Organization and the Position of Women among the Iroquois," *Ethnohistory* 17 (1970):151-67, quote on p. 158....

5. Quoted in Robert Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans, and Tradeswomen: Middle Atlantic

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6. Laura F. Klein, "Contending with Colonization: Tlingit Men and Women in Change," in Etienne, and Leacock, *Women and Colonization*, pp. 88-108.

7. This section draws heavily on Jacqueline Peterson and Mary Drake, "American Indian Women and Religion," in Reuther and Keller, *Women and Religion*, pp.

1-41; see also Niethammer, *Daughters*, chap. 10.

8. Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans, and Tradeswomen," pp. 43-62; see also Niethammer, *Daughters*, chap. 6.

9. Brown, "Economic Organization"; Diane Rothenberg, "The Mothers of the Nation: Seneca Resistance to a Quaker Intervention," in Etienne and Leacock, *Women and Colonization*, pp. 66-72.

10. Quoted in Brown, "Economic Organization," p. 154.

11. ... [S]ee Elizabeth Tooker, "Women in Iro-quois Society," in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquois Studies*, ed. Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 109-23;... and Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: the Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1983):528-59.

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13. See June Nash, "Aztec Women: The Transition from Status to Class in Empire and Colony," in Etienne and Leacock, *Women and Colonization*, pp. 134-48.

14. Niethammer, *Daughters*, chaps. 5-6.

15. Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 28.

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22. Ibid., chap. 4.

23. [Ibid.,]... p. 145. See also chaps. 5-10.

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25. Alan Klein, "The Political-Economy of Gender: A 19th Century Plains Indian Case Study," in Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*, pp. 143-73;

Niethammer, *Daughters*, pp. 111-18.

26. See Klein, "The Political-Economy of Gender."

27. See, for example, quote from Geo. Sword, *Manuscript Writings of Geo. Sword*, vol. 1 (ca. 1909), quoted in Raymond J. DeMallie, "Male and Female in Traditional Lakota Culture," in Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*, p. 238.

28. Ibid., pp. 241-7, quote from p. 245; also Niethammer, *Daughters*, pp. 132-37.

29. In Beatrice Medicine, "Warrior Women— Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women," in Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*, p. 273, see also pp. 267-80.

30. Thomas Jefferson quoted in Bruce Johnsen, *Forgotten Founders: Benjamin Franklin, the Iroquois and the Rationale for the American Revolution* (Ipswich, Mass.: Gambit, 1982), pp. 112,114.

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32. Quoted in Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, p. 17.

33. Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans, and Tradeswomen."

34. "Journal of William AUinson of Burlington" (1809) quoted in Rothenberg, "Mothers of the Nation," in Etienne and Leacock, *Women and Colonization*, p. 77.

First Woman to Vote in America. If that includes "in the area that later became the United States," there are some candidates. Some Indigenous women had rights to voice, and what we might now call a vote before European settlers arrive. The question usually refers to women voters in the new governments established by European settlers and their descendants. European settlers and their descendants? The evidence is sketchy. Women property-owners were sometimes given and sometimes exercised the right to vote during colonial times. Lydia Taft, in 1756, was credited with being the first woman to legally vote in the British colonies of the New World, in an 1864 address by Judge Henry Chapin. Taft voted in town meetings in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. First Woman to Vote. As American readers became more enthralled with the wives of the presidents, these types of articles proliferated between the eras of Ellen Wilson and Lou Hoover.⁸ During Lou Hoover's time in the White House the title "First Lady of the Land" was gradually shortened to "First Lady." "She Was First Lady of the Land": The Woman Who First Won and Wore the Title in America, Chicago Daily Tribune, February 18, 1894; "A Famous Woman Dead: Sudden Close of the Long Life of Mrs. James K. Polk," The Washington Post, August 15, 1891; "Earliest First Lady," Betty Taylor Dandridge Still Living in Virginia, The Washington Post, May 28, 1899; "Mrs. The first U.S. postage stamp picturing an American woman is issued. Martha Washington appears on a lilac-colored eight-cent stamp. 1908. Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," becomes the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. May 10th, the first Mother's Day celebrations in the United States take place in Philadelphia and in Grafton, West Virginia. 1909. American novelist Edith Wharton becomes the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. She wins the award for her novel The Age of Innocence. 1922.