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History 101

March 7, 2019

The Role Women of Early America

Women have lived in the background of civilizations for as long as men have led them.

Women have civilized men and supported their shared homes for thousands of years, this was supported by British colonial and post-revolution conventions and laws. Women were expected to build a home, raise children, and were raised to do just such. They were often left illiterate and knew few rights outside of what their husbands, fathers, or brothers afforded them. Women, however, saw their roles change through 1607 and 1815. They came into the light of society and became key during the revolution and shaped the country as it developed.

It is said that women civilize men, but in the case of early America, women civilize land as well. Unlike the Spanish, French, and Portuguese, Britain saw the exportation of women often through religious coalitions such as the Puritan movement and tobacco brides. In the soon-to-be British colonies women were outright encouraged as the exact opposite of what Portugal had been doing by enacting laws encouraging men to marry women from and produce children in their native country. Women in British America however, caused the extreme growth of the population in the land being used for money-making by their fathers, husbands, and sons through basic biology.

During the 1700s women were often left uneducated and were expected to keep their roles inside the home. However, in the events after the Seven Years’ War when Parliament enacted move after move to control the colonies, demonstrations rang out in unified voice against all British control. While the Sons of Liberty made demonstrations outside their homes the Daughters of Liberty made theirs within. As the managers of their respective households, they saw to the purchasing of goods. This position gave them opportunities to boycott British goods and hit them where it hurt as most of the relationship between Great Britain and British America had been through trade which stimulated economic growth up to this time. Women all over the new United States women were taking active roles for their new country. They were encouraged towards their own education and influence on those around them.

During the Revolution there were many women who became camp followers. They would stay beside their husbands or other male family members. They would support the soldiers as nurses, cooks, and seamstresses and were widely praised by their service. There are also multiple cases during the revolution of women disguising themselves and fighting alongside men in extreme unification to the cause of independence.

Women saw their role turn from that of strict household keeping and child-bearing to one of active civilians. Still dutiful to their households and subject to their husbands, but ready and active towards finding answers as civilians of the new experiment that was the United States of America.