



The Linden Times

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Many of the beliefs of European settlers were based upon their ancestry and the fundamental teaching of Man and God. Those beliefs profoundly defined the roles of men and women both in and outside of families. As God was the highest authority and typically epitomized as a male figure, men believed they derived their power, jurisdiction and worldly authority from God. Men could own property and people and thereby had rights to exercise their authority over their dominions, publicly speak and vote.

Men often utilized corporal punishment and strict discipline measures, as they thought was necessary. Men led the family in prayers or other religious activities. The father was considered the primary parent and sometimes divorce or annulments were permissible, (under certain circumstances), but the father was normally granted custody rather than the mother. Over 75% of the women in the Chesapeake area who were widowed were often destitute as their husbands did not make out specific wills thereby leaving the land or property to his wife.

They were expected to provide for their families and took an active role in rearing their children. Fathers taught their children to read and write and located apprenticeship programs for them - so that they could learn career skills. Colonial male jobs and professions included Apothecary, Blacksmith, Weaver/Clothier/Hatter, Brewer, Brick Maker, Carpenter/Joiner, Cooper/Wagon Maker, Doctor/Dentist/Barber, Gunsmith, Farmer, Soldier, Fisherman, Fur Trader, and Publican (Tavern).



The nuclear family of a mother, father and one or more children was virtually unknown during the early years of American colonization. Typical households were made up of parents, children, extended relatives, and boarders, as well as servants and apprentices who performed household duties. These family groups often lived on farms, but some lived in towns or cities and worked in various skilled trades. Often it was necessary for more than one person (the father) to generate the income to support the family unit.

In early America among the colonists, the work of a wife was often alongside her husband, running a household, farm, or a plantation. Attending to the garden, cooking and laundry took a major part of a woman's time. The making garments—spinning yarn, weaving cloth, sewing, and mending clothes also took much time, when she was not attending to the many children. During much of the Colonial period, the birth rate averaged seven children per mother. Men outnumbered women at a five to one ratio in the New World. If a man wanted to arrange for a wife he would pay between 100 to 150 pounds of tobacco for his potential wife or, approximately - her weight in tobacco.