History 1120-01

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Reading log #3

The first article I read was The “Nagging Wife” by Jan Noel. I found this article different from the others we’ve read in class because this document shared the lives of multiple people and how it tied into the overall topic of the article. The other short documents we have read mainly focused on one group or movement and how they connect to the present day.

I found that out of the two articles we were assigned to read, I liked the “Nagging Wife” over “A Fille Du Roi’s” better because it was more interesting and showed the audience which role women were given when it came to the fur trade, or any other form of trading. At first The Nagging Wife article stated that women were seen as unimportant in the eyes of men when it came to trading furs or other items, however later on it states “As for the present short paper, the first part confines itself to a sampling of various forms of female involvement in the fur trade, using data uncovered by myself and other historians” (Page 46). This tells the reader that the women actually did accomplish a lot for the trading system and the men. It all began with Madeleine Roybon d’Allone, she was the daughter of carver-general at the French-court. Madeleine set up a trade with the native allies, which initially opened up all lines for trading goods. Once trading became more and more popular a man by the name of, Commander Alponse de Tonty became unpopular to the people within the community because he decided to start charging an unreasonably high amount for goods and services.

Even though I didn’t like the second article as much I still think they were very important and relative to what we are learning in class. They both give the audience a sense of how far women had come by the time trading was high in demand because women are the main face behind how trading developed and became a reality. Most men found trading as a form of independence but the articles show us that they wouldn’t have that form of independence if it weren’t for the women who took the first steps of trading goods.

The Nagging Wife document also showed us that the fur trade went further than just trading fur to and from, it was also the process of trading pelts and marine oils between different places and people.

The thesis that the authors are trying to get across to the audience in both articles is that women were a lot more powerful than they are initially described as by men or other historians. For example, at the beginning of the Nagging Wife, Jan Noel writes about how historian William J. writes about how women were seen as a “pull” towards the trading systems. “The attraction of the fur trade for so many inhabitants is not easily explained… Perhaps the complete independence which a man found in the forest, not to mention the charms of willing Indian girls, was compensation” (Page 45). Another author by the name Eccles writes about it in a way that the wife was only there in order to constantly nag the husband to go out and trade, or go to work (Page 45).

It seems to be that authors portray women as bossy and rude when it comes to trading and work whereas, they were the ones who pushed trading in furs, and other goods to become an actual way to survive in their community.