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Old People

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Women

There were clearly defined roles for women who generally took charge of all domestic matters and moving camp. Women made most of the finished goods and owned them, including the tipi. Women gathered and sometimes grew food, collected water and fuel, processed buffalo hides and bore and cared for children. Women decorated buffalo skins - a highly skilled job which took months to complete. Women were judged for their skills at such crafts and as homemakers, their role as child bearers and rearers was highly respected as children were the future of the band or tribe. There are some recorded cases of female warriors. Certainly, when the men were away from the village the women were left with the responsibility of defending it. However women did not have any influence when it came to making decisions. The men were dominant in this respect.

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Men

Men were expected to hunt, fight in wars to protect the band or hunting grounds, look after the horses, participate in decision-making and some religious ceremonies. Most men were involved in monogamous marriages (one man, one wife) although some tribes allowed men to have more than one wife (polygamy) in order to look after lots of children and so to protect the future of the tribe or band. In most cases marriages were love matches and in order to marry a young man would have to impress the woman and her parents with his ability to protect and provide for a wife and their children. This could mean showing skill and bravery in hunting, presenting gifts to the woman's parents, such as horses (a highly valued prize), or reciting poems and playing tunes on the flute.

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