

Pt 1 Input of the Grandmothers - Faith Spotted Eagle - OSEU 6

The treaties were based on making peace, which was a good thing, but there was an ulterior motive of land taking and so that's when the cultural cut began to change. When the settlers came in on the eastern coast and they asked the men in our tribes, in our camps to make the treaty, they said they needed three-fourths of the adult males. Oftentimes they would say that and some of the tribes would say, uh-uh we need our women here. We need our clan mothers, our clan grandmothers, and we can't make this treaty without them.

So some of them asserted it and others didn't. But the point that they were trying to make is that we came from a society that was essentially equal. We all had labor roles, but when it all came out in the wash, the women were not really signatories of the treaties. And I think it was because the men in their mind were respecting that they would always go back and talk to the women. I just came from a treaty meeting this morning and that's what they were saying.

They said that when the men would meet and they couldn't come to, and this was all said in our language, that they couldn't come to a decision, they would go back and they would consult the grandmothers and they would say we need to make this decision and we need your help. So it was not ever neglected, but I think the government officials didn't understand that and they just thought that the women didn't have a right. But they did. They had a very important role.

There's instances where I remember my grandma telling me that when they would have meetings and that camp circle would be meeting and the men might be in the forefront, but if a woman wanted to say something and it was really important for her to be up there, she would throw a stone out in the circle and that was saying I want the microphone. I need to say something and then that time would come. So there were different ways that evolved to get that input.