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**Civics 101**

**Life Stages: Marriage**

[00:00:00] When you two met there was probably an early physical reaction. Romantic attraction pulling you together... a love appeal that hit you sort of. Buying.

[00:00:12] How did you know? Well it happened to me. It happened to some degree to most couples who become happily married. Boing. Boing. Boing?

[00:00:24] Why yes, I think you've made a good start towards getting ready for marriage.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:00:33] Boing?

**Nick Capodice** [00:00:34] There is no shortage of clips like this on YouTube Hannah. Dozens of educational films from the 1950s like 'Should I Get Married' 'Going Steady' or 'A Boy's Fancy.'

[00:00:45] Don't change the subject. Do I look good in a chiffon nightgown or don't I? Or don't you notice anymore?

**Nick Capodice** [00:00:50] We have arrived at our fourth step and the life stages series here at Civic one. I'm Nick Capodice.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:00:56] I'm Hannah McCarthy.

**Nick Capodice** [00:00:57] And today we're talking about marriage.

[00:01:02] Married life is no Hollywood moonbeams and honeysuckle but it can be mighty satisfying at times.

**Nick Capodice** [00:01:08] It's easy to mock these 1950s sexist education reels but one thing I will say it is no wonder there were so many about marriage after World War 2. There was a spike in marriages and divorces higher than ever before in the U.S. Couples rushed to the altar after the war was over and some who had maybe gotten hastily married before the war filed for divorce immediately after.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:01:30] It seems strange doesn't it.

**Nick Capodice** [00:01:33] What do you mean.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:01:33] I mean you're doing this thing that feels so personal. And you're thinking about where you're going to get married and what you're gonna say and this whole new life together and an engagement party and telling family and friends and then it's like, well now I gotta figure out what forms we have to fill out.

[00:01:50] (phone montage)

**Nick Capodice** [00:01:59] It's true it's so weird you're like I mean it's like 'aaah!' but then we have to do the thing we have to do this other thing right. What do we do? Let's google it. Getting hitched is not specifically outlined in the Constitution. It's up to the states. The fees, requirements wait times, minimum age of marriage, also up to the states is who can marry you, who can officiate the wedding. Most states say it has to be a recognized member of the clergy, a judge, or a clerk. But states like California permit anyone to apply for permission to become a "deputy commissioner of marriages for the day." Isn't that nice.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:02:34] That is nice.

**Nick Capodice** [00:02:34] You've heard of the Universal Life Church right.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:02:37] Is that the one online that gives you the ability to marry someone? Okay.

**Nick Capodice** [00:02:42] It's a church that allows anyone to become a minister and thus officiate a wedding.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:02:45] Got it.

**Nick Capodice** [00:02:45] As long as they follow the state process. Only North Carolina and Virginia have ruled in court that Universal Life Church marriages are not valid. So when it comes to governmental requirements for getting married you're looking at 50 different sets of rules. So I called a bunch of county clerks.

[00:03:20] (clerk montage).

**Clerk** [00:03:27] Are you coming in? Are you doing a license or do you want a certificate.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:03:30] Yeah Nick. Which one did you want?

**Nick Capodice** [00:03:33] I froze up. I wasn't sure, I had to ask her which was which.

**Clerk** [00:03:35] It's like a driver's license. You'd get a license to get married and then afterwards we would mail you acertificate.

**Nick Capodice** [00:03:40] These are the two documents you need to get from the government to get married; one before and one after you tie the knot. So I obviously need a license first and the costs and requirements to get one of those not only vary by state but sometimes even by county.

**Clerk** [00:03:53] What you would need to bring with you is an original birth certificate for both of you or either a certified copy of your version.

**Clerk** [00:04:00] Both parties must be present with a photo I.D. and be at least 18 years of age.

**Nick Capodice** [00:04:07] Sometimes you both have to be there. Sometimes just one of you. The I.D. needed varies, it can be birth certificates or social security card or a passport. They almost always need a driver's license and the price is on average around 40 dollars but it can be as little as five dollars, in Oklahoma.

**Clerk** [00:04:22] If you if you go through the two together class then there is then you get a discount.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:04:27] Wait what's that.

**Nick Capodice** [00:04:30] Some states; Texas, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, offer you a discount on your marriage license if you take a premarital education course.

**Clerk** [00:04:38] We do offer a discount for people who take 12 hours of premarital counseling through an educator of their choice.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:04:46] 12 hours.

**Nick Capodice** [00:04:47] But in Minnesota that knocks it from 115 dollars down to 40 bucks.

**Clerk** [00:04:51] The bride if under the age of 50 must provide a proof of a rubella blood test or a doctor's statement regarding sterilization.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:05:00] Wait. What? I mean first off why rubella. Second off why do they have to show proof of sterilization.

**Nick Capodice** [00:05:09] So Montana is the last state to have a blood test to get a marriage license and they're testing to see if you've been vaccinated for rubella which is also called German measles which passes onto a fetus and can cause birth complications. If you show that you've been sterilized you don't have to prove that you've had a rubella shot because you're not gonna have kids anyway. All that said the CDC claims there's about 10 cases in the nation of rubella every year and since 2007 actually in Montana as long as you and your spouse both co-sign a document and say we don't care you can opt out of the blood test.

**Clerk** [00:05:38] If there have been previous marriages we need to see a death certificate or a divorce decree.

**Nick Capodice** [00:05:45] All right here we have reached our first national constant. If you've been married before you have to provide details on the dissolution of your previous marriage to get a new one. Some states just need some relevant details and a lot of others need to see the documents.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:06:03] So what happens if you say that you're divorced. But it turns out you are not. Is your new marriage just null and void.

**Nick Capodice** [00:06:12] Oh I asked.

**Clerk** [00:06:13] That is a legal question that I wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole.

**Dan Cassino** [00:06:18] So the marriage certificates are this great example of federalism.

**Nick Capodice** [00:06:21] He's been on the show so much he's got his own theme music. That's Dan Cassino, political science professor from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

**Dan Cassino** [00:06:27] Every state has its own rules for marriage certificates. And when you can get married and when you can get divorced and this led to a lot of forum shopping. And so libertarians and people who believe strongly in federalism are going to argue that this is the real strength of federalism, that everyone can choose which laws they want and they go and they vote with their feet. And if you are a state with good laws more people come to your state. If your state has bad laws, fewer people come to your state. What this meant in terms of marriage is that basically if you want to get married quickly you just went to a state where you get married easily. So you just went to Delaware and then you can go to Delaware and get married within three hours. You don't have to wait three weeks to have a blood test didn't have to do anything.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:07:04] This is where we get the trope of the drive-through wedding in Las Vegas, right.

**Nick Capodice** [00:07:09] Yes. Right and this goes for divorce as well.

**Dan Cassino** [00:07:11] And if you wanted a divorce as recently as the 1940s if you wanted a divorce you had to go to Nevada you had to set up residency in Nevada. So sometimes you'd have to live there for as much as 60 days to establish residency and then you get divorced within a week. If you were in California for instance you wanted to get a divorce that divorce took a minimum of one year in an effort to try and get the couple to reconcile, the courts say great you filed for divorce. We'll see you in a year. And so going Nevada was actually a much easier way to do this.

**Nick Capodice** [00:07:38] So California no longer requires you to try to make things work for a year.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:07:42] No?

**Nick Capodice** [00:07:43] Now it's down to six months.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:07:45] Oh. But why do you even need a marriage license. It's not like driving where you could injure others if you don't know what you're doing. So why does the government make you get a license and a certificate?

**Leah Plunkett** [00:07:59] Because otherwise you could be married to like 100 people and how would the state know?

**Nick Capodice** [00:08:04] This is Leah Plunkett. She's the associate dean for administration and director of academic success at U N H law.

**Leah Plunkett** [00:08:10] The same way that we get a birth certificate or a death certificate, the state does very legitimately need a way to keep track of people and their various familial statuses. Again not not too focused, right. The state isn't going to ask you to get a license if you're not married to your significant other and you break up, right. You don't need to let the state know we live together for 10 years and it just didn't work out. And I'm really sad that he got to keep the cat.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:08:37] But what's the reason that the government needs to know your marital status or that you're not married to like 100 people.

**Nick Capodice** [00:08:45] There's no federal law about it but all 50 states have laws against polygamy, being married to more than one person. Monogamous marriage is very ingrained in Western culture and in mainstream Christianity. Polygamy was allowed in Utah before it became a state. But Utah was required to ban it in its constitution to gain statehood. Some states make it a criminal offense if you have more than one marriage certificate.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:09:09] So now I have to ask. I've always been so curious, what actually changes for you in the eyes of the law when you get married?

**Leah Plunkett** [00:09:20] Closet space. Sorry.

**Leah Plunkett** [00:09:25] Everything really. And and so what is what is changing is how the government regards you and your familial affairs. Not your professional affairs, right. So back even up to the certainly 1950s probably into the 1960s or even 70s in some places there were restrictions on a married woman's ability to engage in the professional workforce without going through her husband in terms of her ability to own property.

**Nick Capodice** [00:09:58] In 1974 the Equal Credit Opportunity Act passed in the U.S. and until that point a bank required your husband to accompany you to co-sign a credit application. Like to get a credit card.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:10:13] But if you were a single woman you could get a credit card by yourself right.

**Nick Capodice** [00:10:18] No. You had to have a man go with you and co-sign.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:10:22] It should surprise me. But it does not.

**Nick Capodice** [00:10:24] Also in the eyes of the law you can confide in your spouse places where you couldn't confide in your friend for example.

**Leah Plunkett** [00:10:32] If you're engaging in a private marital communication with your spouse no one's overhearing it you intended to be private. If there are then some sort of government proceeding against one or both of you you can claim spousal privilege in regard to the contents of that conversation. It's in that same very broad umbrella as lawyer/client doctor/patient each one of them are very different too. But that is the same basic idea of the government recognizes certain types of relationships as being so foundational to your sense of self, to your well-being, and so inherently private that they will wall them off from being able to be pierced by the government in the course of a law enforcement administrative regulatory proceeding.

**Nick Capodice** [00:11:26] But one of the biggest changes legally when you're married is that resources can be shared. You and your spouse can now collect assets known as joint property. You can share bank accounts you can share your stuff your house and your debts.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:11:41] So if you owe money I'm mortgage and you die. Your spouse can't just walk away whistling airily, the debt doesn't disappear.

**Nick Capodice** [00:11:53] Right. And when you file your taxes you can choose to file them jointly with your spouse and possibly lower your tax bill. If some rando, Hannah, gave you a gift of a million dollars out of the blue you'd have to pay taxes on that gift. But married couples can exchange money gifts tax-free. Have you seen Shawshank Redemption?

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:12:10] Many times.

[00:12:11] If you want to keep all that money give to your wife. The IRS allows a one time only gift to your spouse for up to 60 thousand dollars.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:12:18] I think of it as like an emotional scene more than an informational scene. I know we're a civic show not a show about the affairs of the heart. But it feels like we're being just a little cold and calculating here. Marriage is ideally an expression of love and people have fought to have the right for that expression.

**Nick Capodice** [00:12:40] All right. So we're gonna have to go back a little bit. Maybe more than a little bit.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:12:51] Horse and Carriage a little bit?

**Nick Capodice** [00:12:53] Maybe further.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:12:53] Magna Carta kind of far?

**Nick Capodice** [00:12:55] Just a quick jaunt to like 2300B.C.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:13:00] Ok so the Mesopotamians.

**Nick Capodice** [00:13:01] Yeah. The first evidence of marriage Mesopotamia 2350 B.C. Hannah, your and my concept of marriage is super duper recent.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:13:16] We tend to think about tradition and rather truncated ways.

**Nick Capodice** [00:13:20] This is social historian Stephanie Coontz author of Marriage a History or how Love Conquered Marriage and it's implied in the title of her book. Love had nothing to do whatsoever with marriage.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:13:33] Marriage started out as as the main way that in the absence of a fully developed banking system and wage system, marriage was the main way that people raised capital, made political connections, made alliances. And it was also used as a way of recognizing the citizenship of a man. A man was not considered fully adult until he had a wife to be a co-worker. One of the things that's interesting to modern people is we sometimes think of the male breadwinner marriage as traditional. But in fact it was not through most of history. A man needed a wife to run a farm or to run a small business and in fact colonial authorities often forbade a man to open a small business or especially an inn if he didn't, if he wasn't already married.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:14:29] Okay so this isn't just ancient history. This continues even to colonial America.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:14:35] So by the time the colonists came to America you had two different interesting marriage systems going. that of the Native Americans which was still based on making kinship alliances and connecting groups that were far flung so that you married out of your group and you had in-laws and therefore obligations and favors with another group. But by this time the practice in England was more endogenous marriage, to marry people of the same class or in the same grouping. And that was still very tightly controlled by parents. In fact in New England one of the laws was that if you won the affection of a young woman without having had the permission of the father the young man could be whipped.

**Nick Capodice** [00:15:25] The reason that parents were so controlling is because until about two hundred years ago the explicit goal of marriage was to acquire useful in-laws and gain political and economic power.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:15:34] So when does this shift. When do people start to choose their own spouses?

**Nick Capodice** [00:15:38] In the late eighteen hundreds. People start to be paid wages wage labor when work in America wasn't so dependent on your spouse and you'd like go to work for someone else instead. Marriage could kind of start to move away from this economic agreement and that's when we start to see the rise of what historians refer to as the love match; couples getting married because they want to.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:16:01] But the other interesting thing that happen and this is also particularly American is that the government began to use marriage as a way of distributing resources, rights, and obligations to people that in some other countries were more universally targeted. Instead of giving a right to health care or Social Security directly to people as they aged it began to be channeled through whether they were married. So employer, you only got health care if you were married to someone who was employed to an employer who offered health care.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:16:40] Why did they start to do it that way.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:16:43] It was cheaper than giving universal citizenship rights to people. But also there was the sense that existed for quite a while that marriage is something that stabilizes people, especially in the years of the male breadwinner marriage, which as I say was a pretty modern invention. But in the 20th century the ideal was that if the men could earn enough to support a family the woman would stay home and take care of the kids. And therefore society wouldn't have any responsibility for that. And furthermore the man would work much harder because he had to support a family.

**Nick Capodice** [00:17:24] But the other side of this is that once these benefits are tied to the institution of marriage, unmarried people don't have access to them.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:17:32] But the right not to marry became very much penalized because you couldn't get access to these kinds of; you couldn't you couldn't automatically choose who could inherit from you your partner wouldn't have the right to visit you in the hospital.

[00:17:49] Excluding same sex couples for marriage thus conflicts with a central premise of the right to marry inflicting stigma uncertainty and humiliation on the children of same sex couples through no fault of their own.

**Nick Capodice** [00:18:00] This is Justice Anthony Kennedy reading the Supreme Court decision from Obergefell v Hodges in 2015, a narrow 5 to 4 decision which altered federal law and it required all states provide a license and legally recognize same sex marriages. Because we haven't talked about the most important way the government interacts with you when it comes to marriage, when it decides who can marry whom. That's coming up after the break.

**Nick Capodice** [00:18:28] To understand the history of who can get married in the U.S. I spoke with Kori Graves.

**Kori Graves** [00:18:33] My name is Kori Graves and I'm a Professor of History at the University at Albany, part of the SUNY system. I teach courses on marriage and family women gender and race.

**Nick Capodice** [00:18:45] And she explained it through the lens of three laws that were passed in Virginia.

**Kori Graves** [00:18:49] Because when we think about the limitations on marriage it reaches back to the earliest days of the colony in Virginia. If we look at sort of this question of Virginia and the history, Pocahontas and John Rolfe represents one of the first of what we could consider an interracial marriage.

**Nick Capodice** [00:19:07] Just to jump in here if you're like me and relied heavily upon the song 'fever', or if you relied upon the Disney movie for this history, Pocahontas didn't marry John Smith. She married John Rolfe. And there is evidence that she'd been married before John Rolfe, had a child, and was kidnapped from her tribe to form the alliance with Rolfe.

**Kori Graves** [00:19:26] That particular marriage was celebrated because it represented a kind of old alliance Old World Alliance and also the alliances that we think about in New World contexts too. But rather quickly in the colony. Individuals started to transform how they thought about that relationship because of ideas about superiority inferiority and the status of women. So she and John Rolfe married in sixteen fourteen. They had a son they traveled to England and 16 16 and she dies on the way home.

**Nick Capodice** [00:20:01] And at that time Virginia starts to pass laws that specifically forbid not just interracial marriage but interracial sex.

**Kori Graves** [00:20:07] So that begins in 1630 we see the governor ordering the whipping of a white man for interracial sex. He defiled his body with a Negro. We start to see that so as early as the 16, the mid 1600s you see that while there was a promise in the Pocahontas John Rolfe relationship of individuals imagining that you could cross certain borders, that, that begins to quickly erode.

**Nick Capodice** [00:20:38] One especially problematic part of the relationship was their difference in status. The British didn't see the Algonquin as equal and there was some thought that marriage could be used to help Native people be more like white Europeans.

**Kori Graves** [00:20:50] So it's not that this marriage represented a kind of equal footing in any way. In fact she was considered, because she was female, she would have lost her status that, the status that she had as a favored daughter in the tribe who had power and a matrilineal society. She would have lost that by becoming the wife of a British subject who understood patriarchy as the appropriate order for society and for family. So that relationship is not...it's problematic but it also represents the first. Throughout the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s you get the elaboration of laws defining who could marry whom and these laws are always about creating a boundary between First the British colonist and later Anglos, American Anglos. That said they can only marry Anglos. So in terms of who could marry whom when we think about it as a way of creating a kind of white supremacy, and I use that word deliberately because by the time we get to the 20th century and one of the most restrictive laws about both marriage and immigration it is it is about the law itself is about preserving white supremacy.

**Nick Capodice** [00:22:14] In 1924 the United States passes the Johnson Reed act which is all about restrict immigration using race based quotas which by the way is not lifted until 1965. And this is why we have enormous immigration from Italy and Eastern Europe until 1924 and then it just stops. And Kori told me about another 1924 law passed, again, In Virginia.

**Kori Graves** [00:22:35] The state legislature passed what was called an act to preserve racial integrity. And what this law did was it prohibited any white person from marrying anyone who was not white. It also said that any interracial marriage that took place outside of Virginia, Virginia wouldn't recognize. So you couldn't go outside of the state boundaries come back and say hey we're legally married and this marriage is recognized across these borders because marriage is each state gets to define its marriage laws. So that's the law that was in place and it was again a product of centuries of defining and actually limiting who could marry whom.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:23:22] How did they actually go about enforcing this? With paperwork?

**Kori Graves** [00:23:25] So this law specifically required things like birth certificates that you could prove who you were. It looked at things like blood quantum. But it also has a very curious exception. It was called the Pocahontas exception. And it said that a person who could claim one sixteenth or less Native American heritage could still marry a white person.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:23:50] Why on earth would they create that super specific specification.

**Nick Capodice** [00:23:54] We're still in Virginia and this goes back to the John Rolfe Pocahontas marriage. Lots of wealthy elite first family Virginians proudly claimed descendancy from the Pocahontas John Rolph marriage and they didn't want to have to jeopardize their status. This racial integrity Act is law in Virginia until one of the most famous marriage Supreme Court cases in our history.

[00:24:19] That there is much more deference here that there is actually one simple issue. The issue is may a state proscribe a marriage between two adult consenting individuals because of their race. And this would take in much more...

**Kori Graves** [00:24:32] I always think. What more fitting name than Loving. That's his real last name, is loving.

**Nick Capodice** [00:24:43] 1958 Richard and Mildred Loving got married in Washington D.C. because they couldn't marry in Virginia because he was white. She was an African-American. And they returned home.

[00:24:56] It was about 2am, and I saw this light you know and I woke up and there was the policeman standing beside the bed. And he told us to get up and that we were under arrest. And they told us to leave the state for 25 years.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:25:10] They have to leave for 25 years. They'd have to completely dismantle their life.

**Nick Capodice** [00:25:15] And they did. For their marriage. They left their jobs their home their family and they moved to D.C. and they were arrested when they just came back to visit their hometown.

**Kori Graves** [00:25:25] And this case would actually make its way through the Virginia State Supreme Court to the U.S. Supreme Court and it would be Loving v. Virginia that would establish the right to marriage as a protected civil right. Chief Justice Warren would offer the argument that marriage was, and this is a quote, one of the basic civil rights of man. And the end here is is added to deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in the Virginia racial integrity clause is surely to deprive all the state's citizens of liberty without due process of law.

**Nick Capodice** [00:26:09] This was a unanimous decision by the way in 1967 but it still meant that each state had to change their laws so Virginia did in1968. West Virginia Florida Oklahoma and Missouri in 1969 North Carolina in 1970 Georgia Louisiana and Mississippi in 1972 Delaware and Kentucky in 1974. Tennessee in 1978 South Carolina in 1998 and Alabama in 2000.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:26:43] This is like what we continue to hear about officials refusing to grant licenses to same sex couples. As we speak. Even though the decision came down years ago that same sex couples can marry.

**Nick Capodice** [00:26:57] Right and the Loving decision was cited in that case Obergefell v. Hodges and it's not just officials it's politicians who are proposing bills.

[00:27:05] Specifically a bill that was just filed in the Tennessee legislature, the Tennessee natural marriage Defense Act and this would define a natural marriage as between a man and a woman of course we know there's going to be lots of strong opinions on this...

**Nick Capodice** [00:27:25] Last thing we should talk about for the end is the end. When a marriage just doesn't work. The 2019 divorce rate in the United States is about 39 percent.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:27:36] Okay. When did divorce start to become a common thing in America.

**Nick Capodice** [00:27:40] Stephanie Coontz told me about that.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:27:42] With the development of the love match and this was one of the tremendous complaints that defenders of the real traditional marriage of political and economic convenience had against the love match. They said, look, if you say marriage is about love people are going to demand the right to divorce. If marriage ceases to be about love and that has been a steady steady increase in demands. They began to liberalize a little divorce right fairly early in the colonies that happened more after the American Revolution but still our laws right up until 1970 were based on fault based divorce that you had to show that the other party was at fault.

**Nick Capodice** [00:28:24] And if you're wondering what can justify a fault divorce the most common grounds are adultery, abandonment, prison confinement, one spouse is physically unable to have sexual intercourse, or one spouse has inflicted emotional or physical pain on the other.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:28:41] And many people romanticize this, they think oh marriage was more stable under fault-based divorce but fault based divorce was really weird. You had to come to the court...it was, this is the way the courts put it, with clean hands if you wanted a divorce. In other words if you came in and couldn't prove that you had done nothing to contribute to the complaints of which you you were wanting for which you were wanting the divorce you couldn't get a divorce. There was a divorce in the 1930s in the state next to mine, Oregon Mauer versus Mauer. The court found that the family lived in terror of the man's you know terrible temper and temper tantrums but they found that the wife had thrown pots at the man a couple times. So therefore since neither party came to court with clean hands neither of them could have a divorce.

**Nick Capodice** [00:29:33] In 2010 New York State became the 15th state to allow for no fault divorces. So now you can get one all over the country. One or both of the spouses has to claim that the marriage is "irretrievably broken" or you have irreconcilable differences.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:29:51] But still in California and you told me you got to wait six months before you can get divorced.

**Nick Capodice** [00:29:58] Sure do. And in Virginia you have to live apart from your spouse for a year uninterrupted or if you have kids six months. Seventeen states require divorcing parents attend a divorced parent education class.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:30:09] All of that statutory red tape aside I do feel like we have come a long way since the Mesopotamians.

**Nick Capodice** [00:30:17] Wwe have and so much of it is so recent. Stephanie Coontz told me that for thousands of years the institution of marriage is relatively unchanged. But when we start with the love match moving through the 19th 20th century, especially the last 40 years, the benefits of being married are covered in other places.

**Stephanie Coontz** [00:30:36] Americans no longer feel that marriage is essential to have a successful life. Back in 1950, 85 percent of Americans said that it was immoral or deviant or psychotic to want to be single not to be married. And there were all sorts of social and legal sorts of discrimination that occurred if you were not married. Nowadays people accept that you can have a good successful single life but marriage is not central. But at the same time as we have stopped valuing marriage so much as a mandatory institution we have actually increased our expectations of it as a good qualitative relationship. And the paradox is that we expect more of marriage when we're married and we do marriage better, most of us when we're married than people of the past. There's less domestic violence, there's more equality there's more sharing there's more intimacy, but people aren't willing to enter or stay in a marriage that doesn't live up to that. And so people are postponing marriage.

**Hannah McCarthy** [00:31:43] It's almost like she's saying we're more likely to marry for love and like a really solid well-established love because otherwise women and LGBTQ people have actual codified rights now. And so like I can get a credit card, I can own property, I can adopt a child by myself if I want to. I don't have to marry a man to live out certain important steps of life.

[00:32:13] So now are a little hypothetical American has been born, educated, worked, married, divorced and after all that stuff isn't it time that this American had a break, Hannah.

[00:32:27] I think it is but that's next time on Civics 101.

[00:32:43] That'll just about do it for today. This episode was produced by me Nick Capodice with you Hannah McCarthy. Our staff includes Jacqui Helbert Ben Henry Daniela Vidal Ali and Erika Janik is our executive producer and killer of Darlings. Maureen MacMurray and her husband Danny totally go boing.

[00:32:58] Music In this episode is by Broke for Free. Chris Zabriske Kilo Kaz, Lee Rosevere Scott Gratton, Spazz Cardigane and this year is time.

[00:33:07] I love me some time. Carl if you like Johnny is Kovac gonna hop out any minute and push me off my bike.

[00:33:11] Seventy one is supported in part by the C P B and is a production of N H PR New Hampshire Public Radio and it is supported in part by you gentle listener.

[00:33:21] Thank you so much to those of you who given already. If you haven't got a civics one to one podcast dot org. Check out the kind of swag we have on offer and thank you so much.