Attending to Early Modern Women Conference
Remapping Routes and Spaces

Title of the Workshop:
“Influences on Family Relationships: Gender, Kinship, and Community Networks in the Early Modern World”

Summary of the Workshop:
This panel addresses the conference theme of “communities” and “exchanges” by examining the personal interactions and material exchange of letters or other goods in the creation of kinship networks and community bonds. We will investigate how the social relationships formed by women compared to those formed by men and illustrate how those personal exchanges affected the creation of political, economic, and religious communities in the early modern world. We have chosen to look at sources from early modern Italy, England, and America. This comparative focus allows us to examine conceptions of family and community bonds in different places and cultures, both in Europe and across the Atlantic.

Workshop Participants:
Megan Moran, History, Assistant Professor, City University of New York, Queensborough
Natalie Inman, History, Assistant Professor, Cumberland University
Barbara Ann McCahill, History, retired
**Description of the Workshop**

*Influences on Family Relationships: Gender, Kinship, and Community Networks in the Early Modern World*

Women moved through a variety of spaces in the early modern world from life changes associated with marriage, motherhood, or widowhood to new geographical locations as they traveled to distant places or negotiated their communities at home. Whether traveling abroad or working in the household, both women and men created a strong and often diverse network of kinship relationships in early modern society. How women positioned themselves as mothers, wives, sisters, widows, in-laws, or friends affected the power dynamics of family, community, and even political life. Recent scholarship has challenged the conception of early modern society as strictly patriarchal through examining female agency. This panel continues to interrogate the concept of patriarchy through examining the gendered interactions of women and men as they formed relationships in their families and larger communities. What were the most important social relationships for women and how did these networks compare to those constructed by men? What issues dictated the expression of personal relations and can we discover emotions in the early modern period using kinship networks? How did these personal exchanges affect the creation of political, economic, and/or religious communities in the early modern world?

This panel addresses the theme of “communities” and “exchanges” in the *Attending to Early Modern Women: Remapping Routes and Spaces* conference by examining the personal interactions and material exchange of letters or other goods in the creation of kinship networks and community bonds. Marriage has been a particularly important area of study for scholars; this panel investigates the complexities of marriage, but also moves beyond it to look at other important, and at times overlooked, kinship relationships. Several letters between sisters and brothers in the Spinelli family reveal how sibling relationships both supplemented and
challenged the traditional power of the husband and/or father in sixteenth and seventeenth century Florence. Wills and letters show how mothers and daughters both cooperated and clashed with one another in sixteenth century England. Finally, petitions against the removal of the Cherokee Indians in early modern America demonstrate the importance of motherhood and marriage in Native American conceptions of kinship. Matrilineal kinship, especially the motherhood of these women gave them authority over the lands of their people and a voice in state diplomatic negotiations despite the patriarchal attitudes of the American Treaty Commissioners. These sources demonstrate how positive and negative exchanges affected the intimate dynamics of family affairs as well as larger social, economic, and political events in early modern society.

How these various women communicated their identities enabled them to assert their own definitions of family and community space in the early modern world. We will first introduce each set of primary source documents to provide context and then we will open up the session for discussion of the issues raised in the primary sources as well as other possible avenues of research. By choosing three different national cultures (Italy, England, and America) we hope to compare conceptions of marriage and kinship ties in different places and cultures, both in Europe and across the Atlantic.
Influences on Family Relationships: Gender, Kinship, and Community Networks in the Early Modern World

Barbara Ann McCahill


This presentation will examine some representative passages written from one family member to or about another. Because of the brevity of these utterances and the danger of reading modern emotions into words that seem familiar but sometimes mean different things in a premodern context, such passages represent an interpretative challenge as well as an enticing historical source. I look forward to discussing with you the challenges of using such passages to broaden and enrich our understanding of family relations among members of the Tudor nobility.

Son-in-law to Father-in-law

L&P 2.2 4185. 24 May 1518 Lord Mountjoy to Sir Wm. Say. (1450-1529)

“Mine own good father, in my heartiest manner I commend me unto you. And I am sorry that I do trouble you so much as I do at this time....Thus our Lord have you in his tuition. Your loving son, William.”
This passage would seem to indicate a warm affection on the part of Lord Mountjoy, made even more remarkable because Sir William Say’s daughter, Elizabeth, his first wife, had died twelve years earlier in 1506. Her only child, Gertrude married Henry Courtney, Marquis of Exeter, beheaded in 1539; a court lady, she died 2 months before Queen Mary. Lord Mountjoy married four times.

**Nephew For Aunt**

L&P 1.1 969.51. “George Earl of Shrewsbury, custody of all possessions in counties Derby, Nottinghamshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, and elsewhere belonging to Margaret Vernon, widow, alias Margaret, daughter John Talbott, late Earl of Shrewsbury (his father) with issues from 21 Sep 1 HVII since which day she has been a lunatic.”

Shrewsbury also took his aunt into his house while administering her affairs.

**Sisters**

L&P 13.1 1471. 5 June 1538 William Lord Dacre to Earl Shrewsbury [his fa-in-law] “My bedfellow of late is weilfarne of a daughter, and since her churching is accraysed with infirmity of sickness. Desires lady Northumberland [sister] to come for her consolation & comfort. Kirkoswald.”

Elizabeth (Talbot) Lady Dacre had eleven children, beginning in 1521. Her husband, obviously concerned about her health, invited her sister Mary to visit, which she did.
Sister-in-law

L&P 15. 225. 18 Feb 1540 Thomas Lord Wentworth to Cromwell.

“It is the King’s pleasure to send you lady Garrard [widow Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, ex
Feb. 1537] ‘in honest & secret sort.’ She has been ill 3 weeks & is too weak to stand; as
soon as she can sit on horseback I will send her to yr Lordship. I have informed her of
you & she is ready to obey you. I shall not fail to favor whomsoever you hereafter
command me to befriend. Nettylsted.”

L&P 15. 286. 2 March 1540 Thomas Lord Wentworth to Cromwell. “The lady Garrarde
died this am. The custody of her was by me undesired; and, now that I cannot again
deliver her, I am very pensive & sorry, because there depends an inheritance by her
towards my wife. [Frances, widow of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, was a sister of Margaret,
lady Wentworth, whose inheritance was protected by a saving clause in the Act of
attainder of their father, Sir Adrian Fortescue. The two girls were the daughters of his
first wife Anne, 1st daughter and eventually coheir of John Neville, Marquess of
Montague; the inheritance was substantial.] ‘I am sure I shall not escape virulent tongues
which will speak of us, I take God to record, otherwise than ever we thought or meant.’
Begs Cromwell to send a doctor of physic to examine the causes of her death in presence
of the honest [men of] the shire.”

Wentworth’s discomfort with hosting his sister-in-law is apparent. He is also concerned
about her death while in his care.
Brothers

L&P 11.1048. 5 Nov 1536 Shrews to E- Northumberland “I trust you do not forget your promise to my son Francis & Mr. Holmes that I should have 200 marks a year ‘for my lady your wife her finding.’ She has been with me 2 years past on Our Lady day the Nativity last and I have received nothing but the stuff your Lordship sent her. Desires him to send, by the writer’s chaplain Sir J Moreton, the bearer, the 300 mks. due or an assignment for the same: where Northumberland assigned him last year he could get nothing. Wynfeld.”

L&P 17. 331 Robt. Swyfte to Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury. “On Mon. 15 May 1542, Lady [Mary] Northumberland presented a bill to the King complaining that she had no living from the lands of her late husband. He heard her very gently, and ‘bowed down upon his staff unto her, and said, ‘Madam, how can your ladyship desire any living of your husband’s lands, seeing your father gave no money to your husband in marriage w. your ladyship, or what think you that I should do herein? and she answered, ‘What shall please your Grace.’ King ‘Madam, I marvel greatly that my lord your father, being so great a wise man as he was, would soo no direction taken in this matter is his time. Howbeit, Madam, we wolle be contented to refer the matter unto our Council.’ He then spoke for some time with the Bishop of Durham & Sir Anthony Browne, and gave the Bishop the bill. At his return the lady besought him to be good & gracious to her, to which he answered, ‘We Wolle.’”
Mary was married in 1524; five years later, the fifth Earl of Northumberland declared his aversion “I wolle never come in her company as longe as I lyved.” Mary left her husband and lived with her father and brother. Until his death in 1538, Her father advocated for her with the King, who inherited all of the Northumberland property at the death of the Earl in 1537. Her brother “continued the struggle.” F. W. Bernard, *The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility: A Study of the Fourth and Fifth Earls of Shrewsbury*, The Harvester Press, Sussex, Barnes & Noble, NY, 1985. p. 153.

In contrast, Henry Lord Stafford declined to help his sister, Elizabeth, Duchess of Norfolk after she became estranged from her husband.

L&P 12.1. 638. 12 Mar 1537 Henry Lord Stafford to Cromwell. “made me trust in you. I have 12 children & my living 40L a year less than it has been. At my poor house beside Stafford.”

Stafford rejected the proposal he take in his sister Elizabeth, the irascible Duchess of Norfolk who has fallen out with her husband & children. This case is explicated by Barbara J. Harris in “Marriage Sixteenth-Century Style: Elizabeth Stafford and the Third Duke of Norfolk” *Journal of Social History,* 15 (3), 1982. “By the early 1530's, Norfolk, who was unwilling to give up Bess Holland, decided that his only alternative was to divorce or separate from his wife. In 1533 both he and Thomas Cromwell wrote to her brother asking if the duchess could live with him. Ftn 23 Henry Stafford's reply indicates that this was not the first time the request was made. Ftn 24 Stafford completely rejected their suggestion in two very explicit and revealing letters, one to Norfolk and one to Cromwell. He made clear that his sympathies were with his brother-in-law, not his sister.
He blamed her ‘wild language,’ not the duke's infidelity, for the collapse of her marriage. She carried ‘this continual contention’ so far as to ‘make him to absent her company.’ Henry unquestioningly accepted the double standard and expected his sister Elizabeth to do the same. He never addressed that issue at all. What aroused his anger was the imprudence of her behavior from a practical point of view - an imprudence that affected her relatives as well as herself. By constantly raking against a situation she ought to accept, she was ignoring the advice of ‘the best and wisest of her kin,’ and, even worse, ‘the gentle advertisement that his highness hath sent to her diverse times.’ Instead of cavalierly throwing away the advantages of her marriage to the highest ranking peer in the realm, she should call ‘to remembrance the great honour that she is come to by that noble man her husband, and in what possibility she was in to do all her friends good, if she had followed the king's highness' pleasure . . .’ Her unfortunate stubbornness made her husband ‘nothing to tender the preferment of any of her friends,’ and brought her ‘the king's high displeasure, which is to every true heart death, and her poor friends in continual hinderance, whereof our Lord knows they have no need . . .'” ft. 25 p 374.

Footnotes
23. The letters from Norfolk and Cromwell to Henry Stafford have not survived. The originals of Stafford's replies, dated May 13, 1533, are in the PRO, SP1176, f.38-39. They are calendared L&P, vol. VI, 474 and 475 and printed in full in Green, Letters of Royal and Illustrative Ladies, vol. II, pp. 218-219 for the reply to Cromwell and vol. III, pp. 96-97 for the reply to Norfolk.
24. Henry Stafford to Thomas Cromwell, May 13, 1533.
25. Same to same, May 13, 1533.
The Spinelli were a Florentine merchant family who made their money through the silk and banking business in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries the Spinelli men also served in a number of political posts in Tuscany under the Medici Dukes. Tommaso Spinelli married Maria Maddalena Peruzzi Spinelli and they had eight children (five girls and three boys). The oldest daughter, Maria, married Ippolito della Fioraia and the other three girls entered convent life. Benedetto Spinelli married Maria Castelli and took over the family business when his father died in 1601. The siblings wrote to each other throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries about family issues, financial problems, and social life in early modern Florence.

Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioraia to her brother, Benedetto Spinelli, June 1605.

Dearest and Honorable brother,

I already wrote in another one of my [letters] how I was hoping for another letter from you for the benefit of my husband, Ippolito. I know that you will not have forgotten to do this as it will be for your benefit and honor as well…As my loving brother, you must advise him and help him with all the force and occasion necessary for him to receive it [and], with me, your sister, I know that these words are between us…Send your greetings to my husband so that these things happen today because it is necessary that you help and advise him. Otherwise, I have nothing else to say. We are all well by the grace of God and we ask that God conserve you and give you every happiness. From Castelnuovo. June 1605.¹

Your loving sister, Maria Spinelli

[Postscript:] I ask that you do a favor for me and send a little bit of cauliflower from Poggimoro [the family farm].²

¹ All the translations of the Spinelli manuscripts are my own except where otherwise indicated. Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioraia to Benedetto Spinelli, June 1605. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (hereafter BRML), Box # 119, Folder # 2382, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Scrissi già per una altra mia quanto desideravo da voi per beneficio di Ippolito mio consorte so che non havete mancato fare quanto da lei sarà sto cognosciato per beneficio et onore suo siccome ancora so che non mancarete i tutto quello che cognosciarete per amor mio con me fratello amorevuole che mi sete di consegliarlo aiutarlo con tutte le forze vostro i tutti le occassioni di sui bisogni che tutto ricevere io con me vostra sorella si ve so che questi parole in fra noil…raccomendarvi il mio marito poiché così oggi si trova in ta[n]te necessita e bisogna aiuto e consiglio altro non vi dirò siamo per gratia di Dio tutti sani e così pregiamo N.S. che la conservi che dia ogni contento. Di Castelnuovo, giugno 1605. vostra amorevuole sorella, Maria Spinelli.”

² Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioraia to Benedetto Spinelli, June 1605. BRML, Box # 119, Folder # 2382, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Prego Vostro Signore che mi vogli favorini di farmi avere un pocho di cavolifiori per […] Poggimoro.”
Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioria to her brother, Benedetto Spinelli, 25 January, 1606.

Honorable Signore,

I have already written four or five letters to Ippolito on behalf of the officials who are burdened by the work on the bridge. They are charging a sum of 18 scudi; much time has passed and no one has paid them so things are going badly. I have withheld the money until now, waiting for Ippolito to return or send me [a letter] or tell me what to do but I have not heard anything. Therefore, I am resolved to write to you to explain to him about the things contained [in this letter], or send him back or send orders about what we must do. Please do not forget because I find myself badly off here and [send word] as soon as possible because time passes [quickly] to next Monday [when they want the payment]. With all my heart, I recommend myself to you as well as to Giovanni Batista and Rinieri. We would all be well if we did not have these troubles.

From Castelnuovo. 25 January, 1606.

Your affectionate sister, Maria Spinelli

[Postscript:] I have sent this letter to make this known to you because I have had no response from him as he usually does other times.

3 Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioria to Benedetto Spinelli, 25 January 1606. BRML, Box # 119, Folder # 2382, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Havendo già scritto a Ippolito quattro o cinque lettere solamente per conto de camarlinghi de dari da quali sono gravati i vuoi dell’lavorate dal Ponte, et è passato il tempo, e si sono venduti per la somma di scudi diciotto e per non haver da pagare andranno male, gli ho trattenuti in sino a hora aspettando che Ippolito tornassi o mi mandassi e dire quello dovevo fare e mai ho saputo niente e però mi son risoluta scrivere a Vostro Signore accio li dichiate quanto qui si contiene o lui torni o vero mandi ordine di quello si deva fare, e di gratia non mancate per che io mi trovo a mal partito e quanto prima per che lunedì prossimo passa il tempo non essendo questa per altro a V[ostro] S[ignore] di cuore mi raccomando, et a Giovannibatista e a Rinieri e tutti stiamo bene se non havessimo questi travagli, di Castelnuovo, 25 di Gennaio 1606.”

4 Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioria to Benedetto Spinelli, 25 January 1606; BRML, Box # 119, Folder # 2382, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “e questo ho fatto sapere a voi perché da lui non hav[ev]i risposta come ha fatto dell’altri.”
After her husband died in 1607, Maria became the *tutrice*, or legal guardian, of her children. This is a letter from a widowed Maria Spinelli della Fioraia to her brother, Benedetto Spinelli, in October 1617.

Dear Illustrious brother,

I understand from one of your letters to Signore Lelio, my brother-in-law, how he finds himself with one of the portraits from the library of Messer Alberto. As to the price, I am telling them that you may lead them into greater cost and the portrait may be given with pleasure then to satisfy the creditors of Signore Alberto, which will be a good payment. If I am able to make any other payments as the *tutrice* of my family I will make as many as I am able to and if you can give 100 *scudi* to Signore Filippo Baldovini, I will have paid the expense which he bothers us about everyday. With nothing else to say, I send my greetings hoping that you have much contentment.

From Castelnuovo. October 1617.  

Your affectionate sister, Maria Spinelli

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5 Letter from Maria Spinelli della Fioraia to Benedetto Spinelli, October 1617. BRML, Box # 119, Folder # 2383, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Intendo per una sua scritta al Signore Lelio mio genero come si trova da fare ritratto della libreria di Messer Alberto e hora li dico che in quanto al prezzo Vostro Signore vegga di condurli in più prezzo che si possa e li dia a piacero suo del ritratto poi si vegga di satisfare li creditori del Signore Alberto più anteriori che sarà bene pagati e se posso fare altro come tutrice di mia figli mi avrei che farò quanto fare potrò e se si potessi dare al Signore Filippo Baldovini 100 scudi l’havrei caro poi che tutto il giorno ci molesta e non essendo per altro mi vi raccomando sperando il Signori vi dia ogni contenti, di Castelnuovo, Ottobre 1617.”
Honorable sister,

I am waiting for you to come to us as you have promised me because Lent has already passed by and you have not kept your promise to me. I have seen that you reminded my father how I would like to be accepted and now in fact even more time has passed and [the convent] has to accept one of the others. I will be the last and this is the third [time] that I will have to be the oldest [to enter the convent]. I would like you to urge my father to talk to my brother-in-law and the Signore Dottore so that he will not delay this for another year. I am asking you to work with them all so that it happens soon. Nothing else occurs to me [at this time]. I am sending my greetings to you and ask you to recommend me to my brothers-in-law. I will ask our God to give you his sanctity and grace.

17 April 1591.

Your affectionate sister,

Margherita Spinelli

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6Margherita Spinelli entered the Convent of San Miniato del Ceppo in Florence in 1587 but was not officially accepted as a nun until 1600 when her father paid the spiritual dowry required for admission.

7 Letter from Margherita Spinelli to her sister, Maria Spinelli della Fioraia, 17 April 1591. BRML, Box # 35, Folder # 794, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Honorada sorella, sono stata asspetare che ci venissi come mi avevi promesso di già è passata la quaresima e non mi avete mantenuta la promessa io avrei veduto che ricordassi a mio Padre mi volessi accettare in anzi che passi più tempo e ora si a accettare una di gli altri io sarò l’ultima e quessta la terza che avrei potuto essere la magiore vorrei che solecitasi mio Padre ditelo al cognato e al Signore Dottore che per indugiare a questo altro anno sa quell’ medesimo vi prego a opere con tutti accio sia presto non mi occorrenda altro vi racomando quanta di sopra racomandatemi a cognati tanto a voi per infinite mi racomando nostro Signore vi dia la sua Santissima gratia il di 17 di aprile, 1591. Vostra sorella, Margherita Spinelli.”
Letter from the nun Margherita Spinelli to her brother, Benedetto Spinelli, 16 February 1606.

Magnificent and Honorable brother,

Two months have passed since I last told you that our priests and the Madonna [Abbess] told me that they wanted you to give the money that you owe [them] but have been holding back. Up until now, I have not known anything else except that they told me how they want a response as soon as possible because they do not want to lose this chance to collect their [money]. If I could, I would love to remove this bother from you and from me. I need those 7 scudi that I wrote you about the last time which if I was not squeezed from necessity [for this money] then I would have patience as I have done until now. So please by the grace [of God] do not tell me no. With this end [to the letter] I offer my greetings and I am ask our God to give his grace. 16 February, 1606.8

Your sister,

Margherita Spinelli

8 Letter from Margherita Spinelli to her brother, Benedetto Spinelli, 16 February, 1606. BRML, Box # 35, Folder # 794, Spinelli Family Papers I, Yale University. “Magnifico e Honorado Fratello, Sono passati 2 mesi che vi dissi che nostri preti e Madonna mi diceva che havrebbono voluto che voi dessi quelli danari che haute ha dare io lo tratenutì fino adesso hora non so più che mi dire se loro vorrebbe la risposta quanto prima che non vorrebbe perdere questa ocasione di fare il fatto loro si che se potessi havrei caro vi levassi questo fastidio da voi e da me havrei bisogno di quell 7 scudi che vi scrissi l’ultima volta che se non fussi streeta dal bisogno havrei patientia chome ho fatto fine adessi si che se potete di gratia non mi dite di no e con tale fine mi offero e rachomando pregando nostro Signore lo tengha in sua gratia il di 16 febraio 1606. Vostra sorella Margherita Spinelli.”
Discussion Questions for the Workshop

Letters from the Spinelli Family in Early Modern Florence

1. How did the relationships between siblings (brothers and sisters) affect other family relationships such as the marital bond between husband and wife or the religious bonds of convent communities?

2. How did women use their relationships with family members and did they employ affection and/or strategy in forming these different familial associations? Can we see signs of emotion in these letters and affection among family members?

3. The women in these letters held multiple identities as wives, widows, as well as nuns who were supposedly separate from family life. How did these identities affect the ways in which they formed relationships with their sisters and brothers? Did these relationships change and/or stay the same as they moved from wife to widow or younger sister to nun?

4. How did letters function as a way for women to create varying family ties and participate in family, social, and economic life in early modern Florence? How did the function and purpose of women’s letters in early modern Florence compare to the ways in which women used letters in early modern England or America?
The Cherokee Removal
A Brief History with Documents

Edited with an Introduction by
Theda Perdue
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University of Kentucky

BEDFORD BOOKS of ST. MARTIN’S PRESS
Boston • New York
The Cherokee Debate

Although the majority consistently opposed land cession and removal, the Cherokees were never unanimous in their opposition. In the early nineteenth century, a group of self-serving chiefs succumbed to the temptations of the federal government and sold land. Their leader, Doublehead, incurred the full wrath of the Cherokees, and other chiefs, including Major Ridge, killed him for his behavior. In 1808–1810, the Nation divided over the removal issue, and for a time, the antiremoval forces deposed the principal chief, who favored removal. Ultimately, the Cherokees did cede territory, most who wanted to move west did so, and those who remained strengthened their national government. Again in 1817–1819 the Cherokees debated land cession and removal. Under pressure from the federal government, the Cherokees surrendered more land, those who had promoted removal went west, and the remaining people established “articles of government” that clearly defined who had authority to cede land. These early removals had two important results. First of all, they siphoned off the individuals who supported land cession and western migration. The Cherokees who remained, therefore, became even more adamant in their refusal to negotiate removal, and little dissent from the official antiremoval position existed throughout the 1820s. Second, the people who first settled in western Arkansas and then moved in 1828 to northeastern Oklahoma established a distinct Cherokee society that numbered about four thousand by the 1830s. These Cherokees challenged the hegemony of the eastern Cherokees after the larger body of approximately sixteen thousand moved west in 1838–1839.

The best survey of early Cherokee efforts to preserve their homeland and adapt to changing circumstances is William G. McLoughlin, Cherokee Renaissance in New Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). For the removal controversy of the 1830s, biographical studies of the major players present the opposing sides. See Thurman Wilkins, Cherokee Tragedy: The Story of the Ridge Family and the Demise of a People (New York: Macmillan, 1970), and Gary E. Moulton, John Ross,
Chapter 3

Women and the Second Position

The Second Position...
We therefore recommend to you our request for the ratification of the

... (text continues on the next page)
considerable families, who are very active in encouraging the emigration of our nation. These ought to be our truest friends but prove our worst enemies. They seem to be only concerned how to increase their riches, but do not care what becomes of our Nation, nor even of their own wives and children.

CHEROKEE WOMEN

Petition

October 17, 1821 [1831?]

To the Committee and Council,
We the females, residing in Salequoree and Pine Log, believing that the present difficulties and embarrassments under which this nation is placed demands a full expression of the mind of every individual, on the subject of emigrating to Arkansas, would take upon ourselves to address you. Although it is not common for our sex to take part in public measures, we nevertheless feel justified in expressing our sentiments on any subject where our interest is as much at stake as any other part of the community.

We believe the present plan of the General Government to effect our removal West of the Mississippi, and thus obtain our lands for the use of the State of Georgia, to be highly oppressive, cruel and unjust. And we sincerely hope there is no consideration which can induce our citizens to forsake the land of our fathers of which they have been in possession from time immemorial, and thus compel us, against our will, to undergo the toils and difficulties of removing with our helpless families hundreds of miles to unhealthy and unproductive country. We hope therefore the Committee and Council will take into deep consideration our deplorable situation, and do everything in their power to avert such a state of things. And we trust by a prudent course their transactions with the General Government will enlist in our behalf the sympathies of the good people of the United States.

ELIAS BOUDINOT'S EDITORIALS
IN THE CHEROKEE PHOENIX

The Cherokees' national newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix, was a source of national pride and an important tool in their resistance to removal. In
Discussion Questions for the Workshop

Letters from Cherokee Women in Early Modern America

1. How does a matrilineal kinship system (inheritance of property and identity through the mother's line) like that of the Cherokees shape the authority Cherokee women used in their petition against the 1817 removal crisis? Compare to patrilineal societies like those in Italy and England.

2. These petitions are directed both at the Cherokee Council and at the United States. How do the audiences react differently? Does the male Cherokee audience matter in this moment or only the members of the United States?

3. After the end of the War of 1812, Americans put intense pressure on tribes in the Southeast to sell their lands east of the Mississippi. In 1817 some Cherokees agreed to sell their land and move to the Arkansas territory and while the majority remained in Cherokee territory in the east. How does the latter petition look different from the former one? What do those similarities and differences tell us about the intervening years?

4. Women's agency, as illustrated in these petitions, illustrates their political and social roles in the tribe. How would we define these roles and their relevance to shaping Cherokee community and identity? What happens when those women lose their radialional power through the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal societies?