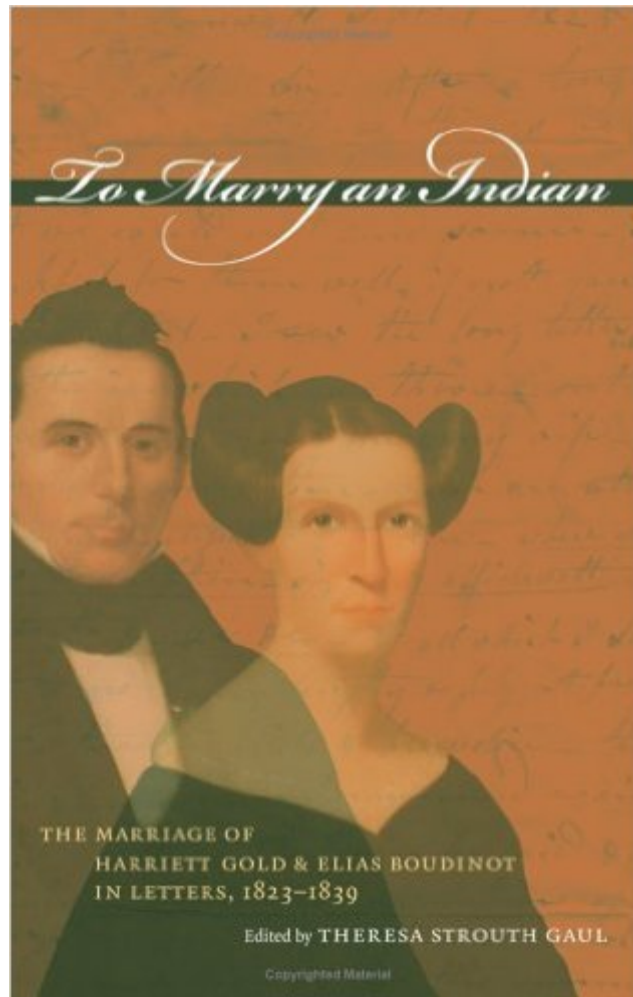


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To Marry An Indian: The Marriage Of Harriett Gold And Elias Boudinot In Letters, 1823-1839



Synopsis

When nineteen-year-old Harriett Gold, from a prominent white family in Cornwall, Connecticut, announced in 1825 her intention to marry a Cherokee man, her shocked family initiated a spirited correspondence debating her decision to marry an Indian. Eventually, Gold's family members reconciled themselves to her wishes, and she married Elias Boudinot in 1826. After the marriage, she returned with Boudinot to the Cherokee Nation, where he went on to become a controversial political figure and editor of the first Native American newspaper. Providing rare firsthand documentation of race relations in the early nineteenth-century United States, this volume collects the Gold family correspondence during the engagement period as well as letters the young couple sent to the family describing their experiences in New Echota (capital of the Cherokee Nation) during the years prior to the Cherokee Removal. In an introduction providing historical and social contexts, Theresa Strouth Gaul offers a literary reading of the correspondence, highlighting the value of the epistolary form and the gender and racial dynamics of the exchange. As Gaul demonstrates, the correspondence provides a factual accompaniment to the many fictionalized accounts of contacts between Native Americans and Euroamericans and supports an increasing recognition that letters form an important category of literature.

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Customer Reviews

The foreword is clear and concise and lay wonderful groundwork for the piece, but it is the letters themselves that possess the meat of the work, as it should be. They provide tremendous insight into a period of time when helping the less fortunate exposed a troubling nerve of racial awareness. As long as the young men of the Cornwall Seminary merely worked and learned the European way, all was fine and they were paraded throughout the country as success stories in bids for financial support for the "mission" of saving the "heathen savages" from themselves. But when love entered in and crossed an unspoken divide between white and red cultures and people, it all came crashing down. How were young men suppose to react when all day they were taught, "God is love", and "All men are equal in God's eyes", only to be hung in effigy when they fell in love with the white girls of the supporting town? It can be of little wonder that they returned to their towns with even greater suspicion of whites than before. Wonderful book. Well outlined, researched, and crafted.

My husband bought this book for his research. The book is a sad indictment of white treatment of Indians.

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