

## Transcript

### **Petition from “females of the County of Augusta” to the General Assembly, January 19, 1832**

To the honourable the Gen<sup>l</sup> Assembly\* of the State of Virginia, the memorial of the subscribing females of the County of Augusta humbly represents that although it be unexampled, in our beloved State, that females should interfere in its political concerns, and altho' we fell all the timidity incident to our sex in taking this step, yet we hold our right to do so to be unquestionable, and feel ourselves irresistibly impelled to the exercise of that right by the most potent considerations and the perilous circumstances which surround us. We pretend not to conceal from you, our fathers & brothers, our protectors by your investment with the political power of the land, the fears which agitate our bosoms, and the dangers which await us, as revealed to us by recent tragical deeds. Our fears we admit, as great; but we do not concede that they are the effects of blind & unreflecting cowardice; we do not concede that they spring from the superstitious timidity of our sex. Alas! we are indeed timid, but we appeal to your manly reason, to your more matured wisdom, to attest the justice & propriety of our fears, when we call to your remembrance the late slaughter of our sisters & their little ones, in certain parts of our land, & the strong probability, that that slaughter was but a partial execution of a widely projected scheme of carnage. We know not, we cannot know the night, nor the unguarded moment, by day or by night, which is pregnant with our destruction, & that of our husbands, & brothers, & sisters, & children; but we do know that we are, at every moment, exposed to the means of our own excision & of all that is dear to us in life. The bloody monster which threatens us is warmed & cherished on our own hearths. O hear our prayer & remove it, ye protectors of our persons, ye guardians of our peace!

Tell us not of the labor & hardships we shall endure when our bondservants shall be removed from us. They have no terrors for us. Those labors & hardships cannot be greater, or so great as those we now endure in providing for & ruling the faithless beings who are subjected to us. Or were they greater, still they are, in our esteem, less than the small dust in the balance compared with the burden of our fears and our dangers. But what have we to fear from these causes more than the females of other countries? Are they of the east, & of the west, of England, & of France more "cumbered with much serving"\*\*\* than we are? Are they less enlightened or less accomplished? However we may be flattered, we will not be argued out of our senses, &

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persuaded into a belief which is contradicted by all experience & the testimony of sober facts. Many, very many of our sisters & brothers have fled to other lands from the evils which we experience: And they send us back the evidences of their contentment & prosperity. They lament not their labors & hardships, but exult in their deliverance from servitude to their quondam\*\*\* slaves. And we, too, would fly—we, too, would exult in similar deliverance, were our destiny ~~not~~ otherwise ordered ~~than it is~~. That destiny is in your hands, and we implore your high agency in ordering it for the best. Do not slight our importunities. Do not disregard our fears. We desire to enjoy our exultation in the land of our nativity. Our destiny is identified with your's. If we perish, alas! what will become of you & your offspring?

We are no political economists; but our domestic employments, our engagements in rearing up the children of our husbands & brothers, our intimate concern with the intercourse & prosperity of society; we presume, cannot but inform us of the great & elementary principles of that important science. Indeed it is impossible that that science can have any other basis than the principles which are constantly developing themselves to us in our domestic relations. What is a nation but a family upon a large scale? Our fears teach us to reflect & reason: and our reflections & reasonings have taught us that the peace of our homes, the welfare of society, the prosperity of future generations call aloud & imperatively for some decisive & efficient measure—and that measure cannot, we believe, be decisively efficient, or of much benefit if it have not, for its ultimate object, the extinction of slavery from amongst us. Without therefore entering upon a detail of facts and arguments, we implore you by the urgency of our fears, by the love we bear you as our fathers & brothers, by our anxieties for the little ones around us, by our estimate of domestic weal, by present danger, by the prospects of the future, by our female virtues, by the patriotism which animates & glows in our bosoms, by our prayers to Almighty God, not to let the power with which you are invested lie dormant, but that you would exert it for the deliverance of yourselves, of us, of the children of the land, of future ages from the direst curse that can befall a people. O, signalize your legislation by this mighty deed. This we pray, and in duty bound will ever pray.

*The signatures of sixty-two women in two columns follow on this page.*

# Transcript

*Docketed:*

Memorial of the  
Ladies of Augusta to  
the Gen<sup>l</sup> Assembly of  
Virginia praying  
the adoption of some mea-  
-sure for the speedy extirpation  
of Slavery from  
the Commonwealth

Signed by 215 Ladies—

Jan<sup>y</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> 1832  
ref<sup>d</sup> to select  
com<sup>ee</sup>  
JOHN W Crt

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\* The writer of this document used the long or leading *s*, a character that looks similar to the letter "*f*" but is used as an "*s*," often as the first of a double *s* as in assign or address.

\*\* This phrase refers to the King James Version of the Bible, Luke 10:40.

\*\*\*Latin word, meaning former.

Citation: Petition from “females of the County of Augusta” to the General Assembly. N.d., presented 19 January 1832. Manuscript. RG 78, Virginia General Assembly, Legislative Petitions, Augusta County, State Government Records Collection. Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.