

PETITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE WESTERN COUNTRY
[State of Franklin, 1787]

From The State Records of North Carolina, Vol. XXII, pp. 705-714

[Courtesy of USGenWeb]

Editor's Note:

Most of the names appearing on this Petition were the very first settlers in what would become East Tennessee. The first county formed was Washington County; then a few years later the counties of Sullivan and Greene were formed from Washington County.

The Honourable, The General Assembly of North Carolina now sitting--

The Inhabitants of the Western Country Humbly Sheweth:

That it is with sincere concern we lament the unhappy disputes that have long subsisted between us and our Brethren on the Eastern side of the Mountains, respecting the Erecting a new Government. We beg leave to represent to your Honourable body, that from Acts passed in June 1784, ceding to Congress your Western territory, with the reservations and Conditions therein contained. Also from a clause in your Wise and Mild Constitution, setting forth that there might be a State or States, erected in the West whenever your Legislature should give consent for same; and from our local situation, numberless advantages, bountifully given to us by nature to propagate & promote a Government with us. Being influenced by your Acts and Constitution, and at the same time considering that it is our undeniable right to obtain for ourselves and posterity a proportionable and adequate share of the blessings, rights, privileges, and immunities allotted with the rest of mankind, have thought that the erecting a new Government would greatly contribute to our welfare and convenience and that the same could not militate against your interest and future welfare as a Government. Hoping that mutual & reciprocal advantages would attend each party, & that cordiality and unanimity would permanently subsist between us ever after, We earnestly request that an impartial view of our remoteness be taken into consideration. The great inconveniency attending your seat of Government, and also the great difficulty in ruling well & giving protection to so remote a people. To say nothing of the almost impassable mountains, Nature has placed between us, which renders it impracticable for us to furnish ourselves with a bare load of the necessaries of life, except we in the first instance travel from one to two hundred & more miles through some other State 'ere we can reach your government. Every tax paid you from this county would render us that sum the poorer, as it is impossible from the nature of our situation, that any part could return into circulation, having nothing that could bear the carriage, or encourage purchasers to come so great a distance for which reasons were we to continue under your Government a few years, the people here must pay a greater sum than the whole of the medium now in circulation for the Exigencies and support of your Government which would be a sum impossible for us to procure, would we be willing to give you our all, & of course, must be beholden to other States for any part we could raise; and by these means our

property would gradually diminish, and we at last reduced to mere poverty and want by not being able equally, to participate with the benefits and advantages of your Government. We hope that having settled West of the Appalachian Mountains ought not to deprive us of the natural advantages designed by the bountiful Providence for the conveniency & comfort of all those who have Spirit and sagacity enough to seek after them. When we reflect on our past and indefatigable Struggles, both with savages and our other Enemies during our late war, and the great difficulty we had to obtain and withhold this Country from those Enemies at the expense of the lives and fortunes of many of our dearest friends and relations, and the happy conclusion of peace have arrived, North Carolina has derived great advantages from our alertness in taking & securing a Country from which she has been able to draw into her Treasury immense sums of money, and thereby become enabled to pay off, if not wholly, yet a great part, and sink her national debt. We therefore humbly conceive you will liberally think that it will be nothing more than paying a debt in full to us for only to grant what God, Nature & our locality entitles us to receive. Trusting that your magnanimity and justice will not consider it a crime in any people to pray their rights and privileges, we call the world to testify our conduct and exertion in behalf of American Independency, and the same to judge whether we ask more than free people ought to claim, agreeable to Republican principles, the great foundation whereon our American fabric now stands. Impressed with the hope of your great goodness & benevolent disposition that you will utterly abhor and disclaim all ideas of Involving into innumerable, disagreeable and irksome Contentions a people who have so faithfully aided & supported in the time of imminent and perilous Dangers; that you will be graciously pleased to consent to a Separation; that from your paternal tenderness and greatness of mind, you will let your stipulations & conditions be consistent with honour, equity & Reason, all which will be cheerfully submitted to; and we, your Petitioners, shall always feel an interest in whatsoever may concern your honour and prosperity. Lastly, we hope to be enabled by the concurrence of your State to participate in the fruits of the Revolution; and enjoy the essential benefits of Civil Society under a form of Government which ourselves alone, can only calculate for such a purpose. It will be a subject of regret that so much blood and treasure have been lavished away for no purpose to us, that so many sufferings have been encountered without Compensation, and that so many sacrifices have been made in vain. Many other considerations might be here adduced, but we hope what hath been mentioned will be sufficient for our purpose, adding only that Congress hath from time to time explained their ideas so fully and with so much dignity & Energy that if their Arguments and Requisitions will not Produce conviction, we know of nothing that will have a greater influence, especially when we recollect that the system referred to is the result of the Collected wisdom of the United States and should it not be considered as perfect, must be esteemed as the least Objectionable.

John Cosson

Joseph Blair

James English	Thomas Williams
William Hannah	Henry Styers
Peter McNamee	His
James Shanks	Thomas X Tadlock
David Robinson	Mark
Robert Callison	William McPick
Isaac Davis	Botholmu Odeneal
James Mitchell	His
David Gemel	Shadrack X Hale Jr.
Thomas Bell	Mark
Thomas Rodgers	Daniel Dunny Jr.
Anthony Kelly	John Wear
Thos. McMackin	Asahel Rawlings
George Davies	Henry Earnest
Nathaniel Davies	James Patterson
Samuel Davies	Francis Hughes
John Lowe	Robert Hood
Joseph Willson	His
David Brown	Wm. X Francis
William Brown	Mark
Jas. Henney	His
Alexr Petter	Patrick X Kirkpat-[rick]
William Reynolds	Mark
David Reynolds	John Tadlock
Aaron Been	James Davis
William Wilson	Benn Brumbly
Thos. Thompson	Mary Webster (?)
David Rankin	George Kirkpatrick
John Lee	Thomas Jones
Sam'l Vance	William Jones
Rd. Kerr	Reuben Simmon
Archibel Alexander	Moses Kelsay
Samuel McPherson	Robert McCall
Matthew Rue	Joseph Alexander
Joseph Lusk	Wm. Cocke
Andrew Jackson	Archibald Roan
Jos. Gest	Elias Witt

Jos. Newberry	Thomas Witt
Alex. Lowry	Nathaniel Witt
Jno. McClelland	Rich'd Dunn
Solomon Reed	Wm. Dunn
Uriah McClellennon	Thomas Call
James Stinson	H. Call
Alexander Street	Joseph N. Newport
James McPherson	Wm. W. Newport
John Prim	John Greer
Jacob Smelser	Absolom Greer
Joshua Kidwell	Thomas Springer
Samuel Jameson	Levy Springer
John Brumley	Thomas Wolf
William Davidson	Conrad Wolf
Wm. Boyd	Phillip Gnibb
Benja. Gist	Henry Easter
Thos. Bromley	William Eats
Hugh Beard	Simeon Crains
Samuel Beard	Harmon Nowel
James Millikin	James Patton
Robert Orr	Robert Patton
Searling Bowman	John Fout
Rich'd Woods	Peter Fout
Robert McCall	Harman Kenedy
John Galbreath	Moses Long
(illegible) (?)	Coonnas Miller
James Watson	Thomas McKee
(illegible) (?)	Wm. Goings
James Hays	Henry Brumly
David Carr	And. Wray
Joseph Garrison	Wm. Wood
William Gillehan	Gordon Potter
Stephen Storge	Wm. Peck
Michael Rawlings	Thomas Mosely
Donnell Cremor	Henry Mosely
Nath. McMeno	Phillip Rudolf
William La*** (?)	Wm. Stublefield

(illegible) (?)	Thomas Baits
Wm. Morow	John Keller
Charles Ramsey	Moses Keller
(illegible) (?)	William Ferguson
John R. *** (?)	Adam Ferguson
Peter Nowels	Ralph Hogan
James Millikan	William Hogan
Thomas Millikan	Richard Wabb
Thomas Dicson	Josiah Epperson
Redman McDanel	Humph'y Montgomery
Samul MacDanel	Carmach George
Samul Gilberts	Charles Wilson
Joseph McMinty	John Johnston
Auborn Mon*** (?)	Wm. Magill
Anson Rit	Oton Clack
Nuness Pottor	John Gibson
John Noman (?)	Reuben Gibson
Peter Nules	William Adkins
James W. Begses (?)	Thos. Fryar
Dalton Ridgs	John Lyon
James Jack	William Brownin
John Adkins	Rich'd Wood
Adword Adword	James Pickens
Robert Bettey	Reuben Riggs
Geo. Black	George Hayes
Simon Ridgs	William Hill
Joseph Donn	Henry Richardson
Allen Bellew	Shiffell Goodlop
Rows Potter	John Sham
John Norton	Miller Doget
Aaron Norton	Christy Miers
Aaron Rider	John Mears
John Jameson	William Owins
Dan'l Rawlings	Thomas Owins
William Jinkins	John Jarrott
Robert Smith	Thomas Pinckny
Wm. Howard	James Stump

Joshua Tadlock	Leonard Hopkins
Robert Hayes	Martha Gahee
Thomas Johnson	Patrick Gahee
Francis Johnson	Jeremiah Smith
his	Robert Sample
Js. X Hust	Anthony Moore
mark	James McCammiss
his	Thomas McCammiss
John X Huson	William McCammiss
mark	Adam McCammiss
Lanty Armstrong	Henry Hohammer
William Hennidge	Franses Castel
John Armstrong	Jacob Meek
Andrew English	Thomas Miller
Nathaniel Hayes	Robert Pain
Daniel Leming	Joseph Hamilton
John Williams	Robert Kerr
his	John Sellars
Robert X Miller	Benj. Wray
mark	(Illegible) (?)
his	Moses Moore
William X Hust	Wm. Moore
mark	Joseph Ray
his	Joseph Lachlen, Sen.
Thomas X Bailey	Joseph Lachlen, Jur.
mark	Edward Crunt (?)
	James Crunt

From the back of the petition:

Nicholas Hayes	William Wilson
Sam'l Hayes	Moses Kennedy
Jno. Mitchel	Hermon King
James Ranner	Joseph Screat
Henry Hokimer	Lewis Tadlock
Geo. Martin	Thomas Tadlock
David Moore	Joshuaway Tadlock
Henry Winterberger	William Padfield
Jos. Winterberger	His

Sam'l Winterberger	Thomas X Benet
Joseph Lusk	Mark
Thos. Wood	Moses Kelsay
Joseph Geest	John Anderson
William Gest	James Richardson
Joshua Kidwell	David Taylor
Thomas Davie	Benja. Gist
John Kidwell	Joseph Huson
Charles Kidwell	Mikill Borders
Whaley Newby	Alx. Pethrow
Henry W. Newby	Oystan Hewtower
Craven Dunear	Wm. Daves
Alexr. Lowrey	John Noris
James Stitson	Robert Hays
Adam Guthery	James Hays
Wm. Craige	Wm. Sippard
Benjamin Henslee	Allexander Cavitt
Abel Morgan	Moses Cavitt
Thomas Vincent	Jacob Jobe
Jno. Chester	Nathan Jobe
Patrick Morrison	Joseph Birdwell
Stephen Easley	Geo. Birdwell
Jackel Light	Jas. Smith
Robert Easley	Moses Russel
Henry Sullavan	Conrad Shelply
John Light	John Comin
Moses Robinson	Walker Barren
William Light	John Bell
William Light, Sr.	William Carson
Thomas Easley	Robert Christian
William Goad	Abraham Titsworth
Jesey Holland	Benjamin Walb *** (?)
James Walb *** (?)	Green Chote
John Goard, Jr.	Shadrach Haile
Geoge Vincent	Forrester Mercer
Henry Heckey	Bryce Russell, Sr.
Owen Atkin	Bryce Russell, Jr.
Nicholas Mercer	James Pickens

Richard Mercer, Sr.	Phl. Grafford Pearce
Arch'd McHaughan	William Gewil
Edward Mercer	Charles Parker
John Black	Antony Agee
John Hunt, Jr.	John Sawyer
Baset Hunt	Joseph Moor
Reuben Hunt	John Yancey
Thomas Tinton	Richard Shipley
Jonathan Hunt	W. Cage
James Cooper	Timothy Heuff
Isaiah Waldrew	George Christian
Lewis Hunt	Deness Murfee
James Smart	Isaac Thomas
James Smith	William Nasengill
Gabriel Gode	John Tulley
Joseph Smith	Thos. Easterlin
John Duncan	William Copeland
Wm. Berry	Ric'd Garnon
Isaac White	John Spurgin
Samuel Cox	Thos. King
James Wheeler	Roger Gibson
John Cottrell	James Adam
Hugh Gentry	Geo. Gabriel (black)
Vallentine Rose	John Yokley
Eli Shipley	John Woolsey
Thomis Shipley	James Arbutton (?)
William Childress	Martin Roller, Jr.
Joshway Hameton	Joseph Blair
Christurpher Croff	David Arwin
Benjamen Aze	William *** (?)
Reuben Hunt	Thos. Taylor
Ellecander More	Adam Stoaks
Martin Roller	Joseph Waldrap
John A. Caft	Mattw. Carithers
D. Wright	Gilbert Christian
Adam Stake	John Prior
Wm. Shewmaker	Moses Looney
Gabriel Goad	Macajah Adams

Peter Easley	James McLern
Jacob Cox	Alexander Carith
William Bucknell	Benj. Burdwell
Haley Bucknell	John Dean
Preley Bucknell	Charles Bacon
William Holland	John French
William Morroson	John Bilensy
John Morroson	William Combs
James Morroson	William Combs, Jr.
Samuel Bofman	Henery Combs
David Merryon	William Stacey
Richard Morell	Addam Coumb
Dudly Betherford	Daniel Agee
John Braford	John Comay
Peter Fin	James Peterson
John Hunt	Jeremiah Taylor
William Baily	Joseph Taylor
George Smith	Stephen Taylor
Jacob Joab	Isaac Taylor
William Cooper	John Chisolm
Wm. Jaction	Edward Tule
Ephraim Joab	Nathaniel Tule
William Mehallm	

Endorsement:

Petition of the inhabitants of the Western Country, December 1787

In Senate, December 1787. Read and referred to Court on Public Bills

From the joint balloting for a commissioner to present the resolves of the Assembly of this State to the Assembly of the State of North Carolina, Mr. Thomas Stuart, was duly elected for that purpose.

James White, S.S.

Test:

R. Mitchel, C.S.

Test:

Stockley Donelson, S.C.

T.A. Ramsey, C.C.