

**Memorial to the Honorable Cato West, secretary, exercising the power and performing the duties of governor of the Mississippi Territory. The right of the people to petition for a redress of grievances is incident to the nature of our government, and is expressly guaranteed by that constitution under which we live ... We allude to the late election held for the Country of Adams. The intrigues and the frauds practised in the Country of Adams on that occasion deprived the constitutional electors of Adams and Wilkinson Counties of their representatives in the Legislature ... [Mississippi Ter. before 1817.].**

MEMORIAL.

*To the Honorable Cato West Secretary, exercising the power and performing the duties of Governor of the Mississippi Territory.*

THE right of the people to petition for a redress of grievances is incident to the nature of our government, and is expressly guaranteed by that constitution under which we live. An occasion has recently occurred, which demands in the most exemplary manner the exercise of this right on the part of the citizens of this Territory. We therefore, your memorialists, aware that appeals of this fort should not be made on trivial grounds or frivolous pretexts, but impressed with the importance and the delicacy of the subject; fully acquainted with their rights, and ever alive to the infringement of them; deem it a duty which they owe to themselves and to the community, to memorialize your Honor on a subject which taken either in a moral or legal view may emphatically be styled a *public grievance*: to redress which, your memorialists solicit your Honor to interpose that authority with which you are invested by the Ordinance adopted for the government of this Territory.

We allude to the late election held for the County of Adams.

The intrigues and the frauds practised in the County of Adams on that occasion deprived the constitutional electors of Adams and Wilkinson Counties of their Representatives in the Legislature. The legitimate voters were completely disfranchised. A system corrupt in the extreme was openly planned and executed, derogatory to the citizens of this Territory, injurious to their interests, and fraught with evils too heavy to be patiently endured. It would be tedious to recite minutely the various instances of fraud practised by the leaders of a party in that election. We consider it sufficient to expose the general system by a brief detail of facts, the truth of which is too notorious to be denied.

A few days prior to the election, a considerable number of blank deeds were printed and deposited in the hands of sundry persons to be filled up and dispersed according to circumstances, with a view to the election of certain candidates. The deeds were generally made for *fifty* acres of land or thereabouts, and distributed among every description of individuals who would accept the fame, on the condition of voting for those candidates whose election they were intended to promote. Under this title, upwards of one hundred persons, who so far from having any interest had not even a residence in our Territory, persons, who were merely floating through the community to some other port, and who had no expectation of receiving protection from, or being in any manner amenable to our laws, voted at the election,—under deeds too made to them on the spur of the occasion, without any consideration, other, than that they were to be returned to their makers after the votes were given. It is a fact of equal notoriety, that many if not all of those spurious deeds passed without those solemnities essential to constitute the validity of such an instrument. They were made without the privity of the owner in many cases, and some of them were neither signed or sealed. In one or two instances it was discovered that two persons had voted under the same deed, which conveyed no title in law or equity to either. In short it was remarked by every honest elector with indignation, that those “Fifty acre deed men,” knew nothing of the situation of the land under which they voted, except the quantity, and could only reply to the questions put by the inspectors, that “they had a printed deed for it.”

Frauds so glaring in a Government of equal right, your memorialists humbly hope will not pass with impunity. If there be no remedy for an evil so destructive of our dearest rights, the elective franchise can, only be nominal to us. The accidental arrival of one or two hundred persons in our Territory on their way to or from New-Orleans, will, if these practices meet with countenance from, or are winked at by the government, always fix the fate of our elections. We shall have no voice in them. If such evasions of the constitution be sanctioned, a few wealthy freeholders with their cart loads of hired voters, will usurp the power and give the laws to the Territory.

The foregoing statement we avow with the boldness of truth to be correct. Such was the practice at the late election. Eye witnesses as many of us were to the procedure, it would have been criminal to have remained silent. We profess ourselves zealous friends to a due extension of the right of suffrage, but when the laws of our country prescribe limits to it, we will ever oppose a breach of them.

In making this representation we discharge our duty. We represent the evil and it remains with your Honor to apply the constitutional corrective, by dissolving an Election pregnant with the blackest fraud, conceived and executed for the purpose of promoting the advancement of a party: a party inimical to the rights of the people, and to the present tranquil administration of the United States.

And your Memorialists will ever pray &c.

Tho s. Foster

Ruben Gibson

Simeon Gibson

Ch. Gibson

Rear Godtelt

Daniel Whitaker

Joel Pate

William Cade

Benj. Hill

Ben ??ily

MB Shields

G Poindexter