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Address of the "Principal Inhabitants of East Florida" to Governor Tonym, June 6, 1783

John Forbes



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ADDRESS TO GOVERNOR TONYN, JUNE, 1783

To His Excellency Patrick Tonyn Esquire
Captain General, Governor and Comman-
der in Chief in and over His Majesty's
Province of East Florida, Chancellor, Vice
Admiral and Ordinary of the same.

The humble Address of the Principal Inhabi-
tants of the said Province.

May it please Your Excellency,

We His Majesty's loyal Subjects, having fully and
dispassionately considered the calamitous state to
which we will be reduced by the cession of this Pro-
vince to the Crown of Spain, and the measures that
have been recommended to us by the Right Honorable
Lord Hawke, and the other proprietors of Lands resi-
dent in London, beg leave to address Your Excellency
requesting that You will be pleased to present our most
grateful acknowledgments to his Lordship, and them
for their early attention to our interest, and to inform
him that agreeable to his directions as many of us as
the time would permit have made Estimates and valu-

Note.-In this address there may be perceived something
of the shock and consternation resulting among the residents of
British Florida from the sudden intelligence that the country
was to be handed back to Spain and desuetude, and they were
to be homeless. The high historical value of the document, how-
ever, lies in that it is a list of "the principal inhabitants of
East Florida" at the time of the cession.

As the Reverend John Forbes (see *ante*) was the first
signer, and on this same day, June 6, 1733, was given a letter
by Governor Tonyn to Lord North stating that he (Forbes)
was "able to give your Lordship information"-which letter
he must have carried at once to England-and as this clergy-
man was an important figure in the colonial government and
high in the councils of the governor, it might be that the pur-
pose of his journey was to carry or accompany the address to London.

The original of this document is in the Public Record Of-
fice, London (Col. Of. class 5, vol. 560, pp. 625-629).

ations of our Estates, to request the continuance of that noble Peers interest, and to assure him that we will cheerfully contribute our proportion towards defraying the expence that may arise in the prosecution of our claim.

We doubt not but Your Excellency has in the most forcible manner represented the advantages of this Country to His Majesty's Ministers, Being however deeply interested in its fate, we beg leave to suggest that could it be preserved under His Majesty's Protection it would furnish comfortable habitations to His Majesty's loyal Subjects, and an asylum to those who will be disaffected under the American States.

From Your Excellencys long residence amongst us it becomes needeless to mention the numberless difficulties we have surmounted and the immense sums that have been expended in bringing this Country from an uncultivated wilderness to a respectable state of cultivation. The amazing progress it hath of late made, the Exports of Naval Stores Peltry and Lumber fully evince its utility to Great Britain, and to what consequence it might be raised were the more valuable uncultivated parts of the Northern and Western Coasts settled by men undoubtedly well attached to His Majestys Government, and who would glory in raising a progeny of the same principles. We humbly conceive that neither Nova Scotia nor the Bahama Islands can answer for commodious habitations to the owners of Slaves, and we are well informed that the West India Islands are overstocked. Besides, Sir, sensible of your Excellencys zeal for Government and attachment to the Mother Country it is with bleeding hearts we lament that many, of His Majesty's loyal Subjects, Soldiers, Sailors, and Husbandmen, sinking under accumulated misfortunes, and for want of such a residence as this Country if retained would afford will think themselves under the necessity of reverting

to the American States and thereby in the end reducing the strength of the Mother Country, and of seeing these American States growing upon its ruins by the industry of those very people who might be so beneficially employed in adding to the strength, and increasing the Commerce of Great Britain.

Your Excellency is sensible that prejudices have prevailed against this Country, that the Lands are well calculated for producing sufficient provisions for the maintenance of its inhabitants, and that they are fully capable of producing Rice, Cotton and Indigo for Exportation, that it abounds with Live Oak Timber fit for ships of war of any rate, that the Barrs of St. Augustine and St. John's are not unsurmountable obstacles to Commerce, and that the Harbour of St. Marys, Spirito Santo and Appalachicola are fit for every purpose of Commerce as well as for the reception of His Majesty's Ships, not to mention the advantage of furnishing the West India Marketts with several articles that must otherwise be supplied by the American States, and the intire loss of the numerous tribes of Southern Indians emerging from Barbarity, who would in peace consume our manufactures and increase our Trade, and in the late War have manifested a fidelity and attachment to the King and a disposition to act agreeable to the orders they received, which would do honour to a civilized nation.

Whatever the Event be Your Excellency may be assured that we ever shall preserve our Loyalty to the King and maintain a grateful remembrance of Your Excellencys exertions, and the good offices of our numerous friends in Great Britain, and humbly conceiving that our interest and that of the Mother Country are intimately connected-We are happy in our expectations from the late change in the administration that the Right Honorable minister at the head of the department actuated by that regard to justice and those

principles of humanity which ever influenced his conduct, will in his great wisdom adopt measures more beneficial to the interest of the nation at large, more adequate to our wants, and more suitable to our circumstances than any pecuniary consideration could prove.

John Forbes	Robert Spence
Thos. Brown	John Tunno
Henry Yonge	Alexr Barron
James Hume	David Yeats
Philip Moore	Peter Edwards
R. Kilsale	Thos Monteith
Will Chas. Wills	Thos Fraser Major S. C.
Geo. Robinsons	Patk Robinson
William Slater	John Holmes
Jno. Douglass	G. Ronpile
Jno Winicott	William Binnie
Thos. Waters	Jno. Mowbray
Will McKinnon	Benjn. Lord
Anthy Hutchins	Robt Scott
John Martin	Thos Hale
Thomas Dow	Benjn. Wallford
Thomas Withers	Mans. Moreas
Levi Allen	Geo. Grassell
Thos. Anderson	Peter Shirriff
Robt Smith	Edmund Mortimer
Jas Smith	Archd. McLachlan
John Clark	Josiah Tattnell
Barnard Humbar	Geo. Kemp
Robt Muffett	Jno Hamilton Lt. Col.
Colin McIver	R. Lawe
John Johnson	Sam Roworth
Adam Amoss	Lewis Fatio
G. Mackenzie	Alexr C. Wylly
Alexr J. Spiers &	Wm. Charleton Lt. R. Arty.
Patrick Crookshanks	T. H. Abbott, Capn. R. Arty
John Ross	Edward Abbott R. Arty
Willm Moss for self	James Hamilton
& Thos and James Moss	Alexr McCaskill
Elias Ball for self &	Francis Levett
Elias Ball Junr	Thomas McMain
James McMurray	Jno Leggett. Capt.
John Brown	Jos. Smith Capt.

Geo. Charleton	Farqn. Betheune
Joseph Manett	M. McIntosh
Jno Mullryne Tattnell	Vichs Warrington
James Smith	Redmond Connell
Wm. Johnston	John McMain
Jas Campbell	Murdock MeLeod Surgeon
Spencer Man	Wm. Wylly Capt
Edwd Penman	John McDonald
John Wood	Chas. Stewart Lindsay
Andrew McMain	Jno O Halloran
Wm. Charlton Junr	Alexr Fotherningham
George McKenzie 60th Regt.	Lyfford Waldron
Daniel Manson Major	Thos. McDonald
Daniel McNiel	John Martin
R. Payne	Lewis Johnston Junr
Willm McLeod	John Johnston
Rodk McLeod	John Mitchell Junr
Thos Pan for	Lewis Kinnen Capt.
Denys Rolle &	Benjn. Douglass
Wm. Pengree	Donald Campbell Lt.
Thos Pan for self	John Kin
Wm. Panton for self	Donald Campbell Ensg.
& Chas. McLalchy	J. Manson Ensign
John Leslie &	Chas Prince Lt. R. Navy
Wm. Alexander	A. Campbell Capt S. C.
John Perpall	& & & &

***St. Augustine
6th June, 1783***