

By the Representatives of the people of
West Florida.

A DECLARATION.

It is known to the world with how much fidelity the good people of this territory have professed and maintained allegiance to their legitimate sovereign while any hope remained of receiving from him protection for their property and lives. Without making any unnecessary innovation in the established principles of the government, we had voluntarily adopted certain regulations in concert with our first magistrate for the express purpose of preserving this territory and shewing our attachment to the government which had heretofore protected us. This compact, which was entered into with good faith on our part, will forever remain an honorable testimony of our upright intentions and inviolable fidelity to our king and parent country, while so much as a shadow of legitimate authority remained to be exercised over us. We sought only a speedy remedy for such evils as seemed to endanger our existence and prosperity, and were encouraged by our governor with solemn promises of assistance and co-operation. But those measures which were intended for our preservation, he has endeavored to pervert into an engine of destruction by encouraging, in the most perfidious manner the violation of ordinances sanctioned and established by himself as the law of the land.

Being thus left without any hope of protection from the mother country, by being betrayed by a magistrate whose duty it was to have provided for the safety and tranquility of the people and government committed to his charge, and exposed to all the evils of a state of anarchy, which we have so long endeavoured to avert; it becomes our duty to provide for our own security as a free and independent state, absolved from all allegiance to a government which no longer protects us.

We, therefore, the representatives aforesaid, appealing to the Supreme ruler of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do solemnly publish and declare the several districts composing this territory of West Florida to be a free and independent state, and that they have a right to institute for themselves such form of government as they may think conducive of their safety and happiness—to form treaties—to establish commerce—to provide for their common defence, and for all acts which may of right be done by a sovereign and independent nation. At the same time declaring all acts within the said territory, of West Florida after this date by any tribunal or authorities, not deriving their powers from the people agreeable to the provisions of this convention, to be null and void—and calling upon all foreign nations to respect this our declaration, acknowledging our independence, and giving us such aid as may be consistent with the laws and usages of nations.

This declaration made in convention, at the town of Baton Rouge, on the 26th day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ten—We the representatives in the name and on behalf of our constituents do hereby solemnly pledge ourselves to support with our lives and fortunes.

(Signed

John H. Johnson,

John Mills,

John W. Leonard,

William Barrow,

Phillip Hicky,

John Morgan,

Edmund Hawes,

Thomas Lilley,

William Spiller,

JOHN RHEA, President.

ANDREW STEELE, Sec'y.