

1-9-1811

Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into
the propriety of admitting the Mississippi territory
into the union as a separate and independent state :
January 9th 1811

United States. Congress. House

R.C. Weightman, Washington (D.C.)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/msterrdocs>

Recommended Citation

United States. Congress. House and R.C. Weightman, Washington (D.C.), "Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the propriety of admitting the Mississippi territory into the union as a separate and independent state : January 9th 1811" (1811).

Mississippi Territorial Documents. 10.

<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/msterrdocs/10>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the General Special Collections at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mississippi Territorial Documents by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Duplicated

3 pieces - 60 -

*Mississippi
Copy to be a
State!*

P. 328.973

REPORT

OF

THE COMMITTEE,

APPOINTED

TO INQUIRE INTO THE PROPRIETY

OF ADMITTING

THE MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY

INTO THE

UNION, AS A SEPARATE AND INDEPEN-

DENT STATE.

JANUARY 9th, 1811.

*Referred to a committee of the whole House, on
Friday next.*

WASHINGTON CITY :

PRINTED BY R. C. WEIGHTMAN.

.....
1811.

REPORT.

The committee to whom was referred a resolution of the House of Representatives, to inquire into the expediency of admitting the Mississippi territory into the Union, as a separate and independent state, have had the subject referred to them under consideration, and beg leave, respectfully, to submit the following

REPORT:

THAT there has existed within the territory aforesaid, a temporary government, similar to that prescribed by the ordinance for the territory northwest of the river Ohio, since the seventh day of April, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight; and although the wisdom of Congress has been displayed in various modifications of that ordinance, it has never ceased to contain principles, incompatible with the rights of freemen. The executive who is frequently a total stranger to the local circumstances of the country, possesses an unlimited veto on all laws passed by the representative branch of the legislature; in addition to which, he is clothed with the odious authority to prorogue and dissolve the general assembly, and thereby prostrate all power within the territory to regulate its local and municipal concerns; these high prerogatives emanating from, and fit only to belong to kings and despots, may be exercised at the discretion of the governor, who is not even required to, assign a reason on which the act is founded. The only security which the people over whom this form of government is established have, against the frequent and wanton abuse of these powers, is to be

found in the mild and conciliatory disposition, uniformly manifested by the general government towards its territories. But experience has shewn, that officers, situated at a remote distance from the tribunal to which they are responsible, too frequently "feel power and forget right," and by eluding the vigilance of rigid investigation, are enabled to practice acts of oppression with impunity. Your committee forbear to enter into an examination of the various objections which might be urged against the present system of territorial governments. It is sufficiently obvious, that in many respects, they are hostile to the free constitution which guarantees the liberties of every American citizen. Your committee therefore consider it an act, both of strict justice and sound policy, to emancipate every territory of the United States, from the trammels of that probationary vassalage, whenever the number of inhabitants within the boundaries of the territory, shall fairly entitle them to a representative in the Congress of the United States. Your committee have used the best means in their power, to ascertain the number of souls within the Mississippi territory. The official returns of the census, have not yet been made to the department of state, agreeably to the act of the last session, directing a census or enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States; consequently, it became necessary and proper, to seek through other channels, the requisite information on that subject. It appears to your committee, from the best evidence which they have been enabled to collect, and on which they confidently rely, that there are in the southern and eastern counties of the territory, about the number of thirty five thousand souls; and that the county of Madison, situated on the northern extremity of the territory, near the great bend of the Tennessee

river, contains a population of about ten thousand souls. It also appears to your committee, that the emigration from the old states to this section of the Union will, in a very short time, constitute the number of inhabitants, required by the articles of cession and agreement between the United States and Georgia, to vest in them the unqualified right to become a member of the Union. Connected with those considerations, the length of time which it will necessarily require to form a constitution, and put the same in operation, affords a strong pledge, that anterior to the final admission of the aforesaid territory into the Union, the number of its inhabitants will amount to at least sixty thousand.

Your committee are of opinion, that where no constitutional difficulty occurs, the formation of new states, on the southern extremity of the Union, ought not to be delayed. It is a remarkable fact, in the annals of this country, that on the river Mississippi, which is acknowledged by all, to be of the first importance, both in reference to its commercial advantages, and the vast extent of fertile territory through which it flows, there does not exist a solitary state government. To unite every portion of the American family, by the indissoluble cord of affection, and to perpetuate the integrity of the Union, are objects paramount to all others, which can be presented to the view of the national legislature. These results cannot be secured, but by an equal distribution of rights and privileges, through every section of our extensive country. Let each enjoy civil, political and religious liberty, subject to the controul of independent local authorities, while the fostering hand of the federal government shall protect them in these enjoyments, from domestic feuds and external violence. Your

committee with the foregoing impressions, do not hesitate to recommend the following resolution:

Resolved, That it is expedient to admit the Mississippi territory into the Union, as a separate and independent state, on an equal footing with the original states; and that provision ought to be made by law, to authorise the people of said territory to elect a convention to form a constitution, to be submitted to Congress, for their approbation.

