

March 12, 1803

Mississippi Territory  
House of Representatives March the 12<sup>th</sup> 1803.

On motion

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit to the department of State a memorial and petition to his Excellency The President of the United States from this House.

Extract from the minutes.

Attest

Samuel Sidney, Diakon clk.



March 12, 1803

To his Excellency Thomas Jefferson President of  
the United States.

The memorial and petition of the House  
of Representatives of the Mississippi  
Territory.

Respectfully sheweth.

That a considerable portion of the Inhabi-  
tants of this Territory are situated upon  
lands of the greatest fertility, watered  
by navigable Rivers, which have no com-  
-munication with the Bay of Mexico, but  
through the dominions of his Catholic  
Majesty. The principal of those settle-  
-ments being within the Bay of Mobile  
upon the Tombogby, a fine navigable  
river, extending its branches so as nearly  
to interlock with the waters of the  
Tennessee, is so situated as to be cut off  
from all communication with the  
settlements adjacent to the Mississippi  
by a wilderness of at least two hundred  
miles; hence it results that the Inhabitants  
of that and other settlements can receive  
no supplies of a variety of articles,  
which the wants of man have rendered



indispensible to the comforts of life, but thro' the indulgence of the Spanish Government. This indulgence desirable as it may be in the existing circumstances of those countries and which may be withdrawn at any moment, can only be obtained, accompanied with inconveniencies which tend greatly to retard the prosperity of those settlements. The Spanish Government possessing an arbitrary power will permit only such traders as they shall be pleased to licence, to visit our settlements and perhaps for this licence a tax must be paid. It is unnecessary to present before the enlightened mind of your Excellency, the serious evils which must attach themselves to the planting interest, thus cramped and embarrassed.

The ardor of the cultivator is repressed and the new Establishments must languish until a remedy shall be applied to the source of the Evil.

The Treaty of navigation & limits



with Spain has not brought into view a number of Rivers, which tho' not equally extensive with the Mississippi, yet whose navigation is equally necessary to the prosperity of a large & fertile region of the United States.

Your memorialists duly impressed with an assurance of the parental care which your Excellency as head of the Empire, unceasingly extends to the most distant portions of its territory, more particularly to this the youngest and most defenceless of its Colonies, are fully persuaded, that it requires only to be made known that a grievance exists, to excite in your benevolent mind a desire to apply an immediate remedy.

Your Memorialists therefore pray that your Excellency will be pleased to adopt such measures as may procure for the Citizens of the United States the free



navigation of all navigable Rivers -  
and water courses falling into the Bay  
of Mexico from the Territories of the  
United States, and passing thro'  
the dominions of his Catholic

Majesty.

Attest,

Samuel Gaaney, Deacon &c.

House of Representatives  
March the 12<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1803.

Williams Gordon Tompkins  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MS.A.1.2.03  
recd May 3.